REVIEW ARTICLE

AGAINST THE VIRTUAL:

KLEINHERENBRINK'S EXTERNALITY THESIS AND DELEUZE'S MACHINE ONTOLOGY

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ABSTRACT: Reviewing Arjen Kleinherenbrink's recent book, Against Continuity: Gilles Deleuze's Speculative Realism (2019), this paper undertakes a detailed review of Kleinherenbrink's fourfold "externality thesis" vis-à-vis Deleuze's machine ontology. Reading Deleuze as a philosopher of the actual, this paper renders Deleuzean syntheses as passive contemplations, pulling other (passive) entities into an (active) experience and designating relations as expressed through contraction. In addition to reviewing Kleinherenbrink's book (which argues that the machine ontology is a guiding current that emerges in Deleuze's work after *Difference and Repetition*) alongside much of Deleuze's oeuvre, we relate and juxtapose Deleuze's machine ontology to positions concerning externality held by a host of speculative realists. Arguing that the machine ontology has its own account of interaction, change, and novelty, we ultimately set to prove that positing an ontological "cut" on behalf of the virtual realm is unwarranted because, unlike the realm of actualities, it is extraneous to the structure of becoming—that is, because it cannot be homogenous, any theory of change vis-à-vis the virtual makes it impossible to explain how and why qualitatively different actualities are produced.

KEYWORDS: Ontology; Speculative Philosophy; Deleuze; Object-Oriented Ontology; Speculative Realism; Machine Ontology

§ INTRODUCTION

Following Arjen Kleinherenbrink's *Against Continuity: Gilles Deleuze's Speculative Realism* (2019)—arguably one of the closest and most rigorous secondary readings of Deleuze's oeuvre—this paper seeks to demonstrate how any relation between machines immediately engenders a new machine, accounting for machinic circuits of activity where becoming, or processes of generation, are always necessarily irreducible to their generators. Thus, navigating Kleinherenbrink's work and Deleuze's literature, this paper treats reality as a byproduct of discontinuity, where direct contact between the interior (virtual) and real (actual) being of machines is necessarily foreclosed. Rather than privileging Deleuze as a theorist *of* the virtual, this paper situates Deleuze's virtual as non-relational excess over and above all other relations while treating continuity as dependent upon the Idea, powers (*puissance*), or singularities of any machine in question. By relating and distinguishing aspects of Deleuze's externality thesis, where no machine is reducible to another, this position opposes a recently popularized interpretation of Deleuze by theorists who proffer the "aisthetic perspective" of relation or stoke Deleuzean approaches to "affect" that hierarchize the virtual, thereby prioritizing continuity.[1] I argue that this interpretation fundamentally misreads Deleuze and mischaracterizes continuity as a product of direct contact between intensities and the processes comprising such intensities; it is, in fact, due to the "sense-event," as it corresponds to *actuality*, that the virtual aspect of any two machines is precluded from coming into direct contact.

In addition to reviewing Kleinherenbrink's book (which argues that the

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[1] Theorists of media and complex computational systems have perhaps been some of the most keen to co-opt this reading, remarking, for instance, that "[d]espite the fact that, from a strict and orthodox Deleuzian perspective, the aesthetic and the computational are two divergent modes of relating to the real, it is my contention that aisthetic accounts of computational systems have adopted Deleuze's aesthetics of ontological continuity and extended it to account for what is not continuous: digital computation." This "aisthetic perspective" treats novelty as "the activity of conception-perception. In other words, it concerns both thinking and feeling as ontogenetic activities (i.e., activities that generate being) [….] for Deleuze, aesthetics is not only about feeling, but about thinking too. I can add now that this thought, however, is of a particular kind: it is non-cognitive, apersonal, and irreducible to a single content, a single origin, or a single experience of it. The best way to describe it is to call it abstract thought or indeed virtual thought." In some instances, these approaches privilege the virtual, which we will make a case against. M. Beatriz Fazi, *Contingent Computation: Abstraction, Experience, and Indeterminacy in Computational Aesthetics*, New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2018, p. 10, p. 34.

machine ontology is a guiding current that emerges in Deleuze's work after *Difference and Repetition*) alongside Deleuze's primary texts, we will also relate Deleuze's machine ontology to positions held by a host of speculative realists and object-oriented ontologists such as Levi Bryant, Maurizio Ferraris, Markus Gabriel, Manuel DeLanda, Graham Harman, Tristan Garcia, and Bruno Latour. Arguing that the machine ontology has its own account of interaction, change, and novelty, I ultimately set to prove that Deleuze is by no means a reductionist, positing that the any "cut" on behalf of the virtual realm is never warranted because, unlike the realm of actualities, it is necessarily inconsistent— that is, because it cannot be homogenous, any theory of change vis-à-vis the virtual makes it impossible to explain how and why qualitatively different actualities are produced. Preferring a machine ontology of the actual to an ontology derived from the virtual, this paper also engages with a new and emerging interpretation of Deleuze termed "differential heterogenesis," where externality is treated as it exists *between processes*.

§ ON DELEUZEAN EXTERNALITY: THE MECHANOSPHERE AND AUTOPOIESIS

Kleinherenbrink delineates how Deleuze's assertion in *Two Regimes of Madness*—that everything is a machine, whether it is "real, contrived or imaginary"[2]—illuminates that the machinic assemblage is infrastructural, wherefore it does not exercise a hierarchical circuitry of linealities and supervenience. Thus, Deleuze's "mechanic" does not describe a mechanical domain opposed to an organic, or non-mechanical one. Similarly, the organic domain ought not be set within a dialectic relation to the non-organ machine— the Deleuzean "thesis of machines is univocity, meaning that there is no biosphere or noosphere but everywhere the same Mechanosphere."[3]

Deleuze's mention of the Mechanosphere may remind the systems theory privy philosophical reader of Schelling's philosophy of identity, where nature is

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[2] Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness—Texts and Interviews 1975 - 1995*, trans. A. Hodges and M. Taormina, New York, Semiotext(e), 2006, p. 17.

[3] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. B. Massumi, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2005, p. 69.

conceived of as something that is neither *in us* nor *outside of us* but, instead, is that which actively abolishes subject-object dualism. Schelling's system proffers recursivity as a "self-contained whole"—this marks the philosophical crux of *organicism* as a foundation for thinking of an open system through meta-scalar self-organization, anticipating biological models such as Ilya Prigogine's dissipative system or Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana's autopoiesis. Within Schelling's philosophy of nature (which also informs contemporaneous models such as Yuk Hui's *organismic* conception of spatiality, a model that destabilizes the conception of our world as a closed and static material system), not only is each organism understood as "self-contained" but, also, always "influenced by other organisms" such that any "internal finality" affirms a structural "external finality."[4] Notably, geologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's technologically-rendered "noosphere" or environmentally-oriented models such as Lynn Margulis and James Lovelock's "artificial earth" (or "Gaia hypothesis") significantly diverge from Schelling's "general organism" insofar as Chardin, Margulis, and Lovelock are concerned with the cosmotechnical realization of a superorganism, whereas Schelling's conception of nature resists absolutization, postulated upon non-objective original productivity.

Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* emphasizes nature's resisting stasis and, therefore, is a precursor to contemporaneous biological organicism. Given Schelling's emphasis on an external force's giving form to nature's production, Schelling's work here engages, to some degree, with Hegel's departure from preformation towards immanent negativity. However, for Hegel nature is an object of observing reason from the outside, while Schelling's conception of nature renders it as pre-consciously sensed prior to becoming an object of reflection. Contra Schelling's emphasis on the external force giving form to the productive force in nature, with Hegel—who moves away from nature-as-preformation and re-introduces contingency in nature—formal actuality is met with the encounter of absolute necessity.[5] When determined as objective/artefactual, models such as Joseph Needham's proto-machinic organicism organize the attendant biology of the

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[4] Yuk Hui, *Recursivity and Contingency*, New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2019, p. 163.
[5] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. G. D. Giovanni, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 480-481.

noosphere to establish an ontic hierarchy that begins with cognitive technicity. In contrast, however, Deleuze's Mechanosphere, as well as his overall theory of machines, is fundamentally flat, discontinuous, and infrastructural, as Deleuzean externality is premised upon irreducibility.

In opposition to Platonism, or internalism—which results from the private depth of machines being irreducible to and unique in *kind* from their actualizations—our fundamental error of thinking, according to Deleuze, is to conflate the contiguity, identity, and resemblance characterizing actuality as also characterizing "things in themselves." Therefore, "every entity is *itself* a machine, in the sense of being a causally effective agent that makes its own difference in the world" where each entity has its own unique "complex inner working."[6] Unlike the approaches produced by systems theory and cybernetics (particularly second order cybernetics and the Shannon-Ashby informatic-constructivist treatment of information, which is predicated upon environmental adequation), Deleuze's externality necessarily cannot be reduced into exhaustive organic or biological relations, as external entities are not self-caused or "reducible to anything else," for "[e]verything must happen between entities themselves."[7] Rather than being positioned between the taut hold of discretization and irreducibility, Deleuze's image of reality invokes a tetravalent ontological structure where entities are involved in producing, altering, and destroying one another, resulting in genesis, endurance, alteration, and termination. In contrast to the mechanical-biological totality of a "general organ(ism)," these infra-interactive machines do not uphold geologic recollection that presents itself through relations or direct contact. Thus, Deleuzean machines are not representations (or "simulacra") and cannot be further reduced to discourse, power, relations, subjectivity, language, ideology and so on, but are "[a]s real as it gets."[8] Moving forward, let us examine how the actual, in Deleuze, serves as a representative limit upon the asymptotic processes of formation (i.e., stratification and destratification).

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[6] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity: Gilles Deleuze's Speculative Realism*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2019, p. 7.
[7] Ibid., p. 5.
[8] Ibid., p. 37.

§ RELATIONALITY

According to Quentin Meillassoux's thesis, the human-world relation is the sole relation to which we have direct access and this relationship mediates all of our thinking, such that cognition necessarily corresponds to being.[9] Correlationism is fundamental to the Kantian-Copernican thesis on finitude, where we can only know the world through our human-transcendental *a priori* intuitions and categories. Accordingly, despite Kantian correlationism concedes that we can never know of noumena, the "thing-in-itself," it also produce an identity-relation, contending that we *will know* (and can only know) the correlation between the "thing-in-itself" and ourselves, or the correlation between thought and being; this is the marker of Kant's *idealist* ontology. Securing the autonomy of being, Meillassoux rejoins Badiou's early attempt to forge an epistemological basis for a materialist ontology by pointing to kenotypic indices or pre-anthropomorphic scientific vestiges of ancestrality, such as the arche-fossil. Thereby, Meillassoux's speculative position is concerned with securing the subject's place before the absolute and establishing a presuppositionless science. Meillassoux underscores the strong correlationist's tacit endorsement of the possibility of things to be other than as they appear, a product of the duplicitous position stoked by the contingency of the thinking subject. Via the *principle of factiality* (i.e., the necessary contingency of every being), or the Principle of Unreason:

> "I maintain that I can attain a speculative materialism which clearly refutes correlationism. I can think an X independent of any thinking and I know this, thanks to the correlationist himself and his fight against the absolute. The principle of factiality unveils the ontological truth hidden beneath the radical skepticism of modern philosophy: to be is not to be a correlate, but to be a fact: to be is to be factual—and *this* is a not a fact."[10]

Accordingly, what Meillassoux terms the principle of factiality illuminates the necessary contingency of every being, which consequently "grounds the non-dogmatic, non-metaphysical Absolute in speculative materialism."[11] Meillassoux's conclusion on the in-itself's independent existence thus regards a derivation that

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[9] Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude—An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, trans. R. Brassier, London, Continuum, 2011.

[10] Quentin Meillassoux, "Time without Becoming," lecture at Middlesex University, London, 8 May 2008. Accessed at http://speculativeheresy.wordpress.com/resources/, p. 1 (22 April 2020).

[11] Daniel Sacilotto, *Saving the Noumenon*, 2020, ed. N. Brown, p. 86. (Manuscript in preparation.)

the virtual, or that which he elsewhere terms factiality, is necessarily posed against contingency, or pure potentiality. Thus, "[f]actiality stipulates that every intra-worldly law is itself contingent and thus possible of being otherwise."[12] Positively exploring forms of asubjective reality through utterly rational chaos, Meillassoux's chaosmos is not necessarily comprised of intractable knowledge, which is the case for Deleuze's chaosmos. Deleuze's chaosmos is the conception of irrational flux intractable to any determinate knowledge—the "in-between" of milieus before any progression is constituted, an intensive spatium which underlies individuation (i.e., the Body without Organs, etc.).[13] This is because, within Deleuze's system, every causal linear dynamic is embedded or implies the ground of intensity as pre-individual intensity, with the chaosmos the locus of the eternal return that is the internal identity of the world of displacement and reconstitution.[14] Meillassoux, on the other hand, finds his chaosmos of absolute contingency as designated by the semiotic order of the "meaningless sign," or what Meillassoux terms the "kenotype" (i.e., that which organizes the formal ideography of mathematical discourse).[15] This kenotype is posed against the "semantic" correlations in languages that pertain to the domain of sense (qualitative specificity) and, therefore, the subject's experiential world, tying Meillassoux, and his chaosmos, to a realist non-metaphysics. Despite the stark differences, Deleuze's machine ontology is also markedly *realist* and *speculative*, as entities are machines qua machines and stoked by incremental/differential heterogenesis—therefore, they are *not* involved in creating meaning "for us." It is explicitly in this sense that the ontological structure of Deleuze's machines are "progressively deduced from the externality thesis, instead of being empirically

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[12] Peter Gratton, *Speculative Realism: Problems and Prospects*, London, Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 106.

[13] Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 335.

[14] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 57, p. 199, p. 219, p. 299.

[15] "In that case, the kenotype would be nothing other than the concept of a sign considered as a mark, as a material and individual thing pending its designation [….] The kenotype would then be nothing more than a concept: the concept of 'a' that is instantiated by this or that material a." Quentin Meillassoux, "Iteration, Reiteration, Repetition: A Speculative Analysis of the Sign Devoid of Meaning," trans. R. Mackay and M. Gansen, in *Genealogies of Speculation: Materialism and Subjectivity Since Structuralism*, Bloomsbury, London, 2016, p. 167.

observed."[16]

The aforementioned reading(s) of Deleuze as a philosopher of the virtual draw upon defining features of the virtual realm as events, processes, intensities, or denizens that exist in mutual continuity up to the point of collectively comprising one "force." Articulating their expressions in terms of *actual experience*, however, shifts the focus of Deleuze's ontology from one that prioritizes the immaterial wellspring of multiplicities (i.e., the virtual) qua subtending material actualization and allocating spatial explication to a logic of separation and serialization qua relation-hood. With the introduction of "surfaces" in *The Logic of Sense*, we see that here, and in other later works, Deleuze replaces the notion of the virtual realm (where, between entities, there are categorical intensive differences vis-à-vis the virtual realm) with an ontology according to which entities, *themselves*, "are granted a private virtual *aspect*."[17] The reconceived virtual aspect constitutes a kind of *excess* over and above an entity's relations, which allows for Deleuze to account for change and interaction, "thus rendering the existence of a virtual realm to do such work superfluous."[18] Consequently, according to this reading of heterogeneity, the virtual is recounted as that which is decidedly non-machinic—continuous instead of discontinuous, intensive instead of extensive, and non-relational—while the machine is understood as a "minimum *real* unit." This is what Kleinherenbrink refers to as Deleuze's "second ontology," which is no longer premised on the notion of a single, universal difference that divides reality into a bifurcated virtual and actual realm but, instead, formulates an internal difference in kind between a virtual and actual *aspect*, which constitutes the ontological structure of all entities—this is a kind of *"internal difference,"* or a "difference" that is not exterior or superior to the thing.[19] In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze further bifurcates every object into two halves resembling one another, "one being a virtual image and the other an actual image" affected by "differentiation" which, "itself already has two aspects of its own" that "in turn

[16] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 11.

