



# **Deleuze and mereology**

Multiplicity, structure and composition

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*Στους γονείς μου,  
Νικήτα και Μαρίνα*

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## ***Declaration***

I, Ioannis Chatzantonis, hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning.

**Signature**

**Date**

Ioannis Chatzantonis



## *Abstract*

This investigation constitutes an attempt towards (1) understanding issues and problems relating to the notions of one, many, part and whole in Parmenides and Plato; (2) extracting conditions for a successful account of multiplicity and parthood; (3) surveying Deleuzian conceptions and uses of these notions; (4) appraising the extent to which Deleuze's metaphysics can answer some of these ancient problems concerning the status of multiplicity and the nature of mereological composition, that is, of the relations that pertain between parts and the wholes that they compose.

## ***List of abbreviations***

### ***Gilles Deleuze***

- D** *Dialogues II*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2006)
- PI** *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. by Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2005)
- DR** *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2004)
- DI** *Desert Islands and Other Texts*, ed. By David Lapoujade and trans. by Michael Taormina (London: MIT Press, 2004)
- CC** *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998)
- N** *Negotiations*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)
- EPS** *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1992)
- LS** *The Logic of Sense*, trans. by Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. by Constantin V. Boundas (London: Athlone, 1990)
- F** *Foucault*, trans. by Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988)

### ***Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari***

- ATP** *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2004)
- AO** *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (London: Athlone Press, 1984)

### ***Alain Badiou***

- BE** *Being and Event*, trans. by Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2006)
- TW** *Theoretical Writings*, ed. and trans. by Ray Brassier and Alberto Toscano (London: Continuum, 2006)
- DCB** *Deleuze: The Clamour of Being*, trans. by Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000)

# Introduction

## Aim and structure of investigation

The aim of this work is to tell a philosophical tale about a dispute: the *φιλονικία* (*Parm.* 128d5) between monists and pluralists. The drama centres on the fate of a conceptual fourfold: one, many, part, whole. The main character through which the narrative unfolds is the French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze. My investigation constitutes an attempt towards (1) understanding perennial issues and problems relating to the notions of one, many, part and whole; (2) extracting conditions for a successful account of multiplicity and parthood; (3) surveying Deleuzian conceptions and uses of these notions; (4) appraising the extent to which Deleuze's metaphysics can answer some of these ancient problems concerning the status of multiplicity and the nature of mereological composition, that is, of the relations that pertain between parts and the wholes that they compose.

The narration begins, in chapter 1, with an analysis of Parmenides' poem that identifies the framework in which Greek thinking operates and against which it occasionally reacts. At the centre of this thinking one finds a forceful Eleatic challenge, Parmenides' *ἔλεγχος*. My aim is to identify the conditions under which the relation between one and many becomes problematic; to discern the paradoxes and dilemmas that this relation generates; to survey the realm of possible solutions to the problem of the articulation of notions of parthood and multiplicity in Eleaticism and, by extension, in the metaphysics that Plato develops in his middle-period dialogues (in chapter 2). Having secured a conception of the *φιλονικία* between pluralists and monists and of the issues at stake in the dispute, namely, an account of the multiplicity of *φαινόμενα*, I proceed, in chapter 3, to examine Badiou's criticisms of the univocal aspirations of Deleuze's ontology. The purpose here is to identify the way in which the ancient dispute underpins contemporary accounts of multiplicity and to extract, with reference to the Badiouian critique of the concept of univocity, a series of antinomies that afflict Deleuze's accounts of the relation between one and many and that problematise the status of Deleuzian metaphysics in regards to its pluralist aspirations. Chapter 4 introduces some key mereological concepts and

undertakes an initial survey of the use and role of notions of parthood and wholeness in Deleuze, mainly by means of an examination of Deleuze and Guattari's presentation of arborescent and rhizomatic structures. This reading allows me to establish a clear picture of the paradoxicality of Deleuzian mereology, which reflects the dilemmas and antinomies identified in relation to the doctrine of univocity. In chapters 5 and 6, I present, analyse and appraise critically two putatively contrasting metaphysical conceptions of mereological relations and operations: Husserl's essentialism and Epicurean atomism. As a result of these investigations, I extract – in a negative fashion – the conditions by which a theory of partial differentiation must abide if it is to overcome the theoretical impasses facing both horns of the *φιλονικία*, monists and pluralists. Finally, chapter 7 undertakes the task of assessing the extent to which Deleuze's ontology of parts and wholes meets the exigencies for a successful conception and articulation of mereological and, more generally, ontological relations between one and many, parts and wholes.

### ***Prima facie* objections**

Why does a treatise announcing itself as an investigation into Deleuze's notions of multiplicity, structure and composition begin with the examination of paradoxes, antinomies and dilemmas that belong to ancient philosophy, and, what is more, to Platonist metaphysics? Is this not a distinctly un-Deleuzian milieu – a heritage that may be argued to be not only foreign to Deleuze's concepts and interests but also inimical to his thought as a whole?

In other words, *prima facie*, my investigation is faced with the following objection: if one of my aims is to examine and untangle Deleuze's conception of oneness and multiplicity, then there is an obvious and sensible route that I should take, namely, that which traces the philosophical lineage that Deleuze himself weaves.<sup>1</sup> This might include: his reworking of Scotist ontology, Spinozist

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<sup>1</sup> This lineage appears to be formalised, for example, in Graham Jones, *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), which includes chapters on Marx, Simondon, Wronski, Hume, Maimon, Ruyer, Kant, Riemann, Leibniz, Bergson and Freud, among others.

expressionism and Leibnizian folds,<sup>2</sup> his Bergsonian heritage,<sup>3</sup> his connections with Maimon and the post-Kantians,<sup>4</sup> his empiricism,<sup>5</sup> his debt to Simondon and biological ideas,<sup>6</sup> his philosophical use of the differential calculus,<sup>7</sup> or even, for want a Greek connection, his Stoicism.<sup>8</sup> It might seem more pertinent, interesting and fruitful, if such a question were to be pursued by means of other thinkers, namely, through Deleuze's philosophical heroes and villains. What seems to make Greek philosophy an unreasonable starting point is the scarcity of adequate precedents in Deleuze's thought of engagement with the terms and categories of Greek thought; and where such engagement does take place, it would be much more reasonable to derive Deleuzian categories by other means. It may therefore be argued that this lack of precedence makes the putative connections I attempt to establish between ancient Greek and contemporary French thought arbitrary, unfruitful and untenable.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In this respect, Daniel W. Smith's analyses are a tour-de-force of clarity and insight. Cf. 'The Doctrine of Univocity: Deleuze's Ontology of Immanence' in *Deleuze and Religion*, ed. by Mary Bryden (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 167-183 and 'The Conditions of the New', *Deleuze Studies*, 1 (2007), 1-21. Also, cf. Todd May, 'Difference and Unity in Gilles Deleuze' in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy*, ed. by Constantin Boundas et al (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 33-50.

<sup>3</sup> The most convincing account of a Bergsonian Deleuze is found in Constantin V. Boundas, 'Deleuze-Bergson: An Ontology of the Virtual' in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 81-106. Also, cf. Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Christian Kerslake's interpretation (cf. *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy: From Kant to Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009)) firmly situates Deleuze in the context of the responses to Kant's critical philosophy. Also, cf. Daniel W. Smith, 'Deleuze's Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality' in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 29-56.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Bruce Baugh, 'Deleuze and Empiricism', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 24 (1993), 15-31.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Keith Ansell Pearson, *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Manuel DeLanda's insightful and influential *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. John Sellars, 'An Ethics of the Event: Deleuze's Stoicism', *Angelaki*, 11 (2006), 157 – 171.

<sup>9</sup> To make things worse, in what follows I seem not to take advantage of the most obvious connections between Deleuze and ancient philosophy, namely, his anti-Platonism and his admiration for Lucretius. In fact, not only am I about to present Deleuze's philosophy in the light of problems that animate Platonism (and I will present the Platonic and the Deleuzian theories of Ideas in terms of these problems in sections 2.1 and 7.3), but I am also going to problematise the status of Lucretius as a philosophical hero of multiplicity.

My reply to this objection begins with the clarification that it is not my intention to offer a historical or developmental account of Deleuze's philosophical biography. In other words, my aim is not to put forward an account of Deleuze's influences – a worthwhile project which has produced a number of excellent commentaries on Deleuze – but instead to make an original contribution on Deleuzian scholarship by connecting Deleuzian ideas in the context of *traditional* questions and problems and to assess the force or efficacy of these ideas in light of these questions. If I propose to draw unfamiliar but legitimate connections and to install Deleuze in a supposedly un-Deleuzian milieu in which he becomes an interlocutor of Plato and Parmenides, it is because I believe that the Greek *φιλονικία* is still raging and that the concepts involved in the dispute animate contemporary metaphysics. This is a belief that the current investigation proposes and seeks to validate.<sup>10</sup>

The foray in ancient philosophy will be extended and systematised in the course of this investigation into Deleuzian metaphysics, e.g. by means of an argument against Epicureanism. This will reveal three important ways in which Deleuze's thought – a modern philosophy *par excellence* – relates to an ancient dispute. Like Plato's account of one and many in the dialogues of the middle period, Deleuze's conception of oneness and multiplicity is developed alongside an account of individuation, that is, a theory of production and causality, or in the terms that I will be using here, a theory of *composition*. In this way, production and causality, cause and effect, ground and grounded, oneness and multiplicity are implicated in a wider theory of *γένεσις* or coming-into-being. Further, both theories purport to evade the *φιλονικία* between monists and pluralists by effecting a diagonal

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<sup>10</sup> This is not to say that there have not been cases of commentaries that discuss Deleuzian themes in relation to ancient philosophy, most usually to Aristotle's account of difference or to the theme of the reversal of Platonism or to Deleuze's Stoicism. For example, cf. Daniel W. Smith, 'The Concept of the Simulacrum and the Overturning of Platonism', *Continental Philosophy Review*, 38 (2006), 89-123; Nathan Widder, 'The Rights of Simulacra: Deleuze and the Univocity of Being', *Continental Philosophy Review*, 34 (2001), 437-453. An exception, which seeks to interpret Deleuze's philosophy in the context of a philosophical narrative that begins with Parmenides, is Miguel de Beistegui's *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

manoeuvre between, beyond and above the terms on which the ancient dispute – as well as modern discussions on structure, which inherit the concepts and the problems of the ancient antagonism – are based, namely, oneness and multiplicity. Finally, and most significantly, Deleuze’s account of oneness and multiplicity and the diagonal operation that accompanies it seem equally susceptible to arguments of the kind put forward by Plato in the *Parmenides*. The monist parameters of Deleuze’s pluralism lends Deleuzian philosophy its paradoxical atmosphere as the demands of univocity seem to entangle any attempt to articulate an ontology of the multiple (a physics) in apparently insurmountable difficulties. Indeed, the central issue of Deleuzian scholarship today seems to be the presentation, analysis and evaluation of objections against Deleuze’s conception of the one and many distinction. These objections concern the scope and profundity of the concept and operation of multiplicity and its relation to oneness in the context of Deleuzian ontology. The problem seems to be assigning Deleuze’s philosophy to a position in the spectrum between monists and pluralists, to determine Deleuze’s answer to the old question of the *φιλονικία*: is it one or is it many? It is in the terms of the ancient controversy that Alain Badiou, Deleuze’s most prominent critic and the first to raise rigorously the question of the notion of multiplicity in Deleuze, conceives his ‘dispute with Deleuze’:

We are faced with an extreme tension, balanced precariously between the multiple on the one hand, and the metaphysical power of the One on the other. It should be clear why the general question that is the object of my dispute with Deleuze, which concerns the status of the event vis-à-vis an ontology of the multiple, and how to avoid reintroducing the power of the One at that point wherein the law of the multiple begins to falter, is the guiding question of all contemporary philosophy.<sup>11</sup>

In making these connections between Eleatic problems, Platonic solutions, Hesiodic cosmogony, Epicurean naturalism and Deleuze’s metaphysics, I presuppose but also aim to validate Montebello’s assertion that ‘*depuis les*

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<sup>11</sup> Alain Badiou, *Theoretical Writings* (London: Continuum, 2006), pp. 103-104. Hereafter cited as *TW*. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

*Présocratiques, Platon, Aristote et Plotin, l'Un et le multiple sont au centre de la philosophie. L'histoire de la pensée s'est installée dans la longue opposition de l'Un et du multiple*'.<sup>12</sup> Given this grand, reverberating philosophical opposition, Montebello proceeds to ask the crucial question that the tradition itself has been eliciting repeatedly: '*monisme ou pluralisme? Le monde est-il dispersion anarchique ou unité monarchique? Est-il chaos ou cosmos?*'.<sup>13</sup>

In the context of the narrative that I attempt to weave and tell, a series of philosophical personae serve to qualify, explicate and crystallise cosmos and chaos, '*unité monarchique*' and '*dispersion anarchique*', as the rivaling visions of the world, seen from the perspective of monism and pluralism respectively. I extract a notion of cosmos and a characterization of the standpoint of mereological monism or essentialism underpinning it by means of Husserl, Hesiod and, to a lesser extent, Aristotle; and, on the other hand, Epicurus and Lucretius offer a *putative* account of acosmic structures, of an ontology that aspires but, as I shall show, fails to be a metaphysical pluralism.

By implication, it should become clear already that my treatment of Deleuze presupposes that Deleuze's engagements with aesthetics, politics and ethics, his analyses of capitalism, schizophrenia and language, his critique of representation and dualism, are underlain by an ontology that gives direction to the slogans through which this philosophy is presented. One often discerns a quasi-ethical reverence commanded by the mere mention of 'multiplicity' and 'immanence' among Deleuze's commentators. Indeed, Deleuze scholarship suffers from the fact that terms and concepts are valorised on the basis of aesthetic, moral or political assumptions. This commentarial strategy is also identified as damaging by Levi Bryant, who notes:

These readings of Deleuze do not tell me why I should be against representation, the subject, established morality, recognition, the State, and so on; they only critique those things through

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<sup>12</sup> Pierre Montebello, *Deleuze: La Passion de la Pensée* (Paris: Vrin, 2008), p. 17.

<sup>13</sup> Montebello, *Deleuze, op. cit.* p. 18.



a Deleuzian lens which amounts to begging the question. They begin from a normative standpoint and thereby fail to establish the necessity of what they argue.<sup>14</sup>

The Deleuze whom I read and whom I present here is – fundamentally – a metaphysician; a thinker whose thought is animated by and responds to identifiable questions and problems that are shared across philosophical schools and eras. Bryant notes that ‘if Deleuze is to be understood, then his concepts, his thought, must be comprehended in terms of the problems to which it responds and not solely in terms of the stated theses belonging to the philosophy’.<sup>15</sup> The connections I attempt to establish, the fact that I take as a starting point of my investigation Eleatic problems, allows me to identify ways in which Deleuze’s philosophy offers insights into and becomes a valuable interlocutor in philosophical debates on mereological relations, on conceptions of parthood and wholeness, on rivaling conceptions of the world and of the making of the world. Examples of reliance on a logic and metaphysics of parts and wholes, when Deleuze seems to appropriate and deploy the traditional mereological vocabulary in order to articulate his metaphysical vision, abound in the Deleuzian corpus: the accounts of multiplicity in *Bergsonism* and in ‘Bergson’s Conception of Difference’, the reworking of the concept of structure undertaken in ‘How Do We Recognise Structuralism?’, the concept of univocity in his study of Spinoza, the theory of Ideas developed in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* (which is summarised in ‘The Method of Dramatisation’), the concept of multiplicity that is expounded in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* with Guattari, the notions of fragments in *Anti-Oedipus* and of rhizomatic structures in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the crucial references and formulations in *Negotiations* and *Dialogues* and his *seminaires* at Vincennes, the remarks on chaos in *What is Philosophy?*, the description of the empiricist world in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, his second attempt to define the essence of the fragmentary in ‘Whitman’ and construction in ‘Bartleby’, the cinematographic notions of whole, set and part in *Cinema 1*, culminating finally

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<sup>14</sup> Levi R. Bryant, *Difference and Givenness: Deleuze’s Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology of Immanence* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008), p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, *op. cit.* p. 4.

into the theory of entanglement found in *The Fold*. Structure and composition are concepts that occupy, whether conspicuously or inconspicuously, a central role in Deleuze's investigations throughout the different stages of his philosophical life. Thus, I employ a mereological and metaphysical vocabulary that, although present in Deleuze, has yet to be explored and assessed adequately.

A further note needs to be made concerning my treatment of Badiou and the limitations to which this is subject. It is not my intention to provide an exhaustive account of Badiou's theory of multiplicity; instead, I am only interested in Badiou insofar as he raises – against Deleuze – arguments that have precedents in the history of Greek philosophy. In effect, Badiou's role in what follows is to instigate the modern dispute between monists and pluralists in a way and in a vocabulary that is, if not ineliminably, then recognisably Greek and that relates contemporary philosophy to issues of ancient Greek ontology. Thus, the reader will not find a comprehensive and systematic investigation into Badiou's ontology, his notion of void, his introduction of set theory at the heart of the theory of multiplicity and of his equation of ontology with mathematics.<sup>16</sup> It is conceivable that this ontology harbours resources that allow Badiou, for example, to escape the pitfalls of atomism that I will identify in chapter 6; nor do I assume that the elements of Badiou's situations are atoms or that sets are to be thought of as atomic conglomerations. However, the object of my investigation is Deleuze's philosophy, and I use the Badiou-Deleuze dispute only as a platform for further understanding the difficulties that Deleuze's theory of the multiple raises and the theoretical exigencies that it must meet.

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<sup>16</sup> For comprehensive studies of Badiou's philosophy, see Peter Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, ed. by Peter Hallward (London: Continuum, 2004); and Peter Osborne, 'Neo-Classic: Alain Badiou's *Being and Event*', *Radical Philosophy*, 142 (2007), 19-29.

# 1 One and many in Parmenides

## 1.1 The poem

### The two ways of inquiry

Ever since Parmenides of Elea disrupted the course of Ionian reflection on nature (*φύσις*), the encounter with the multiplicity of objects inhabiting the phenomenal world has taken the form of the diagnosis of a deficiency. Such a diagnosis has unsettled those philosophers who have discerned in this diversity a grave threat against the claims to intelligibility that the project of the *φυσικοί* presupposes. Those *ἀφύσικοι* (unnatural) critics were motivated by a profound discontent concerning the status of the objects of the mortal world (*τὰ ὀρῶμενα*) and the processes and concepts that apply to them:<sup>17</sup> their ‘coming to be (*γένεσις*) and passing away (*φθορά*) and change (*μεταβολή*) generally’ (according to Aristotle, *Phys.*191b33), their dispersion and scattering, the presentation of a heterogeneous and discontinuous multiplicity of diverse objects (*τὰ πολλά*), composed (*σκιδνάμενον*) of divided parts (*διαίρετόν*) and forming divisible wholes. The diagnosis and critique are premised on the identification of a fundamental bifurcation, namely, the divergence between the two trajectories (*ὁδοί*) traced in Parmenides’ poem:<sup>18</sup> the *ὁδός* treaded by the goddess and the *ὁδός* on which mortals wander.

Come now, I will tell you - and bring away my story safely when you have heard it -

the only ways of inquiry there are to think:

the One, that it is and that it is not possible for it not to be,

is the path of Persuasion (for it attends upon Truth),

the other, that it is not and that it is necessary for it not to be,

this I point out to you to be a path completely unlearnable,

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Eduard Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, 13<sup>th</sup> edn (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), p. 51.

<sup>18</sup> Parmenides uses *ὁδός*, *ἄταρπος*, *κέλευθος* and *πάτος* when referring to ‘road’, ‘way’ or ‘path’. Cf. William F. Wyatt, Jr., ‘The Root of Parmenides’, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 94 (1992), 113-120, for an account of the different meanings, associations and resonances of these terms in the poem.

for neither may you know that which is not (for it is not to be accomplished)  
nor may you declare it.

(Parmenides, B2.1-7)<sup>19</sup>

With these words the goddess of Parmenides' poem introduces the youth to the way of truth (*ἀλήθεια*), the only possible of the ways of inquiry (*ὁδοὶ διζήσιος*, B2.2). The overriding principle that governs the turnings of this path (*ὁδός*, *ἀταρπὸν* and *κέλευθος*) is the same principle that Parmenides bequeathed upon Plato, namely: *ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι*, 'that it is and that it is not possible for it not to be' (B2.3). The thread of *ἀλήθεια* is the principle of being: *ἐστί*.

At the same time *ἀλήθεια* determines (by rendering impossible) a second way of inquiry, the way of *δόξα*. Whereas the path of *ἀλήθεια* is a path of persuasion and reveals truth (*Πειθοῦς ἐστι κέλευθος - Ἀληθείη γὰρ ὀπηδεῖ -*, B2.4), the second path is one of opinions of mortals (*βροτῶν δόξας*, B1.30) 'in which there is no true reliance' (*ταῖς οὐκ ἐνὶ πίστις ἀληθῆς*, B1.30). Parmenides is careful in his employment of singular descriptions for *ἀλήθεια*. In sharp contrast, he consistently resorts to plural descriptions when presenting the objects encountered and the opinions held along the path of *δόξα*. Indeed, Gadamer notes, 'Parmenides does not speak at all of *δόξα* but rather of *δόξαι*'.<sup>20</sup> Further, Mackenzie points at the way in which the consistent use of 'dual or plural descriptions' informs the narration of the mortal path, thus reflecting Parmenides' attempt to elicit the pluralism that undercuts the path of mortal opinions; for example, mortals are *δίκρανοι* (two-headed, B6.5), possessing *πολύπειρον ἔθος* (habit born from much experience, B7.3) and committing the error of *μορφὰς ὀνομάζειν* (naming forms, B8.53).<sup>21</sup> The principle

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<sup>19</sup> Translations of the Presocratics are taken from *A Presocratics Reader: Selected Fragments and Testimonia*, ed. with Introduction by Patricia Curd, trans. by Richard D. McKirahan (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996). This is based on the translations of Richard D. McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994). The standard numbering is based on the ordering established in Hermann Diels and Walter Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Berlin: Weidmann, 1934). For example, in B1.30, 1 refers to fragment and 30 to verse in that fragment.

<sup>20</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Beginning of Philosophy*, trans. by Rod Coltman (New York: Continuum, 1998), p. 98.

<sup>21</sup> Mary Margaret Mackenzie, 'Parmenides' Dilemma', *Phronesis*, 27 (1982), 1-12 (p. 5).

guiding this second path is an impossible principle: 'that it is not and that it is necessary for it not to be' (ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς χρεῶν ἐστὶ μὴ εἶναι, B2.5). The thread of δόξα is the principle of not-being: οὐκ ἔστι.

