
Is A New Life Possible? Deleuze and the Lines

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Abstract

In his dialogues with Claire Parnet, Deleuze asserts that: ‘Whether we are individuals or groups, we are made of lines’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 124). In *A Thousand Plateaus* (with Guattari), Deleuze calls these kinds of ‘lifelines’ or ‘lines of flesh’: break line (or segmental line, or molar line), crack line (or molecular line) and rupture line (also called line of flight) (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 22). We will explain the difference between these three lines and how they are related to the ‘soul’. We will also explain how a singular individual or group can arise from the play of the lines. Eventually, we will introduce the concept of ‘Creal’ to develop the Deleuzian figure of the ‘Anomal’, the so(u)rcerer.

Keywords: crack line, molar line, molecular line, rupture, break, soul, difference, Hume, singular, Creal, impression, Anomal, subject

Lightning, for example, distinguishes itself from the black sky but must also trail it behind, as though it were distinguishing itself from that which does not distinguish itself from it. (Deleuze 2004: 36)

I. Introduction: ‘Whether we are individuals or groups, we are made up of lines’

What is it that makes us act? What is it that brings us from motion into space? Following what directions? What principles? The human life is often presented as a straight line, which has a start, a midpoint and an end. We picture ourselves evolving on this line with the feeling

Deleuze Studies 7.1 (2013): 106–152

DOI: 10.3366/dls.2013.0096

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that we are not always the masters of our destinies and unsure as to which goal(s) to aim for. Is it meaningful to draw such a vectorisation of life when every living being, as soon as it sets itself free from certain indoctrinations, certain imperatives, so often feels that it is bursting with boundless energy or desire and that it is leaking out from every side, like an overflowing vase?

People talk about a life curve in terms of industrial items, but does the human experience – being so complex and metamorphic – truly follow a line? Can its essence be summed up in such a linear form, which would be but a form of abstraction deprived from any other link with the real life of the spiritual bodies than a symbolic or metaphoric one? ‘Oh, the poverty of the imaginary and the symbolic, the real always being put off until tomorrow’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 51).

To say that souls follow lines seems to be a schematic abstraction. But it seems as though it were a concrete reality according to several excerpts in Gilles Deleuze’s work; for instance, in the first chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, when, as he is taking a closer look at the distinction between the base of things and their surface, the philosopher writes: ‘The rising ground is no longer below, it acquires autonomous existence; the form reflecting itself in this ground is no longer a form but an abstract line acting directly upon the soul’ (Deleuze 2004: 37). Further in his writings, and particularly in his dialogues with Claire Parnet, Deleuze asserts quite simply that: ‘Whether we are individuals or groups, we are made up of lines’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 124).

Individuation would thus follow one or several lines, like social life. How to understand – to accept? – that one of the simplest geometrical shapes could be used to describe souls? And how to describe this line, these lines and the dynamics that rule them? First of all, why does Deleuze emphasise the notion of soul in philosophy at the end of the twentieth century, while some cynical or embarrassed minds claimed it was part of the museum of theology?

We shall be more precise: Gilles Deleuze suggests that this line of life divides itself into three threads, or rather that there are three lines of life: ‘The primary line of flight, of border or frontier, which is relativized in the second line, which allows itself be stopped or cut in the third’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 137). What is the meaning of this tripartite system and how does it work? And what is the meaning of terms like flight or cut? In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze (with Guattari) calls these kinds of ‘lifelines’ or ‘lines of flesh’: ‘break lines (or segmental lines, or molar lines), crack lines (or molecular lines) and rupture lines (also called lines of flight)’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 221).

In the first place, the molar lines seem to be defined as binary and oppositional imperatives, segmenting, ordering, as forces of control and of social overcoding, of training, as a narrowing of the *élan vital* or a diversion from it. We shall notice at this point that this definition might remind us of the tendency Nietzsche called ‘Apollonian’ – the formalist containment. This orientation will be explored by reading *Nietzsche and Philosophy* by Deleuze.

As for the rupture lines, they seem to be chaotic lines of ‘the steepest slope’, of flight towards a disindividuated becoming, a force of impetuous attraction, the torrent of an over-full life (but not always a fool’s life) bursting beyond the preservation necessity of the individual belonging to a species. Again, we will have to develop this first evocation and try to understand to what extent these two terms ‘break’ and ‘rupture’ can be opposed. We shall also notice that the rupture lines seem to evoke the concept of the Dionysian by Nietzsche – the excesses bursting from the centre of the earth, from the underground – an impression that we will explore.

Between these two lines, there is supposed to be a ‘crack line’, neither automating-castrating nor impulsive-anarchic, which according to Deleuze would fall and rise, like a yo-yo perhaps or a ‘molecular flux of quanta’. This is a more supple line than the molar line, but Deleuze, in *Dialogues II*, maintains that it is not necessarily ‘a more personal nor a more intimate one’. ‘Micro-cracks are also collective. They run through societies and groups’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 124).

It is at this point that the main difficulty in our attempts to sort things out arises. Indeed, if the molar line is social, the rupture line infra individual, and the molecular line collective, where does the possibility of a singular individuation, of a subject’s uniqueness stand? Where is the dynamic, the personality, which is generally supposed to tell individuals apart, in their identity, in their own becoming? What is it that leads a soul to express a distinct human self, a triumphing ‘I’, supposing that the individual identity is not a fiction out of reach? And what is it that Deleuze calls the ‘fracture in the I’ in *Difference and Repetition*?

It seems that the term ‘crack’ has been inspired, among others, by F. Scott Fitzgerald’s short story *The Crack-up*. We shall state at once that it appears there is some dissonance between Deleuze’s text and Fitzgerald’s one. Deleuze seems to give a rather positive and active meaning to the notion of crack, whereas the vision offered by the American novelist is that of a depressive loss of vital flow, of impetus, an incapacity to embrace the fullness of existence. Fitzgerald depicts the fractured or cracked-up being as ‘a person whose life makes other people’s life seem

like death' (Fitzgerald 2009: 73–4) For Deleuze, the crack is healthier. But in fact, Deleuze and Fitzgerald are talking about the same line, for this one can be explored following the autumn or the spring, going down or up. On one side, the crack sets free; on the other side, it dries up. Or perhaps, does it set free by drying up the Real, like Deleuze said about Beckett? A line along which we believe we do not want anything anymore because we want everything.

In Fitzgerald's story, a woman replies to the narrator's lament:

'Instead of being so sorry for yourself, listen—she said. (She always says 'Listen,' because she thinks while she talks—*really* thinks.) So she said: 'Listen. Suppose this wasn't a crack in you—suppose it was a crack in the Grand Canyon.' 'The crack's in me,' I said heroically. 'Listen! The world only exists in your eyes—your conception of it. You can make it as big or as small as you want to. And you're trying to be a little puny individual. By God, if I ever cracked, I'd try to make the world crack with me. Listen! The world only exists through your apprehension of it, and so it's much better to say that it's not you that's cracked—it's the Grand Canyon' (Fitzgerald 2009: 73–4).

Grand Canyon or 'fractured I', what is the real driving dynamic of the human life if it is neither normativity nor anarchy?

Our examination of the tripartite conception of the lifeline will be advanced in four steps. We will first try to better understand the difference between the three lines—molar, rupture and molecular—and how they can be related to 'the soul'. In the second part, we will try to explain the interweaving, the structure of these three lines, their mutual influence, their permeation, which depends on the particular conception of the being and of the I as fractured. In the third part, we shall understand how a singular individual can arise (or not) from the play of the lines. Such a singular subject will appear as a contemplating, impressed and impressive soul, incarnated in a specific language, that is to say a figure not enclosed inside itself, not fractured. We will resume the hypothesis according to which the subject is longing for everything, in order to think a rising 'I', if it is possible. Finally, in the fourth part, once the role of the lifelines is clearer and the existence of a singular subject will seem possible in the form of a benevolent so(u)rcerer, someone who keeps bringing into being that which does not yet exist, it will be time to start a summary of what has been exposed before, reaching a full understanding of the way we move from the impression that comes first to the active subject.

II. Distinction of the Three Lines: Molar Lines, Rupture Lines, Molecular Lines

The Soul Draws Lines

‘The rising ground is no longer the background, but acquires an autonomous existence; the form reflecting itself in this ground is no longer a form but an abstract line acting directly upon the soul’ asserts Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze 2004: 37) How can an abstract line operate directly upon the soul? To answer that question, we will have to understand what Deleuze means by ‘soul’ and, in order to do so, the reader is advised to listen to the class he gave at the Paris VIII university in 1986–7: *Leibniz: Soul and Damnation* (Deleuze 2003) before we examine here the first chapter of *Difference and Repetition*.

‘What does this mean, the tissue of the soul?’ wonders Deleuze while reading Leibniz. A swarm of small inclinations is the very component of the stuff of the soul. These inclinations fold the soul in all directions. This is not just a metaphor, this is the true nature of the Real: ‘a swarm of differences, a pluralism of free wild or untamed differences ...’ (Deleuze 2004: 61) That is the essence of the soul: folds that form and unfold constantly in all senses; this is a ‘*pruritus*’, a ‘concern’. As if thousands of tiny springs were working in various directions, with elastic forces. The soul is a living, multiple being, an endless network simmering with differential micro-variations. The tissue of the soul, in a constant ‘disparity’, makes micro-folding, virtualised folds. How does this simmer, this swarm which has a tendency to fold, form lines?

‘Towards which side will I fold my soul?’ This is the question of the unconscious. The human self is what results from the production of a perception we have discerned, from a maximum of small perceptions: an inclination, a ‘decisive fold’, which forms a line of action. This decisive fold, this ‘decisory’ fold, is the trigger of action. The lifeline is formed by the association of decisory folds, which have led us here and there, to do or say this or that. We can already consider that if three complementary forces oppose each other—social break of training, rupture by coming back to the pure difference of disparity, individual crack of the ‘neither-nor’ (neither Apollo nor Dionysius)—we can end up with the formation of a kind of individuation, as unoriginal or not autonomous as it may seem at first glance, at this stage of our development.

In any case, the soul is not some steady scales upon which we might put weights. The true figure, the only possible diagram for the deliberation of the soul, according to Deleuze as he re-reads Leibniz, is a diagram of inflexion: there are only inflexions in the soul, inclinations

tracing folds of different sizes. These folds are the furrows of the action. The self is deliberative: it builds itself up in the virtual space and time we dedicate to the elaboration of a decisory fold, leading to a line of action in the real space. What is it that conveys to a movement a linear unity? It is the soul as a folder, which is the unity of the movement. ‘Will I go to the pub or go to work?’ The world drives us from a desire to a counter-desire, imaginings to actions.

But why does the soul draw lines rather than stay, for example, at a point? It is a matter of amplitude regarding the pendulum, a question of unfurling of the folded space and a matter of incarnation. The soul that lies at a point is not incarnated; it is, as such, asleep or damned. When a soul comes into the world, it is a body that unfolds. *To become spiritual is to unfold one’s body*. All souls draw lines following various amplitudes, internal spaces of more or less broad folding—to the exclusion of ‘the damned’, which are the souls tending to be willing to reduce their amplitude to a mere point, a point of sheer hatred of the Everything (‘I hate God!’). A completely unfolded soul, on the contrary, as we can deduce from what was just said, would be a sheer affirmation of everything.

At the basis of the Real, there is thus a pre-individual pruritus of endless differences. This background opens up in the space-time folding and unfolding itself, creating folds. At times, the sum of a certain amount of micro-folds forms a decisory fold, which is a line of action, a line of action of a defined amplitude: ‘Whether we are individuals or groups, we are made of lines’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 124). Now let us take a closer look at the three kinds of lines Deleuze points out.