[17] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 36.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts—1953 - 1974*, trans. M. Taormina, New York, Semiotext(e), 2004, pp. 32-33.

has two aspects.[20]" Elsewhere, Deleuze further describes this division as consisting of an:

> "ideal half submerged in the virtual and constituted on the one hand by differential relations and on the other by corresponding singularities; an actual half constituted on the one hand by the qualities actualizing those relations and on the other by the parts actualizing those singularities."[21]

Accordingly, this "fourfold" world consists of a twofold virtual *depth* and a twofold *actual surface*, where distinction is carved along "unity of the multiple" in the "objective sense" and, on the other end, a "multiplicity 'of' one and a unity 'of' the multiple, but now in a subjective sense."[22] The virtual, irreducible, or "objective" aspect of every entity is, thus, one and multiple at the same time; contra the ontological structure of the actual, the (two) aspects of the virtual concern themselves with the non-relational being of a machine. If it is from Spinoza that Deleuze inherits Oneness (albeit sans divine connection) and from Leibniz the thesis of the multiple, it is via Husserl that Deleuze is interested in qualitative distinction re: objects demarcated from their semblance via subjective, relational, or actual encounters, events, or experiences (i.e., "distinguishing *this* from *that*").[23]

Grounding individual entities within processes, for Deleuze processes are not determined as continuous universals or understood via an underlying event existing "in addition to machines."[24] Deleuze's conception of process is tripartite: first, there is no transcendent factor that connects machines and, second, there is no distinction between man and nature. What both these factors demonstrate is that "process" evinces how machinic being "happens everywhere"; the most important aspect of the Deleuzean machinic process is that the process, itself, is not an "end in itself, nor must it be confused with an infinite perpetuation of itself."[25] This evidences that the schizo-process is not a continuous, universal, or

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[20] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 209-210.

[21] Ibid., pp. 279-290.

[22] Gilles Deleuze, *the Fold—Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. T. Conley, London, Continuum, 1993, p. 145.

[23] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 39.

[24] Ibid., p. 40.

[25] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, H.R. Lane, London, Bloomsbury, 2013, p. 15.

underlying event that exists *in addition to machinology*. In short, Deleuze's externality thesis states that all entities have an extra-relational aspect, a residue of excess and superfluity. Devoid of a universal background, externality is necessarily composed of a processes that consists of breaks and stops/cuts,[26] whereby permanence, emergence, production generation and change emerge as passive syntheses of time:

> "[t]hey describe how one entity relates to another (connection), how it manages to do so while remaining irreducible (disjunction), and how new entities are created (conjunction). They are 'temporal' because they account for how things happen; 'passive' because they are independent of memory, understanding will, recognition and consciousness; 'productive' because they account for the forging of relations; 'registrative' because they account for the alteration of individual essences; and 'consumptive' because they account for the birth and death of entities. These syntheses are not successive, but always 'overlap'….A human spotting a friend is a case of the three syntheses, but so is a meteor striking the moon, or my finger striking my keyboard."[27]

§ LEVI BRYANT'S TWOFOLD MACHINIC ONTOLOGY

While much of Bryant's work is premised on Deleuze's externality thesis, Bryant's ontology of "twofold machines" suggests that externality does not necessitate a fourfold latticework; according to Bryant's construction, entities are divided, as they "have their manifestations in relations to others, plus their non-relational interior constitution."[28] Bryant's *Difference and Givenness* outlines his fundamental "ontocology," which is formulated around the relational appearance of entities vis-à-vis other relations, as opposed to their private being.[29] Bryant's reading of Deleuze emphasizes Deleuze's critique of *presence*—the belief that the experience of an entity is identical to its Being—by showing how Deleuze disentangles *presentist* philosophical positions that reduce reality to thoughts concerning it. From transcendental idealism, "where the subject imposes form on the world," to absolute materialism, "where all is matter and configurations of atoms," and

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[26] Ibid., p. 26.

[27] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 41.

[28] Ibid., 42.

[29] Levi R. Bryant, *Difference and Givenness—Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology of Immanence*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 2008.

the realist position, "where the subject somehow immediately knows the world," all such epistemologies "assume the primacy of some form of presence."[30]

Bryant's externality thesis originally denied that any entity serves as the universal ground of another and, following both the anti-correlationist position and the object-oriented ontologist notion of withdrawal, Bryant maintained that no entity ever directly encounters the interiority of another being. While he was privy to terming entities as "objects," with his most recent book, *Onto-Cartography*, Bryant has utilized the differential entity as a means of characterizing manifestation as machinic. Prioritizing relation itself, Bryant's position does not present the "thing-in-manifestation" as reducible to subject-object internal conditions (e.g., the perceptual experience of a couch and its qualities). Instead, the "becoming" of a manifestation is related to connecting previously unconnected determinations, thereby compositing a "problem" (a concept that we will return to) qua actualization without a homologous representation.[31] Here, the manifestation of an entity is never a single, homogenous milieu or phenomenon but split between qualitative rhythms/processes, nested within its agentive material dimension, and the content of its experience.[32] This bifurcation delineates "the qualities characterizing an experience on the one hand, and on the other hand the unified thing—immanent to the relation—of which they are qualities."[33]

For Bryant, the interior being of a machine is fully determined by its powers. What, then, is to be said of the non-relational or private interior of entities? In accordance with Deleuze's terms, the interior being of a machine is necessarily unified with its multiplicity, preventing continuity and allotting identity (erecting

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[30] Ibid., p. 264.

[31] An example that Bryant provides is the process of learning to swim, recalling a favorite example of Deleuze: "I do not know what is of my body and what is of my water, which is why we can say of learning how to swim that it is a form of 'becoming-water' without *resembling* water. The consequence of this process of actualization through the posing of a problem is that the *illusion* is created where I experience these singularities of my body and the water as if they were always-already there, rather than a product of genesis in learning how to swim. A *new* body and water is generated in learning how to swim, but curiously it seems as if it were already there once I have learnt how to swim." Levi R. Bryant, "Deleuze's Infernal Book: Reflections on *Difference and Repetition*," *Deleuze and Guattari Studies*, vol. 14, is. 1, p. 23.

[32] Levi R. Bryant, *Onto-Cartography—An Ontology of Machines and Media*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2014, p. 96.

[33] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 45.

a kind of firewall between machines, a non-relational means of separation). According to our ontology of externality, we must account for the radical separation between machines: as a non-phenomenological treatment, or a non-relational unity, this means account for why *this* machine is unique from *that* machine, even when "*they* are not looking."[34] Deleuze's diverse world of experience is thus regarded not as a single, continuous, or homogenous mass but granted an *antecedent externality*.

As of 2016, Bryant has renounced the framework of object-oriented externality where entities are withdrawn from each other and considered as irreducible to relations. With the concept of the "folding-transformation" affirming that that which is discrete is a "fold" within a wider field, Bryant now underscores knots of locality along a single integrated continuum (i.e., the dynamic dimension and the ongoing activity of the "pleat"). Bryant thus remarks that "[b]odies are not discrete, but continuous with their worlds," meaning that they are continuous with one another.[35] Nonetheless, these folds are not subsumed by an all-subsuming Mechanosphere, a final entity. Instead, these folds involve a becoming something other, a fold-in-transformation (a tree is, therefore, not pieces of soil, rain, and animal life, but instead a folding-transformation of these things into bark, leaves, roots, and so on). By abdicating externality, Bryant exacts a withdrawal from the discrete entities populating Deleuze's pluralism towards something more so akin to an internalist monism. The externality thesis depends on entities, regardless of if they are different from one another, as existing in discontinuous isolation or being part of a single integrated continuum.[36] If

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[34] Ibid., 46.

[35] Levi R. Bryant, "For an Ethics of the Fold," trans. Frédéric Bisson, *Multitudes*, is. 65, 2016, http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2016/11/01/for-an-ethics-of-the-fold/ (English translation accessed on 4 February 2020), p. 2.

[36] Bryant's ontology of the pleated fold opts solely for the latter, the single integrated continuum. How, then, do entities fare within Bryant's single isolated continuum? Consider the following example: "[t]he tree in Albuquerque speaks to the remote history that created soil conditions, to industrial factories across the globe that contribute to air conditions, to volcanic eruptions in Iceland that deposit soot across the globe, to insects, and animals and other plants of all kinds that populate its branches, fertilize its flowers, and carry its seeds away. The tree appears to stand alone but pleats all of these things into it. The names of lovers carved into its trunk will influence the growth of its bark for years to come in incalculable ways, creating all sorts of unexpected patterns in the bark to come. The farsighted person—which we all are—can never fully discern the immense depths of what bodies implicate in pleating themselves from differences arising from

externality holds, "then entities are split between relational manifestations and their private being."[37] In short, externality evinces a strict discontinuity between interior being qua immediacy and interior being qua exigency.

§ EXTERNALITY AND THE ASSEMBLAGE: SOLITUDE

According to Deleuze, the assemblage has "only itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs."[38] Despite the relations that any media object may have with its semblance, for instance, these relations are demanded by externality and none of these connections to other entities fully designates its "being." This is a theme that Kleinherenbrink terms "solitude" and one which becomes pellucid in Deleuze's books on cinema—i.e., solitude structures the moving images that populate Deleuze's cinematography-cum-world. In the "movement-image," or the pre-World War II cinematic image, "vehicles or moving bodies" are understood as thoroughly relational—that is, they include actions, perceptions, and affections that hint at externality (or autonomy and materiality) but do not embrace it fully.[39] In the works of Hitchcock, for example, Deleuze recognizes that relations are always designated along external terms that constantly refuse their full implication. In the post-war "time-image," we see the enveloping of incompatible images, disjunct sounds, and, consequently, incompossible worlds that are—through editing—brought in-common, facilitating the touching of "an outside more distant than an exterior, and that of an inside deeper than any interior."[40] The cinematic (time-)image reconstitutes intensities in a pure state, bringing them into "a relationship of

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the texture of the world. The farsighted only see the tornado as a Euclidean point, overlooking its dyadic structure or all of the eddies of turbulence that had to conspire to bring the tornado into being. They see only the body or pleat that is close, overlooking the internal distance of the field that the tornado has interiorized in coming into being. Nor is it merely that there is first the field with all its texture, its eddies, its turbulence, its temperatures, and its barometric pressures and that then there is the tornado as an accomplished body. No. The tornado lives from its field over the duration of its existence and its ontological consistency dissipates when the field no longer favors these gaseous vortices." Ibid., p. 4.

[37] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 47.

[38] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 4.

[39] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1—The Movement Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, London, The Athlone Press, 1986, p. 23.

[40] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2—The Time Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. 261.

complementarity" such that "[t]here is no dualism at all," as these intensities indicate something "beyond" the signifier of pure representation.[41] It is from this very incommensurability, the inextricable Outside from which emerges cinema's confrontational thought, that we see inaugurated the possibility of the impossible, the "false image" which makes manifest a "private reality" or "virtuality of time."[42]

This inextricable Outside, as a functor of the thesis of externality manifest within the recording instrument of interpretation, transpires most markedly in drawing out observations derived from the past of lived experience(s). This is exactly why Deleuze agrees with Guattari on the importance of dreams; as the locus of recollection, "[d]reams have to be analyzed precisely because dreams […] are what is being passed through by intensities."[43] Insofar as this relates to cognizing, it is here that the triangulated Peircean relation of signs-to-denotata is processed through the "sensory motor schema," akin to the causally-connected mental plane of movement-images that evolve into "cine-thinking" via the freedom of thinking.[44] In order to further consider the constitution of meaning we can also turn to art that actively engages with the plane of presentation and exigent construction as, for example, in Marcel Duchamp's "Fountain" readymade, which:

> "does not need its 'R. Mutt' signature in order to exist, nor does L.H/O.O.Q. need the moustache added to Mona Lisa. The parts of an entity are always somewhat redundant, a complex notion [..., which] reveal(s) that objects have no natural place, function, or meaning. There is nothing external constituting their essence."[45]

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[41] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "Interview on Anti-Oedipus with Raymond Bellour (second meeting)" in *Gilles Deleuze: Letters and Other Texts*, ed. D. Lapoujade, trans. A. Hodges, South Pasadena, Semiotext(e), 2020, p. 226. This is perhaps most clear in Godard's cinema after (albeit somewhat during) his work in the Dziga Vertov Group, wherein Godard's cinema "unblocks images to this point" (of reconstituting intensities in a pure state) "even though images can be unblocked with a fixed shot [….] There is such an image/intensity relationship that at the same time, the image is the extension that an intensity takes when it dies; but a precipitation of images or a still image where things happen in all four corners; or a color goes through an image and restores the intensity completely through the image." Ibid.

[42] Alexander Galloway, *Laruelle: Against the Digital*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2016, p. 68.

[43] Gilles Deleuze et al., "Interview on Anti-Oedipus with Raymond Bellour (second meeting)," p. 226.

[44] Éric Alliez, "Midday, Midnight: The Emergence of Cine-Thinking" in *The Brain is The Screen*, ed. G. Flaxman, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, pp. 293-303.

[45] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 57.

Accordingly, the readymade teaches us that entities are obstinate assemblages and that all entities are, consequently, irreducible machines that function "smoothly with others if effort is spent in putting it to work."[46] That is, the "natural condition," which is pre-observational, is that of the straited space: it is the necessity of imposing a scientific system and/or systematic scale/measurement that mends any and all aforementioned entities within scientific unity. Nonetheless, this irreducibility does not necessitate an entity that exacts absolute rule or autocratic power—for were this the case, all entities would be self-identical and, thus, reducible to themselves. Deleuze's ecology of the assemblage, a synonym for machine, designates how any system emerges from relations between heterogenous parts. Deleuze's world of externality is one in which "no two grains of dust are absolutely identical, no two hands have the same distinctive points, no two typewriters have the same strike, no two revolvers score their bullets in the same manner."[47] This absolute refusal of internality necessitates that there be no principle frontier of passage between universal and particulars.[48] Externality require that there be a difference in kind between metaphysical surfaces and physical surfaces of each entity, such that all entities are spatially, temporally and mereologically irreducible.[49] Therefore, primary and secondary qualities, parts, functions, wholes, and predicates are brought into an ecology of relational aspects that always implies other entities' necessity.

Because the absolute Being of any entity is foreclosed from its disclosure qua human relation, Deleuze does not commit to an *epistemological realism*. As in the case of Hegel and Leibniz, Deleuze explicitly rejects the expression of totality within isolation, or what Deleuze terms an "orgiastic representation,"[50] where instead of subordinating discrete entities to discrete "bigger things," or larger assemblages, philosophy assimilates all things into a whole of which they are expressions or onto which they converge. In the case of Aristotelianism, for instance, *organic representation* presents itself in Aristotle's edict that "opposites alone

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 26.

[48] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. M. Lester, New York, Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 132.

[49] Ibid., p. 125.

[50] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. xv, p. 42.

cannot be present together."[51] For example, this absorption of a "womb" into "finite determination" transpires as the absorption of everything into the "infinitely large," as exemplified by Hegel, where "we have before us the alternating determination of the finite and the infinite; the finite is finite only with reference to the ought or the infinite, and the infinite is only infinite with reference to the finite. The two are inseparable and at the same time absolutely other with respect of each other."[52] Because Hegel cannot conceive of that which is finite in and of itself, Deleuze rejects Hegelianism for not granting entities their private reality outside of mediated relations (or synthesis).

According to Leibniz' monadology, monads are regarded as "neither substance nor accident" and "have no extension, no shape, and cannot be divided."[53] Despite this may appear, at first, to adhere to the terms of our externalist thesis, Leibniz explains diversity and change by positing that monads *do* have relational properties "that express all the others, so that each monad is a perpetual living mirror of the universe."[54] Leibniz' monadology conceives of absolute isolation in combination with total relationism, where each monad's Being partially comprises an expression of the world's totality—that is, external difference is premised on internal reality. Consequently, while Deleuze is clearly influenced by Leibniz, the fact that each monad entertains an internal relation with the entirety of the world leads Deleuze to reject Leibniz, as, following the logic of the monadology, reason is equated with representation. For Deleuze this is a fatal flaw and reifies the seductive pull of Platonism which he so adamantly resists, as "any given machine and every picture, drawing, description, or theorization is an irreducible entity with a private reality […] uncoupled and deterritorialized […] 'extra-relational.'"[55]

This is, also, precisely why Deleuze rejects the Sellarsian image of scientific

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[51] Aristotle, "Categories" in *The Complete Works of Aristotle—Volume 1*, trans. and ed. J. Barnes, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991, §5, 1056a14-1668, p. 143.

[52] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. and ed. G. di Giovanni, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 112-13.

[53] G.W. Leibniz, "The Principles of Philosophy, or, The Monadology" in *Philosophical Essays*, trans. and ed. R. Ariew and D. Garber, Cambridge, MA, Hackett, 1989, p. 3, §7.

[54] Ibid., p. 8, §56.