The presentation of this exclusive disjunction between, in Kahn's formulation, 'the primary alternatives: that is, of ἐστί and its denial' and the corresponding 'radical antithesis between human conjecture and divine cognition'<sup>22</sup> raises a number of questions: (1) What is the sense of ἐστί and οὐκ ἔστι? What does Parmenides mean by 'being'? (2) What accounts for the rigidity of the exclusive disjunction between the two alternatives? Further, (3) what kind of object is *it* that, disregarding such rigidity, both is and is not?

The aim of this chapter is to propose an answer to these questions. Although some contribution towards disentangling the 'viper's nest of problems'<sup>23</sup> that befall the interpretation of the fragments will be made, my exegesis will focus on Parmenides' account of the imperfection of objects of appearance. Accordingly, I will investigate the way in which his description of the radically bifurcating paths founds the critique of a cluster of notions, namely, coming-into-being, parthood, composition, multiplicity.

There are a number of references in Parmenides' poem pointing towards the foundation that sustains the rigid distinction between the mortal way of not-being and the divine way of being that lies 'far from the beaten path of humans' (ἧ γὰρ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἐκτὸς πάτου ἐστίν, B1.27). On this beaten path 'mortals, knowing nothing, two-headed wander' (ἦν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδέν πλάττονται, δίκρανοι, B6.4-5). The language that the goddess employs in her characterisation of the mortal predicament reflects the vehemence with which the mortal world is rejected: men are guided by their 'wandering mind' (πλακτὸν νόον, B6.6), described as 'equally deaf and blind, amazed, hordes without judgement' (κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοὶ τε, τεθηπότες, ἄκριτα φῦλα, B6.7). In contrast to the world that she knows and inhabits, which is immersed in truth (ἀμφὶς ἀληθείης, B8.51), the mortal world is deceitful (κόσμος

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<sup>22</sup> Charles H. Kahn, 'The Thesis of Parmenides', *Review of Metaphysics*, 22 (1968-69), 700-724 (pp. 705 and 707).

<sup>23</sup> Kahn, 'The Thesis of Parmenides', *op. cit.* p. 700.

*ἀπατηλὸς*, B8.50), inhabited by mortals who ‘have gone astray’ (*πεπλανημένοι εἰσίν*, B8.55) and traversed by the ‘backward-turning path’ (*παλίντροπος κέλευθος*, B6.9) on which mortals travel. The commitment with which the path of mortal opinions is rejected stems from the invocation of not-being in the unwinding of this path. This much the goddess makes clear when she complains that for men ‘both to be and not to be are judged the same and not the same’ (*οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταῦτόν νενόμισται κοῦ ταῦτόν*, B6.8) or when barring the youth from the mortal way of inquiry on account of the fact that ‘in no way may this prevail, that things that are not, are’ (*Οὐ γὰρ μήποτε τοῦτο δαμῆ εἶναι μὴ ἔόντα*, B7.1) when *δόξαι βρότεια* are apparently constituted in the conviction that things that are not, are. In Cherubin’s formulation, ‘to own to being mortal is to invoke negation and distinction fundamentally [...]. To rely on negation and distinction in order to live, to be aware, and to seek is precisely to be mortal’.<sup>24</sup> This, however, is an unbearable invocation for the goddess and one that is foreign to the way of truth. Still, the reasons that motivate and, indeed, necessitate the purging of thinking (*νοεῖν*) from not-being remain unclear.

*Χρὴ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ’ ἐὼν ἔμμεναι· ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι, μηδὲν δ’ οὐκ ἔστιν*: ‘That which is there to be spoken and thought of must be. For it is possible for it to be, but not possible for nothing to be’ (B6.1-2). This is, then, the revealed principle according to which the path of *ἀλήθεια* unfolds and which the goddess bids the youth to consider (*τά σ’ ἐγὼ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα*, B6.2). The following questions may at this point be posed. First, one may ask what the fundamental error that mortals commit is. This is a demand for a descriptive account of the mortal world; that is, for a descriptive metaphysics of the ground that allows *φαινόμενα* to appear: it asks what it is that makes the mortal world, what the falsehood in which its mortality lies consists in. Further, it is imperative that the role that negation plays in this falsehood be clarified; this is a question of analysis, since it inquires into the structure that underlies the constitution of the phenomenal world and aims to see how negation informs the mortal falsehood. On a third level, the question of criterion and a

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<sup>24</sup> Rose Cherubin, ‘Light, Night, and the Opinions of Mortals: Parmenides B8.51-61 and B9’, *Ancient Philosophy*, 25 (2005), 1-23 (p. 21).

normative or revisionary metaphysics arises: namely, why, for Parmenides, falsehood and deception are the necessary consequents of the informing of *φαινόμενα* by negation. The task thus posed is a diagnostic one, viz. if mortality is tantamount to relying on negation, the way in which this constitution entails dissimulation must be examined.

This means that the order of my investigation reverses the order of Parmenides' presentation. The goddess starts with a deduction of the criterion of being, which is then applied in the subsequent diagnosis of mortal opinions in the first part of the poem (B2.1-8.49). Parmenides concludes his account with the cosmological narrative (commenced at B8.50) describing the world that mortals cognise in the second part of the poem. This reversal is methodologically motivated by the need to remobilise the potency of Parmenidean assumptions concerning the deficiency of *φαινόμενα*. That is, rather than start with the divergence of the two ways of inquiry, it is hoped that the root of this divergence will be made apparent by uncovering the reason why Parmenides is led to introduce and uphold the distinction. The multiplicity of entry points into Parmenides' argument is supported by the goddess's proclamation that 'for me, where I am to begin from is the same / for to there I will come back again' (*Ξυνὸν δέ μοι ἔστιν, ὅπποθεν ἄρξωμαι· τόθι γὰρ πάλιν ἴξομαι αὐθις*, B5.1-2).

### **The descriptive way of *δόξα* (B8.51-61; B9)**

I now return to the question concerning the nature of *φαινόμενα*. The task at hand involves the description of the multiplicity of phenomenal objects encountered in mortal cognition as understood in the Eleatic critique. *What* does the Milesian mortal meet upon meeting an object of mortal *δόξα* and what is the sense in which such an object both is and is not?

Having provided her 'reliable account (*πιστὸν λόγον*) and thought concerning Truth' in the first part of the poem, the goddess pauses (*παύω*) in order to endeavour an account of the structure that the many sensible objects possess. The account is preceded by the qualification at B8.50-52 that, 'from here on' (*δ' ἀπὸ τοῦδε*), the youth is going to hear a 'deceitful ordering' of her words (*κόσμον ἐμῶν*

ἐπέων ἀπατηλὸν ἀκούων) and learn mortal opinions (μάνθανε δόξας βροτείας). Indeed the second part of the poem seems to undertake the kind of inquiry which the goddess has condemned in her preceding deduction of the uneventfulness of being and appears to be presenting an elaborate cosmology to rival those of the Ionian philosophers.

The very attempt at a treatment of δόξα on the goddess's behalf has raised objections among both ancient and modern commentators who have read this treatment as a false account of reality, in the manner of a doomed Ionian project. The question then arises what the role of this treatment might be and what the presentation of a 'false hypothesis'<sup>25</sup> might contribute to the ontological message of the goddess, which is none other than the condemnation of inquiries of this kind as mortally illusory. In other words, the presence of the treatment of δόξα in the poem introduces the following difficulty. On the one hand the goddess pledges (in the proemium (B1.28-30)) and indeed undertakes (in the second part of the poem) the instruction of Parmenides' youth (Χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι) in both ways of inquiry, that is, both the way of δόξα 'in which there is no true reliance' (ταῖς οὐκ ἐνὶ πίστις ἀληθείης) as well as 'the unshaken heart of persuasive Truth' (Ἀληθείης εὐκκλέος ἀτρεμές ἦτορ). On the other hand, most commentators interpret δόξα as a way of falsehood. Owen, for example, argues that its presentation is preceded the goddess's 'sharp denunciation of βροτῶν δόξαι' as immersed in illusion.<sup>26</sup> This seems to commit the goddess to a presentation of a false account of reality which merely reproduces the illusions of the φυσικοί.<sup>27</sup> But either what has been instructed in the first part of the poem is true, in which case no truth may be accorded to the world of δόξα, the account of which is at best unnecessary and at worst impious and contrary

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<sup>25</sup> Hermann Fränkel, 'Studies in Parmenides' in *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, ed. by R. E. Allen and David J. Furley, 2 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), II, pp. 1-47 (p. 20).

<sup>26</sup> G. E. L. Owen, 'Eleatic Questions' in *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, ed. by R. E. Allen and David J. Furley, 2 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), II, pp. 48-81 (p. 49).

<sup>27</sup> For a review of the main trends of solutions to the problem of the role of the exposition of δόξα and of the relation between the two parts of the poem, see especially A. A. Long, 'The Principles of Parmenides' Cosmogony' in *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, ed. by R. E. Allen and David J. Furley, 2 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), II, pp. 82-101 (pp. 82-83); Mackenzie, 'Parmenides' Dilemma', *op. cit.* p. 4.



to the divine benevolence that initiates and sustains the whole instruction; or some truth is accorded to the account of *δόξα*, in which case the preceding condemnation of mortal cognition is false. Both alternatives threaten the divine benevolence that since the very beginning has guaranteed that ‘it was not an evil destiny (*μοῖρα κακή*) that sent [the youth] forth to travel this road’ (B1.26-27). Why is the goddess compelled to commit ‘the errors of mortal thinking’?<sup>28</sup> This ‘old question’, therefore, concerns not only the relation between the two parts of the poem but also the relation between *ἀλήθεια* and *δόξα*:

[The second part of the poem] describes at length a world which has already been rejected. Yet the *Aletheia* provides Parmenides with an efficient weapon against his pluralistic contemporaries; and by the same token, it refutes the cosmology of his own *Doxa*. If the *Aletheia* is right, the *Doxa* is wrong and to expound it futile. So why write the *Doxa*?<sup>29</sup>

The problem, however, is solved if one abandons the assumptions that have framed the traditional readings of this cosmology. For the posing of this difficulty stems from the reading of the account of *δόξα* as a false account of reality, i.e., as a cosmology, even if paradigmatic, thus leading to the awkwardness concerning its function and connection to the account of *Ἀλήθεια* in the first part of the poem. This difficulty is resolved if, rather than read the second part of the poem as a false account of reality, i.e. as a first-order cosmological theory of the Ionian kind, it is instead read as a second-order account of the structure that this falsehood possesses. Indeed, upon announcing her motives for undertaking such inquiry, the goddess describes this structure as *ἐοικώς*: appropriate, apparent and, one may add, sincere.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Long, ‘The Principles of Parmenides’ Cosmogony’, *op. cit.* p. 95.

<sup>29</sup> Mackenzie, ‘Parmenides’ Dilemma’, *op. cit.* p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> *ἐοικώς* is ambiguous: it means fitting, appropriate as well as seeming, apparent and probable. According to Mourelatos (Alexander P. D. Mourelatos, ‘The Deceptive Words of Parmenides’ “Doxa” in *The Pre-Socratics: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Alexander P. D. Mourelatos (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 312-349), Parmenides is here taking advantage of the multiplicity of meanings to point towards the dual character of his exposition of *δόξα*. See also Cherubin, ‘Light, Night, and the Opinions of Mortals’, *op. cit.* pp. 9-12; Long, ‘The Principles of Parmenides’ Cosmogony’, *op. cit.* p. 96; Owen, ‘Eleatic Questions’, *op. cit.* pp. 49-55.

I declare to you all the ordering *as it appears*,  
so that no mortal opinion may ever overtake you.

(B8.60-61, emphasis added)

It is in this way, that is, as a truthful account of falsehood (and not as a merely false account of reality), that the second part of the poem dealing with *δόξα* comes to play an integral role in Parmenides' critique of that falsehood: the luminous and deceptive ordering (*διάκοσμος*) of the mortal world is declared 'as it appears' (*ἐοικώς*). Thus, while directed to illusion, the goddess's exposition is, in Cherubin's words, 'fitting or appropriate as a *διάκοσμος* for mortals' since it serves to qualify what the structure of illusion consists in.<sup>31</sup>

The preoccupation with the phenomenal world of the many (*τὰ πολλά*) particular sensible things (*τὰ ὀρῶμενα*) proves, therefore, to be a sincere undertaking and one that is integral to the thinking of perfection and being. It is for this reason that Parmenides patiently lingers on appearance and has his goddess thoroughly take him through the *ὁδός* of not-being, that is, the route of *δόξα* and change and its cosmology of falsehood. The account of *δόξα* offers an account of what the mortal mode of cognition entails and what the projects of the *φυσικοί* presuppose. Its function is to afford a standpoint from which to observe and recognise the structure of illusion. It is thus not the rival of equally false cosmologies, even as the exemplary 'case-study in self-deception, indecisiveness and confusion' that Mourelatos takes the exposition to be,<sup>32</sup> but their analysis. It is in this sense of the capacity to disclose the assumptions that frame the cosmological project that the instruction in *δόξα* will ascertain that 'no mortal opinion may ever overtake (*παρελάσσει*)' the youth, that is, not as a matter of rivalry in constructing equally false accounts of reality, but as the rivalry between false accounts and the analysis of their falsehood.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the

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<sup>31</sup> Cherubin, 'Light, Night, and the Opinions of Mortals', *op. cit.* p. 12.

<sup>32</sup> Mourelatos, 'The Deceptive Words of Parmenides' "Doxa", *op. cit.* p. 347.

<sup>33</sup> For interpretations of the exposition of *δόξα* as a first-order rival of Ionian cosmology, see especially David Sedley, 'Parmenides and Melissus' in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. by A. A. Long (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 113-133 (pp. 123-125). Long also agrees on the status of the account as a cosmogony with the proviso that 'in the cosmogony Parmenides shows that the very best explanation possible from such

goddess's instruction on mortal opinion is the truthful and appropriate (*ἐοικώς*) account of what the immersion in deception (*ἀπατηλός*) consists in. But this means that the tension between the two parts of the poem, as well as between the dual description of the mortal orderings as both *διάκοσμος ἐοικώς* and *κόσμος ἀπατηλός*, is tantamount to the institution of the distinction between appearance and reality, as Nehamas makes clear:

[Parmenides] writes the *Doxa* because its falsehood consists not in its being a *wrong* description of appearance but in its being only a description of *appearance* and in its apparent claim to describe reality.<sup>34</sup>

The account of *φαινόμενα* in the second part of the poem, therefore, presents an analysis of the constitution of the mortal world and provides Parmenides' answer to the first question that the disjunction between being and not-being raises, giving a descriptive account of the falsehood in which mortality lies.

The account begins with the explicit identification of the founding error that condemns the mortal world to illusion:

For they made up their minds to name two forms,  
of which it is not right to name one - in this they have gone astray.

(B8.53-54)

These lines are ambiguous. How is one to understand the clause 'of which it is not right to name one', which carries the goddess's condemnation? What is *this* in which mortals 'have gone astray'? It is unclear whether the error that mortals commit resides in the introduction of two forms (*μορφὰς δύο*) rather than one or whether the error consists in the introduction of two forms rather than none. A third alternative is

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principles is utterly fallacious' (Long, 'The Principles of Parmenides' Cosmogony', *op. cit.* p. 89), that is, as a paradigm of falsehood that exhibits in an exemplary way the shortcomings of its rivals.

<sup>34</sup> Alexander Nehamas, 'Parmenides' Three Ways of Inquiry' in *Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 125-137 (p. 135).

also available according to which the error resides in the introduction of two forms 'of which a unity may not be named'.<sup>35</sup>

This ambiguity cannot be resolved until I have developed Parmenides' account of the way of truth.<sup>36</sup> For the clause that encapsulates the divine condemnation of *φαινόμενα* is the conclusion of the preceding diagnosis of *δόξα*. In other words, the goddess's presentation has already established the diagnostic equation of mortality and falsehood through the criterion of truth, whereas the concern of my presentation here is the descriptive account of the constitution of mortality. This ambiguity, therefore, is a consequent of the fact that the mortal deed is at this stage in the poem qualified and castigated as an error, when our present analysis is involved in a descriptive rather than a diagnostic account of the constitution of illusion. It is only after the diagnostic task has been undertaken that the sense in which mortality amounts to deception may be comprehended and the ambiguity of B8.53-54 resolved.

Regardless of the way in which the constitution of *φαινόμενα* will turn out to be tantamount to an arrangement of falsehood, what is important in the opening lines of the account of *δόξα* as a descriptive account is the fact that this arrangement is constituted in the introduction of two forms, Fire (*πῦρ*) and Night (*νύξ*), as distinct and opposite metaphysical elements. I quote here in full the crucial passages from fragments B8 and B9 in which this introduction is described:

And they distinguished things opposite in body, and established signs  
apart from one another - for one, the aetherial fire of flame,  
mild, very light, the same as itself in every direction,  
but not the same as the other; but that other one, in itself  
is opposite - dark night, a dense and heavy body.

(B8.55-59)

But since all things have been named light and night  
and the things which accord with their powers have been assigned to these things and those,

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<sup>35</sup> Long, 'The Principles of Parmenides' Cosmogony', *op. cit.* p. 90.

<sup>36</sup> Undertaken in section 1.1.

all is full of light and obscure night together,  
of both equally, since neither has no share.

(B9)

According to the account presented here by the goddess, the constitutive deed of the mortal path consists in the setting apart (*ἐκρίναντο*) of opposite elements (*τάντια*) for which separate signs (*σήματα χωρὶς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων*) were established (*ἔθεντο*). On the one hand, Fire is 'aetherial' (*αιθέριον*), 'mild' (*ἥπιον*) and 'very light' (*μέγ' ἐλαφρόν*). Night, conversely, is a 'dark' (*ἀδαῆ*), 'dense' (*πυκινόν*) and 'heavy' (*ἐμβριθές*) body (*δέμας*). A further qualification is added at B9.3, where Night is described as 'obscure' (*ἀφάντου*). The relation between these opposites and their respective signs is one of absolute separation in the sense that what one is, the other is not. Thus, each is strictly self-enclosed in the sense that each is itself and not the other: 'the same as itself in every direction, but not the same as the other' (*ἕωντῶ πάντοσε τῶτόν, τῶ δ' ἑτέρῳ μὴ τῶτόν*, B8.57-58). In other words, the Fire and Night distinction constitutes 'an exclusive opposition'.<sup>37</sup> Although these elements purport to remain distinct and self-enclosed in this way, this distinctness is undermined by their status as opposites. For mortals make a distinction – a *κρίσις* – between opposites that, as such, bears the structure of negation. As opposites, Fire and Night are nothing but opposites. A positive reference to either Fire or Night entails a negative reference to its opposite. What Fire is, Night is not and vice versa, each opposite to the other. In this way, Cherubin claims, 'Light is understood by mortals as what Night is not, and vice versa, so mortals' notions of both forms invoke non-being'.<sup>38</sup> The forms that ontologically found the mortal world are mutually exclusive and, hence, the distinction between them is exhaustive: there is nothing that Fire is that Night is not and nothing that Night is that Fire is not. Where Fire is, Night is not, and vice versa.

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<sup>37</sup> Cherubin, 'Light, Night, and the Opinions of Mortals', *op. cit.* p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Cherubin, 'Light, Night, and the Opinions of Mortals', *op. cit.* p. 3.

This antithesis, therefore, delineates a world as a ‘cosmological system based on dual principles’, a dualism.<sup>39</sup> These principles need not be identified with being and not-being. Contrary to Aristotle and, after him, Long, who valorise either Fire or Night by identifying the former with being and the latter with not-being,<sup>40</sup> thus interpreting the ambiguous B8.54 as ‘one of which (namely not-being) it is not right to name (rather than only being)’ and thereby ‘recommending the naming of light or fire, while forbidding the naming of night’,<sup>41</sup> it is the antithetical relation itself rather than its elements that bears Parmenides’ insight into the constitution of appearance.

As I will also show to be the case in Deleuze’s system, Parmenides, in this interpretation, casts divine wisdom and insight against the construal of the human *διάκοσμος* that is underlain by dualist principles. Rather than an opposition between monism and pluralism, the real contrast that Parmenides establishes is the one between dualist and non-dualist metaphysics. Monism, as Deleuze will repeat, finds its adversary in dualism, not in pluralism.

Returning to Parmenides’ analysis of dualism, this oppositional structure of Fire and Night permeates the whole of nature, for ‘all things (*πάντα*) have been named light and night’ (B9.1), and accounts for the appearance of the objects that mortals come to cognise and about which they have beliefs. These objects, and the world that they inhabit, are thus made up of both Fire and Night, which combine in different degrees: ‘all is full (*πλέον ἐστίν*) of light and obscure night together’ (B9.3). While Fire and Night underpin all things as the ontological elements that combine to

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<sup>39</sup> Mackenzie, ‘Parmenides’ Dilemma’, *op. cit.* p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> This identification is supported by the interpretation of the proemium as an *ἀνάβασις* and of the imagery of light as pertaining to the revelation of being, as Furley has shown (David J. Furley, ‘Notes on Parmenides’ in *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos*, ed. by Edward N. Lee et al (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1973), pp. 1-15 (p. 6). This reading has here been shown not to be as transparent as usually assumed to be. However, the reversal of the Aristotelian identification would not rectify the situation. Rather, the argument here is that, instead of identifying the cosmological elements, Fire and Night, with being and not-being, regardless of the way in which one may construe this one-to-one correspondence, it is the relation between the two elements that bears the structure of not-being; that is, that the account presented in the second part of the poem presents and undermines the ontology of constituents that underlies cosmological mortal thought. Thus we are here committed to an interpretation of B8.53, which will be qualified when we turn to the goddess’s deduction in B8.1-49, as ‘of which it is not right to name one (rather than none)’.

<sup>41</sup> Furley, ‘Notes on Parmenides’ *op. cit.* p. 6.

form them, they combine as distinct elements, that is, as components the combination of which is but the presence of each in different degrees and the absence of each in corresponding degrees. What Parmenides' cosmological narrative is here illustrating is the impossibility of a real unity between equally exclusive elements. An ontology of constituent elements, such as the one that underlies the cosmological projects, cannot sustain the transformative entwining of these elements but must present this combination as merely the presence of one opposite, which in turn implies the absence of its opposite, in a variety of degrees and shares. The Fire and Night scheme, therefore, sustains its world as the mixture of persistently distinct elements. This persistence stems from the fact that the relation between the two constituents is one of negation: Night refuses to turn into Fire or to go through any stages of transformation and, conversely, Fire remains itself refusing, in combining itself with Night, to turn into not-Fire, i.e. Night. This also means that the mixture of Fire and Night that makes things appear is not a third unity of the elements which have therefore allowed themselves to transform into that unity and, hence, to take on qualities of their opposite, but the presence and implied absence of both, each in itself.