The Molar Line or Segmentary Line

‘The first kind of line which forms us is segmentary, of rigid segmentarity’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 124). This fold is the archetypal social fold, the fold of convention, driven by the survival imperative. This is the line of classifying language, the line of prioritisation, of ordering, duty, false oppositions: ‘family—profession; job—holidays; family—and then school—and then the army—and then the factory—and then retirement.’ This is the line of the *they*: ‘They tell us: now, you are not a baby anymore’¹ (14–17). This is a line that works collectively, a line of imprisonment in such and such a function or group, a line of training, a line setting in motion the wheels of the social code according to operational models enabling mass containment of the vital flows—necessarily reductive, forced and simplifying. These are

segments that, far from embracing the natural inclinations of the soul, its multidirectional pruritus and its joyful worry, castrate it or rather try to do so, lull it with the notion of obligation, the notion of necessary limitation of the individual name-surname inscribed in a historic era and in a given society.

The main binary segments make us suffer because the real individuation happens at a more subterranean, less clear-cut, less caricatured level. The main segments of disconnection, which literally take our breath away or shut off our desire in moments when freedom would like to follow another path, these moments of ‘they’ are oppositions and impositions working as emphatic imperatives: ‘rich–poor, success–loss of success, health–sickness, love–love’s drying-up, creativity–sterility’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 126). These are false opinions for, in reality, from the point of view of this opposition the rich as rich and the poor as poor cannot be told apart, they are in the same fold: they are both cut through by the money cut. Likewise the lover and the solitary person do not differ from each other as long as they are prisoners of a social and collective definition of their attachment-detachment.

A molar line depends on ‘binary machines’. The machines of break are oppositional poles, heavily dialectical, regimenting the flow of inclinations, generating actions-reactions, orientating the folds of the soul without nuance.

There are binary machines of social classes, of sexes (man–woman), of ages (child–adult), of races (black–white), of sectors (public–private), of subjectivations (ours–not ours) ... These binary machines are all the more complex for cutting across each other, or colliding against each other, confronting each other and they cut us up in all senses. (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 128)

These conflicted dichotomies do not create spaces of liberation but only new segments, new compartments, new false and too visible minorities; for example, the mixed-blood individual as third term of the white-black segment – as if to call oneself mixed-blood or anything else could free the individual from his or her problematical desire to find one’s place in the world. In fact, it is always about controlling inclinations so as to impose rules more easily. The molar lines are social and therefore political. The segments that are cut imply ‘devices of power’, and we can draw an implicit parallel here with what Foucault called ‘biopower’.

As many classifying devices, as many codes which drive the energies of the soul away from its creative or liberating (or auto-destructive) instinct, the segments determine a limited space in which the individual

human being must be penned, if possible, in a compound. Cut, he may still think he breathes, belongs, has a destiny, but in fact he is only penned in this big compound. The segments impose themselves with the relative complicity of the individual because they reassure him in view of the tormenting big vacuum and big chaos, and because they set up competitive networks that animate the ego and divert/pervert the soul. We know the importance of chaos in Deleuze's philosophy; for him this concept includes a positive reality—a play of differences, an 'ungrounding'—rather than a negative (groundlessness).

Each molar line corresponds to a territory in which a code can be applied at almost no cost. This behavioural code that obtains gratification without superhuman effort comforts human laziness in the idea that there must be something good in the exterior order, the hyper-normed society, that overcoding is the only way to organise a society. The molar lines are trends of automatising of life, comfortable in appearance but in fact, behind the routine, despite the rules and the rewards, it is a form of apnoea: 'M. de Charlus collapses at Mme Verdurin's, because he has ventured beyond his own territory and his code no longer works' (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 129).

The rules and the rewards of the segmental line regime are decreed by a 'State apparatus', that is to say a 'concrete assemblage', which effectuates the machine of overcoding in a society: 'An abstract machine organizes the prevailing statements and the established order of a society, the dominant languages and knowledge, the well-adjusted actions and feelings, the segments that win over the others' (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 129).

To write a philosophical essay, for instance, means in a sense to obey a cutting organisation outline: the one of exposing analysis and of quotation of the corpus. In order not to be only cut and thus speechless, we ought to progressively tend to the fracture without lapsing into complete poetical rupture. We understand with this example that the soul draws lines: confronted with breaking forces and rupture forces, the line (we cannot help thinking about the written line) is a strategy of affirmation by vital focalisation, a concentration in deed, which does not turn into a point of hatred but goes forth towards the hope of an active singularity. Why a line, why a fracture, why a lightning? Because the dilatation or the blaze would be mortal if excessive, because willing to occupy all space at the same time would be equivalent to comparing ourselves to God.

We can notice that the molar line can evoke the plastic formatting that was called the Apollonian principle by Nietzsche, provided we identify

the collective order with the beautiful appearance, which is precisely the prevailing political speech. Deleuze quotes Nietzsche: 'Apollo overcomes the suffering of the individual by the radiant glorification of the eternity of the phenomenon' (Deleuze 2006: 11). The imaged artifice and the hyper-form are meant to make the suffering fade away: this reminds us of the prevailing contemporaneous cosmetics, which advocates for a shaping of bodies according to visible canonical models. Comply with the norm and you will be beautiful.

The Apollonian concept also gives us a description of the molar line that is not entirely negative: 'It would be too easy to say: "This is a bad line"' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 216). It can save us from the death-drive into which can turn the rupture line.

We understand, in any case, how the cut lines work under the constraint of the imperative, of 'you have to'. We see very well how these lines can exert a formatting pressure on the multiplicity of differences that are boiling in the soul at each moment. What is it that is cut by the molar line? The molar line cuts the formation of a line of steep slope, which is the rupture line. The rupture line is somehow a rupture of the break and vice versa. But what is exactly this rupture line?

The Rupture Line or the Dancer's Soul

The rupture line may seem, at first sight, the opposite of the molar line. While one segments, the other crosses through the segments. While one organises, the other is a flow running through a line of irresistible trend. While one makes codes in a predictable world, the other builds chances out of impulses, unexpected decisory folds, energetic flows of tension bursting out. 'This line is simple, abstract and yet is the most complex of all, the most tortuous' (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 125). This is the overflowing of vital excess and this time it evokes the Dionysian principle by Nietzsche: 'Dionysus returns to primitive unity, he shatters the individual, drags him into the great shipwreck and absorbs him into original being.' Inside all of us there is more life than what is needed to draw straight lines. We leak out from every part and are unceasingly tempted to express our overabundance of being by letting out cries of joy, of madness or of fright. The rupture is sometimes here, sometimes there, sometimes elsewhere, flow of blood or loss of it.

We notice that the rupture is not opposed to the break of the molar line in a strict dialectical way. After Nietzsche, Deleuze pleads against too binary dialectical comprehensions of the Real. Instead of talking about a contradiction, we would rather speak about a differential

complicity of the two forces: the break like the rupture line tries to suppress the singularity of the subject in the first person, which is summoned by the crack line.

Finally, Deleuze compares the rupture with ‘the dancer’s soul’ in the *Dialogues* with Claire Parnet, quoting *On the Marionette Theatre* by Heinrich von Kleist. It is not unimportant to stop a moment by this short text of 1810, reaching the climax of romanticism in that it advocates natural grace against semi-conscious reason. *On the Marionette Theatre* may also be one of the matrixes of Deleuze’s conception of lines. Kleist mentions his meeting with a dancer from the city’s opera house, in front of a marionette theatre. The dancer explains that the soul is the motive force of movement (*vis motrix*) and that the puppeteer does not set into motion the limbs but the point of gravity around which the limbs start to dance as if by magic: ‘Each movement, writes Kleist, has its center of gravity; it is enough to direct it within the puppet. The limbs, which are only pendulums, then follow mechanically of their own accord, without further help’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 138).

Kleist adds that each time the puppet’s centre of gravity is ‘moved in a straight line, the limbs describe curves’. The line drawn by the centre of gravity is sometimes a straight one sometimes an incurved one, with a simple but ‘exceedingly mysterious’ appearance: ‘It is none other than *the progression of the soul of the dancer*’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 138–40).

Man loses the dancer’s grace because of the conscience he has of himself and because of the auto-reflexive act of comparing himself with others. Affectation is when the soul is ‘anywhere other than the movement centre of gravity’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 140). The reflection of the self in others and vice versa is precisely the moment of the break, whereas the rupture is, in the best of cases, incarnated by the return of the soul to its centre of gravity. Kleist writes: ‘We see that in the organic world, as reflection grows dimmer and weaker, grace merges more brilliantly and decisively’ (140).

But the puppet can break down. The rupture line is sometimes the line of grace, sometimes the line of a death-drive: ‘It would be a mistake’, advises Deleuze, ‘to believe that it is enough to follow the line of flight or rupture.’ For the rupture lines hold an extreme danger: ‘That of turning into abolition, of destruction of others and of oneself. A passion for abolition. Just like music – why does it give us the urge to die?’ (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 140).

To sum up, the rupture line is the abyss in which what puts down roots is sometimes the grace of the living, sometimes the disappearing of

the individual: 'Not that it derives from the two others but it comes before them' (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 140). This is the hazardous and eternally different ground everything originates from and comes back to. This is, Deleuze writes in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, the South: once more – actually like dance, for 'To dance is to affirm becoming and the being of becoming' (Deleuze 2006: 161) – a Nietzschean theme: the Noon, the hour when the world is 'perfect', a 'well of eternity' according to Zarathustra. The South or the Noon is the moment when the soul reaches its maximal amplitude, when it reaches out to the infinite divine affirmation, in opposition, as we have seen before, to the point of negation in which the hatred for the Everything seen as a universal separation reaches the ego. Thus speaks Nietzsche through Zarathustra: 'How long and weary it becomes, my strange soul! . . . It stretches itself out, long – longer!' (161).

The Molecular Line or Real Lifeline

The crack line seems to somehow result from the tension of the other two lines. We could believe the following: the line of the human experience, 'lightning in the black sky', corresponds to a spatiotemporal molecular line, under the pressure of the other two lines, a pressure which we will have to apprehend as not exclusively dialectical. The molar lines exert pressure for the preservation of a hard-segmented world, with a homogeneous vocation in its organisation. The rupture lines are supposed to exert a chaotic force leading to exhilaration, drunkenness, intoxication (or to death), a gravity of the subterranean lava, a world of differential impulse. The crack line, the more human one (maybe the only truly human one) seems to be a creation of space-time, pressure upwards or downwards expelling the Apollonian monolithic blocks and limiting the Dionysian circular outflows, by lying in the world, in the rite, and in the language, although not entirely.

Because it is also a compromise, a fault of subsistence. These are, still, lines of segmentarity, although they are 'much more supple' (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 124). 'They trace small modifications, they are winding, they sketch falls or jumps' (124). There is something touching, something existential, in the molecular line, because it seems to resist the cut line while still fearing it will sink into the rupture. 'A profession is a rigid segment, but also what happens beneath it, the connections, the attractions and repulsions which do not coincide with the segments, the form of madness which are secret but which nevertheless relate to the public authorities' (125). We may have the impression that

everything is all right, that we are well adjusted in society, that we have the permissions and the rewards we require and then 'a plate cracks': light is cast upon 'a lowered resistance limit or higher requirement level. We can no longer put up with what we previously put up with' (124).

The molar line establishes classifying links between 'pairs' whereas the molecular line is set into motion by 'particles escaping from these classes'. The links established by the molecular line are connections of 'doubles', generating a self-revelation, revealing that identity is not as steady as the frequency of the segments might suggest.

Fitzgerald seems to be, in 1935, a successful author blessed by Destiny. And then the editor in chief of the magazine *Esquire* visits him in Baltimore to ask him why he no longer writes articles or short stories. 'I cannot write anymore,' the author whispers. A short story will, however, be written in an attempt to explain this incapacity: *The Crack-up*, where Fitzgerald explains that when we are in the crack-up, life does not give in to intelligence and effort that easily. We can no longer be satisfied with social superficialities like celebrity. Fitzgerald then describes the crack as a form of vital incapacity, and this may seem contradictory to what Deleuze said about it. However, both do talk about the same thing, in the way that the crack line can be explored upwards and downwards, towards an augmentation of the rise or in the direction of the fall. The molecular line is precisely this human hesitation, this fold going from the paralysis of social inscription to the energy that splits constraints while respecting them partly. The crack line is the airlock of hesitation or of perseverance which makes the being emerge. Falling fracture, that is to say sinking and agony in the repetition of separation; rising fracture, that is to say creative repetition of the vital tension.