[55] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 74.

realism which treats phenomena as conditioned by transcendental subjectivity; Sellars' scientific image, unlike the norm-governed manifest image, is premised upon the elimination of all such normative notions from our descriptive and explanatory frameworks. For Kant, the laws of nature derive their status from pure understanding, which, through categorical unification, structures all that appears. Whereas Kantian noumena may, at first, seem to adopt to the externality thesis, the Kantian "thing in itself" is not only withdrawn from experience but also positioned within internalism, as all entities and relations in human experience can be reduced to universal relations with the transcendental subject and its categories. The transcendental materialist path of Sellars' "naturalized Kantianism" conceives of the possibility of avoiding metaphysical excess and skepticism without succumbing to the subjectalist temptation of absolutizing conditions of experience into the mechanisms of nature. For Sellars, sensory consciousness is the primary product of sensibility which, itself, is populated by sensations that are describable and that pose relations to the subject as modifications of statehood; they lack intentionality and must be distinguished from that which has intentionality (i.e., experiences and intuitions are composites). According to Sellars, if intuition has its own mode of productivity then the understanding has its own mode of receptivity because it must respond to "allotments" of sensibility.[56]

By instrumentalizing Deleuze's externality thesis, Kleinherenbrink attempts to counter Sellars' notion that, in addition to a manifest quotidian image of objects, we can also attain a "scientific image" that reveals them as they are in and of themselves. According to the externality thesis, this conceptualization of difference is apparently fundamentally flawed: "[o]n the one hand, it holds that all entities can be reduced to a final layer of ultimate elements (false depth). On the other hand, it simultaneously holds that these elements conform precisely to our models of them (false height)."[57] For Kleinherenbrink, this disharmony is partially due to a combination of pre-Socratism—for instance, Anaxagoras' idea that everything exists in a single mass of indistinguishable yet differentiable unity,

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[56] Wilfred Sellars, *Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes*, Atascadero, Ridgeview Publishing Company, 2017, p. 2.

[57] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 79.

or "homoiomerous" parts—and Kantianism, whereby entities are reduced to smaller elements but these elements and our experiences or descriptions of them harmoniously coincide. For Deleuze, externality demands we do away with this kind of difference; contra Sellars, Deleuze's conception of indeterminacy is not rooted "in a dialogue between thought and nature, but in a movement that engages the conditions for the continuous renewal of qualitative change and that bridges the gap between the determinate and indeterminate states of being."[58] Deleuze's conception of indeterminacy is located between the "Whole as the final ground of being or all-encompassing horizon, and the Subject as the principle that converts being into being-for-us [….] all the varieties of the real and the true find their place in a striated mental space, from the double point of view of Being and the Subject, under the direction of a 'universal method.'"[59]

Accordingly, the externality thesis relies upon the irreducible machine, which, at its core, denies the "image or the representation slipped into the machine" that always results in "the compromise."[60] To think Oedipally is to cognize in accordance to the readily reductive image of thought, whereby thinking representationally involves committing entities and their relations to reduced relations *with us*.

§ THE MACHINIC BODY

Recall that, according to Deleuze's philosophical system, the "actual" indicates assemblages as they are experienced by other machines while, conversely, the "virtual" denotes the extra-relational reality of machines. The fourfold system is the result of a further qualification resulting from the bifurcation of the actual/virtual with the One/multiple; as it concerns the non-relational unity of

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[58] Peter Gaffney, *The Force of the Virtual: Deleuze, Science, and Philosophy*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2010, p. 18.

[59] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 279. This does not seem like an entirely adequate rejoinder to Sellars, however, who can account for causality without theory-dependency; in fact, it elides Sellars' entire critical conception of normativity. Sellars considers norm-governed behavior as causally but not logically reducible to regularities and dispositions. Deleuze still remains affixed to explicating indeterminacy via the telos of representation-cum-determinacy vis-à-vis the primacy of identity.

[60] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Balance Sheet Program for Desiring-machines," *Semiotext(e)* is. 2, no. 3, 1977, p. 1222.

what Deleuze calls "the body," we are particularly interested in what remains external to relations between machines. Accordingly, "[a]s everything is a machine, so everything is a body."[61] We are not to understand bodies *as* physical, biological, psychic, social, or verbal machines (despite all these systems do *have* bodies) but, instead, understand that externality demands that all entities are formally identical in their having a body, where by "body" we mean "a transcendental unity, irreducible to relational dimensions such as history, possibilities, composition, empirical qualities, users, and functions."[62] Precisely due to the impossibility of full integration, these machines are "bodies without organs." This guarantees that no machine can become fully integrated in any one relation but that every machine, instead, is a site of protest, or "anti-production."[63] As Rancière remarks, by isolating the figure, we prevent it from becoming networked as an element within a circuit or serving as an idempotent and indexical resemblance of something else.[64]

The virtual body, for Deleuze, is never pronounced in actual relations, which is to say that it cannot be integrated into manifestations qua relations and, therefore, it is the virtual that is enveloped by its relations. Despite bodies are irreducible to relational manifestations, these relations, nevertheless, are how relations transpire vis-à-vis appearance. Therefore, despite being a closed vessel, the virtual twofold is not immune to the evental nature of the world.[65] Thus, on the one hand there are the "the virtuals that define the immanence of the transcendental field" and, on the other, "the possible forms that actualize them and transform them into something transcendent"[66]—it is, therefore, the process of actualization following the plane of the virtual that gives assemblages their particular reality.

Deleuze also renders the "problem" or the "problematic" as the dynamic state

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[61] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 87.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Gilles Deleuze, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 19.
[64] Jacques Rancière, "Existe-t-il une esthétique deleuzienne?' in *Gilles Deleuze, une vie philosophique*, ed. E. Alliez, Le Plessis-Robinson, Institut Synthélabo, 1998, pp. 525-536.
[65] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 97.
[66] Gilles Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life" in *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. A. Boyman, Brooklyn, Zone Books, 2005, p. 32.

of the world[67]—every entity is defined by "difference in kind from solutions; its transcendence in relation to the solutions that it engenders on the basis of its own determinant conditions; and its immanence in the solutions with cover it."[68] In a recent paper, Levi Bryant recalls Aristotle's choice example of an acorn becoming a tree: within this context, the Deleuzean "problem" not only refers to the genetic conditions of the acorn but also all the entangled ecological relations relating to the an environment around it—i.e., "soil conditions, plant and animal wildlife in the vicinity of the seed, altitude, humidity, the amount of sunlight the seed is exposed to, and so on."[69] As the acorn seed integrates these singularities and their entangled relations, a unique "solution" is produced as the acorn generates a tree that is distinct from all other trees. Deviation from normalcy is how modes of existence articulate themselves and, conversely, how externality and the body without organs guarantee that a multiplicity can never be reduced to the circumstances that this system proffers. As an articulation of the machinic nomad, "lines of flight" indicate how the body exacts sufficient reason for the possibility of breaking with current relations (e.g., the heart's removal, regardless of whether it results in an organism's death or other hostile possibilities). The nomad is wrapped within a double etymology referring to dividing, distributing, and allotting lands but also to roaming, roving, and wandering. Thus, to be a nomad is to never settle within a relation, a "*local absolute*, an absolute that is manifested locally."[70] Nomadic reality transpires as a "schizo-phrenia," an inverted mereotopology where private reality is prioritized over the relations between them.[71] Therefore, the schizophrenic machine is comprised of parts and elements of various pre-existing machines; "the schizophrenic is a functional machine making use of left-over elements that no longer function in any context and that will enter into relation with each other *precisely by having no relation*."[72]

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[67] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 280.

[68] Ibid., p. 179.

[69] Levi R. Bryant, "Deleuze's Infernal Book," p. 12. As Bryant underscores, we should also note that "development is not a finalistic process for Deleuze as in the case of Aristotle, but is ongoing over the entire existence of the thing; the problem never ceases to change and reconfigure itself." Ibid.

[70] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 382.

[71] Ibid., p. 34.

[72] Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, p. 18.

In the poet Henri Michaux's description of an alien table whose surface is disappearing, the "dehumanized table […] which lent itself to no function […] denying itself to service and communication alike," is likened to "something petrified" such as a "stalled engine."[73] In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze considers how Michaux's table is irreducible to any creator's intentions or to any functional status. Therefore, as in the mereological description, the table's components and relations are simply additions and not its "Being"—that is, they remain as external to relations. Michaux's unsettling table forces us to move beyond surfaces, recalling the body without organs as an alien table that serves as the instrument of unfamiliarity par excellence, resisting any mode or attempt of assimilation.

§ THE EXTERNALITY THESIS: NON-CONCEPTUAL IRREDUCIBILITY & RELATIONS BETWEEN BODIES

Italian philosopher and "new realism" architect Maurizio Ferraris pits Deleuze against postmodernist thought, which he also terms "social constructivism" or "realitism," a combination of de-objectification (that there exist no "things in themselves," solely human interpretations and activities), ironization, and desublimation. According to Ferraris, objects are *unamenable*—this does not mean that they cannot be changed but, instead, that an object cannot be reduced to its relation with another object. According to Ferraris, an object is as irreducible to a conceptual schema as it is to other objects and this is true for social objects as well as for physical objects. This is the fallacy of "being-knowledge," which Ferraris attributes to Kant, as for Ferraris we can have meaningful intuitions without concepts.[74] Furthermore, if any object is irreducible to how others currently relate to it, then it is possible to change both the object and our relations to it—accordingly, change and emancipation are always possible because objects are not restricted to their current givenness. Attributing "irrealism" to both the postmodern position and deconstruction, which serves as an "end in itself,"

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[73] Henri Michaux, *The Major Ordeals of the Mind*, trans. R. Howard, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974, pp. 125-127.
[74] Matteo Ferraris, *Goodbye, Kant!—What Still Stands of the Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. R. Davies, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2013.

Ferraris underscores the fallacy of "ascertainment-acceptance."[75] When Ferraris speaks of unamendability, he does not mean that which is undetermined—the thesis of unamendability demonstrates that an object is not an empty void that passively accepts human projections. Pitting realism against postmodernism, Ferraris' conception of objects is in how they resist interpretation and, therefore, have their own character.

The externality thesis warrants that a machine qua body can never be dissolved into the schemes by which it is encountered. Deleuze's bodies withdraw from becoming-present in relations, such that an entity is always irreducible to interpretation. Unlike Ferraris, Deleuze supplements observations—which point to the externality of entities, or to their unamendability—with an argument concerning *how* reality is comprised of irreducible entities. Ferraris, on the other hand, carves a distinction based on entities not as they exist "in themselves" but as they are conceptualized, setting this into opposition against how they are perceived. From the perspective of Deleuze's externality thesis and the irreducibility of machinic bodies, Ferraris' critique of Kant is insufficient to establish a realism of objects, as it "merely establishes that our experience of objects is a twofold of non-conceptual content supplemented by conceptual interpretation."[76]

Despite the externality thesis forbids direct contact between machines qua bodies, machines do undergo encounters through relation(s), or "syntheses." If relations are external to their terms, a connection between two multiplicities immediately generates something that exceeds them. These syntheses neither concern perceptions of objects nor human experience.[77] In the context of the machine ontology, to be what Deleuze calls a "body without organs," a "Figure," or a "problem" means to contextualize relations via neither a phenomenological nor an epistemological thesis. Syntheses are passive contemplations, pulling other (passive) entities into an (active) experience and, ontologically, all relations are expressed as a contraction. Therefore "every organism, in its receptive and

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[75] Matteo Ferraris, *Manifesto of New Realism*, trans. S. de Sanctis, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2014, p. 12, pp. 19-20, pp. 36-17, pp. 55-56.

[76] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 108.

[77] Ibid., p. 113.

perceptual elements, but also in its viscera, is a sum of contractions, of retentions and expectations," or protentions.[78] Thus, to be a multiplicity is to assemble other entities via contractions, proffering difference while also contracting each entity in turn (through repetition); thus the "problem" corresponds to the organization of differential relations and singularities. As the contractive relation provides for a connective synthesis, Deleuze also refers to it as the "libido" or "libidinal" (departing from the term as it is used by Jung and Freud); the libidinal connection is a "contraction in which machines that remain irreducible to each other are combined to the extent that a third machine unifies them in its experience."[79] As actuality transpires in the form of indirect contact (e.g., through sense or the event) and is relational, manifesting in the unity of machines. "Difference" is comprised of the virtual being fully absent from the actual—this is precisely how Deleuze theorizes of the radical distinction between "corporeal things and incorporeal events."[80]

At this point of distinction, one may be reminded of Bergson's inverted cone as a dynamic representation of regressive memory, which serves as highly instrumental for Deleuze's portraiture of non-chronological time. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze is working within a Kantian-Bergsonian hybrid register: *contraction is the first synthesis* (the present, habit); *retention is the second synthesis* (the past, the ground of memory); *expectation is the third synthesis* (the future, the death drive, or "need"). Expectation allots how something tends towards overcoming its own limit.[81] The *disjunctive synthesis*, as we will further underscore, is of a higher order, not easily reducible to the first, second, or third synthesis in Deleuze's synthesis of memory. The difference between foundation and ground is the difference between the present as the most contracted point of experience and the past as the totality of time implied in the present as a continuity between past and present. This recalls Kant's three syntheses of: i) apprehension (the synthesis, or "synopsis" of the present);[82] ii) memory (recollection "of the thought object and

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[78] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 73.

[79] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 137.

[80] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 23.

[81] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 73-74.

[82] Ibid., p. 135.

its recognition by a thinking subject" in the sense of the capacity to reproduce, i.e., the synthesis of reproduction);[83] iii) final recognition (knowledge, or the capacity to subordinate memory under concepts).[84] However, Deleuze undoes Kant's understanding as, for Deleuze, after memory one does not encounter judgment and recognition but, instead, something that breaks from representation, moving towards the production of the future—that is, "the process of prediction."[85] In place of Kantian knowledge, prediction or expectation facilitates Deleuze's synthesis of the future. Deleuze removes the Kantian conception of understanding from being the synthetic counterpart of the aesthetic in representation by demonstrating how, after memory, "larval subjects" produce novelty via the death drive or expectation. For Deleuze, memory is the whole past—that is, the ground; the present is thus the foundation because it is the most contracted point of the Bergsonian cone of the whole past.[86] More specifically, *because the past is continuous with the present*, the present is only the most contracted point of the past for Deleuze. Nonetheless, despite these three syntheses in *Difference and Repetition* do break with the Kantian transcendental syntheses, they also *coincide* with the tripartite Kantian framework, where Kant's intuition, imagination, and understanding correspond to Deleuze's *sentiendum* (or the being of the sensible), *memorandum* (recollection), and *cogitandum* (or *noeteon*, the Essence that is not yet intelligible).

Because each entity has a body from which it encounters other beings in the form of contractions according to its own characteristic style of being, every "soul" or "larval self" manifests according to habit. Deleuze's first synthesis, or the bare fact of relation —as a synthesis of production (producing an actualization of whatever it contracts, engendering a togetherness)—implies that contraction or contemplation defines all "our rhythms, our reserves, our reaction times […] the presents and fatigues of which we are composed."[87] Therefore, that which remains eternal to terms is the virtual aspect of machines, as machines are

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[83] Ibid., p. 191.

[84] Ibid, p. 192. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and eds. P Guyer and A Wood, Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

[85] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 226.

[86] Ibid., p. 217.

[87] Ibid., p. 74.

barred from body-to-body contact; there is a private depth, soul, or body without organs underlying the actualizations produced by way of contraction or contemplation and "[e]ach relation is a synthesis by which the virtual aspect of a body indirectly relates to an actual manifestation of other machines, the latter differing in kind from their respective virtuality."[88] The contraction's exacting accumulation illuminates what Deleuze (later) calls the "logic of the AND"[89]—consider the following relations: the grass contracting water and nutrients in the soil, the cow contracting the grass, the painter contracting the cow and meadow into a painting, the curator contracting various paintings into an exhibition, and so forth.[90] Occurring between fixed points and cutting across that which is "archaeological" and "teleological," or foundational and destinal, the transversal "logic of the AND" does away with static rudiments.[91] The "logic of the AND" demonstrates how machinic contact involves the connective and contiguous gathering of multitudes of other machines in actualized experiences, a connective tissue of communication between machines that occurs at the point of the in-between(s).

This brings us to the question of sense, by which Deleuze neither means apprehension nor sensation—here, sense is caught within an identity-relation to the event. Both sense and the event concern themselves with the same theory of *relations between machines*. This is demonstrated by how sense is something that must be *made to happen*, which is why Deleuze uses "event" as its synonym, as when Deleuze remarks that "the event is sense itself."[92] Contra affect theory's emphasis on perceived sensation, however, Deleuzean sense "constitutes an endless multiplicity of incorporeal beings"[93] and exacts an impenetrable and non-consumable frontier, facilitating a term of relations whereby the virtual (i.e., internal reality) is never confronted, as it remains external to all relations. Rather, the sense-event is an expression of the "proposition," or empty

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[88] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 118.

[89] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 46.

[90] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 119. Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 50.