Anticipating the diagnosis of *δόξα*, Parmenides here presents a structure of inquiry faced with the following difficulty: if we begin with a dualist ontology of distinct components that combine as the explanatory framework for the appearance of nature, we are then faced with the difficulty that as distinct, these elements fail to interact, since their relation to each other is a cancelling-out of each by its opposite. The elements persist in their own specific nature and refuse to transform themselves into each other and, hence, to constitute a third unity. Thus, what starts as an explanation of the mixture (*κρᾶσις*) of elements fails to account for the very possibility of mixture and, what is more, seems to entail its impossibility. The ontology of elements (*κρίσις*), therefore, fails on its own assumptions to undertake the account of *κρᾶσις*.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> It is worth noting here the similarities between Parmenides' argument against the dualist principles that underpin Ionian ontologies and the Deleuzian argument against the Epicureans that I will reconstruct in my discussion of Deleuze and ancient atomism (in

How does Parmenides' Fire and Night scheme illuminate the constitution of appearances? How does this opposition permeate the objects of mortal opinion as their foundation? The delineation and individuation of the objects of  $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$  entail the application of the Fire and Night scheme. For negation and reliance on not-being is the structure underlying the particular objects of mortal cognition. Particular objects are either Fire or Night by being neither Fire nor Night to the extent that the presence of each entails the absence of its opposite. The phenomenal object possesses qualities of both Fire and Night insofar as each of the opposites participates in the constitution of all things in different degrees. In the same way, objects undergo the processes that involve reference to not-being by being subject to processes of becoming. First, objects are temporally conditioned and their determination is invariably subject to temporal qualification; that is,  $x$  becomes  $F$  entails that  $x$  is not  $F$  at  $t_1$  *and*  $x$  is  $F$  at  $t_2$ . Further, phenomenal objects are contextually qualified:  $x$  is  $F$  when compared to  $y$  *and* not  $F$  when compared to  $z$ . But this is tantamount to the compresence of opposites that the cosmological account uttered by the goddess introduces as the ground of mortal objects. Each point of the cosmological continuum of the second part of the poem contains the presence and absence of both Fire and Night, so that there is no point that is not both Fire and Night. Changing objects in the same way exhibit such an antithetical dualist foundation. Consider, for example, the following epigram attributed to Plato:

I, Laïs, who laughed so disdainfully at Greece and once kept a swarm of young lovers at my door, dedicate this mirror to the Paphian – for I do not wish to see me as I am, and cannot see me as I was.<sup>43</sup>

Laïs, once the temptress around whom young lovers swarmed according to the platonic epigram, is now the object of self-contempt. Becoming *who* she is out of what she is not, Laïs is constantly becoming what she is not, in the same manner in which

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chapter 6). This argument is based on the objection raised in *Difference and Repetition* that atoms have 'too much independence'.

<sup>43</sup> Epigram 11 in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), p. 1744.



an object constituted in the Fire and Night scheme is permeated by the presence and absence of both constituent elements.

According to this interpretation, the second part of the poem presents the analysis of the processes of becoming that come to play an ineliminable role in the constitution of an object of mortal opinion. The Fire and Night scheme exhibits a relation of negation and a dualist cosmology resorting to the not-being of opposites in order to characterize the being of the objects appearing in its continuum. In much the same way, phenomenal objects become, and, in becoming, possess a constitution that relies on the reference to not-being for the explanation of processes of change. The beings of the mortal world are thus insofar as they are not and, hence, they are founded on a structure of ambivalence that Parmenides calls *εἶναι μὴ ἔόντα*: ‘things that are not, are’ (B7.1). For the goddess such a constitution faces the danger of an abyss that undermines the ontological foundations on which Laïs stands. Laïs, the goddess will argue, suffers from a number of ontological vices. I now turn to the diagnosis of these failures.

#### **The diagnostic way of ἀλήθεια (B8.1-49)**

The goddess’s analysis of the dualist cosmology of Fire and Night as the truthful account of mortal illusion has identified the structural ambivalence that the objects inhabiting the phenomenal world exhibit. This ambivalence lies in the role that negation plays in the determination and constitution of such objects; individuated objects, that is, undergoing change. I have examined how negation informs the constitution of the phenomenal world in the preceding account of the way of *δόξα*. The question now facing the divine instruction is this: why is falsehood and deception the necessary consequent of such informing? The task demands that ‘error and illusion [be] traced back to their fundamental fault’,<sup>44</sup> namely the role of not-being, and therefore consists in the diagnostic analysis engendered in the way of *ἀλήθεια*. For, although the goddess has presented the objects of mortal *δόξα* as resting upon a dualism of antithetical terms, the being of which entails the not-being

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<sup>44</sup> Fränkel, ‘Studies in Parmenides’, *op. cit.* p. 20.

of their opposite, what makes this mortal arrangement deceptive remains unclear. Why is the mortal world that relies on negation deficient? Thus, whereas the account of the way of *δόξα* has revealed the constituting deed that founds the mortal world to be the reliance on not-being and the conjunction of being and not-being in the foundation of mortal objects, the way of *ἀλήθεια* will provide the criterion according to which this dualist deed is diagnosed as instituting falsehood. Accordingly, our question here is not 'What does man meet upon meeting an object?' but, instead, 'What does the goddess meet upon meeting an object?'

The appearance of beings in the mortal world operates on the implicit conjunction of being and not-being, as the account of the *δόξα* has illustrated. Such a world rests on what Gadamer calls 'the chaos of opinions' instituted in the 'vacillation back and forth' between being and not-being:

'It is, it is not'; 'There is something, and precisely the same thing is not there'; 'It is there, it is not there'; and 'As soon as it comes into appearance it comes from out of nothing'.<sup>45</sup>

In order to diagnose the beings that are constituted in this conjunctive activity as deceptive, Parmenides must first show that the pair of being and not-being forms an irreducibly disjunctive opposition. In other words, the goddess must deduce the reluctance of any exchange between the two or, what is the same, the persisting purity of both: that being is, while not-being is not. What leads thought, at the very moment of realising its ontological transformation, to pose and hold fast the distinction between being and not-being? Whence the persistence of the insolubility of the distinction such that it requires that it be brought before philosophical thought from the beginning?

The disjunctive nature of the relation is pointedly introduced at stages of the divine instruction when the *κοῦρος* needs to be reminded of the failure of the mortal *κρίσις*. The thinking founded on this *κρίσις* operates on the principle that 'both to be and not to be are judged the same and not the same' (*τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταῦτόν νενόμισται κοῦ ταῦτόν*, B6.8-9). Further references to the rigidity of the

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<sup>45</sup> Gadamer, *The Beginning of Philosophy*, *op. cit.* p. 115.

distinction are to be found at B2.3-8 and B6.1-2 when the goddess introduces the disjunction between being and not-being as the criterion according to which the beings of *δόξα* are to be judged. The beings inhabiting the world of mortals *are* what they *are not*, since they come to be out of not-being, just as Fire is itself by not being itself. They are thus constituted in 'the impossible conjunction of "is" and "is not"' which delineates a world in which 'things that are not, are'.<sup>46</sup> Why is this an impossible pairing? In other words, what makes the detection of this ontological ambivalence in the foundation of beings (being and not-being what they are) a diagnosis of falsehood? The error resides in the elevation of not-being to a principle of being:<sup>47</sup> committed to thinking about changing objects, mortal cognition hypostasises not-being by treating the nothing out of which things come-to-be as a pool of not-yet-actualised possibilities.<sup>48</sup> For what is assumed in the thought that thinks of becoming objects? Nothing else but that in coming-to-be, something *comes* to be. 'Out of what?' the goddess asks:

For what birth will you seek for it?

How and from where did it grow?

(B8.6-7)

Something comes to be out of not-being, the mortal responds (and the goddess agrees), or such is the movement that becoming entails. But if not-being is *not* being, it ought not to be assigned the role of such a source of quasi-being possibilities; instead, it must be coherently thought of as what is not in a radical sense. If one were to refrain from this hypostatisation of not-being, which reduces it to being, one would feel compelled to admit that nothing can come-to-be since nothing can come-to-be out of the radical nothing that the mortal path of cognition suppresses:

What necessity would have stirred up

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<sup>46</sup> Denis O'Brien, 'Non-being in Greek Philosophy: Parmenides, Plato and Plotinus' in *Modern Thinkers and Ancient Thinkers*, ed. by Robert W. Sharples (London: University College of London Press, 1993), pp. 1-26 (p. 4).

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Long, 'The Principles of Parmenides' Cosmogony', *op. cit.* p. 90 ff.

<sup>48</sup> This is particularly relevant to Aristotle's attempt to substitute a theory of potentiality and privation for the Eleatic theory of not-being.

to grow later than earlier, beginning from nothing?

(B8.9-10)

What is often referred to therefore as Eleatic monism is in truth a dualism of radical disjuncts: being and not-being. According to Stanley Rosen,

Parmenides begins with the invocation to avoid Nothing. He accordingly believes himself to be, or at least is regarded as, a monist. In fact, however, Parmenides is a dualist. [...] The legitimate hypothesis is rather that there are two principles, Being and Nothing, both necessary for any attempt to account for the whole, and not reducible the one to the other.<sup>49</sup>

However, against Rosen, I argue that this is a dualism of disjuncts that should not be construed as a dualism of metaphysical components: only one of these disjuncts constitutes an ontological element, which explains also why the disjunction was established by the goddess in the first place. Parmenides refuses to ascribe any being to the not-being that founds mortal discourse and in so doing purges being and not-being of each other in order to restore them to their fundamental status. Thus, although I agree with Rosen that Parmenides does not deny not-being, this does not mean that he does not deny the being of not-being. Instead, precisely because of his refusal to ascribe being to not-being, he must accept not-being. Thus, this dualism (based on the goddess's *κρίσις*) turns out to be a monism since not-being cannot maintain the position of a counter-element to being, such as the mortal way of thinking would demand, e.g. as a pool of potentiality out of which things come to be. Being is, not-being is not; in this Parmenidean dualism resides. Simultaneously, since being is not, only being is; thus Eleatic monism. The goddess's challenge to the cosmological thought of mortals is the duty to elicit the radical sense of not-being that their cosmologies suppress but which never fails to erupt in order to disrupt their world. Whereas, therefore, the mortal cogniser meets beings that are insofar as they are not (Fire is Fire insofar as it is not Night), the goddess recognises that, first, these beings are founded on the conjunction of being and not-being and, secondly,

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<sup>49</sup> Stanley Rosen, 'Much Ado about Nothing: Aristotle contra Eleaticism' in *The Quarrel Between Philosophy and Poetry: Studies in Ancient Thought* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 159.

that this conjunction is an impossible one and its products are deceptive. It is an impossible conjunction because the *κρίσις* between being and not-being is unbridgeable, such that the mortal semblance of a *κρίσις* that suppresses this fails to consider the very not-being on the assumption of which it operates.

To return to the exegetical conundrum of B8.53-54, which ambiguously expresses the fundamental error on which the mortal edifice is built as the naming of ‘two forms, of which it is not right to name one’, it is now possible to read its divine diagnosis thus: mortals commit the error of naming two forms, Fire and Night, each related to the other as its opposite and linked by means of negation. But not-being, thought coherently, is not: ‘for in no way may this prevail, that things that are not, are’ (*Οὐ γὰρ μήποτε τοῦτο δαμῆ εἶναι μὴ ἔόντα*, B7.1). Therefore, the duality of opposites on which the mortal object is founded fails to refer to a real distinction. If one were to think with the goddess, abstaining from the illegitimate reliance on an incoherent conception of nothing that induces the forgetfulness of the not-being that is not, if, in other words, one were to remember and allow oneself to be reminded of this *κρίσις* by the divine instruction, one would understand that Fire and Night, as opposite and distinct ontological building blocks that combine to make *φαινόμενα* appear, cannot be maintained as a real duality. Instead, it must be seen to be an only apparent opposition, inadmissible in the purged thought of the goddess. Since being is, such that it refuses to pass into not-being, what is, and the reality that this delineates, cannot be coherently seen to be the result of the combination (*κράσις*) and/or separation (*κρίσις*) of elements, such as the Fire and Night scheme presupposes. The fullness of being precludes the ontology of elements that underlies mortal *δόξα*. Being is neither ‘scattered everywhere in every way throughout’ (*οὔτε σκιδνάμενον πάντη πάντως*, B4.3) nor ‘brought together’ (*οὔτε συνιστάμενον*, B4.4). It is neither incomplete (*οὐκ ἀτελεύτητον*, B8.32) nor lacking (*οὐκ ἐπιδεές*, B8.33). On the contrary, being is whole (*οὐλομελής*, B8.4), homogeneous (‘all is alike’ (*πᾶν ἐστιν ὁμοῖον*, B8.22)), continuous (*ξυνεχές*, B8.25) and undivided (*οὐδὲ διαιρετόν*, B8.22). Thus, the reality of being is constituted in the fullness of being: ‘it is all full of what is’ (*πᾶν δ’ ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἔόντος*, B8.24). The mortal error, therefore, consists in the naming of two opposite forms when none may be named, since no part of the

duality of Fire and Night may be maintained. What remains is neither Fire nor Night, nor any of the names that

mortals have established, persuaded that they are true -

to come to be and to perish (*γίγνεσθαι τε καὶ ὄλλυσθαι*), to be and not (*εἶναι τε καὶ οὐχί*), and to change place (*τόπον ἀλλάσσειν*) and alter (*ἀμείβειν*) bright colour.

(B8.39-41)

Instead, it is the fullness and oneness of being that persists in the divine teaching and that prescribes the dissolution of the mortal distinctions. This whole (*οὐλον*) and unchanging (*ἀκίνητόν*) being (B8.38) precludes the individuating activity operated on the assumption of such distinctions:

for nothing else is either is or will be  
except that which is, since Fate shackled it  
to be whole and unchanging.

(B8.36-38)

## 1.2 Parmenides' ἔλεγχος

### The Eleatic critique of becoming and multiplicity

The instruction that the goddess provides culminates in the recovery of the insight (in the manner of a reminder) that it is 'not possible for nothing to be' (*μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν*, B6.2). This is what her message consists in and it is this that she urges the youth to recover: 'I bid you consider *this*' (*τά σ' ἐγὼ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα*, B6.2).<sup>50</sup> The divine instruction exposes the false *κρίσις* that founds mortal thinking whose object is *φύσις* as operating on the assumption of the *impossible* *κρᾶσις* of being and not-being. The goddess instead restores and prescribes the divine *κρίσις* between being and not-being and considers this to be the duty of any mortal who is carried 'as far as my spirit ever aspired' (*ὄσον τ' ἐπί θυμὸς ἰκάνοι*, B1.1) and who judges (*κρίνειν*) in the divine medium of *λόγος*. The contrast here is between the mortal and the divine

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<sup>50</sup> Emphasis added.

mode of *κρίνειν*. On the one hand, the *κρίσις* ‘according to opinion’ (*κατὰ δόξαν*, B19.1) conceals and operates on an implicit conjunction of being and not-being as a principle of becoming:

In this way, according to opinion, these things have grown and now are and afterwards after growing up will come to an end.

And upon them humans have established a name to mark each one.

(B19)

On the other hand, the *κρίσις* ‘by reason’ (*λόγω*, B7.5) reveals the fundamental disjunction of being and not-being and instigates the critique of the coming-to-be of multiple objects (*τὰ πολλά, ὀρῶμενα, φαινόμενα*) as lacking principles of articulation.

The result of the restoration of the radical disjunction between being and not-being is the castigation of coming-to-be and multiplicity – of processes and concepts that entail the introduction of not-being in the ontological plenum, whether because they imply scattering (*σκιδνάμενον*), composition (*συνιστάμενον*), separation, lack (*ἐπιδεές*), absence, heterogeneity, incompleteness (*ἀτελεύτητον*), discontinuity and division (*διαίρετόν*) – to the status of illusion: ‘coming to be and destruction were banished far away and true conviction drove them off’ (*γένεσις καὶ ὄλεθρος τῆλε μάλ’ ἐπλάχθησαν, ἀπῶσε δὲ πίστις ἀληθῆς*, B8.27-28). Being *is*; this means that what is must be fully. The only alternative is that it not be: ‘it must either fully be or not’ (*ἢ πάνπαν πελέναι χρεῶν ἔστιν ἢ οὐχί*, B8.11). Coming-to-be, whether thought of as the composition of wholes out of distinct parts or as genesis, is the coming-to-be of something out of nothing; this process involves the hypostasisation of not-being and is impossible. But either not-being is not, in which case it cannot be seen to be hypostasised, or it is, in which case it is not not-being. In both cases mortals ought to face up to the radicality of not-being and accept the consequence that provides the sole characteristic of being, namely, its uneventfulness: ‘Remaining the same and by itself it lies’ (*Ταυτόν τ’ ἐν ταὐτῷ τε μένον καθ’ ἑαυτό τε κεῖται*, B8.29). Being refuses any principle of movement that would instigate an exchange with not-being; thus, it remains continuous, full, complete, whole, homogeneous, uncomposed, undivided

and indivisible: one. Parmenides' argument shows that the investigation into the ways of the verb *ἐστί* bars change, multiplicity and variation; that what is is *simpliciter* or, in a more profound formulation, that 'what is draws near to what is' (*ἐὸν γὰρ ἐόντι πελάζει*, B8.25) or, further, that being is inviolate (*ἄσυλον*, B8.48). This is the principle of the uneventfulness of being that prohibits the mobility of the exchange with not-being that processes of becoming and composition presuppose. The principle of being is not a formula of unfolding but of fettering. *Δίκη*, who in the proemium holds the keys of the gates that the youth enters (B1.11) and who guarantees that the chariot journey is a fortunate occasion (B1.28), returns to 'hold fast' (B8.15) and bound being, never relaxing her shackles (B8.14) on it. 'You will not cut off what is from clinging to what is' (*οὐ γὰρ ἀποτμήξει τὸ ἐὸν τοῦ ἐόντος ἔχουσθαι*, B4.2). Such is the principle according to which being refuses the exchange with what is not and renders it still in its persistent refusal to erupt into not-being.

The uneventful character of being becomes manifest in a series of 'marks' (*σήματα*, B8.2), which the goddess deduces from this fettering, thus:

being ungenerated it is also imperishable,  
whole and of a single kind and unshaken and complete.

(B8.3-4)

Being is ungenerated. It refuses processes of becoming, either of generation (*γένεσις*) or destruction (*ὄλεθρος*), that involve the being of what is not. Observance of the divine injunction dispels the illusion of *γένεσις*, including composition and division into parts, that takes its objects to move from being to not-being and vice versa. The principles that would presumably guide this passage are now diagnosed to be inarticulable in terms of being. For all movement must involve some notion of not-being, such that it cannot be allowed in the purged reality of *ἀλήθεια*: 'I will not permit you to say or to think from what is not; for it is not to be said or thought that is not' (*οὐτ' ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἔασσω φάσθαι σ' οὐδὲ νοεῖν· οὐ γὰρ φατὸν οὐδὲ νοητὸν ἔστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἔστι*, B8.7-9).

The fettering (*πέδησις*) of being to its fullness provides the ground for the deduction of further attributes that make its uneventfulness ('so stays there fixed'



(*χοῦτως ἔμπεδον αὖθι μένει*, B8.30)) manifest. The goddess describes it as ‘without start or finish’ (*ἄναρχον ἄπαστον*, B8.27), complete (*ἀτέλεστον*, B8.4) and unshaken (*ἀτρεμές*, B8.4). The description of *ἄναρχον*, lacking *ἀρχαί* or principles, further points to the absence of intelligible principles of becoming and is a sign of the immobility of being (*ἀκίνητον*, B8.26) that precludes the possibility of the oscillation of becoming. In this way, the shackling of being implies that ‘it is complete on all sides, like the bulk of a well-rounded ball, evenly balanced in every way from the middle’ (*τετελεσμένον ἐστὶ πάντοθεν, εὐκύκλου σφαίρης ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκω, μεσσόθεν ἰσοπαλὲς πάντη*, B8.42-44).<sup>51</sup>

The Parmenidean critique of *γένεσις*, therefore, culminates in a poignant deduction of the impossibility of multiple *φύσις* and the incoherence of its luminous constitution: ‘In this way, coming to be has been extinguished and destruction is unheard of’ (*Τὼς γένεσις μὲν ἀπέσβεσται καὶ ἄπυστος ὄλεθρος*, B8.21). In effect, the Eleatic critique of becoming entails but the posing of a single question, namely, ‘How could it come to be?’ (*πῶς δ’ ἂν κε γένοιτο;*, B8.19). The force of this Eleatic question stems from the adherence to the distinction between being and not-being that must inform any answer to the goddess’s question. Such is the challenge (*ἔλεγχος*) that Parmenides’ poem bequeaths. Abiding by the divine injunction and its *κρίσις* (‘the decision about these matters lies in this: it is or it is not’ (*ἢ δὲ κρίσις τούτων ἐν τῷδ’ ἔστιν· ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν*, B8.15-16)), the youth is compelled to draw the damning conclusion:

Nor will the force of conviction ever permit anything to come to be from what is not,  
besides it. For this reason, Justice permitted it neither to come to be  
nor to perish, relaxing her shackles,  
but holds fast.

(B8.12-15)

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<sup>51</sup> On *ἀρχαί*, see also sections 4.2 (on Hesiod) and 6.3 (on Lucretius).

## Philosophy after Parmenides

In the figure of Parmenides thought encounters an insoluble distinction, being and not-being, and the theoretical imperative that this chasm be considered. This is the challenge (ἔλεγχος, B7.5) that the goddess of the poem demands to be considered and acknowledged: that not-being is not, whereas being is. As Alexander Mourelatos observes in his invaluable reading of the poem, the ἔλεγχος 'that the goddess issued to mortal men in B6 and B7 is that they do not realise that their positive terms could be shown to make reference to unqualified negation'.<sup>52</sup> Rosen formulates the Parmenidean fettering thus:

The problem set for philosophy is how to speak the truth (as opposed to opinion) about Being, without in any way mentioning or invoking Nothing. This restriction is necessary because (1) nothing can be said of a definite kind about nothing, and (2) because of the presupposition that nothing comes to be from nothing. Since what is, is what it is, it must always have been. There is no third state between Being and Nothing. Genesis is theoretically impossible, or at least inexplicable.<sup>53</sup>

Parmenides' fettering injunction entails the critique of the cosmological project of the Ionian physiologists (φυσιολόγοι).<sup>54</sup> To the extent that being is one, full and complete, the κόσμος (ordering) as multiple φύσις that constitutes the object of Milesian observation and analysis is rendered unintelligible and, hence, unfit to be the subject matter of philosophical giving-account-of (λόγον δίδοναι). As Rosen remarks,

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<sup>52</sup> Mourelatos, 'The Deceptive Words of Parmenides' "Doxa'", *op. cit.* p. 315.