Here we clearly hear that the molecular line can be defined both as resulting from the rigidities of the molar line, and as the cracking due to the call of the rupture line. That is why we will have to attempt a more precise explanation of the way the three lines revolve around each other and interweave, with difference in their framework.

III. The Organisation of the Lines and the Difference

Against the Dialectic and the Abstractly Considered Symptoms

We could be tempted to see a kind of Hegelian dialectic in the interdependent play of the three lines. The molar line would be the thesis, the rupture line the antithesis and the molecular line the synthesis. That would be a partial interpretation of Deleuze's proposition.

The philosopher repeatedly set himself apart from the dialectic in his works. Among others, in his *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, the concluding chapter is called 'Against the Dialectic'. 'The difference is more profound' than Hegel's conceptions judged too abstract and representative.

'On Hegel's interpretation, the death of Christ stands for superseded opposition, the reconciliation of finite and infinite, the unity of God and the individual, of changeless and particular' (Deleuze 2006: 148). Hegel seems to understand sensible diversity as an appearance, a game of the spirit. In doing so, he neglects the flesh of the world. He wants to look the negative straight in the eyes but remains in the spectacular face to face with the subject and object. His thesis, antithesis and synthesis, according to Deleuze, are only the symptoms of something which is at stake at a deeper level and which has to do with the difference rather than with the dialectic.

This is not the place to discuss injustice towards Hegel in this Nietzschean-inspired criticism. However, it appears clearly how the permutations of the dialectic can remain logical-abstract and can be used to raise capital concepts. Such superlative empty concepts were taken up by the 'New Philosophers' in the 1980s, with a lot less force and complexity than Hegel. Deleuze will precisely blame them for talking about Evil, Man, War without understanding their subtle ambiguities and their polyvalence. All of this proceeds from a willingness to fix the representation rather than to follow and to welcome the richness of the becoming:

It is not surprising that the dialectic proceeds by opposition, development of the opposition or contradiction, solution of the contradiction. It is unaware of the real element from which forces, their qualities and their relations, derive; it only knows the inverted image of this element which is reflected in abstractly considered symptoms. (Deleuze 2006: 148)

What is subtle and supreme is the difference.

The critic regarding the dialectic is hard or even unfair since it is relegated to 'a fiction': 'To walk feet on the ceiling is not a thing that a dialectician can blame another for, this is the fundamentals of the dialectic itself' (Deleuze 2006: 149). What Deleuze reproaches Marx for in this hint, despite the admiration he had for him, is the same thing as before: not allowing himself the thought of a vital affirmation, an affirmation which would not be only theoretical or dependant on an abstract negation, but an affirmation of a living difference. What is this 'difference'?

The Difference or the Being of the Sensible

‘Imagine’, Deleuze says in *Difference and Repetition*,

something which distinguishes itself – and yet that from which it distinguished itself does not distinguish itself from it. Lightning for example distinguishes itself from the black sky but must also trail it behind, as though it were distinguishing itself from that which does not distinguish itself from it. It is as if the ground rose to the surface without ceasing to be the ground. (Deleuze 2004: 36)

The difference is first envisioned as a ‘monstrous’ fight between what is undifferentiated and oneself. It is the moving of the being, its determination will in a continuous flow and metamorphosis, a movement Deleuze calls ‘cruelty’, reminding us of Nietzsche. This is the bottom that wants to rise up to the surface; it is a will to become a fold, a line, which is not a will to become a plastic form. This is the Dionysian that wants to appear without falling into the Apollonian trend. ‘Difference is monstrous’ (Deleuze 2004: 37): that is to say what tends to show itself (*monstro*, *monstrare* in Latin), to manifest itself without following the form, rather dissolving it, making its straight lines and its pillars waver.

On the other hand, if the difference does not reach out to the form, we could picture it as reaching out to functioning life. The difference would then be the impulse of the undifferentiated generating organs, that is to say interconnected networks of subcategories, bound by the rule of the biggest and the smallest. The difference would not be a continuous *monstration* but of big or small categories or sets; neither the diversity nor the otherness but the opposition of sizes able to fit the principles of identity, of opposition, of analogy, of resemblance, once they are in the field of representation.

But to enslave the difference to the exclusive requirements of organic representation would be veiling its ‘orgiastic’ element (Deleuze 2004: 52). For a long time thought tried to explain chaos, ‘causing a little of Dionysius’ blood to flow in the organic veins of Apollo’ (Deleuze 2006: 149). Intoxication, quartering, fainting, decentring: these are the different stances that representation can never completely reach because representation on the contrary is centration. We could say that the difference is eternal space (‘a non-extensive and non-qualified *spatium*’ – Deleuze 2004: 33), fundamental chaos, pure roaring intensity. Most of the time humans only dwell in the surface space-time, a distorted space full of emptiness – excluding some psychotic minds maybe, or

some mystic people, some musicians, artists or other people who know how to merge with the otherness and the source, casting the ego down.

Difference is not an abstraction. It is the way of being of the sensible. It is, Deleuze says in *Difference and Repetition*, the world of the 'disparate' and of the emerging substrates. Now, we have already met this active disparity: Leibniz applies the idea to the ground of the soul. For Deleuze there is undoubtedly identity between the essence of the soul and the difference. The difference is infra-subjective, infra-individual, *infranimal* even, but it is also spiritual and animistic. What is then revealed is a set of differences 'which are neither in sub-stance nor in a subject: so many subterranean affirmations' (Deleuze 2004: 70).

We have to understand that the difference comes before the lines but it underlies them: the line of flight is leak, *ungrounding* towards the difference; the rupture line is forcing back, burial of the difference; and the crack line is manifestation of the difference through the relentless repetition or exhaustion of the breaking repetition. In their relation to the difference, these three lines can be considered as being just one.

Three Moments of a Same Line

'The primary line of flight, of border or frontier, which is relativized in the second line, which allows itself be stopped or cut in the third' (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: 137). We can consider, Deleuze says, that the primary line of flight, attracted by the Dionysian differential chaos, in order not to be cut, stopped by the Apollonian rigidities, will turn into a relative line, the molecular line. The fissure of the molecular line seems to be the human compromise between the whirl of the undifferentiated and the social mechanisms. What is the meaning of such a relativisation?

Let us first try to understand how these three moments of the line (or the three lines) are organised. First of all, the rupture line. If it is the line of the steepest slope, how can we explain its being highly dynamic and liberatory? How can we explain that it will not sink into the undifferentiated? Maybe because it does, but in the process, which is not a groundlessness but an *ungrounding*, it draws on an energy that makes it spring up again. The line of flight is once more taken in two directions, in the direction of a loss of destructive energy and in the direction of a springing up of the sensible.

How to understand that the molar line devitalises whereas it has been created by the institutions, that is to say by the humans? The direction of the molar line is also an edification: because of it, men dictate law

and rules that ensure the functioning of groups, keeping them alive over other groups. The molar line aims to be the vital line of a dominant group, whereas the rupture is the energy line of the divine, multiversal monster.

We understand the necessity of a third line better, a molecular line, more human, even if we could be satisfied with an oscillation and a conflict between the first two opposite lines: the Dionysian line of rupture and the Apollonian molar line. The molecular line is the line of relativisation with respect to the rupture line. It means that it is a line of connection: neither entirely submitted to automaton-like imperatives nor entirely submitted to the impulse of the undifferentiated. The molecular line seems to be the line of the 'I' inserted in the 'we'.

Here again, we are confronted by an obstacle. We have noticed earlier that Deleuze did not consider the molecular line as 'more intimate or personal'. And yet, everything leads us to think it is. The molecular line seems to be the line of affectivity, of the intimate self. But in fact, it is rather related to the 'fractured I', divided by self-reflection. Can we then conceive a molecular line, which would not be entirely intimate or entirely collective? What is it that Deleuze calls the 'fractured I'?

The Fractured I: 'I is an Other'

We should be concerned with a precise moment within Kantianism, a furtive and explosive moment which is not even continued by Kant, much less by post-Kantianism—except, perhaps, by Hölderlin, in the experience and the idea of a 'categorical abduction'. For when Kant puts rational theology into question, *in the same stroke* he introduces a kind of disequilibrium, a fissure or crack, in the pure Self of the *I think*, an alienation in itself, theoretically insurmountable: the subject can henceforth represent its own spontaneity only as that of an Other, and in doing so invokes a mysterious coherence in the last instance, which excludes his own, that of the world and God. A cogito for a dissolved Self: the Self of the 'I think' includes in its essence a receptivity of intuition in relation to which 'I' is already another. It matters little that synthetic identity, and, following that, the morality of practical reason, restore the integrity of the self, of the world and of God, thereby preparing the way for post-Kantian syntheses. For a brief moment we enter into that schizophrenia in principle, which characterizes the highest power of thought and opens Being directly on to difference, despite all the mediations, all the reconciliations of the concept. (Deleuze 2004: 70)

Let us dwell for a moment on this idea of the fractured I. Everything arises, Deleuze says, from the difference between the Kantian cogito and the Cartesian cogito. *I think therefore I am*: there is nothing that can

lead us to think that the 'I' that thinks is the same as the 'I' that is, as Kant observes in *Critic of Pure Reason*. The thought existence may not be exactly the same as the life existence. For Deleuze, there is in effect a caesura between them. As soon as the I wants to apprehend being, it apprehends time: 'The form under which undetermined existence is determinable by the I think is that of time' (Deleuze 2004: 108).

What are the consequences of this swapping between being and time, between pure *spatium* and temporal conscience? First, it is due to the fact that my indeterminate existence can only be determined *in time*, as the existence of a phenomenon, of a phenomenal, passive or receptive subject *appearing in time*. Hence the distressing paradox: either my active self is another and the self I feel the closest with is pure contemplative passivity, or it is the other way round, but hardly ever both at the same time. To become aware of this is to fall into the crack mentioned by Fitzgerald, a downward fracture if we stick to this passive perception of the self.

That is depression: to adhere to a passive self, spectator of phenomena and representations, and to feel sad about a fundamental lack of authentic initiative. 'It is as though the I were fissured from one end to the other: cracked by the pure and empty form of time', Deleuze repeats (Deleuze 2004: 108). Reflexivity makes us double. This double I is the fracture.

Deleuze tells us that Hölderlin discovers after Kant the emptiness of time backed with the sustained fracture in the I. In this form of time, Hölderlin saw the death-drive. What does this mean?

Let us read the lecture Deleuze gave about Kant in Vincennes (Deleuze 1978). As long as time is cyclical, death does not really occur, it is outside the limits of life, life is only seen as a replacement game in which, sooner or later, Destiny makes up for the injustices here or there. But as soon as time becomes a straight line, as soon as it 'un-curves', as it is 'out of joint' (which, according to Hölderlin, is illustrated first by Sophocles's *Oedipus* then by Shakespeare in *Hamlet*), conscience then becomes sad and vacillates.

Oedipus is in perpetual suspension, he will travel his straight line of time. In other words, he is traversed by a straight line which drags him along. Towards what? Nothing. Heidegger will be able to say later that it's towards death. He will draw from the straight line the idea, which is not wholly un-Kantian, of a sort of being-towards-death. (Deleuze 1978)

There is a caesura in the linear un-curved time and this caesura is a 'zero-instant' a 'pure present' of self-reflection. There is a before and an after

and so, according to the Nietzschean formula, the possibility of a will of revenge, of resentment. In short, the self creates the linear time and finds itself in a quandary, wanting to be at the centre of life.