[91] Miguel de Beistegui, "Deleuze and Guattari on the Rhizome" in *A Thousand Plateaus and Philosophy*, ed. H. Somers-Hall, J.A. Bell, J. Williams, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2018, p. 20.

[92] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 211.

[93] Ibid., p. 5.

givenness/extension.[94] While Deleuze's work on sense is undoubtedly influenced by Spinoza—after all, sense is a result of the transition from (non-)being/virtual into being-for—we can also accredit Husserl's notion of the *nouma* (or "real world," posed against *phenomena*, or the perception of the world) with how sense is realized not as it is reduced to an object's designation, or as that which experiences its expression, but, instead, as an "impassive and incorporeal entity, without physical or mental existence."[95] Thus, sense for Deleuze has absolutely nothing to do with the quality of the sensible given. As Kleinherenbrink reminds us, the "sense-event is not the redness, sweetness, and roundness of an apple, but rather the brute fact of that which is related to being the *apple*, which is a unified entity over and above its many qualities."[96] Not only is sense never expressible or representable, it is never equal to a function. Therefore, following Husserl's "noematic service" and Émile Brehier's conception of the "attribute," Deleuze's "sense" is purely a formal unity in actuality—an immanent function qua relation and purely attributed, or a "frontier."[97]

As every material object relates to a continual and endless material flow, we see how differentiation characterizes the "machine," which only encounters partial objects.[98] For Deleuze, the "partial object" is but another term for sense, as it manifests in and through relations, "a state of dispersion […] like the red clover and the bumble bee, the wasp and the orchid."[99] Accordingly, no machine ever encounters a void—due to the rule of contiguity and rupture, continuity of actuality functions as the "glue of the world," which is simply not the case for the virtual.[100] All entities are generated by other entities, which further generate other entities via encounters that are, thus, partial object-flow combinations. This is why Deleuze often refers to a "series," which is any number of actual manifestations of machines that are organized into parts and wholes within the contiguous experiences of another machine. Consider, for instance, how it is the

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[94] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 123.

[95] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 20.

[96] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 125.

[97] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 156; *Logic of Sense*, p. 91.

[98] Gilles Deleuze, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 50.

[99] Ibid., p. 368.

[100] Ibid., p. 134.

observer's position that necessarily stitches together partial-object flows or sense-events.

In Deleuze, the *event* does not necessarily designate the "sense-event"—the event can be designated along two planes: "real events on the level of the engendered solutions" and "ideal events embedded in the conditions of the problem."[101] Sense-events concern locality, or the plane of actuality, while "pure" or "ideal" events pertain to singularities, themselves, which means the virtual aspect of a machine-encounter. This can be opposed to Leibniz, for whom the "entelechy" of change come from the monad's own inner striving (i.e., "appetition"). In such a system, the virtual aspect of an assemblage does not change due to an encounter and, thus, actuality is ineffectual with regard to the virtual—this is precisely why, for Leibniz, the actual is barred from supervening upon the virtual. Unlike the monism of an unchanging ground, where the virtual would be trapped in its own unchanging eternity, Deleuze's *disjunctive synthesis* of becoming implies a counter-actualization, or a "becoming" of that which it was previously not. Ideal events are therefore productive and, unlike the shackles of monadology, prompt liberatory "intensities." Therefore, "to the extent that the pure event is each time imprisoned forever in its actualization counter-actualization liberates it."[102]

As Kleinherenbrink details, actuality is twofold. One on end, there is the "sense-event," "extension," the "partial object," or the "being-comprehended" of the machine; on the other side, there is also the "quality," "specificity," or the "flow of a machine." "The latter is always grafted on the former"[103] and, as per Deleuze's notion of "immanent transcendence," all actuality is immanent to specific relations. Let us scrutinize the actuality qua human-object relations—for instance, consider an ordinary table, where the "actual table" is an immanent object of transcendence because it is inside of one's experience. We can here draw a bricolage between Deleuze and Markus Gabriel's object-domain relation, which (despite it does not account for the quiddity of specific functions or identity and change) stages a relational ontology of "fields of sense." Consequently, there

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[101] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 189.
[102] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 161.
[103] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 135.

is no "bare existence" but only "determined existence," or "existence as *this* or *that*" wherein the "being-there of individuals or objects" is "below the threshold of further descriptive conditions."[104] This linkage requires that we determine the final aspect of the fourfold, the non-relational essence that supplements each body and makes it ontologically different from other machines. So far, as we have seen, a body without organs is simply the non-relational unity of a machine.

§ ONTOLOGICAL DISTINCTION(S): ON DESIRING MACHINES AND HETEROGENOUS BEING

If actualities do not figure into distinction, how do we distinguish *this* body from *that* body? For Deleuze, desire is what renders relational manifestations and, therefore, is defined in terms of power; desire is the virtual latent content empowering the manifest content of actuality—thus, the machine is a "desiring-machine."[105] The machine's desire is its private reality which cannot be directly experienced by anything else and is not empirically available nor is encountered and, therefore, is transcendental—machinic desire is what gives actuality to a machine without, itself, being such an actuality.[106]

Desire, much like the body without organs, belongs to the virtual aspect of entities[107] and indexes the unconscious relation of physics/physical relations through the aperture of *internal matter*. For, if the externality thesis holds, there is necessarily something about entities *outside* of such relations—i.e., an internality, which Deleuze defines as "[s]ubmolecular, unformed matter."[108] The virtual corresponds to *puissance*, a particular articulation of power that is non-relational and can be experienced and described indirectly. According to Aristotle, there is a distinct secondary understanding of potential equipollent to the many which is unique from the potential of the one; for Aristotle, "[…] so-called potentialities are potentialities either of acting merely or of being acted on, or of acting or being acted on *well*, so that even in the formulae of the latter the formulae of the prior

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[104] Markus Gabriel, *Fields of Sense*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2015, p. 61 (emphasis added).
[105] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Balance Sheet Program*, p. 132.
[106] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 149.
[107] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 106.
[108] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 503.

kinds of potentiality are somehow contained. Obviously, then, in a sense the potentiality of acting and of being acted on is one (for a thing may be capable either because it can be acted on or because something else can be acted on by it), but in a sense the potentialities are different."[109] Just as Aristotle recognized a sense in which *potential is one* and another in which *potential is many*, according to Deleuze's machine ontology, *potential is one* in the sense that it belongs to *this* entity and not to others but potential also is *many*, in the sense of being that which comprises the internal diversity of *this entity* while simultaneously being at the heart of the entire spectrum of this its actualizations.[110]

Drawing from Gilbert Simondon's notion of pre-individuality, which is neither reducible to chronology nor history—though not disparate from either— and directing this study towards topological space, rather than extensive space, Deleuze's interest in the virtual is in relation to the entity in-itself, or the entity as a meta-stable system of non-personal and a-conceptual singularities.[111] For Simondon, it was the transductivity of different modes qua objects in relation to one another that allows for the exigency of a prior virtuality to be brought into actuality—"[f]orms are passive in so far as they represent actuality; they become active when they organize in relation to this ground, thereby bringing prior virtualities into actuality."[112] For Simondon, this process is set through the causality and conditioning of structures inside an associated milieu which are determined by and, thus, determine the other structures of a technical being, "but each one for its own sake, while the technical milieu, which is determined separately by each structure, in turn determines them altogether."[113] In this recurrence of causality between the associated milieu and structures, recurrence is, thus, asymmetrical. The associated milieu is a techno-natural milieu that technical objects or structures create or project upon as their own primordial elemental ground. This associated milieu plays the role of information, as it is the

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[109] Aristotle, "Metaphysics: Book IX," trans. W.D. Ross, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle—Volume II*, ed. J. Barnes, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991, §1, 1046a19-1046a35, pp. 123-124.

[110] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 155.

[111] Ibid., p. 156.

[112] Gilbert Simondon, *On The Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, trans. C. Malaspina and J. Rogrove, Minneapolis, Univocal Press, 2017, p. 61.

[113] Ibid.

bed of self-regulations; the associated milieu is homeostatic and the structures determined by it are animated by non-recurrent causality, where each is associated with singularities (i.e., "each goes in its own direction" and all participate within an entangled homeostatic unity, "which acts as a vehicle for informed energy from one to the other and among all of them").[114] Just as Deleuze's second synthesis of memory is prefigured by the first synthesis of the present, Simondon's notion of "ground" (*fond*) is prefigured by originary technicity, where Simondon's "ground" corresponds "to the functions of totality that are independent of each application of technical gestures."[115] For Deleuze, as with Simondon, the individual and its individuation occur simultaneous, for "the individual can only be contemporaneous with its individuation."[116]

For Simondon, a recurrence of causality is set between an associated milieu and structures such that homeostasis is always conditioned, just as around an individual there remains a pre-individual reality associated with it and enabling it to communicate in the institution of the collective. Similarly, for Deleuze singularities are pre-individual because they are populated with intensive singularities, code, desire, or Idea, rather than with objects of experience.[117] Specifically, when Deleuze calls this potentiality the Idea—a pure virtuality that does not resemble its own actualizations—it is because he is describing "*the real with becoming actual, differentiated without being differentiated, and complete without being entire.*"[118] Due to the externality thesis, relations are external to terms and every machine has an excess that seeks an extra-relational "beyond"—therefore, excess is differentiated, as Deleuze's system is not one of machinic univocity but one where every machine is a multiplicity:

> "singular without being a unit of something and diverse without being a diversity
> of things [….] Desire is the private reality of entities and in this sense [….] internal

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[114] Ibid., p. 62

[115] Ibid., p. 171. Notably, however, Simondon also distinguishes a "figure" which compliments the "ground"; the "ground" corresponds to the functions of totality that are independent of each application of technical gestures, whereas the "figure," made of definite and particular schemas, specifies each technique as a manner of acting.

[116] Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands*, p. 86.

[117] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 171.

[118] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 214.

reality is a machine's matter, its substance, and its essence."[119]

Highlighting how Deleuze's virtual is necessarily defined as a strict *part* of the real object,[120] Kleinherenbrink departs from DeLanda's assertion that Deleuze is not a realist about essences; indeed, Deleuze refers to desire as an essence, a substance, and matter.[121] For Deleuze, following Husserl once more, essence refers not to a simple object of experience but to the body's internal reality, distinct from "sensible things" and "morphological," "nomadic" and "vagabond."[122]

The vagabond nature is that of the virtual's peculiar twofold property of "being *and* not being where they are, wherever they go"[123] and is explicitly designated because it is *intensive*, while an actuality is always *extensive* and, thus, articulated through precisely where and when it is, encountered in relations and nowhere else—"[m]y keyboard is beneath my hand and on my desk. A song is in a room. An organ is in an organism. Soldiers fight in wars and drones hover over weddings."[124] For Deleuze, the transcendental is not that of the Kantian subject or the Husserlian ego but understood as the virtual aspect of a machine, itself.[125]

Thus, no relation, human or non-human—including perception, description, art, science, myth, or mathematics—can attain the complex internal distribution of singularities or flow of desire that is immanent to a machine. Instead, these relations solely produce that which "generates a machine, that which a machine generates, or the actual qualities that it manifests."[126] This is all to say that the schizophrenia of reality is that everything is a machine that has its own internal reality (that is, an "essence") irreducible to its manifestations in relations, an extra-relational non-being that is indexed by the machine's having a body (otherwise termed a "problem," "figure," or "vessel") with powers ("desire," "singularities," "Idea," or "code"). Notably, while the "technical" and "social" aspect of machines

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[119] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 165.

[120] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 208-209.

[121] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 166.

[122] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 167.

[123] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 126.

[124] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, pp. 169-170.

[125] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 142.

[126] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 173.

concerns their actuality, "desire" is "molecular" and, therefore, it is opposed to social and technical machines, which are "molar." Due to the diffracted partiality of machinization, every machine is a "desiring-machine" in one sense, but also an organic, technical, or social machine in another sense, since "these are the same machines under determinate conditions."[127]

This is, in turn, contrary to how DeLanda's "assemblage theory" renders Deleuze, for DeLanda outpouches essence and denies that assemblages are reducible to their parts and environments, such that entities are always external to their relations.[128] DeLanda denies that internal essences (or the virtual) exist(s) while insisting upon irreducible individual entities (assemblages) that exist at all scales of reality. Emphasizing "dispositions," or the fully real (albeit contingent) "tendencies" and "capacities" of an assemblage, DeLanda's realist and internalist ontology seeks to determine how no entity can be reduced to its virtual relations (or "diagram") with other beings, as the "ontological status of any assemblage, inorganic, organic, or social, is that of a unique, singular, historically contingent individual."[129] Purely nominal in difference, by "tendencies," DeLanda means that which allows an assemblage to change what it is doing (e.g., water freezing as temperature drops) and by "capacities," he is referring to that which allows for new actualization (e.g., a plant's leaves becoming poisonous after one chews them).[130] Antithetical to essentialism, DeLanda counters the Aristotelian taxonomy that essentializes species and genera as, for DeLanda, an assemblage is defined by the full history of all that has featured its constitution, with a species understood as an "individual entity as unique and singular as the organisms that compose it, but larger scale individual entities of which organisms are component parts."[131]

Kleinherenbrink argues that we should avoid reading Deleuze's oeuvre from the perspective of the metaphysics proposed in *Difference and Repetition*, because Deleuze, rather than "positing supra-individual virtual structures" migrates

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[127] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 387.
[128] Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society—Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*, London, Bloomsbury, 2013, p. 4, p. 10.
[129] Ibid., p. 40, p. 10.
[130] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, pp. 175-176.
[131] Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, p. 40.

essences "into the interior of machines and shows why essence is malleable rather than fixed (which is his way of getting rid of 'classical' eternal essences)."[132] For DeLanda, the "diagram" is never actualized and there is nothing that makes one "diagram" distinct from another; DeLanda's "diagram" it is a stable virtual structure and, thus, there are solely sets of universal singularities determining possibilities. This is why, for DeLanda, there can never be bodies without organs and why Kleinherenbrink is justified in his charge that DeLanda conflates epistemological heuristics for ontological realities, inadvertently reintroducing a "Platonic heaven" of essences through the ideally continuous cosmic virtual plane that breaks into segments despite being deprived of any theory of identity or origination. As Kleinherenbrink notes:

> "DeLanda also claims that, for example, hunter-gatherer societies always already contained a prefigured state in their possibility space. But if the cosmic plane already contains all possibilities *and* if it is how the world 'first' begins, then why did everything not just come into existence from the get-go? Or why in this order and not in another? And why is it experiencing itself *as if* it is discrete identities?"[133]

The phenomenologist response to DeLanda, launched by critics such as John Hughes and Daniel W. Smith who read Deleuze's project as a continuation of Kantian and phenomenological projects, has been to respond that DeLanda's account is incorrect because Deleuze is accounting for a genesis of representation and not the *things* themselves. DeLanda, who provides a rigorous naturalist/realist/materialist reading of Deleuze, would respond that Deleuze intends, in fact, to account for *things* themselves, regardless of whether there is anyone to represent them or not. For instance, the genesis of a rock takes place regardless of whether any living beings exist or whether anyone is there to represent it.[134] Admittedly, DeLanda's assemblage posits a realism for all entities regardless of type/scale, grants assemblages an initial real causal efficacy, roots assemblages in historical production (rather than transcendent structures), retains that assemblages have mind-independent reality, intricately accounts for the formation of distinct cellular and genetic processes, and regards human-object

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132 Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 179.
133 Ibid., p. 181.
134 Levi R. Bryant, "Deleuze's Infernal Book," p. 8.

relations as ontologically equal to object-object relations.[135] However, in order to avoid conceiving of assemblages as illusory perspectives produced by and located on an intensive virtual realm which exists in a wholly unified and continuous form within a supervenient and immanent eternal present, we must rectify an externality thesis. This is what Deleuze's machine ontology grants us that DeLanda's internalist ontology of the assemblage does not.

§ ON ENTITIES AFFECTING ONE ANOTHER

In introducing the *disjunctive synthesis*, which details how relations are entangled within "becoming," let us recall how Deleuze notes that "[t]he first synthesis, that of habit, is truly the foundation of time; but we must distinguish the foundation from the ground."[136] As we earlier noted, contraction is the first synthesis (the present, habit) and memory corresponds to the past (ground, retention). Despite "[v]irtual objects" are "shreds of pure past"[137] and are therefore non-relational, this does not mean that real internal singularities or properties are ascribed solely to the past but merely that a "power" or "Idea" is never available to the present for another machine. Therefore, "past" means something acting/working upon a relation while not entering into it and indicates that which must have been produced previously.