<sup>53</sup> Rosen, 'Much Ado about Nothing: Aristotle contra Eleaticism', *op. cit.* p. 157.

<sup>54</sup> e.g. Kahn, 'The Thesis of Parmenides', *op. cit.* pp. 720 ff.; David Roochnik, *Retrieving the Ancients: An Introduction to Greek Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 41 ff.; John Burnet, *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato* (London: Macmillan, 1932), pp. 63 ff.; Furley, *The Greek Cosmologists*, *op. cit.* pp. 36 ff.; Long, 'The Principles of Parmenides' Cosmogony', *op. cit.*; Owen, 'Eleatic Questions', *op. cit.* The reading of the poem here proposed has presented Parmenides as a radical ἀφύσικος critic of the φυσικοί. For a contrasting assessment of Parmenides' place in relation to the cosmological thought and tradition that situates him within the project of the φυσιολόγοι, see Karl R. Popper, *The World of Parmenides: Essays on the Presocratic Enlightenment*, ed. by Erne F. Petersen (London: Routledge, 1998); Sedley, 'Parmenides and Melissus', *op. cit.*; and Curd (in Patricia Curd, *The Legacy of Parmenides: Eleatic Monism and Later Presocratic Thought* (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2004).

this Parmenidean beginning [of philosophy in the sense of giving an account of the whole] is also an ending [...]. By enforcing silence concerning Nothing, Parmenides recognised that he was also enforcing silence concerning plurality and diversity.<sup>55</sup>

However, Parmenides' dilemmatic challenge not only prohibits philosophy as cosmology but, further, renders the articulation of ontological thought itself impossible. That, according to Kahn, 'before [Parmenides] wrote, there was no such thing as ontology, no theoretical account of *what is*'<sup>56</sup> obscures the fact that *after* Parmenides wrote, the plausibility of such a theoretical account functioning as an *explanatory framework* has been critically undermined. The conception of being developed at Elea represents both the inauguration as well as the termination of the attempt to give an account of 'the first and last grounds' of φύσις (that is, of the ontic order of *das Seiende*), according to Heidegger's characterisation of the philosophical task.<sup>57</sup> The Eleatic father's severe injunction on the λόγον δίδοναι of being problematises any attempt to explain becoming and discontinuity, that is, to offer a logic of multiplicity, becoming and appearance. The intelligibility of the principles according to which this φύσις becomes, diversifies, composes and multiplies has been retracted. Paying heed to Parmenides' injunction means facing up to radical not-being by refraining from any reliance on it. This rigorously Eleatic path signals the end of philosophy both as ontology and as physiology and prescribes ontological silence. On this path the articulation of φύσις becomes the matter of an unintelligible expressivity that escapes conceptual rendering.<sup>58</sup> It is for this reason that poetic metaphor in Parmenides is charged with the ontological silence of a language that fails to represent, characteristically in prose, the intelligibility of any principles that would govern the φαινόμενα of the mortal world.

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<sup>55</sup> Rosen, 'Much Ado about Nothing: Aristotle contra Eleaticism', *op. cit.* p. 152.

<sup>56</sup> Charles H. Kahn, 'Being in Parmenides and Plato', *La Parola del Passato*, 43 (1988), 237-261 (p. 239).

<sup>57</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 10.

<sup>58</sup> I will show in chapter 6 that a lack of intelligibility also afflicts the Hellenistic version of atomism, in spite of the fact that Epicurus and Lucretius seek to supplant it with the intelligibility of atomic entanglements.

In his *Physics*, Aristotle indicates the ways in which this Eleatic silence was felt in the ontological and cosmological reflection of the post-Eleatic philosophers.<sup>59</sup> The pluralist systems of Anaxagoras of Clazomenae and Empedocles of Acragas and the materialist doctrines of Leucippus and Democritus of Abdera formulate responses to the impasses that Eleatic thought placed upon the enquiry into the principles of φύσις. Commanding the agreement of materialists and pluralists alike (ὁμογνωμονοῦσι, *Phys.* 187a35), Parmenides' ἔλεγχος led Aristotle's predecessors to 'give the matter up (ἀπέστησαν)' (*Phys.* 191b10) and accept the radical disjunction between being and not-being that renders γένεσις the bearer of an impossible oscillation.<sup>60</sup> These thinkers were instead led to confine the phenomenon of becoming within being and, thus, to deny its reality by reducing (καθέστηκεν, *Phys.* 187a31) it to processes according to which 'things come into being out of existent things, i.e. out of things already present (ἐξ ὄντων καὶ ἐνυπαρχόντων γίνεσθαι)' (*Phys.* 187a37). This pattern, characteristic of all post-Parmenidean φυσιολόγοι up until Diogenes of Apollonia (who, for this reason, becomes the last in the series of Presocratic physicists), delineated a distinctly Eleatic pluralism,<sup>61</sup> which operated on the postulation of 'a plurality of [...] basic entities that neither come to be nor pass away,

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<sup>59</sup> Aristotle's narrative is critical of Parmenides' influence on philosophy and levels the charge of intellectual inexperience against Eleaticism. The charge is mounted in *Physics* I.8: 'the first of those who studied philosophy', Aristotle notes with Parmenides and Melissus in mind, 'were misled (ἐξετράπησαν) in their search for truth and the nature of things by their inexperience (ὕπο ἀπειρίας), which as it were thrust them (ἀποσθέντες) into another path' (*Phys.* 191a24-27). On Aristotle's critique of the Presocratics, see Harold Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy* (New York: Octagon Books, 1964).

<sup>60</sup> I have relied on the revised Oxford translations of Aristotle's texts in Jonathan Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). I have also benefited from consulting *Aristotle's Physics*, Greek text, trans. with introduction and commentary by W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936); *Aristotle's Physics: Books I and II*, trans. with introduction and notes by W. Charlton (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970); *Aristotle: The Physics Books I-IV*, text with translation by Philip Wicksteed and R. M. Cornford, The Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1957); *Aristotle's De Generatione et Corruptione*, trans. with notes by C. J. F. Williams (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982); *Aristotle: On Coming-to-be and Passing-away*, text with translation by E. S. Forster, The Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1955); and *Aristotle: Introductory Readings*, trans. by Terence Irwin and Gail Fine (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. R. B. B. Wardy, 'Eleatic Pluralism', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 70 (1988), 125-146.

and which mix and separate to account for the phenomena of the sensible world'.<sup>62</sup> Hence, *γένεσις* became inscribed in the distinction between appearance and reality and was relegated to the status of an epiphenomenon of more fundamental realities fastly bound in the realm of being.

For the Presocratic philosophers thinking in the shadow of Parmenides, becoming remained in itself unintelligible and was, thus, reduced to an appearance of processes that avoided reliance on not-being. This reductive theoretical procedure is evident in Empedocles' account of *γένεσις*, which is framed and developed within a profound contemplation of Parmenides' disjunction and a 'wholehearted endorsement' of the resulting 'rejection of coming to be and perishing, without qualification or implied criticism':<sup>63</sup>

Fools. For their thoughts are not far-reaching,  
who expect that there comes to be what previously was not,  
or that anything perishes and is completely destroyed.

(Empedocles, B11)

And:

For it is impossible to come to be from what in no way is [*ἐκ τε γὰρ οὐδ' ἀμ' ἐόντος ἀμήχανόν ἐστι γενέσθαι*],  
and it is not to be accomplished and is unheard of that what  
is perishes absolutely.

(Empedocles, B12)

Endorsing the Parmenidean *ἔλεγχος*, Empedocles responds to the need for an account of the principles of *φύσις* by means of a reductive translation in terms of mixture: 'there is coming to be of not a single one of all mortal things [...] but only

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<sup>62</sup> Patricia Curd, 'Parmenides and After: Unity and Plurality' in *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, ed. by Mary Louise Gill and Pierre Pellegrin (London: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 34-55 (p. 47).

<sup>63</sup> Daniel W. Graham, 'Empedocles and Anaxagoras: Responses to Parmenides' in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. by A. A. Long (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 159-180 (p. 167).

mixture (*μίξις*), and separation (*διάλλαξις*) of what is mixed (*μιγέντων*)' (Empedocles, B8). What is mixed are 'the four roots (*ρίζωματα*) of all things' (B6): 'fire and water and earth and the immense height of air' (B17.18). These basic elements, 'equal and of the same age' (B17.27) are 'at one time all coming together into one (*συνερχόμεν' εἰς ἓν*) by Love (*Φιλότης*) and at another each being borne apart (*δίχ' ἕκαστα φορεύμενα*) by the hatred of Strife (*Νεῖκος*)' (B17.7-8); but 'nothing is added to them, nor do they leave off' (B17.30). Instead, the roots constitute those fundamental components that 'running through one another (*δι' ἀλλήλων θέοντα*) at different times they come to be different things (*γίγνεται ἄλλα*) and yet always and continuously the same (*ἦνεκὲς αἰὲν ὁμοῖα*)' (B17.33-35) and 'they come to have different appearances (*γίγνεται ἀλλοιωπά*) for mixture changes them (*ἀμείβει*)' (B21.14). The relation between the mortal world of *δόξαι* and the elements which underlie it is forcefully captured in the image of the palette of elements affording the 'pigments' that the skilled artist mixes in his decoration of the canvass of *φύσις*:

As when painters decorate votive offerings –  
 men through cunning well taught in their skill -  
 who when they take the many coloured pigments in their hands,  
 mixing in harmony more of these and less of those,  
 out of them they produce [*πορσύνουσι*] shapes similar to all things,  
 creating [*κτιζοντε*] trees and men and women  
 and beasts and birds and fishes nurtured in water  
 and long-lived gods highest in honours.

(Empedocles, B23)

In thus rejecting that not-being may be accorded any role in the account of the principles of being, these thinkers also assented to the unreality of becoming: in speaking of coming into being, mortals 'do not call it as is right' (Empedocles, B9). Instead, they pursued the reductive translation in terms of mixture (*μίξις* and *μίγμα*, *Phys.* 187a23 and 187b4) of constituent elements (*στοιχεῖα*, 187a26) that had been proposed by Anaxagoras: 'they would be correct to call coming to be being mixed together (*συμμίσγεσθαι*), and perishing being separated apart (*διακρίνεσθαι*)'

(Anaxagoras, B17) of eternal elements. The chemistry with which Anaxagoras substituted Ionian physics explains the appearing and becoming of the phenomenal order in terms of the degree of manifestation and concealment of the elements, whose number is now indefinite. The elements are present in various degrees in the mixture ('in everything there is a portion of everything' (*ἐν παντὶ παντὸς μοῖρα ἔνεστιν*), Anaxagoras, B12), so that phenomenal coming to be reflects the ratio of certain locally predominant elements. The elements do not come to be, nor do they come to be mixed by Empedocles' motive forces; instead, the mixture pre-exists as a 'reservoir containing in latent state all substances that can appear'.<sup>64</sup> It is the rotation (*περιχώρησις*) instigated by Mind (*Νοῦς*) that makes possible an element dominating a region of the mixture; consequently, it is this motion that explains the emerging of a phenomenal substance. Anaxagoras, thus, reduces emergence to the becoming-manifest of previously latent elements ('each single thing is and was most manifestly (*ἐνδηλότατα*) those things of which it has most in it', Anaxagoras, B12) by means of the centrifugal separation enabled by rotation: 'this revolution caused the separating off' (*ἡ δὲ περιχώρησις αὐτὴ ἐποίησεν ἀποκρίνεσθαι*, B12).

The atomism propounded by Leucippus and Democritus, on the other hand, falls short of investing *γένεσις* with intelligible principles. For although they significantly objected that not-being indeed is by being void (*κενόν*), their reductive replacement of *γένεσις* stemmed from the impossibility of an exchange between void and plenum (*πληρες*), or not-being and being. For this reason, the Abderites replace the explanation of *γένεσις* with an account of the mechanics of aggregation and segregation of atomic compounds (*σύγκρισις* and *διάκρισις*, *Phys.* 187a32; *GC.* 322b7) in terms of the position (*θέσις*), shape (*σχῆμα*) and arrangement (*τάξις*) of atoms (*Phys.* 188a23-24; *Met.* 985b15; *GC.* 315b7-9). Atoms, thus, constitute the 'unchangeable primary things' the deep orderings of which account for the surface phenomena of 'apparent generation and corruption'.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Graham, 'Empedocles and Anaxagoras: Responses to Parmenides', *op. cit.* p. 174.

<sup>65</sup> C. C. W. Taylor, 'The Atomists' in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. by A. A. Long (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 181-204 (p. 182).

The last of the Presocratics, Diogenes of Apollonia, replaces *γένεσις* with processes of condensation and rarefaction of air (Diogenes of Apollonia, A1 and A6), the one 'eternal and immortal body' by means of which 'some things come to be and others pass away' (B7). As the concluding chapter in Presocratic responses to Parmenides, Diogenes' reductive account is a fitting ending; for it exemplifies the manner in which the analyses of the post-Eleatic *φυσιολόγοι* are commonly bound by Parmenides. These analyses refrain from attributing to not-being a role in the phenomenon of becoming, in effect assenting to the impossibility of *γένεσις*. The later Presocratics' reductive renderings of *γένεσις*, for example, as change of quality (*ἀλλοιοῦσθαι*, *Phys.* 187a32), combination and separation, are developed as intelligible substitutes of what, as *γένεσις*, remains impossible (*ἀδύνατον*, 187a34). It is this assent that leads Friedrich Solmsen to note that, insofar as the physicists preceding Aristotle are offering a response to Parmenides, there is a remarkable lack of 'arguments' against Eleaticism to be found in these responses.<sup>66</sup> The systems of the physicists after Parmenides share the conviction that beings 'originate and attain their forms without an act of becoming and could dissolve without a real perishing. [...] The processes thus denoted have the advantage of materialising from something that is already in existence'.<sup>67</sup>

Aristotle himself took on the Eleatic challenge by attempting to find a way to articulate the principle according to which being unfolds into beings that escapes reference to the radical not-being of the original distinction. In this way, the explanation of the principles that guide the unfolding of *φύσις* and its multiple becoming can be attempted, and thus the intelligibility of those principles as well as the possibility of the enterprise that seeks to uncover those intelligible principles, i.e. philosophy, may be defended. While accepting the ramifications of the injunction when it comes to the consideration of radical not-being, these thinkers insist that philosophy as a giving-account-of-the-whole is still possible in the notion of a tamed not-being, as in the case of the Aristotelian account of change in terms of potentiality

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<sup>66</sup> Friedrich Solmsen, *Aristotle's System of the Physical World* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1960), p. 444.

<sup>67</sup> Solmsen, *Aristotle's System of the Physical World*, *op. cit.* pp. 6-7.



or of the Platonic notion of difference in later dialogues, such as the *Parmenides* and *Sophist*. The affirmation of becoming here takes the form of the denial of 'the radical separation between Being and Nothing'.<sup>68</sup> Accordingly, becoming in this instance refers to the possibility of the oscillation between being and not-being as a gradation between them. Finally, there is the Heracleitean path according to which philosophy is still possible as an account of the principles of the world in its becoming by insisting on the irreducibility of the structure of becoming to the structure of an oscillation between being and not-being.<sup>69</sup> Becoming and multiplicity possess a structure more fundamental than the passage from being to not-being and back again.

Parmenides, therefore, stands as the founding figure of a thought of which he is also the culmination and end. His ἔλεγχος against any attempt to an account-giving thought is the presentation of an irreducible disjunction between being and not-being that demands to be thought and encountered. These are the fetters that Parmenides' Δίκη places upon thought as the task that must be taken up, considered and judged. The task of being is to consider nothingness in its radicality and

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<sup>68</sup> Rosen, 'Much Ado about Nothing: Aristotle contra Eleaticism', *op. cit.* p. 163.

<sup>69</sup> I thus take Parmenides *not* to be involved in a direct refutation of Heracleitus' teaching, as has sometimes been claimed (e.g. in Zeller, *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, *op. cit.* p. 49). Instead the latter should be viewed to be undertaking an investigation that aims to avoid the stability of the twin pillars, being and not-being, between which Parmenides situates becoming and composition and, thus, as offering the stage for a different kind of project to articulate the structure (or lack thereof) of γένεσις and multiplicity. In a similar spirit, Schofield (in Malcolm Schofield, 'The Presocratics' in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*, ed. by David Sedley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 42-72) notes that while Parmenides and Heracleitus show 'striking similarities in the overall epistemological structure of their intellectual projects', both rejecting 'mortal opinion', they diverge in the fact that 'Parmenidean monism is the outcome of *exclusion* (hence the stress on decision), whereas Heracleitus makes ultimate unity a function of difference and contrariety and conflict' (p. 63). The simultaneously converging and diverging trajectory of the Eleatic and Ephesian paths makes the ambiguity implied in Nietzsche's description of Parmenides as the 'counter image' of Heracleitus (in Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, trans. by Marianne Cowan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1962), p. 69) an apt description of the relation between them as an 'unhappy encounter' (p. 77). Heidegger, in a similar spirit, comments that 'Parmenides shared Heracleitus's standpoint' (in Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, *op. cit.* p. 145). Further, Gadamer (in Gadamer, 'Parmenides and the Opinions of the Mortals', *op. cit.*) blames 'historicism and the philological works of the nineteenth century' for the supposition that Heracleitus is 'the addressee of the Parmenidean criticism' (p. 95).

recognise that, in fact, *it* is unthinkable. It is for this reason, that is, due to the recognition of an impenetrable not-being, that motivates and grounds the goddess's condemnation of the mortal world of *φαινόμενα* as a false world in which this most fundamental of decisions (*κρίσις*, B8.15) has not been made. This is the world of *δόξα*: the mortal *κόσμος* as *φύσις*, as multiple *φυσίς* and as the *φύσις* of the multiple, whose structure is that of the *κρᾶσις* (mixture, but also confusion, B.16.1) that underlies the process of becoming and the concept of multiplicity, the constitutive moment of which is the reference to not-being. On the path of *ἀλήθεια*, in contrast, the fullness, completeness, continuity and indivisibility of being is restored and revealed. Treading this path 'into the abyss of all things',<sup>70</sup> the philosopher comes to think with the goddess.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, *op. cit.* p. 77.

<sup>71</sup> I will explain here the reasons for the conspicuous absence of a discussion of Heidegger's influential reading of Parmenides from the main text. I will discuss Heidegger's concept of *ἀλήθεια* as unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*) in connection with his writings on Parmenides in order to show that there have been good reasons for keeping my reading of Heidegger in suspense at least as far as Parmenides is concerned (the main texts in which Heidegger engages in a reading of Parmenides are *Early Greek Thinking: The Dawn of Western Philosophy*, trans. by Daniel Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984); *Parmenides*, trans. by Andre Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. by Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (Harper & Row: New York, 1968); *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. by Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959)). I have claimed that for Parmenides being maintains itself in withdrawing itself away from the 'look' of the 'sightless eye' (*ἄσκοπον ὄμμα*); in other words that the appearing of beings presupposes illumination and that the latter belongs exclusively to the mortal path. Indeed, the resistance of being to illumination is a recurrent theme in the poem as a whole. Parmenides' light does not possess the capacity to unconceal unless it simultaneously dissimulates. What is at stake is the mode of this dissimulation. Perhaps Eleaticism can be defined precisely as the thought that refuses light any revelatory function, a refusal that founds the distinction between appearance and reality that Parmenides bequeaths to Plato. Heidegger of course refuses to ascribe to Parmenides the radical monist message or the absolute distinction between appearance and reality that I think can and should be discerned in the goddess's instruction. For Heidegger, being is both *φύσις*, i.e. an emerging (*aufgehen*) and standing-out through which beings become and remain observable and *οὐσία*, i.e. abiding in this standing forth, enduring (*verweilen*) as constant presence (*ἀεί ὄν*). Being is thus qualified first as unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*) that points to its counter-essence, concealedness (*Verborgenheit*), and then as disclosure (*Entbergen*) that points to a sheltering enclosure (*Bergung*). Light (*Schein*) operates as the principle of the appearing of beings, a function which also underlies Parmenides' account in the poem, from the topography of the proemium and to the luminosity described in his cosmology. But Heidegger goes on further to identify being with a dynamic process of making manifest that cannot escape the Eleatic *ἔλεγχος*. The break with Eleatic thought occurs in a momentous

## 2 Paradoxes and dilemmas in Plato's account of multiplicity

### 2.1 Plato's theory of Ideas as a logic of multiplicity

#### The Eleatic parameters of Plato's philosophy

Nietzsche heard in Plato the resounding echo of 'a sound full of doubt, full of melancholy, full of fatigue with life, full of hostility to life'.<sup>72</sup> This echo reverberates in the epigrams that tradition has ascribed to Plato.<sup>73</sup> Plato, as imagined by tradition,

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fashion as soon as Heidegger, insistently throughout his texts on Parmenides, asks how ἀλήθεια is opposed to untruth and whether there might not be an inner connection between unconcealedness and concealedness so that there could be a sense in which both belong to being. His answer consists in the understanding of ἀλήθεια as Disclosure (*Entborgenheit*, *Entbergung*), over and against mere undisclosedness as the absence and elimination of concealedness 'the unconcealed is the un-absent, that over which a withdrawing concealment no longer holds sway.' Thus, *Anwesen* (coming-to-presence) is articulated as the coming forth into unconcealedness and is saved by it: 'the unconcealed has entered the tranquillity of pure self-appearance and of the look', and is now in this tranquillity secured. *λήθη* is thus withdrawing concealment and ἀλήθεια (disclosing) is not mere opposition to concealing: 'the disclosed does not simply become unclosed'. Rather the *Entbergen* is an *Entbergen* (enclosure), that is, a sheltering (*Bergung*) in which beings emerge. ἀλήθεια as disclosure therefore means to bring into a sheltering enclosure: to conserve the unconcealed in unconcealedness. Thus the counter-essence of ἀλήθεια turns out not to be *ψεῦδος*, i.e. the dissembling concealment associated with falsity and deception (*Anschein*), but instead *λήθη*, that is, withdrawing concealment (*Verborgenheit*) as hiddenness. ἀλήθεια therefore belongs to being in that it makes possible the epiphany of worlds inhabited by beings. This means that there is a 'concealed unity of *Sein* and *Schein*', the latter understood as the self-showing that makes beings manifest (*Vorschein*). Indeed, 'seeming means the same as Being': in glowing, coming to presence. But this process involves the rejection of precisely the distinction between ἀλήθεια and appearance to which Parmenides is committed. As I have argued, it is only through this distinction that we can understand the further distinction between gods and mortals in the poem. Heidegger on the contrary reaches the conclusion that *φύσις* is the emerging-abiding sway and the appearing that seems, self-shows, lights up, such that the distinction between the mortal and the divine is abolished. Heidegger's reading of the poem does not allow us to understand the way in which Parmenides provides a key counter figure for the interpretation of the role of truth in metaphysics; how, that is, Parmenides affords a conception of the relation between being and beings and of the institution of the ontological difference that is obscured by Heidegger's interpretation of the Eleatic message.