Deleuze quotes a text by Hölderlin:

At the extreme limit of the rift nothing in fact remains except the conditions of time and space. At this limit man forgets himself because he is wholly inside the moment. God forgets because he is nothing but time. And there is infidelity on both sides ... (Deleuze 1978)

That is the modern condition of the I and the double turning-away: a God that would no longer be anything but empty time, a man that would no longer be anything but a caesura in time, an oblivion, a negation by self-extraction of the vital being and of difference. Everything happens, Deleuze says, as if thought has its enemy within.

We understand the molecular or crack line better now. The fissure arises at the moment when we shift our perception of life as friendly, to life as hostile or indifferent. As long as Nature informs us and organises destinies in a cyclical way, the self can only celebrate life: this is the time of the sweet *amor fati* and of the oceanic feeling. As soon as a self arises, setting its being from the world, suspicion towards life arises together with powerlessness and ego poverty. For to doubt life only centres ego on a spectator's passivity while life goes on, but without him. We cannot say that life is indifferent a priori but we can say that it is a posteriori indifferent to the self-reflective cogito. That is why the ego judging life with contempt judges only itself in reality and condemns itself to suffering and paralysis.

The fracture comes from the caesura, that is to say from the ego that wants to coincide with the being in a central position, whereas the centralised ego is precisely what prevents us from coinciding with being. Lack of being, loss of being, that is the name of the modern ego and from there it seeks revenge on the being which has supposedly abandoned it (whereas it is the ego that abandoned the being favouring separation instead of union). Its desire turns into infidelity. Self against the indifferent life: a tragedy leaving the self more on its own each time. Not alone against all, but like all.

Because if the fractured I is frequent, the singular I is rare. Now we have set the theoretic fundamental bases of what Deleuze calls lifeline, it is time we tried to think subjectivity in its singularity. Is a singular and free life still possible today, when the self essentially appeared as reactive, sullied by pathos and loss of being?

IV. Is A Singular Lifeline Possible?

It is admitted that the sap of being is becoming. But what is the basis of the human subject, how can he reach a singular individuality? The singular becoming, since it is enclosed in the original difference (also called 'monster' by Deleuze) by the rupture line or line of flight, is first the anchor chain linking the surface to the depth. Difference is a non-representative process, which is involuntary, unsubjective, impersonal and infra-individual.

We are made up of more or less curved lines: rupture lines—the call for the Dionysian; molar lines—the social imperatives; molecular lines—the ascending or descending compromise between these two opposite tendencies. A curved line implies an inflection point. A singular point is opposed to an ordinary point in the line, not because it is determinate by a form or the development of a form, but because it determines the change of inflection of a line. The lines' inflection point is always determined, as we will analyse below in Deleuze's text about Hume, by an impression, a sensation summoning both imagination and affective domain.

We have to seize each singularity, first as an emergence of difference, which is a canvas of multiple impressions making up the world's soul. An impression can never be localised and is never still, because it is in progress. An assemblage is formed when an abstract line is drawn between two impression points. Polarities between impressional micro-events are what set into motion the play of the molar line, rupture line and molecular line. The impression is first singular and we quickly pull it back because of cutting prejudices. Does that mean that the individual can never be singular but always a hybrid between the singular and the same?

For a subjective singularity to arise, as we will see, we have to take on the complicity of difference, this vital and infranimal flux, between the banks of novation and void, and to take on a relentless fight against repetition in the first person. There are two kinds of repetition in the first person: the social daily routine, which de-singularises, and the continuous resistance to death, which is the muffled voice of vital spontaneity, from which the ego is set apart by the cogito.

The Repetition of Union and Separation

The egotistical repetition of the social individual is alienating, separating, symbolical and lethal. So the sensible, vital repetition of the eternal

return of a disparate union, of the attention to the impressions, will be competing with ego in the first place.

‘Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it’, Deleuze says, after Hume (Deleuze 2004: 90). Imagination is defined as a power of contracting impressions. But repetition of habits is a somnolence of the imagination; whenever A appears, I expect the appearance of B. There are active contractions and passive contractions.

The passive contractions are the sleep-walker daily routine; they are not creative. The active contractions, more difficult, nourish themselves in the flesh of impressions. Passive contractions are an egotistical mechanism operating in time, in the present experienced by the I fractured by the cogito that sets it apart from the living. The impressional contraction takes place in pure original space, which is already at the surface. It is in this prejudiced social present that time spreads. A passive synthesis happens: ‘Time is subjective but in relation to the subjectivity of a passive subject’ (Deleuze 2004: 90). As for space, it is pure becoming, the creation of worlds perpetuates within it. A singular subject will have to draw new forces from the pure differential *spatium*, which is the flesh of the world, and will have to set itself free from time.

Deleuze evokes the Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness by Bergson:

Four o’clock strikes . . . However, quite apart from any memory or distinct calculation, we contract these into an internal qualitative impression in this living present or *passive synthesis* which is duration. Then we restore them in an auxiliary space, a derived time in which we can reproduce them, reflect (on) them, or count them like so many quantifiable external-impressions. (Deleuze 2004: 92)

Bergson’s mistake here is to talk about passive synthesis. The impressional contraction, according to Deleuze—whose trust for Hume is higher than for Bergson—is, on the contrary, active. It does indeed happen outside of time, in a living and continuous duration, but the time of restitution in an auxiliary space, the *partes extra partes* space, is not a derived time, it is the only time, the time of the cogito, the social time, and the ‘external-impressions’ are already nothing other than judgement, quantity and representation.

The repetition of the living, which is repetition of the dissimilar, draws lines in the soul: the contraction designates the active elements that will form these lines, the sensitive contraction points. How can we extract qualities from these points? How do we create a reality from

these contraction points? Because all the souls and the elements in the world are united by a 'primary sensibility that we are' (Deleuze 2004: 92). This primary sensibility is the very difference, as a living sensibility, the impulse to contract, the *monstrating* impression, as infra-organic. The contemplative soul is a pruritus questioning the eternal return of disparity.

We are made of thousands of habits and prejudices: they form the basic domain of the passive and secondary syntheses at the surface. The articulation of thought takes place within the I fractured by the cogito, and this caesura from life accounts for the habits of the I often being 'bad habits' from the point of view of life. The only good mental habit of the I, probably impossible to keep, would be to strive not to repeat in the first person, but to let life be repeated in the I. I stand outside the becoming as ego but I am partly inside as being. The repetition in the first person is the means through which difference is spoiled in representation. To give back its freedom of speech to difference, that is the goal of the individuality willing to find again its axis, that is to say the best way for difference to animate it and to instil a destiny. In order to do so, there are two ways, both ultimately improbable so long as they are distinct: the relentless auto-disciplinary repetition of genius, aiming at a return to grace through overdetermination to the limit of consciousness, and the stance of the self in a not-to-repeat-in-the-first-person.

To Bring into Existence that which Does Not Yet Exist

In order to be the expression of a real truth, the I needs to draw from the differential unconscious, in the creative basis of being. The lightning will be (c)real, completely alive, only if it is the expression of the base of the night. The only way for the I to become singular, that is to say to spread out and to manifest the active synthesis of the multiplicities that run through it, is to be willing to bring into existence that which does not exist. An I which would let itself be driven by the cutting repetitions ends up falling into the void of its fracture and goes downwards, wrongly clinging on to the repetitive molar lines in its struggle: 'You have to start your social routine again' (Deleuze 2004: 93). To climb back up the fissure, the exercise is to let the ground rise from a monstrous explosion, to repeat life. That is what we will call a hyper-stasis.

For the eruption of difference not to be anarchical without creating a rising linear form then a will, an axis is needed, defined as to bring into being that which does not yet exist, to 'bring into existence something you will not take from what already exists' (Deleuze 1983).

Hereafter is what Deleuze says in a lecture in Vincennes:

Because the modern world is tumult and chaos, the task of the modern man is to get out of tumult and chaos. How? Building up a spiritual life of one's own—see, it is the contrary of the modern dialectic, of the Hegelian dialectic—building up a spiritual life of one's own, that is to say a spiritual life which does not owe anything to what is existing, but you have to bring it into being, it is your task to bring into being something that you will not take from what exists. (Deleuze 1983)

This is the condition of becoming a figure that is not self-centred, the condition not to remain in the possible of representation: not willing to get out of oneself, because it is impossible, but 'to make the difference': 'We must therefore say that difference is made' (Deleuze 2004: 36). And we will add that difference must be told.

An individual who does not try to let the difference be made by himself or through himself does not reach singularity. Again, Deleuze's inspiration comes from Nietzsche: 'For the speculative element of negation opposition or contradiction, Nietzsche substitutes the practical element of difference' (Deleuze 2006: 8). What a goodwill wants is to affirm difference, which is not a difference of the ego. There is an enjoyment in the difference which is inhabited, which is a kinship of destinies with being. We ought to understand that this difference is not hierarchical according to the rules of the social molar line, it does not imply competition in the manipulation of the beings, it is an axial stance welcoming the becoming, this infra-natural fundamental monstrosity, the subterranean lava that runs in-between what we will define as novation and void.

There is not any singularity which is not backed up with the rupture line or which is satisfied with escaping, since perpetual flight is impossible. The individual can become singular, that is to say rising fracture, if he takes into account the three lines: the molar line, the rupture line and the molecular line. That is why there is only one line, as Deleuze suggested. And this line is a rising or falling flux with a zigzag course sometimes bursting egotist plugs, colliding here with a break, there with a relapse.

It is not only through work of the thought that difference is made singularly, because thought is not able to tell the difference between the possible and the real. In order to be singular, singularity has to let the real be expressed and told through the body, the senses. But the real that shows up is difference coupled with the possibles of thought and egotist breaks. This is an unceasing Sisyphean movement, and the individual

who would think he had arrived would fall back out of the scheme and would be an object again.

The application of bringing-into-existence-that-which-does-not-yet-exist is not a job you finish once and for all but a perpetual, endless effort, which may fall back into the break or the separation at any moment. Every minute the world becomes object and every minute the will recreates the subject. But can the subject and the object ever be separated from each other, can we cut a bolt of lightning into two, or say that on one side of the lightning the night is not the same night as on the other side?

I am standing in a place, surrounded by people. I am requested to have an identity, that is to say I am asked to choose my line of conduct. Will I show an identity belonging to the molar line, for instance a grade or a title? Will I show an identity belonging to the rupture line, that is to say burst out shouting, laughing insanely or speak 'incoherently'? Will I show my fracture, that is to say make a small complaint, as if it were incidental, or give a metaphorical answer beside the point? Each time I make an attempt to show my presence through a line of conduct, I am making an object of myself, I am mimicking the living experience.

But then we will ask where the problem stands. Is it not 'enough' to be willing to bring into being that which does not yet exist, to tense oneself up in order to welcome difference, in order to become a self rather than a petty ego? Nothing is enough, first because singularity asks for a daily bravery, then because the problem of the I is that it expresses a local point of view. In the best of cases, the subject wishes it could express all the points of view at the same time but it would be a fall into rupture and madness, and still without succeeding in being totally multiple.

The fractured I is defined by temporality and thus it can never fully express the pure *spatium* of difference. It can only, in the temporal succession, say: I + I + I + I (or else non-I + non-I + non-I . . .) and can never completely be a continuous flux for itself. To bring difference into existence is not that easy, because the human individuality is a cogito which is, each minute, an affirmation threatened by doubt or oblivion.

To bring difference into being is the pure repetition of the *I am not repeating*, an effort understood as Maine de Biran's definition of it:

Effort necessarily entails the perception of a relationship between the being who moves, or wishes to move, and any obstacle whatsoever which is opposed to its movement. Without a subject or a will that determines the movement, without a resisting term, there is no effort and without effort, no knowledge, no perception of any sort. (Derrida 2005: 152)

At this point we could wonder whether this effort is worth making. To become a singularity, to act up to a difference: for what? Could we not stick to following the binary molar lines and conform ourselves to being an automaton rewarded by the system? But this is an impossible fiction: sooner or later the caesura will reassert itself, sooner or later extreme need shows up, sooner or later the ground claims its due. It seems that we can only rise up or fall down the molecular line: the yo-yo of the subject.