The disjunctive synthesis comes with a forewarning: "the only danger in all this is that the virtual could be confused with the possible."[138] Notably, this is because the "possible" is that which is not yet real—the nature of the virtual twofold means that it is the real internal matter, or "Idea," of an entity, which is fully real and therefore not possible. Thus, "the possible has no reality (although it may have an actuality); conversely the virtual is not actual, but *as such possesses a* reality."[139] Possibility, in being the possibility of an *action*, indexes another entity—if virtual essences were possibility, it would necessarily refer to another entity, which would mean it is relational, representational, internalist, and reducible. This is not the case, however, because Deleuze's possibilities do not

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[135] Manuel DeLanda, *Assemblage theory*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2016.
[136] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 187.
[137] Ibid., p. 101.
[138] Ibid., p. 211; *Desert Islands*, p. 101.
[139] Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, New York, Zone Books, 1991, p. 96.

demonstrate the being of things themselves, which is at the root of every disjunction, as the virtual essence of a machine is a *cause*, allowing machines the possibility of undergoing specific encounters/genesis. For Deleuze, essences function as the ground for events.

To produce is, once more, to produce via a fourfold: the machine, with a body without organs and singularities, can only be encountered in terms of partial objects alongside qualified sense-events. This means that "being-produced" by other machines necessitates using other machines as parts, implicating them and comprehending them in turn. All contact is indirect and, while a machine undergoes a connection, contracting machines into an encounter, it also undergoes variation in its own internal matter which grounds this connection. A new connective synthesis is made possible between these and other machines. This is how the "logic of the AND" is intensified and stratified, how a body without organs gains and/or alters its own matter by appropriating other entities. Therefore, the contact of contraction is comprised of the "attraction-machine" which co-exists alongside the "repulsion-machine," creating the "paranoiac machine"[140] that eludes all other systems, prompting a circuit of co-generation between matter and desire.

Because machinic fourfolds are produced by machines, an encounter*ed* machine partakes in the generation of the encounter*ing* machine's capacities when the latter comprehends/contracts the former. In the example of a swimmer's "influence" with the body of water that they are swimming in, there is no "*connective* influence" on how the swimmer experiences the water while, at the same time, there is a "*disjunctive* influence":

> "The movement of the swimmer does not resemble that of the wave, in particular [....] there is no ideo-motivity, only sensory-motivity. When a body combines some of its own distinctive points with those of a wave, it espouses the principle of a repetition which is no longer that of the Same, but involves the Other—involves difference, from one wave and one gesture to another, and carries that difference through the repetitive space thereby constituted. To learn is indeed to constitute this space of an encounter with signs, in which the distinctive points renew

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[140] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 23.

themselves in each other, and repetition takes shape while disguising itself."[141]

The virtual water does not influence the swimmer's encounter, rather it is the swimmer's "code" which determines the encounter. Nonetheless, the virtual (water) can influence this code by becoming one of its generators (i.e., an indirect disjunctive recording). In contracting the ocean's waves into experience, they—the water, the waves—become a part of the swimmer, and every "part" of the swimmer can possibly alter its singularities. This is why the waves have a "say" in how they are experienced by the swimmer's body, because "[b]y contracting the waves of the ocean into experience they become a part of me, and any part of me has a shot at altering my singularities."[142]

This recalls the process of constructing a virtual object through difference and repetition, whereby the virtual object governs and compensates for progress and failure in regards to activity, as in the example of the wasp and the orchid. Such examples presupposes two entities encountering one another, co-constituting each other through connective and disjunctive syntheses, chains of capture extracting surplus value and attraction.[143] Therefore, internal chains of code are synthesized through the encounter as virtual content is co-determined during the recording process (*enregistrement*). As such, "the recording is an outside-inside, an enveloping limit, 'outside' because it brings in a surface of exteriority on which the results are transcribed, 'inside' because it is a constitutive part of the machine and regulates the process of production."[144] The event is inscribed within the incorporeal facet of flesh and body, with connective synthesis canceling difference by bringing entities within a contiguous actuality and disjunctive

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[141] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 23.

[142] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 197.

[143] "And we have doubtless been able to present things in a logical order where the disjunctive synthesis of recording seemed to follow after the connective synthesis of production, with a part of the energy of production (Libido) being converted into a recording energy (Numen). But in fact, from the standpoint of the machine itself, there is no succession that ensures the strict coexistence of the chains and the flows, as well as of the body without organs and the partial objects. The conversion of a portion of the energy does not occur at a given moment, but is a preliminary and constant condition of the system. The chain is the network of included disjunctions on the body without organs, inasmuch as these disjunctions resect the productive connections; the chain causes them to pass over to the body without organs itself, thereby channeling or 'codifying' the flows. However, the whole question is in knowing whether one can speak of a code at the level of this molecular chain of desire." Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 327.

[144] Gilles Deleuze, "Letter to Félix Guattari (07/29/1969)," in *Letters and Other Texts*, p. 40.

synthesis prompting material affect. As Deleuze remarks, "[w]e learn nothing from those who say: 'Do as I do'. Our only teachers are those who tell us to 'do with me', and are able to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce."[145]

A third encountering machine of the *other*, or difference/heterogeneity, is thus formulated that partakes in characterizing the event. This is related to what Deleuze terms the procedure of "vice-diction,"[146] where correlative genesis intervenes and conditions the determination and conditions of singularities. On the question of relation, thus, we can agree with Kleinherenbrink that "the relation between Idea and problematic body remains indirect, as there must always be a generator to provide the latter with the former."[147]

§ DELEUZE'S DIFFERENTIAL RELATIONS: A GRADIENT OF CHANGE

Despite Harman often reproaches Deleuze as he is sometimes understood (that is, for reducing objects to a basic stratum of reality), there are arguably a number of similarities between Deleuze and Harman, insofar as both theorists posit all object-entities as the basic constituents of reality and that these entities' ontological structure is comprised of a fourfold.[148] Drawing from Heidegger's tool analysis in *Being and Time*, which describes the object's becoming a "thing" due to its breakage (which undergirds "thing theory),[149] Harman is concerned with an object's ceasing to be embedded in the context within which it normally functions (e.g., a broken hammer in a carpenter's workshop). It is only after such a tool no longer operates within a wider system of equipment that its relations are severed with its wider relation, revealing an extra-relational function despite the object continues retaining its original ontic object-hood. Accordingly, the extra-relational function becomes:

> "not part of *our* experience of objects, but of objects themselves [….] For this
> ontologization of extra-relationality, he [Harman] relies on the same argument as
> Deleuze [….] If entities are nothing but their relations to other entities, then it is

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[145] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 23.
[146] Ibid., p. 189.
[147] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 200.
[148] Graham Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, Winchester, Zero Books, 2011, p. 107.
[149] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Stambaugh, Albany, State University of New York Press.

> unintelligible how anything can ever change as everything that anything could be would be exhausted in its current givenness."[150]

Consider the wholly immanent and unified object of givenness, stilted upon relational presence that Deleuze calls the "partial object." Harman refers to this as a "Sensual Object." There is also confluence between Harman and Deleuze on how change occurs as a new entity is forged from an already existing entity through alteration. Harman's "vicarious causation" bars direct influence between entities/manifest qualities,[151] just as Deleuze's externality thesis precludes an encounter between the private interiors (virtual spheres) of machines. Not only are these manifest qualities regarded as *other* than the real qualities harbored by some private interior but, in the case of alteration or generation, if there is a change in an entity's interior being it is because manifest qualities generate or alter existing "real qualities." This is commensurable with Deleuze's notion of disjunctive synthesis.

Thus, both Harman and Deleuze hold that entities, among themselves, necessarily account for the generation of new beings, with everyday assemblages involved in the constitution of real qualities/singularities of new assemblages. However, as Kleinherenbrink prudently qualifies:

> "Harman's and Deleuze's philosophies are at odds when it comes to their respective accounts of *when* change can occur. For Harman as for Deleuze, the dyad of real qualities (Deleuze's singularities) and real object (Deleuze's body) in an entity constitutes a malleable essence. Yet for Harman, the alteration of an essence due to an entity's encounters with others is either drastic or nil."[152]

Unlike Deleuze's gradient of change, for Harman alteration is a zero-sum game of drastic transformation or gridlock, after which change is barred. Therefore, Harman's necessitarian conception of stochastic transformation is accompanied by a subsequent non-initial theory of immunity. Harman's ontological argument for change maintains that change is only possible in a finite number of occasions and, in such instances, transpires in an extreme sense.

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[150] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 201.
[151] Graham Harman, "On Vicarious Causation" in *Collapse II*, Urbanomic, Falmouth, 2012, pp. 171-206.
[152] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 202.

This brings us to the fundamental distinction between Deleuze's machine ontology and Harman's object-oriented ontology. Harman's account of change seeks to refute that: 1) entities are unchangeable; 2) entities are in a constant flux of becoming.[153] While the first step simply accounts for a theory of change, the second stipulation draws from Harman's reasoning that if entities can always be altered to encounters, this reduces all entities to relationhood. Nonetheless, for Deleuze, "powers" or "singularities" are distinct in kind and type from those actualities generating them, which means that it is impossible to *dissolve* an entity into its relations. According to the externality thesis, rather than being determined by relations, it is the contingent encounter with which a machine is confronted with—and the manner in which current singularities resonate with these contingent encounters—that the force exercised by real qualities of surrounding entities undergoes change.

Recall how Simondon's understanding of pre-individual funds designates an accumulation of factors underlying actuality's genesis. For Simondon, there is a "quantic" and historic element to the material combination of technical devices and "one grasps all at once and in actuality what is progressively constructed, what is slowly and successively elaborated; the idea of progress, or rather what is mythical about it, comes from this illusion of simultaneity, which presents as a fixed state what is merely a stage."[154] Simondon underscores how change is not stochastic and a zero-sum, despite it may appear to present itself as such in how we illusively grasp it. Similarly, Deleuze's reworked metaphysics applies distinctly to variable quantities than individuals; specifically, differential relations (e.g., dx/dy) do not hold between *individuals*, but, instead, between variable quantities (i.e., x and y). Despite these variables may correspond to quantities of individuals, they can also equally correspond to velocities, spatial orientations, temperatures, and ranges of freedom characteristic of dynamic systems.[155]

Harman does not consider how differential relations can be constitutive of the virtual and how this differs from causal interactions—instead, he collapses this

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[153] Ibid., p. 204.
[154] Gilbert Simondon, *On The Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, p. 122.
[155] Peter Wolfendale, *Object Oriented Philosophy: The Noumenon's New Clothes*, Falmouth, Urbanomic, 2014, p. 173.

distinction. As Peter Wolfendale rightly notes, Harman fails to consider the nature of "pre-individual relationality" and how the differential relations that Deleuze (and DeLanda) take to be constitutive of the virtual may differ from the relations or, more accurately, the causal interactions, that Harman deals with exclusively. That is, Harman elides engaging in the metaphysics of relations and the question over whether (differential) relations should be given priority over individuals by treating "the *attractors* (or singularities) that populate the *vector field* (or multiplicity) which is generated by the relevant differential relations as individuals that can be unproblematically separated from these relations, as if they were discrete components out of which the vector field was constructed, rather than topologically invariant features of a continuous curve."[156] Therefore, Harman solely preoccupies himself with the alteration of essence-change vis-à-vis whether causation does or does not occur.

According to Deleuze's disjunctive synthesis, entities are endowed with a gradient or register of "receptivity"[157] upon which traces of encounters (regarding internal matters of alteration) record themselves, resulting in the "change that is substance itself,"[158] or the rhizome's *becoming*. However, despite the misinterpretation by so-called "affect theorists," Deleuze's theory of becoming is not, in fact, localizable in sensation or that which one "feels." Amongst other examples, we can see why this misconception could arise from a literal reading of *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, where Deleuze writes about "becoming" in terms of feeling—for instance when he mentions the schizophrenic Judge Schreber's "feeling" of becoming-woman.[159] However, Deleuze enumerates that the "I feel" of becoming has nothing to do with sensible qualities,[160] employing it as a technical concept that concerns a machine's *puissance* which, being transcendental, is never available to human feeling or any type of direct access. The "I feel" of becoming is an indirect awareness of desire's ongoing nature.[161]

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[156] Ibid., p. 174.

[157] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 74.

[158] Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 36.

[159] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 26, p. 141, p. 289.

[160] Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands*, p. 238.

[161] This is also the case in Jean-Louis Schefer's account of "affect," which influenced Deleuze. Schefer remarks that: "[f]or those new appearances – in which we must sometimes accommodate partial objects in

Becoming, accompanied by exact material change, is perfectly real—rather than imaginary—and, therefore, it is recorded. Hence, Deleuze remarks that "the eternal truth of the event is grasped only if the event is also inscribed in the flesh."[162] For Deleuze, disjunctive synthesis is denoted by the "Numen," the "energy of disjunctive inscription"[163] that, in the absence of a divine will, omniscient God, or sovereign subject, allows entities to do the "work traditionally assigned to an exceptional agent."[164] According to Deleuze's machine ontology, "the sole thing that is divine is the nature of an energy of disjunctions," as in the ability of a phenomena to be dissolved into its recorded elements.[165] In the example of Judge's Schreber's delirium, Deleuze quotes Freud's notes on identification being followed by division, as "[p]aranoia decomposes just as hysteria condenses. Or, rather paranoia resolves once more into their elements the products of the condensations and identifications which are effected in the unconscious."[166] While hysterical neurosis "comes first," disjunctions appear "as a result of the projection of a more basic, primordial condensed material."[167] Thus, neurosis is "recorded" via the genealogies of desiring-production—i.e., "intensive quantities" that fluidly appear in singular events over time—rather than relapsing into Oedipal triangulation, which is just the domestication of intractable desiring-content. This is precisely why Deleuze contrasts "traditional oedipalization and schizophrenization, the only liberating one because in the schizo there is something like a universal producer."[168]

However, Deleuze's disjunctive synthesis is by no means a Heraclitan thesis of eternal flux where everything is in constant and significant change. The virtual twofold of body and desire is immersed within the active unity of interior change,

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order to grasp them, and whose full form and reference we always misapprehend – are affects." Jean-Louis Schefer, *The Ordinary Man of Cinema*, trans. M. Cavitch, N. Wedell, P. Grant, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2016, p. 210.

[162] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 161.

[163] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 24.

[164] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 207.

[165] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 24-25.

[166] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 13. Sigmund Freud, *Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoi*a, trans. J Strachey, Freiburg, White Press, 2014, p. 49.

[167] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 13.

[168] Gilles Deleuze, "Letter to Michel Foucault" in *Letters and Other Texts*, p. 69.

with its unconscious "factory" immersed in the process of both being the ground for generation and being generated, itself.[169] Consequently, considering Deleuze's aforementioned gradient, there *is* a necessary difference in kind between virtuality and actuality. Therefore, any machine encounter's "plurality of forces acting and being affected" occur at a "distance, distance being the differential element included in each force and by which each is related to others."[170] Such is the theory of differential heterogenesis, where the becoming of the *a priori* is linked to a mathematical description of the emergence and creation of forms. Beginning with *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuzean difference is not subordinated to an opposition between identity and distinctness (as in Harman's account of change), which allows Deleuze to map a consistent account of heterogeneous continuity. Indeed, differential heterogenesis is highly related to the significance of differential calculus and the differential relations that it describes, wherein mathematical curves present the exemplary case of continuous heterogeneity, or difference that is not understood in terms of a prior discreteness. Without any need for stabilization, differential heterogenesis offers a "first referring system" for heterogenic flow that allows the emergence of the semiotic function from dynamic evolution without the need of any stabilization; as applied to fields such as semantics, this allows for a methodology opposite to the classical case of structural morphodynamics.[171] Accordingly, conditions are not given, *a priori*, within a definitive set of possibilities, allowing for us to account for the historical variation of phase space and the set of all possible trajectories. Rather than being limited to mapping already possible trajectories, all machine-cum-rhizomes are irreducible entities where any "*homogenous system*" is necessarily "*already affected by a regulated, continuous, immanent process of variation*"[172] that contracts virtuality into a differential relation of manifestation. This relates to the virtual twofold of body and desire, which is always involved in an active unity of interior change, a product of a machine's encounter with other machines—note, however, that

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[169] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 90.

[170] Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. H. Tomlinson, New York, Columbia University Press, 2006, p. 208.

[171] Alessandro Sarti, Giovanna Citti, and David Piotrowski, "Differential heterogenesis and the emergence of semiotic function," *Semiotica*, no. 230, 2019, pp. 1-34.

[172] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 103.

these relations are always "at a distance" due to a difference in kind between virtuality and actuality.