<sup>72</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. by Richard Polt (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), p. 12.

<sup>73</sup> Cooper, in his editorial note preceding the epigrams (cf. *Plato: Complete Works*, *op. cit.*) draws attention to the difficulties of ascribing authorship for a number of these to Plato. This

describes an evanescent world inhabited by fading objects, presenting such a process as one of undermining and destitution:

I throw the apple at you, and if you are willing to love me, take it and share your girlhood with me; but if your thoughts are what I pray they are not, even then take it, and consider how short-lived is beauty.<sup>74</sup>

And:

I am an apple; one who loves you throws me at you. Say yes, Xanthippe; we fade both you and I.<sup>75</sup>

Elsewhere, the themes of a disruptive breach, a broken unity and an involuntary scattering provide the opportunity for the lamentation over the institution of an irreducible distance and the discovery of an irreparable loss:

We are Eretrians of Euboea, but we lie near Susa, alas, how far from home!<sup>76</sup>

And:

We once left the sounding waves of the Aegean to lie here amidst the plains of Ecbatana. Fare thee well, renowned Eretria, our former country. Fare thee well, Athens, Euboea's neighbour. Fare thee well, dear Sea.<sup>77</sup>

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uncertainty concerning the authorship of the epigrams does not bear on my presentation here. It is sufficient for the purposes of this argument that they have been ascribed to Plato and therefore that they bear upon the philosophical persona that comes under the name and that has been imagined and passed down to us, for example, through *The Oxford Book of Greek Verse* (ed. by Gilbert Murray et al (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930)). This classic anthology attributes a number of the above as well as other couplets to Plato, who, according to the Introduction of the prominent classicist C. M. Bowra, 'soon abandoned his efforts and withdrew into philosophy for his search after a permanent satisfaction, turning his great poetic gifts to the formation of a matchless prose' (p. xxxvii). The point here, although philologically unsettling, is about the philosophical constitution of Platonism.

<sup>74</sup> Epigram 7 in *Plato: Complete Works, op. cit.* p. 1744.

<sup>75</sup> Epigram 8 in *Plato: Complete Works, op. cit.* p. 1744.

<sup>76</sup> Epigram 9 in *Plato: Complete Works, op. cit.* p. 1744.

<sup>77</sup> Epigram 13 in *Plato: Complete Works, op. cit.* p. 1745.

Plato, in these attributed epigrams as well as in the dialogues of his middle period, laments, in the manner of an Eretrian finding himself in Susa, the elusiveness of what refuses to remain the same and the distance that a fundamental scattering has uncovered in the structure of things.

It is in the *Phaedo* that the melancholic echo sounding in the epigrams finds its philosophical articulation. The deficiency of *φαινόμενα* is here conceptualised in the relation of imperfect copies of perfect Forms. The *ὀρῶμενα* and *πολλά* objects ‘strive (*ὀρέγεται*) to be like [the Form] but are deficient in this (*ἐνδεεστέρω*)’, ‘falling short of it (*ἀντοῦ ἐνδεεστέρα ἐστίν*)’ and ‘eager (*προθυμεῖται*) to be like it’ but mortally ‘inferior (*φαιλότερα*)’ (*Phaedo* 75a1-b6) to the intelligible ground which disperses them. Such mortal objects imply the scattering and dismemberment of the original to which they may only gesture from a distance, in the same way that a lover feels the objects associated with his loved one as gestures, marks and images that ignite the thought of the loved one, albeit as withdrawn and forgotten:

Well, you know what happens to lovers: whenever they see a lyre, a garment, or anything else that their beloved is accustomed to use, they know the lyre, and the image of the boy to whom it belongs comes into their mind.

(*Phaedo* 73d4-5)

To recover what is lost and to recollect what is forgotten is the task that Plato assigns to philosophy as that practice of recollection (*ἀνάμνησις*), sanctification (*τέλεσις*) and initiation (*μύησις*) that reassembles and restores the thought of perfection (69c4).

The Eleatic *ἔλεγχος* frames Plato’s conception of the philosophical task and practice itself, most notably when, in *Phaedo* 64a-67e, he describes philosophy in relation to death (*θάνατος*) and the practice of separation (*ἀπαλλαγὴ*). What is held apart and separated in *θάνατος* is more than body and soul. The mortal meets imperfect objects because the *κρίσις* (as “decision”, “separation” and “judgment”)<sup>78</sup> which delineates and individuates objects conceals a *κρᾶσις* that takes the form of an indecision between being and not-being. The philosopher escapes the inauthentic

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<sup>78</sup> Mourelatos, ‘The Deceptive Words of Parmenides’ “Doxa”, *op. cit.* p. 348.

κρίσις of the mortal cogniser, whose decisions, as Mourelatos shows, are made *δέμας* (B8.55), i.e. ‘with respect to body’,<sup>79</sup> in order to achieve separation from the vehicle of individuation, that is, the body. In other words, the Platonic prescription for the separation of soul and body in philosophical death rests on the Eleatic *ἔλεγχος* which commands the holding apart of being, as what is ‘itself by itself with itself, eternally one in form’ (*Symposium* 211b1), and not-being. This injunction reveals being as *τὸ ἀδόξαστον* (*Phaedo* 84a8), i.e. not an object of *δόξα*, and renders the *κρῆσις* that the life of becoming bodies presupposes unthinkable.<sup>80</sup>

### **Plato’s theory of the multiple in the dialogues of the middle period**

I ended the previous chapter with the conclusion that Parmenides’ *ἔλεγχος* severely problematises the philosophical project of accounting for the principles according to which multiple beings come to be. The absolute *κρίσις* between being and not-being implies the radical bifurcation of the two *ὁδοὶ* of mortal beings and divine being. As a result, being becomes *passive* (or, in the terms used in Deleuze’s *Logic of Sense*, impassable and neutral), both theoretically (in terms of making possible an account of causality between being and beings) and ontologically (in terms of constituting the cause in such an account). Being holds fast in refusing to constitute the explanatory

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<sup>79</sup> Mourelatos, ‘The Deceptive Words of Parmenides’ “Doxa”, *op. cit.* p. 336.

<sup>80</sup> Aristotle attributed to Plato a Heraclitean disposition concerning sensible particulars (cf. *Met.* 987a32-b, 1078b9-1079a4, 1086a31-b11). However, Plato’s Heracliteanism cannot account for his dissatisfaction with appearances, since no such discontent is prescribed by Heraclitus. Plato indeed stands as the heir of a critique bequeathed by Heraclitus (cf. T. H. Irwin, ‘Plato’s Heracliteanism’, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 27 (1977), 1-13 for an assessment of the Heraclitean dimension of Plato’s argument). However, he further inherits a diagnosis of mortal falsehood and a criterion of divine truth by which to judge it from Parmenides. For both Heraclitus and Parmenides the phenomenal world exhibits structural deficiencies whose lessons ought to be learnt and accounted for. For Heraclitus this means joyfully recognising the unity-in-opposition structure of the phenomenal world and the *λόγος* that governs the balanced unfolding of opposites. For Parmenides on the other hand, this deficiency points towards the distinction between *δόξα* and *ἀλήθεια*. In more general terms, Plato is a consummate distiller of the thought of the Presocratics, absorbing Pythagorean mysticism, Empedoclean aspirations and Socratic methods, among other influences. However, it is Parmenides’ ontological vision that transformed these influences into a distinct ontological system. As far as the dialogues of the middle period are concerned, Plato is an Eleatic critic (this claim will be substantiated by means of a close reading of passages from the *Phaedo* and *Symposium* in this section).

framework and to furnish the parameters of intelligibility that would sustain an account of the constitution of beings. *After* Parmenides, being has been irrevocably retracted from beings.<sup>81</sup>

The possibility and existence of a relation between being and beings, or the way in which the one is or is not accorded to the many and becomes multiple, is the subject of the fundamental investigation conducted in the first part of Plato's *Parmenides*. There, Socrates initially proposes the theory of Ideas as a conciliatory means of overcoming the dispute (*φιλονικία*) between monists and pluralists ('those who assert the many [τοὺς τὰ πολλὰ λέγοντας]', *Parm.* 128d2) and their rivalling hypotheses – 'it is one [ἓν]' and 'it is many [πολλὰ]'. According to the theory that Socrates presents,

there are certain forms [εἶδη] from which these other things [τὰ ἄλλα], by getting a share of them [μεταλαμβάνοντα], derive their names – as, for instance, they come to be [γίγνεσθαι] like by getting a share of likeness, large by getting a share of largeness, and just and beautiful by getting a share of justice and beauty.

(*Parm.* 130e3-131a1)

The youthful Socrates' account, which repeats the essential characteristics of the theory developed in the *Phaedo*, becomes the object of the title character's critique insofar as it purports to cut through the one or many dilemma by means of the operation of participation. What does this operation consist in and how is it supposed to undercut the *φιλονικία* between monists and pluralists? How does Plato account for the multiple in the *Phaedo*? And under what conditions does this account become the object of the Platonic critique in the *Parmenides*? Or what is the same,

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<sup>81</sup> In the terms in which Deleuze reads Plato in *Logic of Sense* and *Difference and Repetition*, the retraction of being from beings (its passivity, neutrality and impassibility) and the loss of the possibility for a logic of appearance means that, for Plato, there is an ontological chasm between beings/images and being. Accordingly, the theory of ideas is interpreted as an iconology, rather than an ontology, on the assumption of the *χωρισμός*. In so doing, Deleuze's reading of Plato follows closely Nehamas in considering participation to be an alternative to predication and in situating Platonism firmly within Eleatic philosophy. I return to Deleuze's analysis of the Platonic theory of Ideas in section 2.1.

what separates the Platonic Parmenides – the philosophical protagonist of the *Parmenides* – from the Parmenidean Plato?<sup>82</sup>

Alexander Nehamas argues that, insofar as Plato abides by the Eleatic injunction that only being is and that the many are not, the ontology of the dialogues of the middle period remains ‘within the basic limits’ of Parmenides’ logic of being.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, the same dialogues attempt to establish a logic of appearance through the concept of participation. In other words, even though beings *are not* what they claim to be, they nevertheless participate in what *is* what they claim to be and, hence, they *appear* to be what they claim to be. The theory of Ideas, then, constitutes an Eleatic solution to the problem of the constitution of the many sensible beings, which is raised as a problem *for* and within Eleaticism, so that both problem (the account of multiplicity) and solution (the theory of Ideas) are firmly inscribed in Eleatic monism.<sup>84</sup>

The claim that the ontology of the *Phaedo* is firmly inscribed in Eleatic limits means, according to Nehamas, that participation should not be construed as Plato’s explanation of predication but as a separate mechanism of attribution wholly devoid of being. Particular sensible beautiful things are not beautiful; they appear to be beautiful because they participate in what *is* beautiful, namely, the Idea of beauty. Plato’s account of *δόξα* in the *Phaedo*, therefore, does not violate Parmenides’ principle that only being is. It merely identifies a secondary way of attribution according to which a claim is made and a property is ascribed only in appearance, but not in being. The imperfection of beings does not reside in the compresence of contrary predicates (being beautiful *and* not-being beautiful); rather, the compresence of opposites constitutes an epiphenomenon of imperfection.

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<sup>82</sup> I proceed to answer the first and second questions in this section; the third and fourth questions are addressed in section 2.2.

<sup>83</sup> Alexander Nehamas, ‘Participation and Predication in Plato’s Later Thought’ in *Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 196-223 (p. 216).

<sup>84</sup> The claim that Parmenides’ monism frames the Platonic project has also been defended by Curd (in *The Legacy of Parmenides*, *op. cit.*), Kahn (in ‘Being in Parmenides and Plato’, *op. cit.*) and Schofield (in ‘The Presocratics’, *op. cit.*).



What then allows beings to ‘venture’ (τολμειν, *Phaedo* 102e4) to ‘admit’ (υπομεινει, *Phaedo* 104c) opposites and ‘to be other than’ what they are (ειναι ετερον, *Phaedo* 102e2), in the first place? What does deficiency consist in, if other than compresence? The deficient or inferior status of phenomena lies in the fact that they are not what they appear to be. The fact that they apparently are and are not what they claim to be (just, beautiful, pious, equal) is only possible because they neither are nor are not what they claim to be, but they only *appear* (φαινεσθαι, *Phaedo* 74c1) to be what they claim to be. In other words, according to Nehamas, the deficient character of beings does not reside in the ‘conjunction of the two extremes’, being and not-being what they claim to be; Plato, that is, ‘does not think that an object really is beautiful and also really is not’.<sup>85</sup> Instead, ‘the two extremes exclude each other’<sup>86</sup> according to the principles already laid in Parmenides’ poem: ‘what is cannot not be’.<sup>87</sup> This amounts to the conclusion that ‘participation and being are, on Plato’s middle-period view, incompatible’<sup>88</sup> or that ‘in the middle dialogues, *to be* and *to participate* were mutually exclusive’;<sup>89</sup> or, still, that participation is ‘an alternative to, and not an analysis of, *being F*’.<sup>90</sup>

Plato’s account of multiplicity, then, is contained in the explanation of participation or, in other words, in the account of imperfection. The many strive for the one (Idea): they want (βουλεται) but fail (οδ δυναται, *Phaedo* 74e1) to reach it. I will concentrate on crucial passages on the deficient status of multiplicity from the *Phaedo* and the *Symposium*.

We say that there is something that is equal. I do not mean a stick equal to a stick or a stone to a stone, or anything of that kind, but something else beyond all these, the Equal itself [αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον]. [...] Do not equal stone and stick sometimes, while remaining the same, appear to one [φαινεται] to be equal and to another to be unequal? –Certainly they do. –But what of the

<sup>85</sup> Nehamas, ‘Participation and Predication’, *op. cit.* p. 197.

<sup>86</sup> Nehamas, ‘Participation and Predication’, *op. cit.* p. 197.

<sup>87</sup> Nehamas, ‘Participation and Predication’, *op. cit.* p. 200.

<sup>88</sup> Nehamas, ‘Participation and Predication’, *op. cit.* p. 197.

<sup>89</sup> Nehamas, ‘Participation and Predication’, *op. cit.* p. 214.

<sup>90</sup> Alexander Nehamas, ‘Self-predication and Plato’s Theory of Forms’ in *Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 176-195 (p. 184).

equals themselves? Have they ever appeared unequal to you, or Equality to be Inequality? – Never, Socrates. These equal things and the Equal itself are therefore not the same? [...] Do [equal sticks and the other equal objects we just mentioned] seem to us to be equal in the same sense [ᾧσπερ] as what is Equal itself? Is there some deficiency [ἐνδει] in their being such as the Equal, or is there not? –A considerable deficiency, he said. –Whenever someone, on seeing something, realises that that which he now sees wants to be like some other reality but falls short [ἐνδει] and cannot be like that other since it is inferior [φαιλότερον], do we agree that the one who thinks this must have prior knowledge of that to which he says it is like, but deficiently so [ἐνδεεστέρωσ]? –Necessarily.

(*Phaedo* 74b4-e4)

How is one to understand this striving (ὀρέγεται, *Phaedo* 75a1 and 75b1) of beings, that is, the movement of their falling short (ἐνδει, *Phaedo* 74d6 and 74e1), their inferiority (φαιλότερον, *Phaedo* 74e2 and 75b6) and poverty (ἔχει ἐνδεεστέρωσ, *Phaedo* 74e3 and 75a2)? On the other hand, what of the perfection of what is completely (παντελῶσ, *Republic* 477a2), really (εἰλικρινῶσ ὄν, *Republic* 477a5), perfectly (τελέωσ ὄν, *Republic* 597a4) and in fact (ὄντωσ ὄν, *Republic* 597d1)? If, as Nehamas argues, predication excludes participation, then imperfection of ascription by participation consists not in *what* is ascribed but in the *mode* in which it is ascribed. The problem with Helen's beauty is not any imperfection of the quality of beauty embodied in Helen (or in Laïs), its not being exact enough, but in the fact of embodiment and the status of its attribution. To put it differently, the problem with 'Helen is beautiful' is not her being *beautiful* but her *being* beautiful. Thus the significance of Plato's logical translation into 'Helen participates in the beautiful', which entails, when participation is properly interpreted, that 'Helen *is not* beautiful'. In the case considered in the *Phaedo*, if sensible instances of equality (τὰ ἴσα) 'while remaining the same, appear (φαίνεται)' (*Phaedo* 74b5) to be both equal and unequal, this appearance of compresence of opposites amounts to the exclusion of participation from predication. It is in this that two equal stones fall short of equality (ἀντὸ τὸ ἴσον): in the mode in which equality is possessed, i.e. through participation.

Thus, the unending task of forensic science, producing increasingly accurate measurements, is irrelevant for the understanding of Plato's account of

imperfection.<sup>91</sup> In this case, as Nehamas notes, Ideas would be interpreted as ‘limits of an infinite series’ that sensible particulars can never reach but merely tend towards or approximate: ‘the sensible world is imperfect because it is only approximately whatever we say it is; the Forms are perfect because they are exactly whatever we say they are [...] “Perfection” is explicated as “exactness”, and “imperfection” as “approximation”’.<sup>92</sup> Plato would then be taken to be arguing that, as regards equal stones, further forensic measurement would invariably show that this limit, the moment of precision and exactitude is never reached. Accordingly, the imperfection of sensible beings would be understood in terms of inexactness or fuzziness. There are two problems facing the equation of imperfection and approximation. To begin with, there is no a priori reason that would exclude exactness from the realm of phenomena, that is, no reason to doubt that the series of measurements might reach a moment of absolute precision or that Helen might reproduce *exactly* the divine beauty of Aphrodite. Secondly, if perfection were exactitude and imperfection inexactness, what would stop us from claiming that two equal particulars, the equality of which, on this interpretation, only approximates equality itself, are in fact perfectly, i.e. exactly, unequal and, hence, that they are perfect embodiments of inequality rather than imperfect embodiments of equality? Plato would rightly object that particulars are neither perfectly equal nor, importantly, perfectly unequal, since they are neither equal nor unequal. Two unequal sticks, although their inequality is exact in the sense that there is no limit of exactitude that remains to be reached, are deficient in their *being* unequal. They are, therefore, exact but imperfect particulars, which means that, following Nehamas and Bostock, perfection must be disassociated from exactitude (or imperfection from approximation) as a direct result of the dissociation of participation from being.

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<sup>91</sup> In addition to Nehamas, the point is also made forcefully in David Bostock, *Plato's Phaedo* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), pp. 85-94. Both Bostock's and Nehamas's arguments are directed against commentators who explicate perfection in terms of exactitude. See, for example, Paul Shorey, *What Plato Said* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), pp. 172-73; and W. D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), p. 25.

<sup>92</sup> Alexander Nehamas, ‘Plato on the Imperfection of the Sensible World’ in *Virtues of Authenticity: Essays on Plato and Socrates* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 138-158 (p. 141).

What then of perfection and imperfection if the former is not to be construed as the limit of exactitude that the latter fails to reach but only tends towards? The failure of the many ever to reach what they strive for is not the failure to reach a moment of precision and exactness, but the incapacity to remain the same. In other words, the sensible candidates leave unexplained the legitimacy of the application of the predicate they purport to define by furnishing its criterion. Thus, the imperfection of sensible beings lies in the fact that they change in the sense that they receive contrary predicates. This does not mean that, under specific circumstances and within a set of spatial, temporal and contextual parameters, Helen fails to be beautiful *in an exact way*. Rather, it means that Helen *is not* beautiful (the addition of '*in a perfect way*' here is superfluous and tautological) but only *appears to be* beautiful (even exactly) under the conditions of specific contexts. This is, then, how the imperfection that is constant in the mortal realm should be understood: in terms of the conditional mode of mortal attribution, i.e. of attribution by participation. This explains also why Plato ascribes to change such centrality and constancy in his description of the realm of *δόξα*, since it is the possession of opposites in which the conditionality of mortal attribution resides: the fact that participants seem to change, entails not-being, and since that can neither be said nor thought, according to Parmenides' injunctions, the logic it establishes is one of appearance that is wholly devoid of being. The many, then, strive not because, being inexact, they unendingly seek the limit of exactness; they do not fail because they are not exactly what they claim to be but because they are not *at all* what they claim to be. Imperfection, thus, does not consist in those very properties that it shares with the world of Forms. It consists, rather, in that sensible objects possess their perfect (i.e. exact) properties imperfectly (i.e. incompletely, temporarily, accidentally). [...] The copies' imperfection does not reside in the properties that make them copies, but in the way these perfect properties are possessed. When we say that particulars are only imperfectly F in comparison to the Form of F-ness, the imperfection belongs to the 'being' rather to the 'F' in 'being F'.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Nehamas, 'Plato on the Imperfection of the Sensible World', *op. cit.* p. 144.

In contrast, the perfection of beauty itself resides in it *being* beautiful, as becomes evident from Diotima's famous description of divine beauty (*αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν*) in the *Symposium*:

First, it always is [*ἀεὶ ὄν*] and neither comes to be [*οὔτε γιγνόμενον*], nor passes away [*οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον*], neither waxes [*οὔτε ἀυξανόμενον*] nor wanes [*οὔτε φθίνον*]. Second, it is not beautiful this way [*τῆ μὲν καλόν*] and ugly that way [*τῆ δ' αἰσχρόν*], nor beautiful at one time [*τοτὲ μὲν*] and ugly at another [*τοτὲ δὲ*], nor beautiful in relation to one thing [*πρὸς μὲν*] and ugly in relation to another [*πρὸς δὲ*]; nor is it beautiful here [*ἔνθα μὲν*] but ugly there [*ἐνθα δὲ*], as it would be if it were beautiful for some people [*τισὶ μὲν*] and ugly for others [*τισὶ δὲ*]. [...] It is not anywhere in another thing, as in an animal, or in earth, or in heaven, or in anything else [*ἔν τῳ ἄλλῳ*], but itself by itself with itself [*αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ μεθ' αὐτοῦ*], it is always one in form [*μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν*]; and all the other beautiful things [*τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πάντα καλὰ*] share in that in such a way that when those others come to be or pass away this does not become the least bit smaller or greater nor suffer any change [*πάσχειν μηδέν*].