Shall we then, to avoid the falling crack, merge with the sensation of our impressions? Shall we tell ourselves that the aim of a human existence is to experience as many impressions as possible and give up on the individual singularity beyond the sensible? That is a serious proposal. Is not the willingness to express a discursive singularity, which is shown to others, already a fall into the molar line? Does it matter that the others recognise my point of view as healthy, new, worthy of admiration, if what I feel is already so rich and multiple, if, being opened to the senses, I am already in the difference, with no need to express it? Why should we not content ourselves with being a contemplative soul to become a ful(ly-)filled subject?

Contemplation as Self Fulfilment

Is there a similarity between *bringing into existence what does not yet exist* and contemplation? Are we not already in the molar line when we *want* to be a difference? Effort: does it prevent us from achieving the amplitude of our soul? Let us read the third Ennead of Plotinus with Deleuze's lecture in Vincennes (Deleuze 1987).

According to Deleuze, Plotinus says: every single thing rejoices, every single thing rejoices of itself, and it rejoices of itself because it contemplates the other one it is made up of. 'Every single thing is a contemplation and from this derives its joy' (Deleuze 1987). Joy is ful(ly-)filled contemplation. It rejoices of itself as contemplation is ful(ly-)filled. Contemplating the other that it is made up of, it fulfils itself and fills itself up. Not only animals, not only souls but also you and I are self-fulfilled contemplations filled of themselves.

We are little joys. But we no longer know it! Feel that these are the words of salvation for philosophy. This is the philosopher's creed and this does not mean: I am happy. What stupidities have been said about Leibniz's optimism; this does not mean everything is fine! When somebody tells you, like Plotinus: be joyous, this does not mean, come on folks, everything is fine,

be joyful, contemplate and fill yourselves up, fulfill yourselves with what you contemplate. (Deleuze 1987)

What Plotinus says is that we are of a contemplative nature. 'Not only you and I, your souls are contemplations but animals are also contemplations, plants are also contemplations, and the rocks themselves are also contemplations. There is a *self-enjoyment* of the rock' (Deleuze 1987). Just by contemplating, the rock is filled up and fulfilled with what it contemplates. It is thus '*self-enjoyment*'.

It means that each being, at its own level, looks back to that which preceded it. That is what contemplation is, according to Deleuze: a 'conversion'. This is the soul's conversion or a thing's conversion into that which it derives from. Looking back to that which precedes it, the soul contemplates. By contemplating, it fills up and fulfils. But it does not fill itself from the other without first filling itself. 'It becomes a joy by itself looking back to that which it derives from. The *self-enjoyment*, the self rejoicing is the correlate of the contemplation of principles' (Deleuze 1987). Every single thing is a contemplation of that which it derives from, which is life becoming difference, flesh of endless disparity.

What is it that the rock contemplates? Its own parts. The rock contemplates the silicon, the carbon, the micro-elements from which it derives. The wheat is contemplation of the elements from which it derives and which it takes from the earth. 'And that it takes from the earth according to its own form and in accordance with the demands of its own form, that is to say, according to its *feeling*' (Deleuze 1987). The demands of its form are the *feeling*. The individuation proceeds from what is felt, but what is actively felt.

Every single thing is contemplation of its own 'requisites', unconscious contemplation of its own conditions of existence, that is to say its requisites.

Is there anything more contemplating than a cow? It seems to have a blank look, but not at all. It is true that there are animals that are not contemplative in the least but this is the lowest level of animals, for example cats and dogs, they hardly ever contemplate. That is why they experience little joy. They are bitter animals, they do not contemplate anything. They echo the damned exactly, we will again see that the damned do not contemplate anything, as we have seen. (Deleuze 1987)

Going over Leibniz, Deleuze determined that the damned stands at the point of hatred for God, for the Everything. The amplitude of his soul is really small and he is not trying to expand it. The damned, hateful cogito, pure point of critic, is separated from the contemplation of the

elements. 'The status of the damned is to be pure vomiting. They do not have prehensions other than negative. They do not have prehensions other than negative and expulsive, as they are pure vomiting' (Deleuze 1987).

Is contemplation passivity? No, and to understand this we could be tempted to use, as Deleuze says, the word 'envision' with the meaning of a verb (*envisager*). The subject operates the prehension of its own requisites. It envisions, imagines its own requisites rather than contemplating them. But eventually Deleuze uses instead the term of 'contraction'.

If I say that an organism contracts the elements that are needed by it, I say that your organism is a contraction of water, oxygen, carbon and salt etc. and it seems to me it becomes extremely clear. If I say that the rock is a contraction of silicon and I don't know what else, it becomes extremely clear. (Deleuze 1987)

To contemplate is always to contract impressions, contract data. Contracting data, I fill myself up with the joy to be myself: to let the vital points arise. To atomise the Real to reconstitute it after one's own image.

To contemplate is to envision the formation of lifelines in the fabric of the soul and to facilitate the game of the folds by standing up for *I don't repeat*, as much as possible. It is to pay attention to its folds, to feel them, to project them. There is no contradiction between bringing into being that which does not yet exist and contraction, since it is the very basis of it. Singularity shall not be looked for in an egotist subject. The subject of *bringing into existence that which does not yet exist* is the 'successful schizophrenic', the one who does not dramatise his scattered state, but rejoices in it without getting stuck in it, insofar as it cannot cling on to a trained ego, insofar as it follows the line of flight thanks to his ego's bursting.

What is this *metaschizophrenic*? An interior elegance, a tightrope-walker's soul strolling onto the thread of impressions. The model of schizophrenic singularity is a walk of the sensible and not 'a lie on the analyst's couch' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: xix). A walk on what path? On the folds of the disparate soul, 'in the midst of nature':

He thought that it must be endless bliss to be in contact with the profound life of every form, to have a soul for rocks, metals, water and plants, to take into himself, as in a dream, every element of nature like flowers that breathe with the waxing and waning of the moon. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 2)

Nature is not experienced as nature-object but as a process of creative production. There is no longer man, nature, subject or object but process producing one in the other and producing machines of production: 'the self and the non-self, outside and inside no longer have any meaning whatsoever' (Deleuze 1987). Everything is production, production of production, desiring production. The *metaschizophrenic*, this *crealist*, we shall say, is the one who draws his points of view on the tightrope of the desiring-production of the folds of the soul, whose repetition is a *not-to-repeat-in-the-first-person* modifying the Real.

The lifelines opening up to a singularity are undoubtedly backed up by desire.

Desire: Miraculate, Enchanted Surface

The line machine is constantly supplied by desire. Machines are essentially desiring-machines, eager to see several points coupled. Only the point of hatred for the Everything remains on its own. All the other points are passionate about drawing lines, they have a constant appetite to fold, to unfold and start folding again. 'Desire constantly couples continuous flows and partial objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented. Desire causes the current to flow, itself flows in turn and breaks the flow' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 6).

We clearly see that production is at stake in the three lines. Desire makes things flow, this is the rupture line. Desire flows, this is the molecular line. Desire seizes up, this is the molar line. Here we understand very minutely how the three lines only form one line, the line of universal production. But Deleuze reminds us that we shall not picture it as forming a pre-established harmony. Desiring machines only function by breaking down all the time: creative or destructive conflict over social habits and subterranean repetitions of difference.

Universal desire is constantly bringing into existence that which does not yet exist and contemplating this production. This is the impression's will to become lines and *spatium*. This point is the opposite of hatred for the Everything. Desire is love for the realm of the Everything, will of full amplitude of the soul, call to create and run through all the area of the *spatium*, which is the living and disparate flesh of the world.

Universal production implies of course, at its extremity, a point of un-productivity, a point of void, a point of nothingness or abstract unity. Is the point of un-productivity the point of hatred for the Everything, the point of the damned? No, on the fringe of un-productivity stands the 'body without organs', blank face of novation, reverse of the *spatium*.

‘The body without organs is not God, quite the contrary, but the energy that sweeps through it is divine, when it attracts to itself the entire process of production and serves as its miraculate, enchanted surface’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 14)

Desiring-production is consumption and consummation, voluptuousness. It is not so for an ego but for a creative subject. The self is nothing but what remains of the disjunction, the shadow of the fold in the past: ‘So that’s what it was!’ The ego is reactive. We can even wonder if the ego is not the fatigue of the Real. That would be a way to define the ego: the moment of fatigue in production, the point which means stop. The ego coincides with the damned. The damned is the ego as hatred for universal production and desire for it to stop so that we can breathe a little or that we can finally sleep properly. But it never stops, production never stops and that is why the ego sometimes goes through bitterness, regret, falling fracture. A singular subject, in the process of becoming, in rising fracture, is consequently the subject that overcomes its ego, that wraps up its tiredness point of the Real, becoming creator of the Real. My ego has to remain but a reduced pragmatic point, which does not sum me up. I am not inside of my ego but I wrap it up as I become within the *Creal*.

The ego is the nihilist point, which is willing everything to stop or to be one. But how can we conceive that such a point should spring up in the midst of universal desire? Because to want nothing is still to want something. This is what characterises the damned: his bored irritation, his bitterness comes from the fact that he cannot give up desire. Desire is always there, even if it is desire for nothing. Desire constantly produces Real, and as a reactive ego it sometimes produces negation, hence the fractured I as reactivity: ‘desiring-machines produce antiproduction all by themselves’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 34).

What is the desiring-machine? A system of template breaks, hot ruptures and waving, yo-yo fractures, a perpetual becoming. Desire implies that there is not strictly speaking a singular subject but only a constant process of singular becoming.

Desire is a contemplating ‘becoming-animal’, a becoming-molecular, a ‘swarm’, a ‘pack’, a circulation of affections, an alternative current upsetting significant projects like personal feelings and it constitutes extra-human sexuality, an ‘irresistible deterritorialisation’.

What is this ‘becoming-animal’? The point is not to be an animal or to imitate it but to guarantee desire the possibility of its production. ‘Becoming produces nothing other than itself’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 262). The subject is nothing other than the temporal and temporary character of multiple becoming considered by

a consciousness. Becoming is a 'rhizome', a radical tissue of multiple arborescence. The singularity of desire is to be 'multiplicity', 'axial', a vertical collective but immanent 'peopling'. 'I am legion', a legion which spreads by 'contagion', that is to say 'assemblages' of points and lines.

But should we not be surprised to see that the *I* shows up, above all in a 'So, that's what it was!'? Should we not see a problem in the fact that the *I* will first be memory of the past rather than a prehension means of the Real? Should we not ask ourselves in even more detail according to which conditions the *I* can become active?

The Anomal or the Subject as So(u)rcerer

Desire is certainly 'pack and contagion of the pack', but Deleuze and Guattari observe clearly in *Thousand Plateaus* that 'wherever there is multiplicity, you will also find an exceptional individual, and it is with that individual that an alliance must be made to become-animal' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 268). Desire thus implies exceptional polarities. How to define them? They are the 'leader of the pack', the 'master of the pack', above all the 'Anomal' among the animals. Anomal has a meaning that differs from abnormal. Ab-normal (Latin adjective), Deleuze says, defines that which does not have rules or goes against the rule, whereas 'a-nomaly' (Greek substantive without adjective in English) designates 'the unequal, the rough, the cutting edge of deterritorialisation'. The Anomal is a position in space or a set of positions in relation to a multiplicity.

What is the nature of the anomal? The anomal is not an exceptional domestic individual but nor is it a bearer of species that would possess its specific or generic specificities in the purest form, unique model or specimen, typical perfection incarnated, eminent outcome of a series or pedestal of a completely harmonious correspondence.