Returning to the distinction between technical and social machines, technical machines are defined extrinsically for they deal with being comprehended by other machines. Every machine is both technical and social—these categories indicate a difference in "regime" and not "kind."[173] The social machine fashions the memory, or reproductive process, which allows for synergy with technical machines. They both "point to the social machines that condition and organize them, but also limit and inhibit their development."[174] Social machines "intervene" or "repress" by contracting otherwise disparate entities together, as the comprehension of a machine is necessarily determined by the capacities of the machine "doing" the comprehending.[175] In the example of a table, for instance, the table can be considered a social machine "for its parts," bringing chairs and placements together into a functional assemblage—in this example, the "social machine" is predicated upon being comprehended by physical components that will be determined through use-value. Simultaneously, the table, placemats, kitchenware, and so on also comprise the "technical machine," which enacts a sort of ecologization-affect, creating an enclosure or limit condition upon which an observer considers these all as part of a unified (technical) system. It is the contraction by a third machine, the human observer, that these two machines are brought together.

In the event that we examine a large (macro-)multiplicity, such as a nation-state, we can readily observe how they are "made up not only of people but also of wood, fields, gardens, animals, and commodities"[176]; similarly, "in another example, a cavalryman is comprised of (among other things) a man, a horse, and a stirrup."[177] Both the nation-state and the cavalryman are constituted within a temporal course of existence and a shape of "becoming" that is mostly determined by the social machine, which instrumentalizes such structures as a

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[173] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 46. Gilles Deleuze et al., "Balance Sheet Program," p. 130.

[174] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 165.

[175] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 209.

[176] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 385.

[177] Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, New York, Columbia University Press, 1987, p. 69.

technical machine. Thus, as entities became functionaries of another assemblage, such limit conditions create boundaries and patterns of manifestations. These specific contingent encounters, despite their bodily irreducibility and excessive desire, bar assemblages from either connecting, contracting, or retaining relations arbitrarily. It is, in fact, the trace or "code" that remains in minor machines that, after contractions or retentions, continue to function. Because actuality is contiguous and denies full integration, or being-for-the-other, actual presents are consolidated contracts metamorphizing into pure pasts that are distinct in kind from those presents, permeated by an "active forgetting."[178] Therefore, this genealogical process of forgetfulness is a fundamental feature of reality which guarantees that "*becoming is an antimemory*."[179] Thoroughly relational, the history of any entity is a record of how other assemblages manifest according to it and how the machine transpires according to others—becoming "cannot be reduced to anything that has become" just as "[b]ecoming is not what it becomes."[180] Becoming is a "transmutation"[181] where the contraction of actual presentations is transferred into virtual content—this is why we never have visible access to seeing the manifest relation in itself, because "everything changes in nature as it climbs to the surface."[182] Contra relationism, where radically new entities supervene upon any new spatio-temporal moment, Deleuze's machine ontology designates change in nature as reiterating how actualized virtuality or contracted actuality designates that a source never resembles its result.[183]

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[178] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 55.

[179] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 294.

[180] Gilles Deleuze, *What is Grounding?*, trans. Arjen Kleinherenbrink, Grand Rapids, &&& Publishing, 2015, pp. 82-83.

[181] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 8.

[182] Ibid., p. 175.

[183] This is by no means to suggest that becoming can escape from the Spinozist determinism that Deleuze inherits. On the contrary, every body is "born not only of determined elements […] it is born into a determined setting, which is like a mother suited for its reproduction." Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 272. This setting is a milieu that Deleuze frequently refers to as a "dark precursor" because these determinations are absent from the sense-events that it creates and from the machines that spring forth through conjunction, which we will further detail. For Deleuze, the production of any relation "affirms necessity" and combines all elements of chance. While Deleuze describes the sense-event's actualizations as "aleatory," this is simply due to its virtual properties, which do not imply specific actualities and differ from their manifestations/causal schema. Where a point of contact may be "aleatory" between two machines, the third machine ungrounds the two former machines through the synthesis of conjunction.

Intensity designates the internal matter of multiplicities. According to the externality thesis, we ought not conflate the ontological structure of entities with existential challenges—"[p]recisely because of ontological equality, things are unequal in their existence."[184] This existential difference, a pure difference, is why Deleuze attributes intensities with indivisibility and the *puissance* of an entity. Much like singularities, Deleuze terms intensities as "not the sensible but the being *of* the sensible."[185] Detailing how intensity becomes individuated and actualized into the forms of space and time without relapsing into idealism, Deleuze re-inscribes Bergson's metaphysics of becoming in the context of a reworked transcendental philosophy. Thus emerges an *empiricist* inversion of Kant's account of synthesis and the faculties, in which the aesthetic and cognitive powers of the subject become the engines of ontogenesis, directly generating these forms of space and time. Because intensities are always transcendental and virtual entities—"whether or not one machine manages to alter another depends on the intensity of their encounter"[186]—they are enveloped by extensity, which *is* divisible and is expressed in "basic spatio-temporal dynamisms."[187]

We have described the "tetravalence of the assemblage,"[188] including: 1) the body ("Figure," "problem," "plane of consistency"); 2) desire ("code," *puissance*," "powers," "potential," "Idea," "singularities"); 3) sense ("sense-event," "partial object"); 4) qualities ("flow"). We have also described the twofold virtual essence formed through the body and its desire alongside the "sense-event" and its qualities, which form the twofold *actual* manifestation.

Through the *connective synthesis* ("habit," "contemplation," "contraction," "production") we have described a relation—the combination of rupture and continuity—that brings irreconcilable machines together within the "actual plane" of existence vis-à-vis other machines. In addition to the *connective synthesis* we have also detailed the *disjunctive synthesis* ("recording," "registration,"

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[184] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 215.

[185] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 267.

[186] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 215.

[187] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 245. Since different entities have different "Ideas" not every machine can connect to others and not all machines can undergo all encounters; in turn, not every machine can register the existence of others, and so on.

[188] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 89.

"inscription) which illuminates that which a relation is determined by or rooted in—that is, the essence of the assemblage, an internal matter of a machine that is malleable and undergoing inscription and registration due to the contraction of other entities.[189]

Having detailed both the *connective synthesis* and the *disjunctive synthesis*, we are now left with a quandary—the absence of an externalized media-relation. Despite adamantly dispelling any possibility of dualism between social and technical machines, it may, indeed, appear that Deleuze seems to retain the dualism between machines and relations, which betrays the prime insight of the machine ontology (i.e., that everything is a machine). This void is the product of our not yet having elucidated the medium of the machine encounter. We have traversed Deleuze's literature to note that relations are machines that spring forth "veritable external bridges,"[190] but what of the media produced through relations, the mobilized and detached product(s) of such relations? Deleuze notes that "[c]reation's all about mediators" and that "[w]ithout them nothing happens."[191]

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[189] It is perhaps quite fair to say that Deleuze's disjunctive synthesis is often over-designated as the fruit of his system. This is, in fact, what Badiou's book on Deleuze claims, as for Badiou the disjunctive synthesis lays claim to how relations work. According to Badiou, relations are rooted in a universal and open Whole that reintroduces a universal one. The eternal return is understood as the formal law posed on chaos; the universe thus being an outcome of the struggle between dissolution and return, where Being is prodded forth via conjunction and dissolution: "[t]he reascent of the virtual would be the return, or the engagement of the One in the simulacra or beings, while the beings themselves, in their subjection to the disjunctive synthesis, would signify heterogeneity and dissolution." Alain Badiou, *Deleuze—The Clamor of Being*, trans. L. Burchill, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. 68. Unlike Deleuze's conjunctive synthesis by way of disjunction, Laruellean idempotence attempts a "media-without-mediation"; as Anthony Paul Smith remarks, this is a generic determination "without synthesis – between the One and the Multiple that is developed in this non-philosophical unified theory of philosophy and quantum mechanics." Anthony Paul Smith, *Laruelle: a Stranger Thought*, Cambridge, UK, Polity, 2016, p. 164. Notably, as Kleinherenbrink recovers through his close reading, Deleuze's system is predicated upon the externality thesis and, therefore, the conjunctive synthesis, which produces externality. Also notable is the remark that "[t]o even begin answering the question for any given body or bodies always involves non-philosophy, and even then we are only ever categorizing and examining signs of machines in order to construct maps of their being. This would be the process of determining '*who? how? how much? where and when? in which case.*'" Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 282. Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands*, p. 96. In Kleinherenbrink's remark, the inner being of things is understood through an outside, a distinction that well describes the process of antecedent determination in Laruelle's non-philosophical system of:
(immanent real) Identity→(theoretical/scientific) real object→object of knowledge

[190] Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands*, p. 163.

[191] Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, p. 125.

This necessarily means that we need a third synthesis, a *conjunctive synthesis*.

§ THE PRODUCTION OF RECORDING: THE CONJUNCTIVE SYNTHESIS

If the first synthesis of connection creates a "foundation" and the second synthesis of disjunction designates a "Ground,"[192] the third synthesis of conjunction producing an ungrounding through compounding the first two "for itself."[193] The third synthesis is therefore one of "consumption," "consummation," "residue"[194] and does not "refer to the becoming of the machines forming the terms of the relation, as that concerns the second disjunctive synthesis of recording. Instead, it refers to the genesis of a new machine altogether, which from then on can engage in its *own* connections and becomings."[195]

Calling forth our opening remarks surveying theories of autopoiesis and positive feedback, we can substantively know how the *conjunctive synthesis* is a recursive function that creates a positive informational feedback loop based upon adequation via environmental complexity. As Deleuze remarks:

> "[m]an is a *component part* of the machine, or combines with something else to constitute a machine. The other thing can be a tool, or even an animal, or other men. We are not using a metaphor however when we speak of machines: man *constitutes a machine* as soon as this nature is communicated by recurrence to the ensemble of which he forms a part under given specific conditions [….] Men form a labor machine under the bureaucratic conditions of the great empires. The Greek foot-solider together with his arms constitute a machine under the conditions of the phalanx. The dancer combines with the floor to compose a machine under the perilous conditions of love and death."[196]

We can see this detachment from the immediate production of actuality as giving rise to a new nomadic machine in many instances. For example, "whenever someone makes love […] that person constitutes a body without organs, alone and with the other person or people."[197] Every synthesis necessitates two former syntheses, and every connection invariably involves the "eternal

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[192] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 79.
[193] Gilles Deleuze, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 28.
[194] Ibid., p. 103, p. 28.
[195] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 225.
[196] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Balance Sheet Program*, pp. 117-118.
[197] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 30.

return's" production of a non-productive, irreducible body without organs undergoing virtual becoming. Deleuze at times calls this residual entity a "celibate machine"[198] which delegates the birth of every conjunctive machine, wrapped up in autonomy and novelty, "new with regard to the machines that initially produced it"[199] due to its being bound by "neutrality and genetic power."[200] By "forming a new alliance between the desiring-machines and the body without organs so as to give birth to a new humanity or a glorious organism,"[201] the "celibate machine" is a producer of intensive qualities.

The conjunctive synthesis is a mereological function where the parts overdetermine the whole, for the machine ontology is nothing but pluralism in the last instance. Therefore, Deleuze emphasizes "the unconditioned character of the product in relation to its production, and the independence of the work in relation to its author or actor."[202] In contrast to the obfuscatory motor force of capitalist "value theory" that relates empirical phenomena, or economic dynamics, back to a fundamental principle of synthesis via equalization, Deleuze acknowledges the celibacy of machines to both "[a]ccept the event" and how "it contains in itself something incorporeal."[203] This is a theory of the scar, the wound's residue, whereby, despite "'[m]y wound existed before me, I am born to embody it.' That is to say, yes, it is effected in myself, but it contains something by which it isn't anymore 'my' wound."[204] This residual energy is what facilitates the further becoming of the new machine, a product of conjunctive synthesis of the "unconscious"[205] that has a residual energy driving it forwards. There is, therefore, a critical *reflective* facet in the constituting of conjunctive synthesis, as "the celibate machine first of all reveals the existence of a much older paranoiac machine"[206] rather than erasing its primacy.

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[198] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 29.

[199] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 226.

[200] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 123.

[201] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 17.

[202] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 92.

[203] Gilles Deleuze, "Seminars on *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*," http://www.webdeleuze.com/ and http://www2.univ-paris8fr./deleuze/article.php3?id_article=215 (accessed 5 February, 2020).

[204] Ibid.

[205] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 28-29.

[206] Ibid., p. 30.

Here we have an answer to the previous problem concerning mediation, as the third machine functions as a "veritable external bridge"[207] and conjuncts that which is properly intra-relational, forging relations within or through machines instead of posting a universal background or open Whole. At this point it may tempt the reader to claim that the *conjunctive synthesis* repeats the logic of the *connective synthesis*, which implies rupture and contiguity through forces of "habit, connection, and contraction."[208] However, the conjunctive synthesis is unique from the connective synthesis, as the former concerns "that which must be generated (a celibate machine) *during* the connection with other machines (partial objects, sense-events) in order for the encounter to last."[209]

This is not to concede to the revolutionary necessity of connection, or "conjugation," which "plugs or seals the lines of flight" as it "performs a general reterritorialization."[210] Excessive desire, or surplus, is actualized through specific relations and nowhere is this clearer than the becoming-marketable of once anti-capitalist efforts—consider, for instance, how ecological efforts are often subsumed by postindustrial alternative energy efforts vis-à-vis neoliberal corporate motives. The virtual being of a machine can never be exhaustively deployed in a single relation and, thus, there is always the possibility for other entities to intervene. A system functions "so long as the surface holds" and there is "nothing more fragile that the surface," which is prone to "being overturned in a terrible primary order."[211]

In his 1990 "Postscript to Societies of Control," Deleuze describes the mereological "dividual" and control power's teleological "dividualization," a processes of quantum axiomatization, non-coercive modulation, and numerical diffraction that renders the individual, as a an indissoluble whole and total assemblage, to be of less interest to Capital that their aggregate composition.[212] This is evidenced today in metadata analysis, derivative markets, or actuarial

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[207] Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands*, p. 163.

[208] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 228.

[209] Ibid.

[210] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 220.

[211] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 91, p. 125, p. 82

[212] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on Control Societies" in *Negotiations 1972–1990*, trans. M. Joughin, New York, Columbia University Press, 1995, pp. 177-182.

finance capitalism's techniques of predictive recombination, wherein neoliberal control is not excised by a central power but decentralized war machines—under control society, subjects are partialized, designated as score-able and rank-able. Stratification is eliminated by control power which, given faster computing speeds and processing power, is increasingly veering more and more towards automatization and algorithmic governmentality. Following Deleuze, Bernard Stiegler terms this development under our hyper-industrial epoch "hyper-control," wherein "fragility" is generated by "self-produced personal data, self-collected and self-published by people themselves—whether knowingly or otherwise—and exploited by applying high-performance computing to these massive data sets."[213] Nonetheless, following Deleuze's account, the suppleness of micropolitics is pharmacological, allowing for new emancipatory possibilities and new repressions, or limit-conditions. Thus, Deleuze's remark that in production there is always something that "diverts,"[214] allowing the immediate generation of a new machine that cannot be reduced to its generators.

In describing compossibility and/or incompossibility, Deleuze designates each machine with its "own specific Idea in variation […] a given machine will not be able to even register the existence of the vast majority of other machines."[215] Incompossibility can be "practical" when it relates to the observable limit conditions or substances of this world (e.g., a would-be patron is forbidden from entering a particular establishment due to specific conditions such as ongoing construction or maintenance). Such limit conditions can also be "essential" when we, as observers, do not have the *puissance* "to be somewhere or encounter something" (e.g., observing dark matter, which we know exists but are unable to encounter/observe until we construct the proper machines).[216]

This conjunctive relation is a *differential relation* because it cannot be reduced to its manifestation; for instance, "[w]ater is a differential relation with regard to its hydrogen and oxygen, nations are differential relations with regard to their

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[213] Bernard Stiegler, *Nanjing Lectures 2016—2019*, trans. Daniel Ross, London, Open Humanities Press, p. 36.

[214] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 52

[215] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 231.

[216] Ibid., pp. 234-235.

laws and citizens, a love is a differential relation with regard to its lovers, and so forth."[217] A Figure is distinct from its code because within the virtual half of the machine is the non-productive facet, distinct from desire's productive and causal multiplicity. Accordingly, generation is produced through other machines and therefore is relational—the variations and becomings of an Idea are by no means a matter of *puissance.*

Is this processual irreducibility necessarily always differential? Tristan Garcia, much like Deleuze, is a process-philosopher and his work will help clarify this distinction. While, for Deleuze, the third synthesis of conjunction shows how a machine is always more than its parts and/or environments (because it cannot be reduced to its generators), according to Garcia's two-sided ontology it is always less. Let us call to mind, once again, the necessary disparity between ontological status and existential status in Deleuze's machine ontology: every machine is equal within Deleuze's flat ontology qua the fourfold of body, Idea, partial object(s), and qualities while machines, existentially (which Garcia calls "objectively"), are produced through specific *puissance* and vary in their actualizations relative to other specific machines. Similarly, Garcia's ontology "[c]aptures entities in their *formal* being on the one hand and their *objective* being on the other."[218] However, for Deleuze qualities are not machines but actualizations of a machine—for instance, the color "red" is not a machine in itself but an actualization. For Garcia, "red" is granted the same ontological parity as the machine that actualizes it and is, therefore, also a machine.