(*Symp.* 210e4-211b3)

The perfection of beauty lies in the fact it is 'absolute (*εὐλικρινές*), pure (*καθαρόν*), unmixed (*ἄμικτον*), not polluted by human flesh or colours or any other great nonsense of mortality'. This perfection is tantamount to the simplicity of uniformity (*μονοειδὲς*) of the Idea. The meaning of uniformity becomes clear in the *Phaedo*: tallness itself, Plato writes, 'is not willing to endure and admit shortness and be other than it was' (*Phaedo* 102e2). Instead, 'tallness, being tall, cannot venture to be small'. In other words, perfection is the incapacity to admit not-being and, hence, change (the coming to be from opposites) or division and/or composition: what *is* is unchanging (*ὡσαύτως ἔχον*, *Phaedo* 79d2) or, in view of its uniformity, pure (*καθαρόν*). As a consequence, the dichotomy of predication and participation, perfection and imperfection coincides with the distinction between truth and opinion, being and becoming, reality and appearance, divine and mortal, soul and body:

The soul [*ψυχή*] is most like the divine [*θείῳ*], deathless [*ἀθανάτῳ*], intelligible [*νοητῶ*], uniform [*μονοειδεῖ*], indissoluble [*ἀδιαλύτῳ*], always the same as itself [*ἀεὶ ὡσαύτως κατὰ ταῦτὰ ἔχοντι ἑαυτῶ*], whereas the body [*σῶμα*] is most like that which is human

[ἀνθρωπίνῳ], mortal [θνητῶ], multiform [πολυειδεῖ], unintelligible [ἀνοήτῳ], soluble [διαλυτῶ], and never consistently the same [μηδέποτε κατὰ ταῦτά ἔχοντι ἑαυτῶ].

(*Phaedo* 80b1-4)

The seal, then, with which Plato marks Ideas is being (*αὐτὸ ὃ ἔστι*, *Phaedo* 75d2), and, shackled by the simplicity of being, the things that are (*τὸ ὄν*, *Phaedo* 78d3) ‘always remain the same and in the same state (*ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτά καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχει*)’, whereas participants ‘vary from one time to another and are never the same (*ἄλλοτ’ ἄλλως καὶ μηδέποτε κατὰ ταῦτά*)’ (*Phaedo* 78c5):

Are they ever the same and in the same state [*ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτά*], or do they vary from one time to another [*ἄλλοτ’ ἄλλως*]; can the Equal itself, the Beautiful itself, each thing in itself, the real [*τὸ ὄν*], ever be affected by any change [*μεταβολήν*] whatever? Or does each of them that really is, being uniform [*μονοειδές*] by itself, remain the same [*ὡσαύτως κατὰ ταῦτά ἔχει*] and never in any way tolerate [*ἐνδέχεται*] any change [*ἀλλοίωσιν*] whatever [*οὐδέποτε οὐδεμῆ οὐδαμῶς οὐδεμία*]? –It must remain the same, said Cebes, and in the same state, Socrates. –What of the many beautiful particulars [*τῶν πολλῶν*], be they men, horses, clothes, or other such things, or the many equal particulars, and all those which bear the same name as those others? Do they remain the same or, in total contrast to those other realities, one might say, never in any way remain the same as themselves or in relation to each other? –The latter is the case; they are never in the same state.

(*Phaedo* 78d1-e3)

Another way to express the simplicity, purity or uniformity of ideal objects, is by formulating self-predications of the form ‘the equal itself is equal’. What this says is that Ideas can only be what they are and that they cannot be what they are not, so that self-predication, Nehamas notes, is ‘a more fully spelled-out version of Parmenides’ principle of being’.<sup>94</sup> Thus, Plato’s problem (the status of sensible multiplicity) is raised from within, and on account of, the assumptions of Eleaticism. The Platonic solution (the theory of Ideas) ‘represents, ironically, one of the last Presocratic systems’, since Plato, *with* the pluralists, takes on the task of accounting for multiplicity, the need for which is only discerned after Parmenides’ diagnosis has

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<sup>94</sup> Nehamas, ‘Self-predication and Plato’s Theory of Forms’, *op. cit.* p. 181.

turned it into a problem, that is, of showing ‘that the sensible world has a measure of reality because of the existence of objects [...] that meet Parmenides’ conditions on being’.<sup>95</sup>

This, then, i.e. the identification and development of a logic of appearance by means of the concept of participation that remains foreign to and incompatible with the logic of being drawn in the first part of Parmenides’ poem, would be Plato’s casting of a Parmenidean account of sensible multiplicity in terms of things that ‘are and are not’. In other words, the structure of imperfection contains Plato’s account of the nature of the sensible multiple. To say that this is an Eleatic response to the problem of accounting for the multiple is to say that participation does not introduce gradations of being; rather, it is other than being since participants are not what they appear to be but only appear to be it: ‘the capacity to participate seems to go along with an incapacity to be’.<sup>96</sup> It is a response, however, since participation legislates over appearance and validates claims: ‘it provides an explanation of why things that are not really beautiful seem to be so and can be spoken of, even if only in a derivative sense, as “beautiful”’.<sup>97</sup> The force of this law comes from the grounding operation that Plato accords to Ideas: the causal power of Ideas resides in the presence (*παρουσία*, *Phaedo* 100d4) or communion (*κοινωνία*) of Ideas in beings, which is to say that participation is another name of the grounding operation of Ideas insofar as they are present in the appearance.

### **Deleuze on the grounding operation of Platonic Ideas**

Thus, Ideas in Plato have a grounding function that they owe to the operation of participation. Before I proceed to the analysis of the criticisms that the *Parmenides* raises against the possibility of such a function (of *παρουσία* and *κοινωνία*), I turn to Deleuze’s essay ‘The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy’, which contains an important interpretation of the grounding operation of Platonic Ideas and, hence, a

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<sup>95</sup> Nehamas, ‘Self-predication and Plato’s Theory of Forms’, *op. cit.* pp. 182-3.

<sup>96</sup> Nehamas, ‘Participation and Predication’, *op. cit.* p. 199.

<sup>97</sup> Nehamas, ‘Participation and Predication’, *op. cit.* pp. 198-9.

significant description of what Deleuze understands as foundationalism in philosophy.<sup>98</sup>

Now what's going to happen to us without barbarians?

Those people were a kind of solution.<sup>99</sup>

Platonic philosophy presupposes the *πόλις* as its problem. Platonism demands, as the conditions for its emergence, not only a polyphony of opinions, a plurality of voices, but also a cacophony of claims. Both resound in the *ἀγορά*, the significant centre of the city and stage of ontological, ethical and political contest (*ἀγών*). The raising of the cacophony that institutes the *ἀγορά* is possible only after previous cosmic, moral and political orders that had ensured resonance from outside no longer permeate the polyphony. The *πόλις* refuses the ordering imposed by transcendent models of arbitration ('imperial or barbarian')<sup>100</sup> and the Greek cities that are founded upon the cacophony of the *ἀγορά* form 'fields of immanence'. Such immanence is the effect of a previous crisis in established mythic models of legitimisation. Its inauguration stems from the realisation, without a doubt accompanied by bewilderment and confusion, that 'there are no more barbarians' and that their solution is no longer available. In the lack of the criteria assured by such transcendence, Plato believes that the *ἀγών* remains unresolved: 'anyone can lay claim to anything' (CC, p. 137). Polyphony, requiring the plurality of the voices of friends (*φίλοι*), descends into cacophony, as friends are replaced by debaters (*ἀγωνιστικῶν*, *Meno* 75c6). To restore the possibility of an accord within the plurality of voices is the problem in response to which Plato proposes the theory of Ideas.

It is thus that Deleuze tracks down 'the motive of the theory of Ideas' (LS, p. 253). Plato seeks to invent and 'erect a new type of transcendence'. But no help is to

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<sup>98</sup> Contained in Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. by Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. by Constantin V. Boundas (London: Athlone, 1990). Hereafter cited as LS. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>99</sup> C. P. Cavafy: *Collected Poems*, trans. by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard, ed. by George Savidis (London: Chatto and Windus, 1990), p. 15.

<sup>100</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998), p. 137. Hereafter cited as CC. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.



be expected of barbarians any longer: instead, Platonic transcendence takes its place in the *ἀγορά* itself so that it ‘can be exercised and situated *within* the field of immanence’. This new type of transcendence makes possible a procedure of authentication the narrative of which is no longer expressly mythical, barbarian or imperial, but belonging to the *πόλις*:

If we really want to say that philosophy originates with the Greeks, it is because the city, unlike the empire or state, invents the agon as the rule of a society of ‘friends’, of the community of free men as rivals (citizens). This is the invariable situation described by Plato: if each citizen lays claim to something, then we need to be able to judge the validity of claims.<sup>101</sup>

Platonic ontology encompasses two distinct but complementary moments: the diagnostic moment of separation (*χωρισμός*) that produces idols and the therapeutic moment of participation (*μέθεξις*)<sup>102</sup> that produces icons.<sup>103</sup> It is through *χωρισμός* that Plato, paying heed to Parmenides’ injunction, postulates an irreducible distance between being and beings; it is through *μέθεξις* that, *contra* Parmenides, passages of communication between the two realms are discovered, in spite of the Parmenidean bifurcation.<sup>104</sup> Plato, hence, tells a double story, positive-therapeutic and negative-diagnostic at once.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. by Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994), p. 9.

<sup>102</sup> Also *μετάσχεσις-μετέχειν* in *Phaedo* 101c5 (also in *Parmenides* 129c4) and *μεταλαμβάνειν-μετάληψις* at 102b2 (also in *Parmenides* 129a2 and 131a).

<sup>103</sup> Henceforth, ‘idol’ and ‘icon’ are used as technical terms. The former corresponds to Deleuze’s generic ‘image’ standing in contrast to the Idea. ‘Icon’ finds its opposite in ‘phantasm’ or ‘simulacrum’ and is used to convey the meaning of a range of Deleuze’s designations for the secondary possessor (such as ‘copy’). Thus, idol is the result of the separating distance from the removed Idea/being diagnosed by Parmenides, whereas icons and phantasms are categories of idols, namely classes of participating and non-participating idols.

<sup>104</sup> As will become clear, the metaphor of passages of communication does not wholly capture the operation of *μέθεξις*. Platonic participation effects the total alignment of idol to Idea. For this reason, the passages afforded by participation do not remain accidental but come to engulf the domain of idols as the conditions for its possibility. This is where the metaphor of passages of communication between Idea and idol becomes misleading: a passage implies the possibility of non-communication, namely in cases where there is none to be crossed. But the comprehensiveness of the correspondence afforded by participation leaves no room for non-

On the one hand, the theory of Ideas presents a negative diagnosis that discerns a fundamental shortcoming in the constitution of the objects of *δόξαι*. Platonism is instituted in this diagnosis as the active pursuit of *χωρισμός* between Idea (*εἶδος*) and idol (*εἶδωλον*): the imitated model is separated from the imitating copy, ‘the “thing” itself from its images’ (*LS*, p. 253), the primary from the secondary possessor. The *χωρισμός* is instigated by the uneventfulness of being, which in Diotima’s speech remains ‘itself by itself with itself, eternally uniform’ (*αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτὸ μεθ’ αὐτοῦ μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν*, *Symposium* 211b1). This formulation recasts Parmenides’ own formula for being, namely, as ‘remaining the same and by itself it lies and so stays there fixed’ (Parmenides, B8.29-30). Ideas possess the marks that the goddess had already deduced in her revelation of uneventfulness: *τὸ ὄν* (*Phaedo* 78d4), ‘being uniform (*μονοειδὲς*)<sup>106</sup> by itself, [remains] the same (*κατὰ ταῦτὰ ἔχει*) and never (*οὐδέποτε*) in any way (*οὐδαμῆ οὐδαμῶς*) [tolerates] any change whatever (*οὐδεμίαν*)’ (*Phaedo* 78d5-7).<sup>107</sup> At the same time, the mortal beings that are kept at a distance from being (*τὰ ὀρῶμενα* idols) are beings constituted as ‘never remaining the same’ (*μηδέποτε κατὰ ταῦτὰ [ἔχον]*, *Phaedo* 79a10). Again, Plato’s characterisations of mortal objects follow closely Parmenides’ diagnoses of *εἶναι μὴ ἐόντα*: ‘The many beautiful particulars (*τὰ πολλὰ καλὰ*)’, in contrast to the Beautiful itself (*αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν*), ‘never in any way remain the same as themselves or in relation to each other’ (*Phaedo* 78e2-4).<sup>108</sup>

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aligned idols. If there are non-aligned idols, their disobedience is not due to the absence of communication (a non-communication of sorts) but to the subverting of communication (excommunication). This is Deleuze’s account of the constitution of simulacra.

<sup>105</sup> What follows focuses primarily on the treatment of the *χωρισμός* in the *Phaedo*. It is in this dialogue that, as Kahn notes (in *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: the Philosophical Use of a Literary Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 344), ‘Socrates confronts his own death’. The imminence of this event casts its shadow on the text in such a way that death becomes entwined in the theory of being. This motif will later be explored in relation to Badiou’s critique of Deleuzian philosophy as pre-occupied with death (in section 3.2).

<sup>106</sup> In Parmenides: *οὐλομελές* (B8.4); also, *πάν ἐστιν ὁμοῖον* (B8.22).

<sup>107</sup> Cf. *Phaedo* 78d2, d8, e2, 79a9 for similar formulations of the sameness characterising Ideas.

<sup>108</sup> Other designations of the difference that inflicts idols in this part of the *Phaedo* include: ‘they vary from one time to another’ (78d3); they are ‘affected by any change whatever’ (78d4-5); ‘they are never in the same state’ (78e5); they never remain the same (79a10).

Thus, two realms are separated from each other, both delimited by the principles that Plato formulates in *Phaedo* 78c: the realm of divinity filled by Ideas ‘that always remain the same and in the same state’ (ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχει); and the realm of mortal φαινόμενα filled by idols that ‘vary from one time to another and are never the same’ (ἄλλωτ’ ἄλλως καὶ μηδέποτε κατὰ ταῦτὰ). The stillness of the ‘pure identity’ of Ideas encloses the realm of ‘exemplary similitude’, which stands over against the realm of idols, itself enclosed and afflicted by difference, heterogeneity, composition, that is, processes that involve not-being.

On the other hand, the negativity of this separation gives rise to a positive account of the constitution of beings: μέθεξις allows an explanation of the operation according to which things appear, that is, a theory of appearing: ‘if there is anything beautiful besides the Beautiful itself, it is beautiful for no other reason than that it shares (μετέχει) in that Beautiful’ (*Phaedo* 100c5). Thus, while χωρισμός places the duality between Idea and idol in the centre of Platonic contemplation, μέθεξις brings the parts of this antithesis into a relation of non-reciprocal determination: ‘it is through Beauty (τῷ καλῷ) that beautiful things (τὰ καλὰ) are made beautiful’ (*Phaedo* 100e2-3).

This double aspect (of removal of Ideas through χωρισμός and alignment to Ideas through μέθεξις) is carried over in the determination of beings as idols of ideal originals. For beings are now positively determined as idols and this means that the conditions for their appearance are accounted for. This determination, however, has only been accomplished by relating idols to the productivity of Ideas: the being of idols is exhausted in the act of appearing, that is, in their reflecting the perfection of Ideas, ‘the presence of (παρουσία), or the sharing in (κοινωνία)’ that accounts for the production (ποιεῖν) of beings (*Phaedo* 100d5-6). The constitution of ontic mortality entails necessary reference to the world of ontological divinity (μέθεξις) that remains permanently removed (χωρισμός). Hence, the shortcoming of idols (their distance from removed Ideas) is at the same time the condition of their appearing (their alignment to Ideas) as it is within the distance opened up by separation that determination is bestowed, or relinquished, from afar: the unparticipated foundation bestows determinacy upon the participant, who possesses ‘only secondarily’ what

the unparticipated possesses 'in a primary way' (*LS*, p. 255). What comes to participate is the distanced idol and only as thus removed does the Idea relinquish the participated to the participant. It is as a result of such relinquishing that participation is given a realm of idols over which it can officiate, being thus conditioned by the distance entailed in the gesture of bestowal. It is within this distance that an elective process is made possible and established.

On the supposition of the moment of ontological separation, therefore, participation aligns the world of *δόξαι* to the world of *ἀλήθεια* and predetermines a nexus of possible trajectories that idols may follow. Hence, the 'wandering' (*Republic* 479d9) that for Eleaticism implied the radical indeterminacy of *φαινόμενα* is in Platonism always pre-hended in monocentric systems whose centre is the Idea. The world is inhabited by classifiable beings, each of which is constituted as the thing that it is through its relation to the Ideal model that it strives to reach. *Μέθεξις* correlates the world of things as idols with the world of Ideas; thus positively determined, idols are icons and participation furnishes the principles, criteria and elective procedures that delimit the realm of iconic representation.

The two moments of Platonism can now be further determined. In its negative-diagnostic aspect Platonism articulates an ontology instituted in the *χωρισμός*, on which, however, it establishes, in its positive-therapeutic aspect, a logic of icons, that is, a theory of appearance according to *μέθεξις*. Thus, with *μέθεξις* we pass from the constitution of idols according to the principles of Eleatic ontology to the production of icons (*εἰκῶν*) according to the principles of a distinctly Platonic iconology.

Platonism is an iconology since it sees in the realm of beings the operation of a nexus of relations that refers it back to the ideality of being. The mortal world is permeated by this ideality by means of resemblance: it is ordered by similitude and beings appear within its structuring, each occupying a definite coordinate in relation to the Ideas. Again, resemblance, like participation, operates on a preceding removal and deficiency. To resemble (and to participate) is 'at best, to rank second'; but this shortcoming is complemented by the compensatory moment of determination that

resemblance itself affords. How does resemblance function as a principle of iconic generation?

The nature of the *εἰκῶν* resides exhaustively in the activity of *εἰκέναι* (to resemble): icons are idols 'endowed with resemblance' (*LS*, p. 257) and 'guaranteed by resemblance' (*LS*, p. 256). Icons, therefore, are beings whose determination is relinquished or bestowed according to the 'internal and spiritual', that is, constitutive and founding, relation to the Idea, 'which comprehends the relations and proportions constitutive of the internal essence' of those beings.<sup>109</sup> Resemblance, in other words, is a relation passing from the Idea to the thing, determining the thing and thus producing it as the Similar.

Icons, being thus constituted, inhabit and comprise a world that is everywhere determinable, that is, standing in a determinate relation to the Idea or wandering around an ideal centre at a determinate and hence significant orbital trajectory. The determinateness of this trajectory, which is the determinateness of any trajectory insofar as it is the trail of an appearing being, is significant since it allows for the measuring of resemblance and, for this reason, for the assignment of a value to beings. Icons are everywhere rendered calculable; indeed this is, according to Plato, the condition of their constitution. Assigning values has been ascertained by the determinateness that *μέθεξις* and resemblance has conferred upon the mortal manifold. On this presupposition the dialectic is the method that effects the separation between Ideas and things but that also makes available the inventory of the world of things by giving each thing its due, subsuming it 'under the appropriate species'. The objective of Platonic philosophy is, on this level, an operation of specification, that is, of according an essence to particulars and this means that particulars acquire a place in the world of appearance by means of their resemblance to Ideas. To be sure, such designation means that things are always imperfect as they strive for what is permanently out of their reach; conversely, however, things are determined in terms of this failed striving: what they resemble, and hence fail to reach, makes each thing what it is, giving it its determination. Things, therefore, are

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<sup>109</sup> Plato's Greek makes use of the dative (*τῷ καλῷ* above) to convey such passing-through.

instituted in such striving for an Idea; this is a positive account of the constitution of appearances; and the futility of their yearning is a correlate of their mortal deficiency; this is the negative diagnosis of Platonism.

Icons are constituted in the value that is in all cases assignable to them and which is determined according to the 'superior identity of the Idea'. This nexus of valuation makes available a criterion according to which claims are measured and rivalries settled. *Χωρισμός* and *μέθεξις* furnish a criterion of selection: it is then a matter of determining the essence of the thing and measuring the distance from the ideal centre or the rank of imaging at work in each case. Icons invariably possess a determinable value: participants of all intensities, whether being a participant of the second, third or fourth rank travelling down 'the infinity of degradation culminating in the one who possesses no more than a simulacrum, a mirage', the entire hierarchy is one of 'well-founded aspirers': each determinable by the degree of its distance and *χωρισμός* from the Idea but also instituted in the *μέθεξις* and resemblance to the Idea.

Thus, the radicality that Plato accords to the separation between Idea and idol, and which since Aristotle has placed its negativity at the absolute centre of Platonic thought, must at all times be weighed against the positivity of the relation that passes from Idea to icon. If the *χωρισμός* places the identity of the Idea *against* the difference that is the medium of idols, it also makes possible the alignment of the two realms by means of ascribing this difference within the 'imitative similitude' that 'the pure resemblance' that goes from icon to Idea produces. This difference is always pre-hended and pre-determined as the being of the idol is from the start comprehended and determined *from within* the 'exemplary similitude of the model'. The world appears as the imaging of being and is thus in a relation to being. Participation has the effect of rendering the realm of appearances into a homogeneous plane permeated by its relation to the foundation. The beings inhabiting this plane are not only governed but also constituted in the relation to the foundation. The account of the operation of appearing that the theory of Ideas makes available specifies the conditions under which something appears, namely, as the icon bearing an internal and constitutive resemblance to the model.

The principal problem that Plato's account of iconic constitution responds to concerns the division between kinds of idols. The problem may be put as follows: if all idols are constituted in the distance of the *χωρισμός*, what separates the veritable and internal mimesis of icons from the mimetic aspirations of other idols? The *χωρισμός* between Idea and idol establishes that the terms of the duality are separated; any relation that might pass from the Idea to the idol, therefore, will be a productive relation between separated and external terms. Nevertheless, the determination by means of resemblance assures that the generation of icons is at least a 'veritable production ruled by the relations and proportions' comprehended by the Idea. Icons, *qua* idols, stand in a mimetic relation to the original to which they aspire as other than that original and as external to it; *qua* icons, however, their imitation is an internal one, as, passing through the Idea, imitation becomes a determining activity. Although all idols, icons and other, are engulfed by the difference that separation afflicts on the mortal world, icons resemble internally that from which they differ. Their dissimilarity is a difference between similar things; indeed the icon *is* similar to the Idea although it is, *qua* idol, different from it. Indeed, their difference is a difference in degree that presupposes the identity of the Idea: 'only the same can differ'. Icons then are not merely idols; conversely, not all idols are icons.