The anomal is a 'phenomenon of bordering'. Each multiplicity is bordered by a wrapping line that is its anomaly. When it is incarnated, this anomaly takes the shape of the 'so(u)rcerer', that is to say the one who knows how to invoke the powers of the vital source and to give them a name. Would he then be the incarnation of the free subject, this sorcerer, this so(u)rcerer, this 'Outsider'?

If the active subject is the Anomal, it is the boundary between two groups of flows, between two packs, between two tendencies. What does it mean to say that the subject is boundary? First, that he exists only as a limit, that is to say he does not have any intrinsic materiality. The subject is a membrane that can vibrate, this is the limit of the organ. It justifies

what animates it from the inside, it makes it show up but it does not define itself by it. It is a wrapping line. Is this line a line other than the three lines, molar, rupture, molecular?

Deleuze and Guattari write that the Anomal is the alliance necessary for becoming but it conducts the becoming transformations or the moments of multiplicity always further on the line of flight. Therefore, the sound subject is the line of flight as an organic envelope of a vital production, and in this respect we understand that it is never in any other form than becoming. The subject is an 'experiment'. We find again the *bringing into existence that which does not yet exist*.

Deleuze calls the moments of this becoming subject *haecceities*, that is to say degrees, intensities. But can these intensities of individuation define an active human? On the contrary, should we not remember that because of his intrinsic temporal fracture, the so(u)rcerer can never say I? Or, the other way round, that man, as an individual, can never be fully active?

This question brings us back to *Nietzsche and Philosophy* by Deleuze. Is man essentially reactive? Nietzsche presents the triumph of the reactive forces as something essential in man and in the history of man.

Ressentiment, bad conscience and nihilism are not psychological traits but the foundation of humanity in man. Nihilism is the a priori concept of universal history; that is why defeating nihilism, freeing the thought of bad conscience and *ressentiment* means to overcome man, to destroy man, even the best one. (Deleuze 2004: 157)

It is in his essence that man is said to be 'skin disease of the Earth'.

To the question 'Is man essentially reactive?', Deleuze says that we have to answer 'yes' for man as a result but 'no' for man as becoming of forces. Man can be active as a medium, as a vector, but to be essentially active he has to be capable of affirming. To be able to affirm, the subject has to get out of its cogito ego cutting it off from its spontaneity, that is to say to open the doors of difference.

However, one might have the impression that sometimes the subject affirms the I and from then on denies its differential spontaneity, sometimes serves as a channel for difference and speaks like a poet, that is to say without identification to an ego ('I is an Other', as Rimbaud wrote). Can we conceive a subject who at the same time affirms itself as an I and expresses the difference, this 'eternal return of that which makes dissimilar' (Deleuze 2004: 374)? Yes, provided that its self shall not be reduced to an ego, provided that the I shall be a self that includes the ego reduced to the point of reverse of hatred for Everything. The so(u)rcerer

does not speak in the first person as an ego, but in the name of the spirits and the flesh, in the dancing uttering of the trance of being.

The anomalous subject, the leader of the pack, is as spontaneous as can be:

As a result, the spontaneity of which I'm conscious in the *I think* cannot be understood as an attribute of a substantial and spontaneous being, but only as the affection of a passive self, which experiences its own thought—its own intelligence that by virtue of which it can say *I*—being exercised in it and upon it but not by it. (Deleuze 2004: 108)

The singularity of the subject seems possible as a so(u)rcerer, the one who desires the Everything and who lives from it, through whom the destined becoming expresses itself. As we will see in the conclusion, the so(u)rcerer acts remembering three axes: hyper-stasis, untimeliness and crealism.

Yet we have to better understand to what extent lifelines constitute intensity links, plateaus between the primary impressions and the subject.

V. From the Impression to the Subject

At the heart of Deleuze's philosophy stands the first text he published, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, and the notion of impression as original monad. The impression, as we have started to see, is the vital principle, the *vis motrix* of becoming. A complete reading of this text on Hume, in the light of the text we have examined, is necessary.

Deleuze first states that Hume's project entails the 'substitution of a psychology of the mind by a psychology of the mind's affections' (Deleuze 2001: 22). Only a psychology of affections can constitute the true science of man. At the origin, there is not only the spiritual but the passionate, and the social itself is originally passionate. In order to exist, spirit has to be affected. When we wonder how the spirit becomes a subject, we have to wonder how an impression becomes spiritual.

Imagination, as a singularisation of impressions, expands from space, from a place, the original *spatium* of difference. 'The production of an idea by the imagination is only the reproduction of an impression in the imagination' (Deleuze 2001: 23). This activity is 'whimsical and delirious'. Being the bond of ideas, it moves through the universe, 'engendering fire dragons, winged horses, and monstrous giants' (23). The depth of the mind is indeed 'delirium' or—the same thing

from another point of view—change, randomness, indifference of the difference.

Deleuze observes that Hume's philosophy is a sharp criticism of representation. Spirit is not reason, but it is reason which is an affection of spirit through the play of habit, of repetition. 'Reason is a kind of feeling' (Deleuze 2001: 30). As the method of true philosophy goes from the lack of an idea to the presence of an impression, likewise, the theory of reason goes from a scepticism of reason to a positivism of feeling, which includes *in fine* reason as a reflection of feeling in the defined spirit, the subject. In this respect, Hume is not at all sceptic. He believes in impressions. Impressions of reflection, contemplations are the origin of spirit.

An impression expands, from points to folds, reflecting itself, that is to say trying itself: 'The passions are reflected; but where and in what? They are reflected in the imagination' (Deleuze 2001: 56). In the reflection that arises from the original contraction of the impression, 'the passions imagine themselves and the imagination becomes passionate' (57). The formation of lifelines is the passion of the imagination.

We see once more the conflict between the molar line and the rupture line as far as imagination is concerned. Insofar as the principle of morals and of passion affects the spirit, the spirit is no longer a fancy, a pure creativity of impressions: it fixes itself and tends to turn into human nature, a fracture. But insofar as the spirit also reflects the affections which try to fix it, it remains a fancy, capable of transformation, 'for at least something within the affections escapes all reflection' (Deleuze 2001: 59). That which cannot let itself be reflected without contradiction is precisely that which defines the real exercise of affections, the relevance of limits, the action through which they fix the spirit under such and such a form. Reflecting the form of its own fixation, imagination sets them free and set itself free from them, expands them endlessly. That is the play of desiring-machines: the breaks lead to leaks, the leaks join the fractures. The greatness of man is that it does not stop at the break, that he considers the break not like something real but as an impression of break, and from then on the creative machine can start working again. Alienation will never be total, as long as man will not forget its impressed/impressing ground, its capacity to untangle the Real, to catch its breath in the heart of a barren nothingness. Imagination 'makes the limit an object of the fancy, it plays with the limit by presenting the accidental as essential, and separates power from its actual exercise' (59).

There is a belief, deep inside the human brain, which is animated by this indestructible faith: there will always be a new exception that might

change the rule. This firm belief that rule is not as solid as a rock derives from the being, from the difference. The human being is profoundly revolutionary because the being is profoundly disparate: 'The power of imagination is to imagine power' (Deleuze 2001: 59). Illusion restrains, but it saves as well as a creative principle. There is a 'union of the most frivolous and the most serious' (60).

This union of the most frivolous and the most serious is subterranean. At the surface, the naturalised images and the prejudiced words draw us back from our participation in the difference, break the emergence of the impression almost from the start: unceasing play of the impressions that form at the surface of the soul, and of the lines that break or distort them.

We find a pathetic evocation of this tragedy under the hand of Georges Bataille, in *Inner Experience*, a text contemporary with Deleuze's book about Hume:

There subsists in us a silent, elusive, ungraspable part. In the region of words, of discourse, this part is neglected. Thus, it usually escapes us. We can only attain it or have it at our disposal on certain terms. They are the vague inner movements, which depend on no object and have no intent—states which, similar to others linked to the purity of the sky, to the fragrance of a room, are not warranted by anything definable. (Bataille 1988: 14)

Bataille continues:

If we live under the law of language without contesting it, these states are within us as if they didn't exist. But if we run up against this law, we can in passing, fix our awareness upon one of them and, quieting discourse within us, linger over the surprise which it provides us. It is better then to shut oneself in, make as if it were night, remain in this suspended silence wherein we come unexpectedly upon the sleep of a child. (Bataille 1988: 15)

This child, this surprise, which somehow reminds us of the Nietzschean motif of found again creativity, is listening to the impression. This creativity happens thanks to the everlasting effort of the so(u)rcerer against the molar lines, against the principles of the same.

The I is half deprived but in the silence of the night it can be in contact again with its freedom of expression. We find in the text by Deleuze about Hume this intuition of the self as a fractured synthesis which will be developed in *Difference and Repetition*:

We saw that origin and affection could not be combined within the self because, at this level, there subsists a great difference between principles and fancy. That which constitutes now the self is the synthesis of the affection and

its reflection, the synthesis of an affection which fixes the imagination and of an imagination which reflects the affection. (Deleuze 2001: 64)

We can admire here the coherence of Deleuze's evolution, quoting once more these lines from 1968 about the pure I of the *I think*:

The subject can henceforth represent its own spontaneity only as that of an Other, and in so doing invoke a mysterious coherence in the last instance which excludes his own—namely, that of the world and God. A cogito for a dissolved Self: the Self of the 'I think' includes in its essence a receptivity of intuition in relation to which *I* is already an other. (Deleuze 2004: 70)

I is an other because the overflowing line of flight and the simplifying cut line run through it. Schematisation is the defining principle of the parts among the tissue of vague impressions. This is the Apollonian principle confronted with the Dionysian principle.

We can wonder at this point how the molar line was born, if it abuses life so much. First hypothesis: there is an original molar line that is established from the moment the animal becomes aware of being mortal. The genesis of the break would then have to do with the death consciousness. 'Gaping desire', but death is a gap, a comparison and so a schematisation of the same, a comeback of the reflection on the lost territory and a naturalisation, a fetishism of this absent territory, as if it were the same for everybody, as if it were impossible to talk about death in multiple.

Second hypothesis of the territorialisation of differential impressions: habit. As we have seen, repetition is what restricts, being the neurotic criss-crossing of the same fold, but also what sets free, being a resistance, bringing into being that which does not yet exist. For there is a habit of doing and a habit of not doing, which is persisting refusal to be (un)done, to be cut. And it is above all the latter that sets the impressions free:

Repetition becomes a progression when we no longer see it in relation to the objects repeated because it changes, discovers and produces nothing. It becomes a production as soon as we see it from the point of view of the mind which contemplates it, for it produces a new impression in it ... (Deleuze 2001: 68)

To summarise, we can say that, from the subject's point of view, the molar line is the acceptance of a habit imposed from the exterior, whereas the walk along the line of rising fracture is the resistance of a habit to listen from within. In other words, the molar line is brought to life as soon as a world of external objects is fixed by the cogito.

This world of external objects will divert the desire for difference and orientate it towards the same of rigid protocols and social rewards.

The rupture line is the dissolution of the subject–object dichotomy created by the desperate will to find enjoyment in objects rather than in vital impressions. As an ego, I am indigence separated from becoming. As a self, a so(u)rcerer, I open myself up to the eloquence of living, to its suggestiveness, all the more as I no longer try to transpose my aim of enjoyment to an object. In this respect, we can talk about asceticism in the accession to original joy. The anomaly is not to hunger for objects but to be steadfast in letting creative impressions rise. To that extent the I as an ego does not live entirely and is lacerated by death: this death is the wish for what we believe we do not have, that is to say the illness of the imagination denying itself by espousing the simplification of breaks.

Rousseauist drama of the human: to live together, one has to create norms, and these norms, becoming fixed, make him unhappy. Subordination to the State and social production machine: as long as this subordination is painful (even afterwards) then it is the sign that the current social system is lethal and that the verb of life is resisting the prevailing biopolitical speech. The external habit is not the inner experience: ‘The unity of experience and habit is not given’ (Deleuze 2001: 69). When both are identical then we will be able to say that society is life.