Under the rubric of "compactness," Garcia rejects all varieties of substantiality or essence—for Garcia, to endow reality with any kind of positive and self-adequate content means to constitute it with being both a whole and the component of that whole, resulting in a logical paradox.[219] For Garcia, properties play perhaps the most critical role in respect to determining an object's unity. Such is Garcia's processual comprehension of "de-determination," the grasping

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[217] Ibid.

[218] Ibid., p. 237.

[219] Tristan Garcia, *Form and Object*, trans. M. A. Ohm and J. Cogburn, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2014, p. 73.

of machines in their irreducibility through a formal plane of reference.[220] For instance, an observer de-determines a tree by abstracting it from its components, its environment, its properties, its past, and its future. As a machine ontology that, contra Deleuze's distinction between machines and their actualizations, removes all actuality pertaining to an entity, Garcia's system of being generates an entity alongside "everything that an entity manifests to others."[221] The tree is therefore left de-determined and reducible to itself, by which we mean it is not reduced into pure "nothingness" and, simultaneously, not reduced into "natural, social, or historical" referents.[222] Unlike Deleuze, Garcia does not attribute such solitary "machines" as having any real being "in itself." For Garcia, ontological status is produced negatively and is irreducible, a byproduct of the "*difference* between *that which is in this thing* and *that in which this thing is*" or the "*difference* between […] content and container."[223] What Garcia calls "form" is the outline of an object's inclusion in a comprehension-system, the point where "something else takes over" and frames the machine. Thus, "objecthood" compliments "form."

Garcia remarks that "things that enter into another thing, which in one way or another comprehends them, we call 'objects'"[224] and takes us one step further than Gabriel's ontology of the infinite deferral of specification. For Garcia, any particular entity is not "nothing" for it is irreducible to all that composes it (e.g., atoms, sensations, thoughts, etc.) and what it features in (e.g., an apartment room, building, neighborhood, and so on). Rather than having any features "in and of itself," an entity is characterized through the pure difference between its composite make-up—or its components—and its referential background, or that in which it features. What this demonstrates is that there is no necessary composition for an object but pure relation-hood, or "intensities. "Garcia remarks that, "[l]ike a reflection on the surface of water, a tree that is identical to itself is nothing but an effect of the profound reality of that which is, continuous variations of being, lines of becoming that momentarily appear like stable objects

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[220] Ibid., p. 5.
[221] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 237.
[222] Tristan Garcia, *Form and Object*, p. 8.
[223] Ibid., p. 13, p. 61
[224] Ibid., p. 100.

in space."[225]

Via Garcia's absolutely *negative* characterization, we can better understand how Deleuzean difference is conclusively *positive*—a machine is always *more* than its generators and generations because it has a complex private and interior "being" that comprises what Deleuze calls "powers," "singularities," or "Idea."[226] Kleinherenbrink's critique is that, while for Deleuze there is a difference *within* entities—between their virtual properties and their actual manifestations to other entities—Garcia's entities "lack any properties that would constitute a sufficient reason for why *this* entity differentiates *like this* and *that* entity differentiates *like that* […] any and all specification and characterization dissolves into an indefinite chain of references to components that are in things […] without ever stumbling upon something that actually has *features*."[227] More precisely, Garcia's system lacks a theory of translation or scalar hierarchy due to its infinite deferrals of specification, which Deleuze systematically accounts for rather robustly. For Deleuze, machines can have actualizations that are not themselves machines but instead translations or scalar measurements of the *being* of a machine, contracting these into the experiential content of another machine. This serves as a critical moment to more closely observe Deleuze's rhizome and the relationship between the whole to parts.

§ ON REDUNDANCY, FRAGILITY, RESISTANCE

Due to its mereological—or differential—heterogenesis, every machinic relation is *excessive*, as it is characterized by internal difference between virtuality and actuality. Composed of connection-registrations, residue is additive and therefore produces new machines through the threefold synthesis which transpires as: 1) *Libido*, a "withdrawal-energy" that delineates how a qualified sense-event transpires for a machine; 2) *Numen*, a "detachment-energy" which relays how this machinic encounter differentiates the *puissance* upon which the machinic relation was initially drafted; 3) *Voluptas*, the "residual energy" of becoming, or the

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[225] Tristan Garcia, *The Life Intense: A Modern Obsession*, trans. A. R. Alexander, C. R. Alexander, J. Cogburn, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2018, p. 81.

[226] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, pp. 242-243.

[227] Ibid., p. 243.

"genesis" of a new irreducible machine.[228] Accordingly, these three modes:

> "make the process of desiring-production at once the production of production, the production of recording, and the production of consumption. To withdraw a part from the whole, to detach, to 'have something left over,' is to produce, and to carry out real operations of desire in the material world."[229]

Further stratifying the principles of rhizomes, Deleuze enumerates: 1) the "principle of connection" where "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be" (e.g., semiotic chains, regimes of powers);[230] 2) the "principle of heterogeneity," whereby a rhizome is irreducible to its multiplicities;[231] 3) the "principle of multiplicity," which dictates substantive difference between the machine's being a unified "body without organs" and differentiated in its singularities, open to becoming;[232] 4) the "principle of asignifying rupture," according to which actualizations are ruptures unique from their desire;[233] 5) the "principle of cartography,"[234] according to which a map constructs an unconscious that exceeds its territory (this is perhaps most clear in pedagogue Fernand Deligny's *lignes d'erre*, or wander-lines)[235]; 6) the principle of "decalcomania,"[236] which emphasizes how encounters can always instigate novel inscriptions of desire on its virtual body.[237]

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[228] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 41.

[229] Ibid.

[230] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 7.

[231] Ibid.

[232] Ibid., p. 8.

[233] Ibid., p. 10.

[234] Ibid., p. 13.

[235] French psychoanalyst, philosopher, and pedagogue Fernand Deligny's work on movement and linealities greatly influenced Deleuze's kinetic conception of "lines of flight" and deterritorialization. Beginning in the 1950s, Deligny (who departed from La Borde clinic) and his co-workers collectively ran residential communes in France for autistic children and young people who otherwise would have been institutionalized. Tucked away outside of Monoblet, in the shadow of the Cévennes Mountains, Deligny facilitated a shared open-space living site that he termed "primordial communism." Deligny, who eschewed psychoanalytic theory's approach to autism, mapped the "arachnean" network of his autistic children patients' daily kinesis. Distinguishing between "lines of drift" and "customary lines," Deligny used paper and pencil to map the children's movement (where they walked, what they played with), gestures (including cooking or collecting wood) and molecular perceptive linealities (what they observed). Fernand Deligny, *The Arachnean and Other Texts*, trans., D. S. Burk and C. Porter, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

[236] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 13.

[237] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, pp. 254-255.

Each generating part of a rhizome is, in turn, a rhizome generated from non-resembling parts "[d]ividing endlessly" where "[m]atter thus offers an infinitely porous, spongy or cavernous texture without emptiness, caverns endlessly contained in other caverns: no matter how small, each body contains a world with irregular passages."[238] Because the essence of any machine is open to variation prompted by an encounter, the encounter can be subsumed within a machine's tendrils; this is how all relations lead to and index the transcendental, or "intensive," heart of a machine. For example, the "code" or being of a child is not only determined through social or familial conditions but *all* (rhizomatic) encounters, including "bread, money, dwelling place, social promotion, bourgeois and revolutionary values, wealth and poverty, oppression and revolt, social classes, political events, metaphysical and collective problems."[239] As a "teratology,"[240] Deleuze's philosophy emphasizes how individual essence is regulated by a process of progressive individuations and always constructed from infinite (differential) heterogenous sources with multiple entrances, each ontologically equal. Rhizomes are therefore not exclusively composed of other rhizomes. As is the case for Lucretius, with rhizomes "there is no body composed of homogenous parts."[241] Instead, rhizomes underscore the open nature of the whole and its being irreducibly constituted by machines with parts that are irreducibly composed of other machines.

While Meillassoux's reality as hyper-contingency provokes that "[e]verything could collapse […] by virtue of the absence of any superior law capable of preserving anything, no matter what, from perishing,"[242] for Deleuze p*uissance* can solely be overcome by other machines. Therefore, "[n]o tree disappears without a fire burning it, terminates consuming it, or thunderbolts detonating it into a swarm of splinters."[243] This is why, in opposition to both Meillassoux's hyper-

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[238] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 5.

[239] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 121. In Garcia's system of de-determination, this would be the inverse, where relations are negatively determined.

[240] Rosi Braidotti, "Teratologies" in *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, ed. I. Buchanan and C. Colebrook, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 156-172.

[241] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 266.

[242] Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, p. 53.

[243] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 250.

contingency and Leibniz's incommensurability (qua a superior entity, i.e., God), Deleuze is a thinker of absolute actuality. Deleuze accounts for machinic desire, which not only limits how machines can encounter one-another but also prevents Garcian redundancy. Because machines can, themselves, constitute territories that underscore certain features, "there is still hierarchy and distribution in univocal being."[244] Stable patterns of production and behavior emerge—symbiosis, for instance, allows for machines to become what DeLanda describes as "contingently obligatory."[245] This is how strata lock singularities into acts of capture, producing "systems of resonance and redundancy" and forming "molar aggregates"[246] that stratify specific regional ontologies within fourfold being and threefold synthesis.[247]

§ THE POWER OF THOUGHT: HUMAN ALL TOO MACHINE

How does Deleuze's thought concern the human, which it would evidently appear to never privilege beyond the machinic tyranny of scales and conjunctive synthesis? Deleuze's machine ontology accords a method of his "transcendental empiricism." This system begins with a recollection of the Kantian "boundary concept" of rationality's regulative use; according to Deleuze's account of "empiricism," human finitude designates encounters as a sign or manifestation of other entities and not such entities in and of themselves. The "transcendental" portion is what manages us to assume that there is also a virtual side to machines, which can allow us to move beyond this pretention of negative use. In his early account of "transcendental empiricism," Deleuze's materialist transvaluation of the Kantian account of transcendental subjectivity imparts how impersonal, inhuman thinking does not merely represent the natural world but is directly productive of forms (e.g., space and time). As Deleuze's system matures, it further

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[244] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 36.

[245] Manuel DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory*, p. 11.

[246] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 40.

[247] In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze delineates: 1) the *non-organic stratum*, or expressions dependent on content (e.g., sedimentary rock is actualized by its parts, flysch); 2) *organic strata*, or articulation, where expression is independent from content (e.g., successful reproduction); 3) *anthropomorphic strata*, where human activity most highly specifies the generation of independent expression in regards to heterogenous content (e.g., a universal sign, such as the same CD being sold in various stores across the world). Ibid., p. 40, p. 41, p. 59, p. 502.

accounts for a supplementary account of subjectification, wherein an appeal to the "encounter" ensures the "measure of fit" between transcendental empiricism as a constructivist mathematism of concepts and the world of intensive, actual difference.

It is the unconscious of a machine that comprises our "real subject," whereas that with we identify ourselves with (e.g., "male," "female," "non-binary," "Turkish," "French," "writer," etc.) is the marker of excess and overflow. We are apparent "residual" subjects kept intact through other machines[248]—we cannot commit a single act without conspiring, veritably mobilizing and collapsing within an infinity of such machines. This is the nature of our "double freedom": we can never be reduced to or totally integrated within the machines that produce us and, simultaneously, we cannot be fully reduced to that which we produce or create. Is the marker of the human that we are *conscious* of these processes and the irreducibility we share with existing multiplicities? Consolidating the confrontation of materialism and idealism so as to overcome the duality of image and movement, consciousness and being, Deleuze remarks that "all consciousness is consciousness *of* something (Husserl), or more strongly: all consciousness *is* something (Bergson)."[249]

What Deleuze ascribes to Bergson is that, due to the externality of relations to term, being *conscious* of machinic processes—as a further relation-cum-irreducible machine—merely implicates us in the third conjugation (through consciousness). Everything is not internal to space and time—instead, the externality thesis holds that space and time are local phenomena rooted in machines, themselves.[250] Space relates to the singularities of machine[251] but there are two kinds of space: the transcendental "smooth" space of machinic singularities, and the actual "striated space" of actual manifestations.[252] *Sense-events constitute the striated world but striations do not correspond to the smooth spaces that underly them.* Therefore, not all machines are part of all spaces and "things" are never located in space in general but always in other machines. All machines are

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[248] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 376.

[249] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 56.

[250] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 51.

[251] Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands*, p. 111.

[252] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 496-522.

together in other machines and never "somewhere in general."[253] This is the ultimate lesson we learn from rhizomes—a lesson of immanence.

Time is also bifurcated into "Chronos," and "Aion," with "reciprocal exclusion" between the two.[254] As the time of measure, "Chronos" concerns the contiguous flow of actual encounters that a machine undergoes—how machines exist for other assemblages in their being translated and mixed into actuality. Such is the cypher of the return, the repetitive logic of "the Same" that designates how no machine can go beyond registering other entities on its own terms.[255] "Aion," on the other hand, is that which "can only be thought,"[256] the time of counter-actualization and relations escaping the present by dividing what appears into "an already-there that is at the same time not-yet-there, a simultaneous too-late and too-early."[257]

Returning to our initial comments on a super-organological universe, an all-encompassing Gaia, the following question becomes necessary—if we are merely machines and an individual is "always in a world as a circle of convergence,"[258] must it logically follow that there must be one totalizing reality? Deleuze's machine ontology "posits one reality in the precise sense that all machines and their singularities are generated from *local* outsides, which is to say other machines with their own irreducible and withdrawn virtual aspect, but never from a *total* outside, which is to say something transcending machinic being."[259] Does this mean there is "mechano-sphere" in the sense of a machine system that encompasses the totality of all bodies without organs, a Universal abstract machine? Deleuze gives us two different answers, at times confirming this thesis[260] and elsewhere noting that a plurality of existing abstract machines presents a diagram-assemblage.[261] Perhaps to more definitively answer this we can glean a

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[253] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 262.

[254] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 61.

[255] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 263.

[256] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 74

[257] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 262.

[258] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 110.

[259] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 265.

[260] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 4. Gilles Deleuze, *Kafka—Towards a Minor Literature*, trans. D. Polan, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1986, p. 87.

[261] Gilles Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 71.

clue from the following state: "there is no abstract machine, or machines, in the sense of a Platonic Idea, transcendent, universal, eternal. Abstract machines operate within concrete assemblages."[262] Deleuze's "mechano-spere" cannot violate the externality thesis, meaning that it is still a part among parts—if there is to be any unity, it is a "chaosmos and no longer a world."[263]

An unlikely thinker, Bruno Latour, similarly approaches reality as comprised of irreducible entities and mutual associations, where we lack a final layer and/or primordial source to tether concrete existents to. Latour, of course, is well aware of the similarity between actor-network theory and Deleuze's machine ontology, as Latour notes that his system could be termed an "actant-rhizome ontology."[264] Latour's principle of irreducibility emphasizes the contingent labor of actants, none of whom are ordained metaphysical hierarchy. Prompting a "reduction," (hybrid) actants combine into networks, where the network is not ontologically separable from the actants,[265] just as in Deleuze's machines and rhizomes. Kleinherenbrink prudently notes that "Deleuze's machine ontology would define a city as both a machine and a rhizome: a machine because of its irreducibility and a rhizome because it is generated by countless other machines. For the same reason, a city for Latour is both an actant and a network of actants."[266] Following Latour's account of *being*, to define an entity is to observe it alongside what it does, registering it in the act of translation, a functional appeal—all that exists is actants and their associations, without *a priori* suppositions (just as in Deleuze's "transcendental empiricism").

Nonetheless, one fundamental reality allots for distinct political possibilities between Deleuze and Latour. For Latour, our tendency to reduce domains into either "natural" passive executors of mechanistic natural laws or "cultural" entities that reduce all possibilities into sovereign human freedom is the project

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[262] Ibid., p. 510.

[263] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 176.

[264] Bruno Latour, "On Recalling ANT" in *Actor Network Theory and After*, ed. J. Law and J. Hassard, Oxford, Blackwell, pp. 15-26.

[265] Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence—An Anthropology of the Moderns*, trans. C Porter, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2013, p. 33.