It is now easier to recognise the nature of the *ἀγών* the adjudication of which animates the 'totality of Platonic motivation', including the formulation of the theory of Ideas. It is one of the ironies of Platonic thought that, if it is the distinction between Idea and idol that becomes its 'great manifest duality' and public preoccupation, it is nonetheless not *this* *χωρισμός* that shelters 'the meaning of the theory of Ideas' (CC, p. 137) or that constitutes its founding deed. The centrality traditionally accorded to the separation between Idea and idol proves misleading insofar as it gives the impression that the method, object and objective of Platonic ontology is the separation between the terms of this separation themselves, i.e. Idea and idol and the determination of the idol in relation and proportion to the Idea. This is not the struggle on which Plato seeks to adjudicate. Instead, Deleuze insists, the overriding preoccupation is that the thing be authenticated; this means that what is sought after is a method for judging things, for 'selecting lineages' and distinguishing pretenders.

The separation between being and beings makes possible (as its compensatory complement) a theory of *μέθεξις* which, in binding beings to Ideas and populating the sensible realm with idols, also implicates a 'latent distinction' within the order of the idol itself by distinguishing between images that stand in a relation of *μέθεξις* and those that do not, or between icons and phantasms. In other words, determination (the breadth and 'superficial aspect' of Platonic philosophy) is from the start directed towards the interests of selection (its depth): it is not specification for the sake of definition but authentication that is the central objective of Platonism; and it is not a dialectic of 'contrariety and contradiction' but a 'dialectic of rivalry' that is its method. The overriding motive is not to recognise mortal objects in their mortality and to distinguish their polyphony from the monophony of Ideas, but to distinguish within the cacophony of mortality between icons and phantasms.

How is *this χωρισμός*, operative in the depth of Platonic philosophy and mobilising the ontological separations of its surface, established? Is there a threshold that separates the icon, that is, the well-founded aspirer, from the phantasm and its 'unfounded pretension'? Deleuze identifies the critical hinge that in Plato separates the idol in two in two formulas of difference. On the one hand, icons are instituted, as Plato had proclaimed, in their difference from the original. The difference of icons, however, is a difference ruled by resemblance. Insofar as copies are 'endowed with resemblance', copies are invariably good copies, that is, icons. Platonism directs its power to the articulation of the principles of an iconology, that is, to the determination of those conditions under which things appear as icons of an Idea. The sensible realm and its objects are accounted for as copies imitating a certain founding centre and following a trajectory around that centre the distance to which determines the rank of participation in the Ideal centre.

Finally, how can an idol not be an icon? In other words, under what circumstances might a pretender appear in whom resemblance is not a constitutive relation? Surely only by means of malediction, of deliberate evasion and simulation might a pretender be judged to be a false pretender and a counterfeit. This pretension is unfounded not because of its infinite removal from the original; the whole hierarchy of copies, insofar as they are determinable by means of the degree of



resemblance, are well-founded pretenders. Rather, the absolute *χωρισμός* of the simulacrum from the original it falsely aspires to is an effect of the lack of any internal relation of resemblance constitutive of its being. Instead, the phantasm is ‘an image without resemblance’ or, given that the phantasm does make a claim, its resemblance is always ‘an external effect’ of an ‘internalised dissimilarity’.

## 2.2 The criticisms of the *Parmenides*

### The dilemma of the first part of the *Parmenides*

To return to the *Parmenides*, accounting for the legislative (or, according to Deleuze’s analysis: grounding, selective, authenticating, arbitrate) capacity of Ideas is tantamount to offering a coherent theory of participation or ideal presence that will explain the causal or grounding power of being. Is the aligning of beings to being – of idols to Ideas – that the theory of Ideas proposes an operation that is possible within the parameters of the Eleatic *ἔλεγχος*? *Prima facie*, such a theory is faced with the following incoherence: if Plato, in his response to Parmenides, remains a consistent monist, for example, in the insistence that to participate is not to be but only to appear to be, how can he account for the legality of Ideas, for their regulatory, validating and lawgiving character, given the fact that Ideas legislate only on account of participation? In other words, Plato must hold that participation is a derivative of being while at the same time maintaining that participation is not being, and, hence, falls short of being able to account for this derivation.<sup>110</sup> To put it differently: in accordance with the Eleatic *ἔλεγχος*, monism entails the groundlessness of phenomena, if to ground is to find a *real* cause in being, since participants are not; whence, then, the capacity of Ideas to ground what is from the start taken to be ungrounded? The problem concerns the possibility of a logic of appearances, of a system, that is, of arbitration relative to the claims of appearances.

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<sup>110</sup> This explains my decision to give prominence to Nehamas’s interpretation of Plato’s metaphysics in the dialogues of the middle period, since, by convincingly situating Plato in Eleaticism, this interpretation brings to the fore the problems, dilemmas and antinomies that the theory of Ideas presents from a monist perspective.

In the first part of the *Parmenides* (126a-135c), Plato identifies the problem and draws in dramatic form its cataclysmic implications for the metaphysics of the *Phaedo*. He accomplishes this by having his Eleatic protagonist formulate a series of arguments against the theory of Ideas, the distinction of one and many that it presupposes as its problem and the operation of participation that it offers as its solution. Parmenides puts forward six objections that concern (i) the inventory of Ideas (130b5-e2), (ii) the account of *μεταλαμβάνειν* (130e2-131e4), (iii) the ‘third man’ argument (132a1-b1), (iv) the account of Ideas as *νοήματα* (132b2-c8), (v) the account of Ideas as *παραδείγματα* of resemblance (132c9-133a4) and (vi) the knowability of Ideas (133b3-135b2). These objections aim to show that the Parmenidean context in which the conception of multiplicity developed in the *Phaedo* is couched rules out the possibility of a logic of appearances. In this way, Plato’s parricide, his rejection of Eleatic monism, is staged as a philosophical suicide: it is ‘Parmenides’ that undoes Parmenides’ hold on Platonic metaphysics.

The theory of Ideas that Socrates presents as a response to Zeno’s arguments against plurality does not, as Nehamas notes, reject Zeno’s assumptions about oneness and multiplicity, but rather is only possible on these assumptions. The young Socrates, in effect, reminds Zeno that, for reasons that an Eleatic must accept, the many sensible things do not belong to being. Hence, although monism entails that being is ontologically one, pluralism may be given purchase if the philosopher reminds herself, as a thorough Eleatic, that the logic of appearance necessitates the thinking of multiplicity, if only restricted, outside being, to appearances.

Thus, the theory of Ideas as developed in the dialogues of the middle period responds to the need for an account of apparent multiplicity from within the limits of real oneness; it seeks, that is, to respond to the inevitable demand for an explanation of the multiple (a theory of appearance, of sensible constitution, of deficiency or imperfection, of variation and diversity, of plurality and of particularity) from within the parameters of the one; to work out a logic of appearances (pluralism) that remains consistent with monist ontology. In the context of the exchange with Zeno, the theory of Ideas presents, for Socrates, the solution to the problem of the

unaccountability of plurality from a purportedly consistent monist standpoint. The many is possible not in its being but in its appearing.

At this point the coherence of Plato's project, the project of accounting for multiplicity on the assumption of the Eleatic conception of oneness, is lost, since we remember that appearance, although *not* being, is still derivative to being (in Plato's terminology, it participates in being), and on account of this derivation, is legislated by being (or in Deleuze's terms, being grounds, arbitrates, authenticates and selects images). This means that there is the need for an explanation of the possibility and function of participation and of *παρουσία*: of the immanence of being in beings and of the apparent converging of what Parmenides traced as rigidly diverging *όδοι*. For the possibility of participation seems to imply at once that Plato must admit that his theory does not preserve 'the inviolability of those things which, according to it, are'.<sup>111</sup> The difficulties that the Platonic Parmenides raises serve to bring this incoherence to light since they show that being, in assuming a grounding function, also assumes the character of the things that it grounds, and which it can only ground on the presupposition of such assuming, namely, of multiplicity. Thus, the theory violates the indissolubility of being on which it is premised.<sup>112</sup> Among other criticisms, Plato has the 'very grey' Parmenides object that the oneness of *εἶδος* precludes its dispersion, either as part or as whole, in many sensible (*όρώμενα*) participants (*μετέχοντα* and *μεταλαμβάνοντα*). For, if the form were in each of the many as a whole (*όλον*), then 'it would be separate from itself' (*Parm.* 131b1-2); and if, on the other hand, things received a share of the form as a part (*μέρος*), then Socrates ought to admit that 'the forms themselves are divisible [*μεριστά*]' (131c4). In both cases, the immanence of the Idea would undermine its status as 'one and the same [*μία καὶ ἡ αὐτή*]' (131b2), on which, according to the theory Socrates presents here, the function of the Idea as the ontological and epistemological ground of beings depends. Conversely, we might attempt to preserve this function and defend the theory in the light of Parmenides' argument by insisting that Ideas 'are not in us [*ἐν ἡμῖν*]' (133c4), that is, by pointing towards the separation (*χωρισμός*) between beings

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<sup>111</sup> Nehamas, 'Participation and Predication', *op. cit.* p. 200.

<sup>112</sup> See section 1.1 above.

and their ideal ground, thus sacrificing immanence in favour of maintaining a coherent notion of transcendence. This attempt, however, renders the very operation of grounding it seeks to preserve unintelligible. Transcendence strictly requires that 'we neither have the forms themselves nor can they belong to us' (134b3-4); rather, 'forms are what they are of themselves and in relation to themselves, and things that belong to us are, in the same way, what they are in relation to themselves' (133e3-134a1). Transcendence, therefore, cancels the explanatory and productive function that the theory accords to Ideas since it negates any relation (which would introduce immanence) that might sustain such a function: Ideas becomes 'necessarily unknowable [ἄγνωστα]' (133c1).

Although the theory accounts for multiplicity by insisting that 'being and participation exclude each other',<sup>113</sup> it turns out that the causal capacity of the one being in relation to the many beings, i.e. the *παρουσία* of the one in the many or, what is the same, the participation of the many in the one, entails the undoing of this exclusion with the consequence that Plato is obliged either to revert to the coherence of a thorough monism that rejects the possibility of a logic of (the many) appearances, having safely fettered being to itself, or to accept the ramifications of participation, namely, the breaking apart of the one in the many in a pluralism that rejects the possibility of a logic of (the one) being.

Thus, the conclusion that ensues has the form of a dilemma and a decision: *prima facie*, the young Socrates must (i) either uphold the immanence (*παρουσία*) of the one in the many and the participation of the many in the one, which simultaneously entails that we accede to the dispersion of the Idea as one, itself by itself, and separate; (ii) or maintain the absolute transcendence (*χωρισμός*) of separate Ideas and, as a consequence, withdraw Being from beings and deny the ontic realm of its reality. In both cases, the Idea as the explanatory, productive and constitutive source of the Being of beings and the donor of their reality is abandoned – a consequence that Plato has Parmenides pointedly deduce in his final argument concerning the knowability of Ideas. Thus, the theory of Ideas not only fails as a

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<sup>113</sup> Nehamas, 'Participation and Predication', *op. cit.* p. 201.

theory in which the duality of one and many would be overcome but, moreover, fails to arbitrate the perennial dispute between *ἓν* or *πολλά*.

The lesson learnt in this first part of the *Parmenides* is severe but profound: the relation between Being and beings, one and many, needs to be rethought in terms other than those developed in the *Phaedo*. This means that the crucial concepts of *χωρισμός* and *μέθεξις*, of transcendence and immanence, must be rethought in the framework of a new conception of the relation between, and the ontological constitution of, multiplicity and oneness.

In both cases (i) and (ii) above, the undoing of the distinction between participation and being is tantamount to undoing the separation between being and appearance or the one and the many. It is thus that the target of Parmenides', i.e. Plato's, criticisms is separation. Kenneth Sayre remarks that 'what Parmenides stresses first, last and foremost, [...] is that these Forms are supposed to exist in complete separation from things that come to be by participating in them',<sup>114</sup> the former as '*χωρίς μὲν εἶδη αὐτὰ*' (*Parm.* 130b2) and the latter as '*χωρίς δὲ τὰ τούτων αὐτὸ μετέχοντα*' (*Parm.* 130b3). The incoherence of Plato's response to Zeno's argument against plurality (as developed in the *Phaedo* and the *Symposium* and as reiterated only to be dismantled in the first part of the *Parmenides*) lies in the fact that this response is successful in rendering the multiple intelligible, in spite of the one, only on the presupposition of the radical separation between being and participation, or oneness and multiplicity. Nevertheless, the pluralism that is the logic of appearances receives is established in its relation to the monism that is the logic of being. In this respect, Nehamas notes:

Socrates' exclusive distinction between being and participating in the opening of the *Parmenides* was intended to show that a conservative pluralism, with being applying only to Forms and participating only to sensibles, was a plausible alternative within the basic limits set by Eleatic monism. [...] The difficulty is that, given his exclusive distinction between being and participation, the theory provided no mechanism for explaining how it was that Forms

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<sup>114</sup> Kenneth M. Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 20.

could possess the many properties they had to possess if they were to be real objects and if they were to function as Plato had intended them to function.<sup>115</sup>

According to Sayre, 'at the heart of this problem [regarding the notion of participation] is the question how Forms and sensible objects can be related at all, given their radically different natures'.<sup>116</sup> Predication, or the logic of being, excludes participation, or the logic of appearance; or, in other words, multiplicity cannot be accounted for from within the limits of a system of thought, Eleaticism, that thinks the one as indissoluble, homogeneous, continuous, complete, full, uncomposed and indivisible, inviolate and unshaken.<sup>117</sup> This is the problem that the *Parmenides* identifies. If it does not resolve it, the dialogue still provides the general framework in which to rethink the relation between one and many in terms other than of a mutual and radical exclusion of the one from the other, and that means of participation from being, of appearance from reality.

### **The second part of the *Parmenides***

The first step towards a shift in the thinking of the one is taken in the second part of the same dialogue. Having raised the difficulties afflicting the theory of Ideas in the first part of the *Parmenides*, Parmenides surprisingly encourages Socrates not to be deterred by the fact that 'these difficulties remain unresolved' (*ἀγνοοιμένων*, 135c3) but to persist in the 'noble and divine' impulse (135d1) to think of Ideas. The problem was that such thinking came 'too soon', before Socrates had been 'properly trained' (*πρὶν γυμνασθῆναι*, 135c8) and while 'still young' (135d2) to think through the demands of a coherent theory of Ideas. Parmenides, thus, goes on to prescribe a training regime (*γυμνασία*, 135d3) and a method for examining rivalling hypotheses, such as the one with which the dialogue opens between monism and pluralism, in a way that will enable the philosopher to deduce, in an exhaustive manner, the consequences of any hypothesis. The exercise that Parmenides prescribes is thus an essential component of philosophical education, a preparation that is proper and

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<sup>115</sup> Nehamas, 'Participation and Predication', *op. cit.* p. 216.

<sup>116</sup> Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, *op. cit.* p. 13.

<sup>117</sup> See section 1.1 above.

thorough (*μᾶλλον γυμνασθῆναι*, 136a2) and that imparts thought with the discipline and skill necessary for the task of grasping the truth (135d2).

Parmenides' prescription involves the application of three methodological principles. Firstly, the philosopher should draw consequences from affirming not only a thing's existence but also its non-existence: 'you must not only hypothesise, if each thing is [*εἰ ἔστιν*], and examine [*σκοπεῖν*] the consequences of that hypothesis [*τὰ συμβαίνοντα ἐκ τῆς ὑποθέσεως*]; you must also hypothesise, if that same thing is not [*εἰ μὴ ἔστι*]' (135e9-136a1). In the case of oneness, Socrates must not only consider the consequences of the hypothesis of monism ('the one is'), but also examine the consequences of the contrary hypothesis ('the one is not') and he must deduce what must be the case for both of these. Secondly, the philosopher must not only infer the consequences of these hypotheses for the thing about which the hypothesis is made but also deduce the consequences for things other than that thing (to which Plato refers as 'the others', *τὰ ἄλλα*): 'you must examine what the consequences will be on each hypothesis, both for the things hypothesised themselves [*καὶ αὐτοῖς τοῖς ὑποτεθειῖσιν*] and for the others [*καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις*]' (136b3-4). Thus, in the case of the concept under examination in the *Parmenides*, an adequate investigation of oneness must ask what the consequences are for oneness as well as for the many (things other than oneness), both on the hypothesis of the one's existence and on the hypothesis of the one's non-existence. Thirdly, from these hypotheses the philosopher must deduce consequences for the thing hypothesised both in relation to itself and in relation to others; and for other things both in relation to themselves and in relation to the thing hypothesised. Parmenides, thus, deduces the consequences, for the one and for the many, 'both in relation to themselves [*καὶ πρὸς αὐτὰ*] and in relation to each other [*καὶ πρὸς ἄλληλα*]' (136b4), of the hypotheses that the one is and that the one is not. These are then the three methodological directives of a proper and rigorous philosophical education. Hence, the methodological formula that Socrates must apply in training, if 'a full view of truth' is to be achieved (136c5-6), is the following:

concerning whatever you might ever hypothesise as being [*ὡς ὄντος*] or as not being [*ὡς οὐκ ὄντος*] or as having any other property, you must examine the consequences [*σκοπεῖν τὰ*

συμβαίνοντα] for the thing you hypothesise in relation to itself [πρὸς αὐτὸ] and in relation to each one of the others [πρὸς ἕν ἕκαστον τῶν ἄλλων] [...]; and, in turn, you must examine the others [τᾶλλα], both in relation to themselves [πρὸς αὐτὰ] and in relation to whatever other thing [πρὸς ἄλλο] you select on each occasion, whether what you hypothesise you hypothesise as being or as not being.

(*Parm.* 136b8-c5)

The second part of the *Parmenides*, thus, contains a series of eight deductions regarding oneness, both in relation to itself and in relation to the many, and regarding multiplicity, both in relation to itself and in relation to oneness, on the hypotheses of the one's existence and non-existence. In this way, the examination of oneness, i.e. the exhaustive and rigorous extraction of consequences from these hypotheses, establishes the conditions by which a theory of the multiple, that is, in Badiou's terminology, an account of the presentability of presented beings, must abide. These conditions draw the new parameters concerning the thinking of the one.

It is at this point that Plato breaks free from the Eleatic aegis under which the theory of Ideas is presented and developed in the middle dialogues.<sup>118</sup> In effect, the second part of the *Parmenides* formally acknowledges the need for a 'new departure' in the theory of the multiple (and the thinking of the one) and 'marks off the boundaries of a new ontology' precisely in 'taking a stand against Parmenides' by developing a conception of the relation between one and many that breaks with Eleaticism.<sup>119</sup> The eight hypotheses formalise the attack on the historical Parmenides' conception of oneness and multiplicity that the arguments made against the theory of Ideas by the Platonic Parmenides merely implied. For the deductions establish that, given the separation between the one and the others, i.e. if the one 'exists in and by itself, not admitting relationships with other things',<sup>120</sup> then the one as well as the others must be admitted to be radically indeterminate, irrespectively of whether the one is or is not. As a result, both the monist and the pluralist hypotheses entail unbearable consequences for the assumptions of each hypothesis. On the assumption

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<sup>118</sup> Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, *op. cit.* pp. 47-8.

<sup>119</sup> Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, *op. cit.* pp. 37 and 49.

<sup>120</sup> Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, *op. cit.* p. 45.



of separation, that is, neither Parmenides' logic of being nor Plato's logic of appearance, by means of which Plato intends to deliver a vindication of the possibility of knowledge, are possible since 'far from helping to explain how sensible things come to exhibit certain properties, the theory of separated Forms here is shown actually to preclude such an explanation'.<sup>121</sup> Whether the one is or is not, the one and the others turn out to be nothing, if separation is the case.

This conclusion is established in the following way. Separation is a problem for monism insofar as it thinks of oneness as devoid of plurality: (a) according to the first hypothesis (*Parm.* 137c-142a), if the one is and it is absolutely separate from the others, then it follows, as a consequence, that the one lacks all determinacy and is unthinkable, and (b) according to the sixth hypothesis (*Parm.* 163b-164b), if the one is not and is still thought as separate to the others, it follows, as a consequence, that the one lacks all determinacy. The upshot of the conjunction of the consequences deduced from (a) and (b) is that (1) the historical Parmenides' being is rendered impossible since whether it is or it is not, the one cannot be an object of thought and knowledge since it is radically indeterminate. But separation is also a problem for pluralism insofar as it thinks of plurality as devoid of oneness. This is established as follows: (c) according to the fourth hypothesis (*Parm.* 159b-160b), if the one is and it is absolutely separate from the others, it follows, as a consequence, that the others lack all determinacy, and (d) according to the eighth hypothesis (*Parm.* 165e-166c), if the one is not and it is absolutely separate from the others, it follows, as a consequence, that the others again lack all determinacy. The upshot of the conjunction of the consequences deduced from (c) and (d) is that (2) the historical Parmenides' others are rendered impossible since whether the one is or it is not, the others cannot be an object of thought and knowledge since they are radically indeterminate. Thus, on the assumption of the radical separation of the one and the many, the conjunction of (1) and (2) entails that (A) whether the one is or is not, both the one and the many, thought of as separate, are radically unintelligible.

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<sup>121</sup> Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, *op. cit.* p. 47.

Can the one (and the many) be salvaged by ‘opening the Forms up to relationships with other things’,<sup>122</sup> that is, by opening up being to participation? Again whether the one is or is not, if the one is conceived of as somehow allowing for a relation to the others, then the one and the others turn out to be indistinguishable.

This is established as follows: (e) according to the second hypothesis (*Parm.* 142b-155e), if the one is and it relates to the others, it follows, as a consequence, that the one lacks all determinacy and is unthinkable, and (f) according to the fifth hypothesis (*Parm.* 160b-163b), if the one is not and is still thought as relating to the others, it follows, as a consequence, that it again lacks all determinacy. The upshot of the conjunction of the consequences deduced from (e) and (f) is that (3) Plato’s account of the relationality of being (participation) is rendered impossible since whether it is or it is not, the one cannot be an object of thought and knowledge since it is radically indeterminate. Further, (g) according to the third hypothesis (*Parm.* 157b-159b), if the one is and it relates to the others, it follows, as a consequence, that the others lack all determinacy and are unthinkable, and (h) according to the seventh hypothesis (*Parm.* 164b-165e), if the one is not and is still thought as relating to the others, it follows, as a consequence that the others again lack all determinacy. The upshot of the conjunction of the consequences deduced from (g) and (h) is that (4) Plato’s account of the relationality of being (participation) is rendered impossible since whether it is or it is not, the others cannot be an object of thought and knowledge since they are radically indeterminate. Thus, on the assumption that the one and the many accomplish a relation, the conjunction of (3) and (4) entails that (B) whether the one is or is not, both the one and the many, thought of as related, are radically unintelligible.

From (A), above, and (B), Plato, in the *Parmenides*, infers that whether the one is or is not, and whether it is conceived of as separate or immanent, the one and the others turn out to be unthinkable.