Meanwhile, ‘by itself, habit can feign or invoke a false experience, and bring about belief through “a repetition” which is not derived from experience’ (Deleuze 2001: 69). The repetition of the same that does not derive from experience is the molar line. As for the line of flight, it is the repetition of difference deriving from experience. What about the molecular crack-up line? Line of the biographical real life, oscillating, stumbling, between life and death, between, on the one hand self-training separated from the vital flows and object-orientated and, on the other hand, liberation of a subject through the ascetic fulfilment of letting the *Creal* emerge in the form of flesh.

Of course, as we have seen, the molar line should not be considered as absolute evil and the rupture line as divine good. In any case, we are standing, whether we want it or not, beyond good and evil, rather on the side of an interdependent relation between life and death, between the individual and the group. The lines are balances and unbalances of becoming. We can only hope that they interweave to form a rising spiral, in which the freed subject would jump from line to line, as much for saving its skin, and its senses, as for remaining in differential creativity

and active contemplation of disparity within the self. It is a trick of the subject, in the agencies it establishes, in the rhizomes it weaves jumping from line to line, but also an ascetic task and a brave confrontation with the errands of the ego. There is no axis of the world outside the subject (but a group can be a subject, an integrity); there is no subject without axis. What is this axis? A self-defined filter to fight resentment.

The subject becomes absolute and sets itself free from the ego when it makes the sap of the pure vital *spatium* rise from within, thanks to a spiralisation, which is an accomplice of the three lifelines. Hence this alternative: on the side of the cutting and cut ego, we have ‘the earth girded, encompassed, overcoded, conjugated as the object of a mortuary and suicidal organization surrounding it from every part’. On the so(u)rcerer’s side we wake up ‘the earth consolidated, connected with the Cosmos, brought into the Cosmos following lines of creation that cut across it as so many becomings (Nietzsche’s expression: Let the earth become lightness)’ (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 510).

Impression is the absolute movement. Impressions are the tissue of the soul and in their bosom, every single second, the destiny of the subject is at stake. We shall remember Deleuze’s lecture about Leibniz and the soul: ‘Will I go to work or to the tavern?’ (Deleuze 2003). According to the impression that I am and that I let materialise in image and in deed, I will fold myself in one direction or another. Between the starting point of a line, the impression, and the finishing point, the fold, there is a micro-destinal series. ‘What would have happened if I had not been to the tavern?’ Deleuze asks. ‘Then it would be another me’ (Deleuze 2003).

To that extent, our actions judge us. The way we allow ourselves to identify the impressions from the start, as good or bad – we often speak in everyday language about ‘first impressions’ – determines in part our destiny or our capacity to resist dominations.

Reading Hume, we find striking equivalence between the three critic states of spirit and the three lines. ‘Indifference and imaginativeness are the situation peculiar to spirit, without regard for the external principles that fix it by associating ideas’ (Deleuze 2001: 86): this is the rupture line.

‘Madness is the contradiction within the mind between these principles that affect it and fiction that he sets as a principle’ (Deleuze 2001: 86): it is in the worst of cases the molar line and in the best of cases the so(u)rcerer’s axial asceticism.

‘This system is a delirium. When fiction becomes a principle, reflection goes on reflecting, but it can no longer correct. It is thus thrown into

delirious compromises' (Deleuze 2001: 86): it is in the rising molecular line (synchronicities, crealism) or falling one (incidents, depression).

Indifference, imaginativeness, madness and delirium: that is a really accurate picture of human experience. That is why the slightest extravagance, the slightest distraction is still to confide in its first impressions, without immediately denaturing them in prejudice, which is a true asceticism, that is to say a training to refer to life rather than to death.

The question of the third part in our presentation comes back to the foreground under this form: 'How the subject, or that which goes beyond the given can arise from within the given?' 'Undoubtedly, that which transcends the given is also given' but in another way: 'As we believe and invent, we turn the given itself into a nature' (Deleuze 2001: 86). The given is not given to a subject, the subject forms itself in the given while forming it: that is what we call crealism.

But what is the given? It is, according to Deleuze's interpretation of Hume the 'flux of the sensible, a collection of impressions and images, a set of perceptions. It is all that shows up, the being equivalent to the appearance, movement, change without identity or law' (Deleuze 2001: 86). This experience of a collection, a bustling succession of distinct perceptions, is the very basis of empiricism as being distinct, independent, different: 'Every discernible perception is a difference' (86). Here we find the announcement of the principle of difference, the monster that enables to show up. Experience is always experience of difference. The subject then forms ideas, which in the best of cases are not the representations of an object but of an impression.

To talk about a subject and no longer only about impressions is to talk about a duration, about an axial ritual, about a *praxis*. The active repetition is the subject's constitutional root and the subject is at its root a synthesis of present and past looking forward the future. The synthesis consists of establishing the past as an a priori law for the future, with the inherent factor of disappointment: 'Each man expects to conserve what he already possesses. The principle of frustrated anticipation will play the role of contradiction in the logic of property, that is, the role of a principle of synthetic contradiction' (Deleuze 2001: 86). To a certain extent, time is disappointment whereas space is hope, impulse. The experience of difference displays an a-temporal multiplicity, whereas the experience of repetition creates temporality. That determines a play between reason and imagination and as a result some impressions become brighter. The brightest impressions, allowed by a voluntary filtering of the connections between perceptions, are the present of the subject, both body and mind.

The subject forms from a given that it filters and shapes. The given is the impressions generating associations and passions. Imagination is the faculty to animate impressions: 'According to Hume, the imagination becomes a faculty insofar as a law of the reproduction of representations or a synthesis of reproduction is constituted as the result of principles' (Deleuze 2001: 110). But as was demonstrated by Kant's interpretation of Hume, if the given was not itself primarily submitted to principles of the same nature as those regulating the link of representations for an empiric subject, the subject could never know this agreement, except by chance, and would not have the opportunity to link its representations according to the laws that would however be at its disposal.

But are impressions ontologically prior to imagination, or does a transcendental position exist which operates the synthesis of impressions into images? In other words, in reference to our first chapter about the soul and Leibniz: is the virtuality of the fold prior to the pruritus of the animistic original tissue? Should there not be, together with the pure *spatium* of difference, a transcendental principle tending to turn the points of disparity into lines? The alternative is simple: either lines are formed by chance (even if imagination then projects necessity onto them), or their realisation is inscribed as a necessity of the sieve-subject.

Another way to raise this problem is: are impressions equivalent to each other or are there affinities between them, which would favour such or such orientation in the formation of the lifelines, starting with the points of impression? Hume resorts to a musical metaphor in his *Treatise of Human Nature*:

Now if we consider the human mind, we shall find, that with regard to the passions, 'tis not of the nature of a wind-instrument of music, which in running over all the notes immediately loses the sound after the breath ceases; but rather resembles a string-instrument, where after each stroke, the vibrations still retain some sound, which gradually and insensibly decays. (Hume 2000: 188)

We have to start from the pure impression, Deleuze says. Some principles affect the mind, such as impressions of reflection. Subjectivity is the impression of reflection and this impression itself derives from some impressions of sensations: 'But it is precisely this proceeding or this process that the impressions of sensation are incapable of explaining: they cannot even explain why in the collection, they themselves are elected among others and instead of others' (Deleuze, 2001: 113). The notes of music do not know how they will form a melody together.

So Hume says that there are some 'principles' orientating what shows up. These principles have a double selective and constituting role. But according to which necessity is the principle of the subject formed?

We could first think about the principle of pleasure. Imagination would follow the impressions, whose association generates the greatest pleasure in the body. But this idea does not resolve anything because we would still have to explain why pleasure would choose a certain order, a certain harmony, rather than cacophony.

The hypothesis of a selectivity of impressions presiding over the formation of the lines of imagination and action is the true culmination of our description of the lines. We can think that Deleuze is not always very clear about the principles of linearisation, about the way in which the monster shows in this way rather than in this other one. The constitution of lines would remain but a mechanism stained with shadows if we reject the idea of a pre-established harmony, *more geometrico*, of an affinity between some points orientating the formation of lines. Otherwise, we could imagine that points would remain points and would never form lines.

Another way to see things is to say that points cannot form lines except intentionally. For Hume, the subject 'hates pain' and looks for pleasure. 'Making of pleasure a purpose, the principles of passions give to action its principle' (Deleuze 2001: 113). But a principle of immediate pleasure, once more, would not account for the coherent channelling of forms.

Hume suggests then that there are 'useful' tendencies and others that are 'baneful'. But that the original imaginativeness should locally orientate towards the useful, that is to say towards the safe opening up of a subject, could seem like an entropic view.

The idea of 'vivacity' of some impression is more satisfying in that it combines pleasure, effort and utility, and goes beyond them. Hume writes: 'There is also a resemblance between the image and the object we infer; which strengthens the relation, and conveys the vivacity of the impression to the related idea with an easier and more natural movement' (Deleuze 2001: 113). If the subject's will of creation is orientated following the principle of vivacity, this means that lines are formed following points of greatest intensity, and it allows the introduction of a finality which is also physiological. The subject is formed in the given from the principle of greatest vivacity. Sometimes the molar line attracts the body because of the greatest vivacity that instinct feels, sometimes it is the rupture line or the molecular line.

Hume writes about a ‘general interest’ as the impact in the imagination of the particular interest, as the movement of a passion overcoming its partiality. This unity of a subject functioning as a whole in relation with other subjects, Deleuze, reading Hume, calls ‘intentional finality’. The mind is ‘resonance and vivacity’: the mind becomes subject ‘when it calls on its vivacity so that a part of itself, whose character it is (impression), conveys it to another part of itself (idea), and secondly, when all its parts put together resonate producing something new’ (Deleuze 2001: 113). In the given, Deleuze says as early as 1953, we establish relations, we form totalities, swept away by the impulse to produce ‘something new’.

Here is the confirmation we were looking for. This idea by Deleuze, inspired by Bergson, presented at the end of *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, seems to be *in fine* the only one that accounts for the dynamic of formation of the lifelines: the tendency to create novelty. From then on, we have to say: in the depth of being, there is certainly difference, disparity, but there is also desire for novelty. That is the principle of desiring-machines: to create vivacious novelty.

This hypothesis implies that death is as real as the same, contrary to novelty. From then on life is a fight against the same. Fleeing from the same as death or as void would be at the origin of difference. The term ‘void’ is even preferred to the term ‘death’. Deleuze sees difference as multiple; likewise, to avoid a philosophy of the one we have to see the void fled by the desire for novelty as a void beyond (or below) the one and the multiple. Now, is it not that which characterises void not to be one? If the void was one, it would become being again. Here we have to take into consideration the notion of vacuity in Buddhist philosophy. Vacuity, void are nothing other than the reverse of difference.

We understand better, now, the formation of the lifelines. They are formed by the tension between void and desire for novelty. We have to imagine that the original monster, life, is not a homogeneous space but a space containing void. What is void then? It is non-existent intensity, zero vivacity.

From then on, life draws lines between maximal intensity and zero intensity, without it being necessary moreover to assert these limits as real: we can indeed imagine that life is accounted for by the fact that maximal intensity and zero intensity are both impossible. Hence becoming as scattering between two original fantasies.

Void and novelty: is it a new dualism or the synthesis of dualisms in the being-becoming? ‘Arrive at the magic formula we all seek – PLURALISM = MONISM – via all the dualisms that are the

enemy, an entirely necessary enemy, the furniture we are forever rearranging' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 23). There is no beginning or end, no void at the start or maximal intensity in the end, but 'always a middle point', through which life grows and overflows.