[266] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, pp. 267.

of modernity and, therefore, rooted in a historical event.[267] For Deleuze, such reductionist thinking is never the product of a historical event but the consequence of paralogisms, an error of thought that is produced by the ontological appearance, or ontic status, engendered by machines. The image of thought is treated as a surface-effect and, therefore, Deleuze is concerned with the representational nature of thinking, unlike Latour whose interests are embedded within historical contingencies. As it relates to the organism's operating under such paralogisms, the unification and totalization of this connective synthesis is production via a psychological register, organizing the body into its organism-form. This means that the body's desires and its capacities to socially recognize, as well as the work of social reproduction, are necessarily interwoven within Deleuze's political treatment of machine ontology. Latour, on the other hand, is able to index historical rifts and avoid the machinic (or, in Latourian semblance, "networked") necessity of dualyzed overcoding. This also is precisely why the Deleuzian machine necessarily produces images without resemblance, finding itself at odds with Platonism, where the copy is an image *with* resemblance. For Deleuze, all resemblances that exist are merely productions *between machines* instead of (Platonic) predetermined identities. Resemblances are simulacra, retaining a difference in kind between "what they are in their virtual becoming" and that which they "manifest to others," i.e., the machinic becoming of actuality and appearance.[268]

§ OVERTURNING PLATONISM & THINGS IN THEMSELVES

If Platonism, from Badiou's millenarian Platonism to Reza Negarestani's neorational Platonism, is the doctrine that the being of some or all entities is secondary, it is because principles, truths or essences are found in a "something else" which we can engage with through interaction. Insofar as involves primary entities, only the Eternal Form can possess the ontological access of being one with these primary entities. Therefore, Platonism is an internalism, defined not by the "extrinsic relation to an object" which, following Kleinherenbrink, we

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[267] Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. C. Porter, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2001.
[268] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, pp. 275.

have called the "externality thesis," but by "an intrinsic relation to the model or foundation."[269] Deleuze's machine ontology inverts this idea and seeks to replace the "Idea as the goal of reminiscence" and, therefore, the Platonic "stable Essence" by reorienting Ideas as they are conceived of by a subject, utilizing "qualitative transition" and "mutual fusion."[270] To "overturn Platonism"[271] necessitates removing all traces of "full presence," "reductionism," and "relationism" by liquidating stable and eternal "general essences," replacing them with individual and malleable distributions capable of forming singularities.[272] Accordingly, "*the ideational or the incorporeal can no longer by anything other than an 'effect,'*"[273] where bodies and their virtual content become the cause of what transpires—"[a]ctual qualities, such as being just are no longer references to eternal forms, but hallmarks of the sterile surfaces of neutral-sense-events."[274]

Platonist internalism slips into the "paralogism of extrapolation"[275] for Deleuze. By thinking of the virtual in terms of the actual and the ontological in terms of the existential, we erroneously conceive of the transcendental is terms of the empirical. Recall how in the machine ontology, any relation is a connection with a *partial* and *non-specific* object.[276] An actual sense-event is distinct in *kind* from the virtual being of the machine, of which it is merely a manifestation. Therefore, following Deleuze, any concept, quality, or "membership" attributed to an assemblage point irradiates not the Idea, in itself, but the translation of desire within a technical machine for a larger, subsumptive circuit—the social machine. This is why the relational being is not simply "partial" but also "non-specific"; according to the paralogism of extrapolation, we extend the category of being qua an entity towards greater categorical belonging. That is, we take an assigned quality, concept, or membership to accurately express the being of another machine, and "what is apprehended when we touch the surface of the object is

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[269] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 259.

[270] Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. R. Howard, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 109.

[271] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 59. *Logic of Sense*, p. 253.

[272] Ibid., p. 53.

[273] Ibid., p. 7.

[274] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, pp. 275.

[275] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 132.

[276] Ibid., 88.

perceived as residing in its innermost depth."[277] This is why the "paralogism of extrapolation" gives rise to impossible standards, giving precedence to the assumption that "real desiring-production is answerable to higher formations that integrate it, subject to transcendent laws, and make it serve a higher social and cultural production."[278] If any "extrapolated X" is simultaneously posited as the being of an individual and that which an individual always lacks, then the quality, concept, or membership of is transmogrified into a "despotic signifier."[279]

There is also a second paralogism, that of the "double-bind," which concerns Deleuze's disjunctive synthesis of recording.[280] This involves one specific pathology dominating all ordinances of variation. The case example par excellence of the "double-bind" is, invariably, the Oedipus complex, where all desires and actions are determined (by psychoanalysis) in advance to be expressions of a type-based identity complex. The third paralogism, the "paralogism of application," is a misconstrual of the conjunctive synthesis. Just as the previous "paralogism of extrapolation" reduces the being and behavior of an entity as equivalent to the single quality or limited set of qualities that an entity lacks, the "paralogism of application" organizes the determinant cause of all action as being symbolically organized. By negating any notion of agency (not to be conflated with free will, for Deleuze is a Spinozist determinist), with the "paralogism of application" the being of the subject undergoes an "explicit reduction to an *empty form*, from which desire itself is absent and expelled."[281] Given any internal relation, the subject is reduced to a mirror, moment, position, record, or representation—enacting a grand collapse, the "paralogism of application" takes the "polyvocity" implied by the conjunctive synthesis and reduces it into a "biunivocity."[282] Novelty is reduced to variation of the same *Spiel*—here, the "nomadism" implied in the logic of the celibate machine and relations of differential heterogenesis are replaced by "segregation," assigned to an inescapable organizer—a vacuum that appearances in psychoanalysis,

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[277] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 274.
[278] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 92.
[279] Ibid., p. 90, p. 91.
[280] Ibid., p. 133.
[281] Ibid., p. 216.
[282] Ibid., p. 127.

relationism, and reductionism, alike.[283]

The first three paralogisms produce the "paralogism of displacement,"[284] where that which is actively occurring within a particular relation is forged to be transcendentally thought, instead of empirical. Kleinherenbrink provides the example of the Aristotelian idea that heavy objects "strive" to be at the center of the universe, which is "then used as an explanation for why it takes effort to lift them"; thus, the logic of displacement, involving a "repressed representative," a "repressing representation," and a displaced represented" points to a "code outside of its relational coding."[285]

Desiring production need not always involve an actuality, as each entity solely relates to the actual manifestation of other entities, which means it can mereologically register "that which it takes as its parts insofar as it is actual."[286] For Deleuze, something must occur in actuality if an entity is to be generated, ushered towards becoming. The "paralogism of the afterward"[287] refers to the thought that such actualities, themselves, do not refer to unique virtualities of their own. For example, consider the central thesis in *Anti-Oedipus*: the Oedipus complex is understood to be the *actual generator* for thoughts, behaviors, and events without ever being generated by these (machines)—according to psychoanalysis, the Oedipus complex is an actuality without virtuality. Being generated from other entities involves its becoming and is therefore self-identical and unengendered. That is, the Oedipus complex is understood to be divine and supervenient instead of being just another social machine with its own generators and private virtuality.[288] Similarly, reductive materialism constitutes the homogenous and universal ground for everything by extending the known realm of physics into an ideal and complete Theory of Everything, therein projecting actuality onto virtuality. As Kleinherenbrink remarks, "[s]uch philosophies of false depth think that all entities take something quite unlike themselves for their

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[283] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 277.

[284] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 138.

[285] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 278.

[286] Ibid., p. 279.

[287] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 154.

[288] Ibid.

matter, without this matter taking something quite unlike itself for *its* matter."[289] In the previous example, the assumed reductive-physicalist Theory of Everything is unable to account for the superposition of quantum mechanics, for instance, or problems of scalar reduction.[290]

Accordingly, representation can only think of difference extrinsically by building a system of predicative oppositions within the concept, but Deleuze's empiricist method conceives of difference *intrinsically*. This is because Deleuze's system of constructive empiricism conceives of how the aesthetic manifold divides itself, illuminating that conceptualization distorts *real difference* without necessarily barring the very real possibility of conceptualizing conditions of real experience within a "science of the sensible." The Deleuzean subject emerges as part of the natural world while nonetheless functioning as a catalyst for morphogenesis. Deleuze's pluralist transcendental empiricism is opposed to Kant's transcendental philosophy, where transcendental subjectivity foregoes the possibility of conceiving of different and differential relations and interactions between entities *themselves*. As an internalist, Kant is committed to reducing all activity to apparitions of a subject, while transcendental empiricism is properly schizophrenic, "in which entity is a machine with its own malleable and transcendental essence, an internal 'matter' based on which it encounters its world."[291] What Deleuze's system shares with Kant is that it is predicated on human finitude (that we are finite beings due to relations and terms being hinged upon externality) and the power of thought (where the transcendental exacts limit conditions). For Deleuze, we still learn about the "interior" of other machines insofar as we take extensive and actual manifestations as signs of virtuality, which is why Deleuze's thought cannot make transcendental reality present to us despite it can realize entities do *have* individual transcendental reality. While this cannot produce theories that account for internal being it, nonetheless, allows for a theory of difference where machines manifest under determinate circumstances

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[289] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 279.

[290] Recall how Bergson is able to move outside of blind materialism or scientism by accounting for drive-like tension in the organism and the actualization of drive(s) in terms of the "creative event"; the dynamics of Bergson's theory of life (e.g., duration, drive) resist an image of life or thought wherein all is given at once and established as predetermined "facts."

[291] Ibid., p. 280.

which, for instance, is fundamentally precluded from Garcia's system. For instance, as they are classically conceived, atoms are identical to one another in their actuality but, because they differ minimally in their virtuality, Deleuze's machine ontology guarantees irreducibility—such "internal difference between series" allows for "one story" to not "reproduce the other" as "one does not serve as model for the other: rather, resemblance and identity are only functional efforts of that difference which alone is originary within the system."[292]

This is a system that privileges thought, which can move beyond the sensible to consider the "being *of* the sensible"[293]—this is why, contra affect theory, Deleuze does not privilege feeling over thought. Thought is able to go beyond mere appearances of appearances within consciousness[294] and, therefore, "only intelligence extracts the truth."[295] This does not mean that thinking machines do not encounter limit-conditions. Quite the contrary, in fact, as the empirical is never transcendental and, therefore, no Idea is directly available to the "goal of reminiscence" as a "stable Essence," but is withdrawn to its virtuality, where it undergoes "qualitative transitions."[296]

As sociologist Niklas Luhmann notes, remarking on system-specific distinctions, the connection with the reality of an external world and cognitive agents is established by the "blind spot of the cognitive operation" because "[r]eality is what one does not perceive when one perceives it."[297] For both Bryant and Deleuze, the transcendental illusion is generated in the behavior through which objects relate to one another and, consequentially, how "the states 'experienced' by a system are treated as other objects themselves, rather than system-specific entities generated by the organization of the object itself."[298] For Harman, the Heideggerian disposition in which objects withdraw from our epistemic and practical grasp serves as an ideal model for the noninteraction of

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[292] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 126.

[293] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 237.

[294] Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza—Practical Philosophy*, trans. R. Hurley, San Francisco, City Lights Books, 1988, p. 18.

[295] Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, p. 23.

[296] Ibid.

[297] Niklas Luhmann, *Theories of Distinction*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002, p. 145.

[298] Levi Bryant, *Democracy of Objects*, London, Open Humanities Press, 2011, p. 102.

all objects with one another in zero-sum terms. Harman's typology of change is directed towards functional ends, with an object either acting towards or against the system's end. Deleuze's machine ontology warrants withdrawal so as to galvanize a dynamics systems approach, capturing complex behaviors without appealing to Harman's all-or-nothing terms.

Much like Mark Wilson's admission of the descriptive labor and "Theory T thinking" employed by generalized solutions in classical chemical and physical systems[299] and Giuseppe Longo's acknowledgement of how continuous machines overdetermine discrete machines,[300] Deleuze's "transcendental empiricism" designates how indirect approximations are the only way by which we come to terms with the "inner beings" of machines. As Deleuze remarks, we can make sense of the virtual-actual distinction via relational currents "from the outside and through successive experiments."[301] These currents act as a mask, behind which a succession of masks exist. For Deleuze, knowledge concerns either the: i) actual components generating an entity, or ii) the actual part an entity that plays in the generation of something else. However, neither of these yield the virtual being of any machine, but are simply functional masks, operations akin to a "geometrical description."[302] No typology provides us the virtual description *in itself* but gives us an apprenticeship of masks and signs, virtual objects translated into extensity. For Deleuze, because all reductions fail, all signs are relational, appearing as "sensuous impressions or qualities."[303] Therefore, signs are *material—*this does not mean that they are made of tangible components or matter but that they have their life in *something else*, something "not altogether spiritual"[304] but *relational.* As a consequence, "what we call an 'object' is only the effect an object has on our body."[305] Thus, the material meaning of a sign is "nothing without an ideal essence that it incarnates,"[306] as individual entities have virtual essences that

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[299] Mark Wilson, *Physics Avoidance*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2018.

[300] Giuseppe Longo, "Extended criticality, phase spaces and enablement in biology" in *Emergent Critical Brain Dynamics*, ed. A.A. Benasich and U. Ribary, vol. 55, 2013, pp. 64-79.

[301] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold*, p. 55.

[302] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 13.

[303] Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, p. 9.

[304] Ibid., p. 41.

[305] Gilles Deleuze, *Expression Philosophy—Spinoza*, M. Joughin, New York, Zone Books, 1990, p. 146.

[306] Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, p. 13.

withdraw from all relations.

§ CONCLUSION

Engaging in a close analysis with Kleinherenbrink's work, *Against Continuity*, this paper has sought to weave a latticework that recovers a hitherto overlooked machine ontology and externality thesis which maintain that machines only encounter the actual manifestations (sense-events and flows) of other machines rather than the virtual aspects of machines meeting directly. In turn, we have sought to galvanize a rigorous close reading of Deleuze that treats machines as a "minimum real unit."[307] We can further elaborate that the machine has four aspects: two of these comprise its virtual and non-relational aspect, while the two others its actual manifestations in relations—a machine's *body* comprises its virtual unity while the machine's *Idea* (its singularities or powers) comprises virtual specificity (*this* rather than *that* machine, as noted by our comparative analysis with Garcia's de-determination).

In *The Logic of Sense*, continuity is not a feature of the virtual realm, but one that belongs to sense-events, or actuality. Continuity is contingent, "in that it needs to be established and in that it can collapse."[308] In *Anti-Oedipus*, continuity is, similarly, regarded as a local and temporal achievement that occurs on the plane of actuality, conditioned by ontological breakages qua externality and by machines.[309] Contra Platonist essentialism and Leibniz' monadology, for Deleuze univocity does not "mean that there is one and the same Being; on the contrary, beings are multiple and different […] That of which it is said is not at all the same, but Being is the same for everything about which it is said."[310]

Perhaps Kleinherenbrink's boldest statement, which this paper has tried to support, is that Deleuze is an object-oriented philosopher whose machine ontology adheres to some of the positions postulated by speculative realism. Within the camp of speculative realist and object-oriented philosophers we have reviewed, we saw the emergence of a metaphysics that is both internalist and

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[307] Gilles Deleuze, *Dialogues*, p. 41.
[308] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 125. Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 294.
[309] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 38.
[310] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 179.

externalist. For Bryant and DeLanda, for instance, discrete entities are designated as internal to larger continuous domains, whereby the virtual is relegated to pure productive forces ("chaos itself, or anything else").[311] In Meillassoux's anti-correlationist system and Ray Brassier's Sellarsian scientific formulation, realism's reality exists independently from human experience and/or thought despite it can be grasped through the application of privileged procedures (e.g., kenotypic signs-cum-mathematics or natural sciences, respectively). For Gabriel, Garcia, and with Latour's ontologization through mutual association qua actants, individual entities supervene upon reality by defining relationally determined entities—this is the case regardless of whether we are speaking of primary or secondary qualities (or, in Garcian lexicon, "form" and "object"). Nonetheless, in a mode that is altogether unique from these philosophers, Deleuze staunchly and rigorously produces an externalist ontology "in which every machine has an interior that can never be reduced or even presented to other beings,"[312] as irreducible singularities have to undergo translation in order to be generated. Despite Harman also has a rather staunch theory of externality, Deleuze's machine ontology restricts the occasions through which interior entities can change, whereas Harman fails to produce any such gradient. Deleuze's machine ontology and externality thesis produce a critical point of departure, evincing how every entity is an irreducible singularity that can merely be translated into relations vis-à-vis *difference* in kind between internal virtual content and absolute actuality.

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[311] Arjen Kleinherenbrink, *Against Continuity*, p. 295.

[312] Ibid., p. 296.