With respect to the consistency of lines, the one is always deduced, Deleuze says. Multiplicity varies its dimensions, affected by the passion for change of nature and for metamorphosis. The play of lines, the rhizome, is not formed according to a principle of reproduction but of creation. Taken as a whole, the being is pure creation, but taken as individualities, the being temporarily turns into empty shapes constituted by desire, like dead skin. A cathedral is in a way a dead skin once its construction is finished. The centration of its project has been brought to its end. But the end of life is not centration, insofar as it is inhabited by an a-centred non-hierarchical and non-significant systematic: a circulation of states in which the important term is the circulation and not the state. The state is that which life rejects. This is applicable, in political theory, to the State with a capital letter and its molar lines.

The building up of the cathedral, as long as it is not finished, is a 'plateau' of intensity. But a plateau is always followed by another plateau, once the thing is formed. Singularity is the creative intensity, not the objectivised work or its outline. The path is the middle point of life.

The middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed. *Between* things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one *and* the other way, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 28)

Novation and void: the two unreachable banks in-between which life flows.

VI. Conclusion: How Is a New Life Possible?

We will leave Deleuze aside for a while to make a short detour to a poetic sea, casting the anchor in the lands of Rainer Maria Rilke's words in the *Duino Elegies*. Thus we will first define the tendency to be slow off the mark not only as the *ressentiment* of the one who, being subject of an experience, subjected to the past, only becomes aware of things as a 'So that's what it was – it could have been better', but also as the movement

of the one who, in the impossibility to fix itself either in the sea or on earth is in a perpetual nomadic stopover.

‘Who has turned us around so that, whatever we do, we bear the attitude of one who is departing?’, the Eighth Elegy asks (Rilke 2000: 51). Man feels himself orientated towards one direction rather than another, facing something rather than something else, partial being, being with a standpoint and as a consequence simultaneously of light and blindness. The impression given by this question is a non-coincidence with action, a separation from the living world. We are positioned so locally delimited and we do not occupy the whole space, we leave one state in favour of another, we stop over once and again. The idea of being turned implies that there would be a way to go on, no longer as someone who is departing, but as someone who is coming, or in any case someone who goes on while staying at the same time, someone who is both going away and standing at his starting point.

Now, what is going away without departing? To spread. That, as we have seen, is what Leibniz calls the amplitude of the soul. In order to spread while spreading out an action, there must be dilatation so there is a centre even if it is moving. Now, what seems to be the meaning of the question in the Eighth Elegy is that the human being is constantly mobile, a point of disaffection upon which we have no hold. Who has never experienced telling something which seems important to us to a person who is drifting away in an exasperating manner, not focusing on what has just been said (maybe precisely because the person feels an intention of importance in the other person)? A shore is offered but we have already departed, preferring the uncertainty of the sea to the revelation offered, in which we will not confide. But the tendency to be slow off the mark will imply that the person will think it over later, in the last stopover, since a stopover is always defined by the past and forthcoming stopovers.

The Fourth Elegy says: ‘The migrant birds can tell the seasons . . . We kept ignorant and left behind, must force ourselves belatedly upon a wind and come down hard on some uncaring pond’ (Rilke 2000: 23). Were it a vital intuition within us, were it something like a projective instinct of life, which would throw us towards a greater vitality in the future, then we would maybe live in the present, in accordance with the present time. But we are ignorant as to what our present actions will become in the future whereas the migrant bird knows that its migration leads it towards the watering place and better weather. The bird confides blindly in its migration, its movement is orientated, and moreover, it does not lose its original standpoint since it will come back there.

The migrant bird spreads up its soul, from its starting point to its finishing point. Man, lacking information, lacking in appearance the projective instinct of life, moves losing sight of his starting point: stopping over but no longer knowing from where he departed, why he departed and where he is going.

‘Oh Trees of Life: how shall we know your Winter?’ the Fourth Elegy also asks (Rilke 2000: 23). We are not trees of life because as we move we lose our roots, we do not know how to preserve life in winter, we rather flee than endure, by lack of forbearance. Forbearance only, only the extension of the soul would enable us to go through winter, since other points of the soul would be in summer.

‘We set all in order. All falls apart. We order it once more and fall, collapse, disintegrate ourselves’, the Eighth Elegy asserts (Rilke 2000: 52). That also is the tendency to be slow off the mark, a will to archive the past by retrospective. If I had said this, that would have happened. Cause and effect as a way to classify life projected in the past. We often function on the same pattern; this is not a singularity that classifies but a busy collective form: ‘We classify.’ Sometimes objects fall, sometimes the ego falls. A confrontation cutting the vital flux, so destroying it. As long as I am classifying, I am a cogito facing objects that I classify. I put the world in order, I look after it like a ‘master and possessor’. But the world is not material so it gives the impression that it is collapsing to the sense of ordering. And if we succeed in regimenting the world as an object we then lose contact with our singularity, we are scattered in pieces like a broken mirror, since the subject no longer reflects itself but as an object.

The world as a perpetual collapse is the world of the ‘spectator’, ‘turned towards the Everything’. ‘As if in panic fear they flutter through that sky ... afraid of flight itself: swift as a flaw runs through a cup’ the Eighth Elegy also says (Rilke 2000: 52). We want to be a bowl containing everything, thanks to retention, thanks to the thirsty concentration, forgetting that the world is the open. We want to shut the open in our subjective cup out of fear to disappear and from then on, as the result of pressure, a crack falls and we become this crack. *Ressentiment* of the ‘bat’, afraid of dying but equally afraid to live in the daylight, in the diurnal openness.

How can we be not only the traveller fleeing from one end to the other, always bidding farewell? How to be at the same time the earth, the sea, the stopover, the boat and the sailor? Spreading one’s soul.

Leibniz said: to have an ample soul. Deleuze’s lecture about Leibniz, as we saw, distinguishes the damned, whose soul stands at the point of

hatred for everything, from the free man, whose soul fills an amplitude tending to a physical living and sensitive infinite, not only abstract, and whose acts and thoughts try constantly to fill this amplitude. It is no use adding that, most of the time, without effort, we are all damned rather than angels. We would have to be both, point and extension of the surface of the soul: 'Angel and Puppet: now – at last – a *play!* Now all can fuse together, all that we divide by merely being here', the Fourth Elegy says (Rilke 2000: 23).

But angels and puppets form fugacious dances. We are soon again like writers in perpetual gestation, living in the excuse rather than in the verb. And why? Because the tendency to be slow off the mark, the sense of travel craving more novelty, is always titillated by the idea that it would be better elsewhere, magnetised by the idea of the absolute stopover. This dream of the 'pure *space* before us – all its flowers opening endlessly', in the Eighth Elegy (Rilke 2000: 52), leads us from a harbour to another harbour as fishes going after the bait. We covet, we want to *have* the being, and that is how we make it fall apart. We see our paradise lost as a world to come back to, as a place, as a located object and not as 'that nowhere, free from negatives, unsupervised and pure; the place which we might breathe and know unendingly, and never crave' (52).

Envy and the envious person want to locate the being for a private show, which could be enjoyed as something we have, and they are always lying in wait. The comedy of man: this lying in wait is so intense that the hyper-spectator no longer sees anything, does not allow an impression that could bloom into a flower to linger. A stopover blots out another, an expectancy drives out another and I do not live anything, and I do not see anything and everything is always finished when it had hardly begun. 'This is what fate means: to be opposite, and to be that and nothing else, opposite, forever' the Eighth Elegy says (Rilke 2000: 52).

Will love save us? It is very unlikely according to Rilke: 'When you lift yourselves up to each other's mouth and your lips join, drink against drink: oh how strangely each drinker seeps away from his action' the Second Elegy says (Rilke 2000: 13). In the love relationship, we do not escape lying in wait, the show of ourselves, and from then on we are beyond the grace of a kiss. Ego *against* ego rather than losing and giving up on the ego. Avidity and impatience, attempt to locate enjoyment spatio-temporally rather than extension and dilatation of the soul: 'Do not think I woo thee, angel! Should I do so, you would not be moved, so full of conflict is my cry. Against such utter counter force you cannot prevail' the poet laments in the Seventh Elegy (45). Passion for travelling,

passion for the contraction in the place it gets off. Maybe we like nothing more than being alone to the extent that we lose ourselves and never find ourselves, pushing back the torrent of life.

Maybe the tendency to be slow off the mark is nothing else than a love for death because 'Close to dying we need see death no more and can, perhaps, look outwards with a gaze as wide as the gaze of animals. Lovers, were it not for that other one whose presence blocks their sight, might come to it, amazed', according to the Eighth Elegy (Rilke 2000: 47). We believe we run after death as innocently a being sleeping alive, but in fact we run with avidity after the enjoyment to *have*, the dream to have Everything which makes us push something back as a thing and not as an emerging seed. Alas, we cannot *have* Everything. We can only *become* Everything through an extension of our soul in all directions, past included. But this past frightens us since we were not spread in it but only ephemeral spirals run through by destiny. We have to accept to be an other.

As we suggested, a soul spreading out implies an origin by creation of a centre, even a moving one. Every moment, the soul spreading out its amplitude has a centre. What is this centre? Nothing other than the will not to lose oneself and to be oneself. We are not afraid of death, because we do not know it and, deep inside, we hope too much. We are afraid of not knowing who we are, of having several personalities (different contractions of the soul) and as a consequence several possibilities and several impossibilities. We are afraid to be lost in the sea or to wander on earth, that is why we keep on following the tendency to be slow off the mark, as an in-between flitting about with little life.

To be at the same time the earth, the sea and the sailor: that is the salvation of the soul spreading into the openness, Deleuze says. That is the rising fracture: 'And we, who think of happiness ascending, would with consternation know the rapture that almost overwhelms us, when happiness falls', the Tenth Elegy says (Rilke 2000: 65).

Spinoza suggested that we are far from knowing what a body is capable of doing, the joy a body is capable of. It seems that humanity has not yet explored the whole expanse of its soul, weighed down by lament or complaining. We are still elegiac. We *think* happiness instead of living it. We are no longer faithful to the earth, Nietzsche would say, that is why the fruits of happiness escape us falling next to our little grateful hands.

We still have a thought of lack, hence the elegy spirit. Maybe we can never go beyond. We may always be staircases, mobile points going from one harbour to another, looking for the absolute and (already)

missed haven. Life may give us time to spread out our soul but there is envy looking after the elastic and contracting the soul into will to have.

The Second Elegy says: 'If only we too could discover a pure, contained human place, a strip of fruitful land of our own, between river and stone! For our own heart exceeds us, even as theirs did' (Rilke 2000: 23). So hope is allowed. For our heart exceeds us, like the heart of gods. And our heart encourages us to become a subject, a hero, a so(u)rcerer, a living axis. To become such, three coordinates are to be held firm:

1. Hypo-stasiate our *will-to-bring-into-existence-that-which-does-not-yet-exist* in a conscious and felt repetition.
2. To keep being untimely by refusing the normative temporality of the breaks.
3. Never give in to the fatalism of believing that the real is fixed. *The world is my creation.*

Revolution in time, becoming another, human transmutation, setting oneself free from the furrows of labour: can we conceive a more solemn, more triumphant, a happier subject? A dialectic whose sparks create the world. Can we conceive a better subject for passion?

It is a fact that there is a whole discourse of revolution, which is a manifestation of laziness, a distressed snobbery, an obscene timidity. But the repetition of the will to be different, even under the minimal form that the critic in society is, is a way to be on the watch. A necessary way, probably but definitely insufficient. There are watchwords with which we fall asleep, enthusiasms that are too intoxicating whereas the becoming other is always an adventure.

'Chaosmos' of lines to endure, in which to inscribe oneself, to write. New life is our passion. We give birth to worlds trying to hold onto the impossible, walking on towards a woman of manifest interior elegance, walking a step away from our falling apart, raising our voice next to (self-)destructing persons, refusing that our retinas be dazzled by mimetic persistences.

Once upon a time the meeting between a rupture and a systematic, an unconsciousness and a rhythm, fire and ice.

Rising fracture. Lightning.

A friction accompanied by a look at the black sky, where stars draw the lines of the destiny we inscribe in them.

Notes

1. *They* is a limited way of translating the French *on*, a general and unsingular version of *we*.

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