Both these conclusions, (A) and (B), are directed against the *ontological monism* that underlies the account of *phenomenal pluralism* in the *Phaedo*. The parameters in

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<sup>122</sup> Sayre, *Plato’s Late Ontology*, *op. cit.* p. 47.

which this metaphysics was drawn involved a certain understanding of oneness on which a theory of the multiple in terms of participation was developed. The twin principles governing this understanding, as set down in the first part of Parmenides' poem, state that only the one is and that the others are not. As Sayre notes, one of the consequences inferred from the hypotheses is that 'the existence of this Unity [admitting no relationships to other things] is indistinguishable from its nonexistence'. In other words, "'that it is" is no more thinkable or effable than "that it is not"'.<sup>123</sup> Further, Parmenides must admit that 'there is no contrast whatever between [this exclusive Unity] and the others' since 'whether Unity exists or not, it is indistinguishable from the other with which it allegedly is contrasted'.<sup>124</sup> Sayre concludes that 'the existence of a strictly exclusive Unity is indistinguishable from its non-existence, and that things other than this Unity are indistinguishable from the Unity itself'.<sup>125</sup> This conclusion contains Plato's challenge to Parmenides' being and signifies 'Plato's rejection of Eleaticism'.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology, op. cit.* p. 48.

<sup>124</sup> Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology, op. cit.* p. 48.

<sup>125</sup> Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology, op. cit.* p. 52.

<sup>126</sup> Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology, op. cit.* p. 52.

## 3 One and many: a contemporary dispute

### 3.1 Deleuzian antinomies

#### A modern φιλονικία

In *Being and Event*, Badiou draws a distinction, derived from Plato's *Parmenides*, between the pure and the structured multiple, between *πλήθος* and *πολλά*; the former designates an inconsistent multiplicity that is 'the multiple-without-one', while the latter indicates a many as 'the composition of ones'.<sup>127</sup> It is the grasping of *πλήθος*, the 'plethora of being', that constitutes the mark and test of a true thinking of multiplicity and that sets it apart from those accounts that may only think of multiplicity in terms of the plurality of the One and the 'cohesion of *πολλά*' (*BE*, p. 37). Deleuze formulates the measure of this articulation: 'multiplicity must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather an organisation belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system'.<sup>128</sup> Thus, the task at hand, the interpretation of Deleuzian pluralism, involves addressing a series of questions, problems and dilemmas that concern the fundamental claim made on its behalf, which Badiou rejects, namely, that in this pluralism the dichotomy of one and many is overcome in favour of a radical and original understanding of multiplicity as *πλήθος*, that is, as 'unlimited inconsistency of the multiple of multiples' (*BE*, p. 34). These questions concern Deleuze's understanding and implementation of the univocal demand and his analyses of multiplicity.

I will now attempt to explicate briefly the nature of the univocal parameters that frame Deleuzian ontology and, consequently, to assess the nature of the difficulties to which they give rise, to identify the source of the seeming paradoxicality that surrounds Deleuze's philosophy and to discern the possibility of

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<sup>127</sup> Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. by Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 35. Hereafter cited as *BE*. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>128</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 230. Hereafter cited as *DR*. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

dispelling it. Like Plato's account of one and many in the dialogues of the middle period, Deleuze's conception of oneness and multiplicity is developed alongside an account of individuation, that is, a theory of production and causality, or in the terms that I will be using here, a theory of *composition*. In this way, production and causality, cause and effect, ground and grounded, oneness and multiplicity are implicated in a wider theory of *γένεσις* or coming-into-being. Further, both theories purport to evade the *φιλονικία* between monists and pluralists by effecting a diagonal manoeuvre between, beyond and above the terms on which the ancient dispute – as well as modern discussions on structure, which inherit the concepts and the problems of the ancient antagonism – are based, namely, oneness and multiplicity. Finally, and most significantly, Deleuze's account of oneness and multiplicity and the diagonal operation that accompanies it seem equally susceptible to arguments of the kind put forward by Plato in the *Parmenides*. In this way, I will show that Deleuze puts into effect a diagonal operation that mediates between oneness and multiplicity in such a way as to raise paradoxes, present dilemmas and invite criticisms to which he, like the young Socrates before him, needs to respond.

I turn, therefore, to the presentation of some of the formulations of the idea of univocity that Deleuze's critics find so problematic. The presentation of the theory of univocity and the examination of Badiou's criticisms of univocal ontology, of its status as a pluralism and of the account of multiplicity that this entails are undertaken as a propaedeutic to deciding a problem: namely, to understand what Deleuze means when he declares that 'there is neither one nor multiple [*Il n'y a ni un ni multiple*]'.<sup>129</sup> The paradoxes that Badiou discerns in Deleuze's conception of being (as univocal) and genesis (as actualisation) and the dilemmas that these paradoxes raise constitute the guiding thread to be picked up and the starting point for my interpretation. The considerations underlying this decision or the method of advancing dictated by this starting point do not in themselves guarantee that the decision is not a mistaken one; that, in picking *this* thread, the interpretation of

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<sup>129</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. by Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 13. Hereafter cited as *F*. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

Deleuze's thought is not from the start compromised by the assumptions and biases of Badiou's interpretative perspective. It is imperative, therefore, that this danger be kept in mind when extracting questions, problems and dilemmas on account of Badiou's criticisms of Deleuze.

### **The doctrine of univocity**

Deleuze borrows the term 'univocity' from the medieval controversy on divine attributes.<sup>130</sup> If 'from Parmenides to Heidegger it is the same voice which is taken up, in an echo which itself forms the whole deployment of the univocal', it is in John Duns Scotus, and not in Parmenides, that Deleuze finds the first principal moment 'in the history of the philosophical elaboration of the univocity of being' (*DR*, p. 48); and it is as the ontology of Duns Scotus that he introduces univocal ontology (*DR*, p. 44). Nevertheless, if, as Beistegui argues, 'Deleuze's philosophy finds its impetus and initial inspiration in the scholastic thesis regarding the univocity of being',<sup>131</sup> the terms of the controversy are not original; instead, the warring parties (Scotists, Thomists and Greek apophaticists) sustain and prolong a discussion the terms of which are established in ancient ontology. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger presents the central problem 'with which medieval ontology was often busied':

'In the assertions 'God is' and 'the world is', we assert Being. This word 'is', however, cannot be meant to apply to these entities in the same sense (*συνωνύμως, univoce*), when between them there is an infinite difference of Being; if the signification of 'is' were univocal, then what is created would be viewed as if it were uncreated, or the uncreated would be reduced to the status of something created. But neither does 'Being' function as a mere name which is the same in both cases: in both cases 'Being' is understood. This positive sense in which 'Being' signifies is one which the Schoolmen took as a signification 'by analogy', as distinguished from one which is univocal or merely homonymous'.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Cf. Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), pp. 454-471.

<sup>131</sup> Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis*, *op. cit.* p. 225.

<sup>132</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), p. 126.

Heidegger proceeds to claim that the medieval concept of analogy takes its departure from Aristotle, 'in whom this problem is foreshadowed in prototypical form' (p. 126), namely, in the Aristotelian account of the unity of Being in terms of analogy (p. 22).

That being is not a genus means that it is not to be identified with the class of existent things. In other words, what individuates beings, individuating differences, is, as for Aristotle, other than logical or inexhaustible in respect of difference between kinds: 'Being, even if absolutely common, is nevertheless not a genus' (*DR*, p. 44). How then is being common to beings if not as genus? In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze attempts to explain the meaning of this oneness by means of the circuit of expression in the proposition. 'We can conceive that names and propositions do not have the same sense even while they designate exactly the same thing' (*DR*, p. 44). In these cases when one and the same designated ('what expresses itself in the proposition') may be designated by a plurality of expressors ('numerical modes'), the designated expresses itself in a plurality of senses. This plurality of senses is real but not numerical or ontological:

the distinction between these senses is indeed a real distinction (*distinction realis*), but there is nothing numerical – much less ontological – about it: it is a formal, qualitative or semiological distinction.

(*DR*, p. 44)

Thus, Deleuze continues, 'we can conceive of several formally distinct senses which none the less refer to being as if to a single designated entity, ontologically one' (*DR*, p. 44). The problem, then, of the meaning and place of oneness in Deleuze, passes through this enigmatic formula and the understanding of its terms: the distinction between the senses of being (plurality of beings) is, as in the case of names and propositions, a real distinction but one that furnishes only a formal and qualitative plurality that is not numerical or ontological but that refers to a single designated entity, the oneness of which must be conceived ontologically.

What distinguishes this account of the senses of being from the analogical explanation? Why are they not reducible to analogues of the analogical unity of being? Deleuze responds:

We must add that being, this common designated, in so far as it expresses itself, is said in turn *in a single and same sense* of all the numerically distinct designators and expressors. In the ontological proposition, not only is that which is designated ontologically the same for qualitatively distinct senses, but also the sense is ontologically the same for individuating modes, for numerically distinct designators or expressors: the ontological proposition involves a circulation of this kind (expression as a whole).

(DR, p. 45)

Hence, Deleuze explains the plurality of beings in terms of the distinction between the individuating modes or numerically distinct designators and expressors, i.e. names of being that are said in a single sense, and not in terms of a distinction between senses in which being is named:

In effect, the essential in univocity is not that Being is said in a single and same sense, but that it is said, in a single and same sense, *of* all its individuating differences or intrinsic modalities. Being is the same for all these modalities, but these modalities are not the same. It is 'equal' for all, but they themselves are not equal. It is said of all in a single sense, but they themselves do not have the same sense. The essence of univocal being is to include individuating differences, while these differences do not have the same essence and do not change the essence of being – just as white includes various intensities, while remaining essentially the same white. There are not two 'paths', as Parmenides' poem suggests, but a single 'voice' of Being which includes all its modes, including the most diverse, the most varied the most differentiated. Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself.

(DR, p. 45)

In other words, beings name being, but this naming invokes oneness both on the level of the unity of being (as the single designated) as well as on the level of the names themselves (numerically distinct designators), since the latter are uttered in the single and same sense.



The metaphysics underlying these distinctions are elaborated in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, a detailed study of the problem of expression in Spinoza.<sup>133</sup> 'God', Deleuze writes, 'expresses himself "before" expressing himself in his effects: expresses himself by in himself constituting *natura naturans*, before expressing himself through producing within himself *natura naturata*' (*EPS*, p. 14). God, in being productivity, produces beings. Nevertheless, in contrast to the production of effects that remain reciprocally external to their cause, expression has two faces: 'expression in general involves and implicates what it expresses, while also explicating and evolving it' (*EPS*, p. 16). The cause is *explicated* (or *evolved*) in the effect, wherein it is unfolded insofar as the cause, in producing or expressing, expresses or unfolds itself in the effects, 'the One manifesting itself in the Many' (*EPS*, p. 16). On the other hand, the cause is *implicated* (or *involved*) in the effects and the effects involve the cause insofar as 'the One remains involved in what expresses it, imprinted in what unfolds it, immanent in whatever manifests it' (*EPS*, p. 16). Thus, at once, expression is implication and explication: the one produces the many, simultaneously explicating itself in its products and being implicated by its products. The simultaneity of these two aspects is captured in the notion of *complication*, which means 'at once the inherence of multiplicity in the One, and of the One in the Many' (*EPS*, p. 16). Thus, the cause, being simultaneously implicated (or involved) and explicated (or evolved) in and by the effects, complicates (or comprises) all its effects. Complication, therefore, constitutes a third aspect, a 'principle of synthesis' capturing the simultaneity and complementarity of involution and evolution, whereby what is explicated in the effect is the nothing else but the cause itself, which, in turn, implicates the effect. The explication in the effect constitutes, therefore, the 'very life' of the cause, the activity of its own immanent unfolding, the one's 'own evolution' (*EPS*, p. 18). For the same reason, the effects are but the immanent products of this

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<sup>133</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1992). Hereafter cited as *EPS*. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text. See also Deleuze's lecture on univocity, equivocity and analogy: '14/01/1974', *Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze*, trans. by Timothy S. Murphy <<http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=176&groupe=Anti%20Oedipe%20et%20Mill%20Plateaux&langue=2>> [accessed 30 July 2008].

lifelike activity or internal 'points of view' on the cause and contained in the cause (EPS, p. 22).

Thus, Deleuze's formulation of the expressive, causal or productive relation between one and many consists in the formula: the one complicates the many in being simultaneously implicated and explicated in the multiple.

### **Monism and/or pluralism**

With the concept of univocity the antinomies, paradoxes and dilemmas identified in the *Parmenides* are raised with new vigour in a putatively anti-Platonist setting, namely, Deleuze's account of the relation between one and many in the context of the doctrine of univocity. Univocity demands both that being be immanent in beings and also that it remain one; in other words, that the one becomes many without ceasing to be one and without failing to become many. Such a position invites the objection that, if immanent, then the one becoming multiple constitutes a *real* process, i.e. one in which the one bears real multiplicity out of itself, and that this multiplicity finds its metaphysical anchor in the one. This seems to entail the further inference that in such a real process the one ceases to be [one]; in Plato's terms, it becomes 'fragmented' (*Meno* 79a8) or divisible (*μεριστόν*, *Parm.* 131c4) or, according to the conclusion of Plato's 'third man' argument in the *Parmenides*, 'no longer [...] one, but unlimited in multitude' (*ἄπειρα τὸ πλήθος*, *Parm.* 132b2-3); and, hence, given that the one remains immanent to multiplicity, that oneness and immanence cannot be upheld simultaneously.<sup>134</sup> This objection assumes, with Zeno, that 'not only can one not combine the views that being is one and that being is many, but one cannot avoid the choice between them'; or, in other words, that 'plurality excludes unity' *tout*

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<sup>134</sup> The antinomy also permeates Christian theological conceptions of the divine in the Hellenic East. Lossky (in *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge: James Clarke and Co., 1957)) relates St Gregory Palamas's apophatic solution to the problem that St Peter's promise of man's participation in God raised. For the promise seems to entail we would be able 'at a given moment to be united to the very essence of God and to participate in it even in the very least degree' (p. 70). This would mean that God would be '*μυριοπόστατος*, "of myriads of hypostases"; for He would have as many hypostases as there would be persons participating in His essence' (*ibid.*). Palamas's solution is to distinguish between God's inaccessible and incommunicable essence and His energies. This is 'an ineffable but real distinction between the unknowable essence and the self-revealing energies of the divinity' (p. 72).

*court*.<sup>135</sup> As a result, it is either the case that in a metaphysics of immanence there is no room for oneness, a conclusion favoured by Badiou, or that in a metaphysics in which the one remains the central ontological category there is no place for immanence. The former alternative leaves us with an immanent pure multiple; the latter with a transcendent, pure, full and indissoluble oneness. But the two horns of the dilemma are taken to be not only contraries, but also contradictories, one of which must be sacrificed. It is this logical dichotomy between immanent multiplicity and transcendent oneness that underlies Badiou's presentation of the dispute between his actualist pluralism and what he takes to be the virtualist monism of Deleuze, as the following quotation makes clear:

Deleuze retains from Plato the univocal sovereignty of the One, but sacrifices the determination of the Idea as always actual. [...] *A contrario*, I uphold that the forms of the multiple are, just like the Ideas, always actual and that the virtual does not exist; I sacrifice, however, the One. The result is that Deleuze's virtual ground remains for me a transcendence, whereas for Deleuze, it is my logic of the multiple that, in not being originally referred to the act of the One, fails to hold thought firmly within immanence'.<sup>136</sup>

In other words, Badiou implicitly but clearly has decided against the possibility of an immanent oneness on the basis of which a logic of appearances could be constructed. Insofar as Deleuze aims to do precisely this, the Badiouian *elenchus* deems his ontology to be incoherent, as it aims to satisfy simultaneously two contradictory principles: one *and* many. The knot may be undone – supposedly by purifying exegeses – in either of two irreconcilable and mutually exclusive ways, each of which immediately entails the rejection of the other and both of which involve the falsification of the coupling of immanence and oneness and its cosmogonical formula. The ways are the following: either abandon the one as transcendent, i.e. the only logically possible signification of the one, its sole consistent description and

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<sup>135</sup> Michael C. Stokes, *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 2.

<sup>136</sup> Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamour of Being*, trans. by Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 45. Hereafter cited as *DCB*. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

necessary nature and affirm the reality of the many; or abandon immanence as multiple, i.e. the only possible plane of immanence, its sole and necessary realm, and affirm the reality of the one. In both cases, the one does not immanently become many and the knot is undone. Once undone, the decision on which of the two solutions is preferable is 'a question of taste' (DCB, p. 91), as often happens with irreconcilable positions. However, a decision must be made if it has not been made implicitly from the start. In this decision lies the distinction between Deleuze's and Badiou's 'contrasting forms of classicism' (DCB, p. 45). The former solution is Badiou's; the latter is the route taken by Badiou's Deleuze, given that for Badiou the Deleuzian formula must submit itself to this elenchus, so that Deleuze is forced, *de facto*, to choose the reality of the one or, what is the same, transcendence or, what is still the same, the unreality of the many.

The problem, then, which is instituted in the context of an Eleatic *and* Badiouian *ἔλεγχος*: if the one does become many, i.e. immanently, then the indivisibility of the one must be as real as the divisibility of the many. The difficulty arises because the indivisibility of the one seems to dictate the unreality of the divisibility of the many; and vice versa, the divisibility of the many seems to dictate the unreality of the one. Thus, it seems that the double condition for the reality of the Deleuzian/univocal cosmogonic formula (one-becomes-many), namely, that both being and beings be real, can never be satisfied.

Thus, on a first impression or according to Badiou, Deleuze not only fails to choose sides on the perennial controversy (*φιλονικία*, *Parm.* 128d5) between pluralists, for whom what is is many (*πολλὰ*) and it is not one, and monists, for whom 'the all is one' (*ἐν τὸ πᾶν*, *Parm.* 128b1) and 'it is not many' (*οὐ πολλὰ*, *Parm.* 128b2). In other words, he not only fails to decide between the mutually exclusive hypotheses whether what is is one (*εἰ ἓν ἐστὶ*) or many (*εἰ πολλὰ ἐστὶ*), but, moreover, his univocal ontology ensnares him into affirming both hypotheses, i.e. that what is is both one and many and (*πολλὰ καὶ ἓν*, *Parm.* 129d3), hence, commits him to the abominable conjunction of monism and pluralism. In other words, the formula 'the one-becomes-many' entails the equation 'monism=pluralism', 'the

magic formula we all seek'.<sup>137</sup> The guaranteed failure of this formula, for Badiou, means that Deleuze has already made a decision, albeit implicitly, in favour of monism. Hence Badiou's ultimate indictment that Deleuze's ontology fails to account for the multiple.

Deleuze's univocity demands both that the one remain radically separate from the many and that the one be absolutely immanent in the many. All this may be put in the form of an antinomy facing any thought that asserts at once that being is immanent (and, hence, multiple) and that being is one (and, hence, transcendent in relation to the multiplicity in which it is also immanent): being is immanent in beings and, hence, *already* scattered multiple; but, at the same time, being is *always* fastly one and, hence, transcendent in relation to beings. The reality of both the one and of the many cannot be affirmed at once, let alone through each other; or, in other words, it must be admitted that the cosmogonic process described by the formula one-becoming-many is not a real process at all, because unreality invariably afflicts one of the conjoined terms, the one or the many, as soon as the other is posited as real. Either being does become beings (being *already* scattered beings), but, hence, being does not become beings, given its unreality (its already being beings); or being does not become beings (being *always* fastly being) and, hence, beings are unreal. The unreality of being is the price to be paid for the reality of beings; the unreality of beings the price to be paid for the reality of being.

A 'dangerous pluralism' of the kind that Deleuze claims to have established ought to afford the conceptual means for accounting for the reality of the process of the one becoming many. In other words, it must be able to offer an affirmative response to the question of the reality of both being and beings. Under what conditions is this reality ascertained? Under what conditions is the reality of the formulae 'one-becomes-many', 'being-becomes-beings' and 'holding-fast-entails-being-scattered' upheld? This involves the following conditions. First, being must be; that is, it must be one and it must be in a sense that is not exhausted in the naming of

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<sup>137</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 23. Hereafter cited as *ATP*. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

beings. Further, being must really become beings; or, to put it in more precise terms, the only way that being becomes beings is if this becoming of being is immanent to beings. Thirdly, beings must be. To summarise so far, the formula 'the one becomes multiple', if significant, should be translated as 'the one immanently becomes multiple'. This translation brings to the surface the conditions under which the 'magical' formula names a real process, a process, that is, in which neither the one nor the multiple is reducible to one another or lacks metaphysical status.

Agreeing for the moment that this formula sets the limits and ends of Deleuzian pluralism, the objections levelled against this pluralism will become more evident. On the one hand, Badiou, noting that the reality of multiplicity (which Deleuze's univocal pluralism claims to account for) requires a method committed to principles of immanence, is thereby led to infer the unreality of being (or the virtual or the one) precisely on account of the reality of beings (or the actual or the multiple): the immanence of the one in the many, which constitutes the second of the conditions for the reality of the process, divests the one of any ontological status and, moreover, abolishes its claim to constitute 'the only possible end point of the multiple'; beings are not only the most adequate name of being but also the only possible name: 'in my eyes, immanence excluded the All' (*DCB*, p. 45). Thus, for Badiou, the second condition entails the negation of the first. On the other hand, a vulgar monism, such as Mellissus's, undermines the reality of the many on account of the oneness that constitutes the first condition for the reality of Deleuze's formula. If the one does not become many it is because it does not immanently become many and this means that the one is transcendent in relation to the multiple. In this case, transcendence entails that being is withdrawn from beings and, in ceasing to function as their ground, divests them of reality. For both the Badiouian pluralist and the vulgar monist, Deleuze's formula seeks to affirm two conditions that seem irreconcilable. It is in this way that the dilemmas and paradoxes of the *Parmenides* seem to afflict Deleuzian ontology and to constitute its central problem.

## 3.2 Badiou's criticisms of Deleuze's pluralism

### Univocity and the One

I now turn to a closer analysis of the contemporary *φιλονικία*. In his *Deleuze: The Clamour of Being*, Badiou seeks to dispel what he perceives to be the mistaken image of 'a Deleuze for whom everything is event, surprise and creation' (*DCB*, p. 10). On the contrary, for Badiou, Deleuze's insistence on univocity results in 'a metaphysics of the One': a systematic – in that it involves 'a line of power that is invariable' (*DCB*, p. 16) – and abstract – in that it is not devoted to 'the inexhaustible variety of the concrete' (*DCB*, p. 13) – philosophy which entails 'the qualitative raising up' (*DCB*, p. 9) of the One over the multiple and imposes it as 'the supreme destination of thought' (*DCB*, p. 10).

In contrast to the interpretations of Deleuzian philosophy as a radical pluralism that attempts to grasp difference and multiplicity in themselves, and in spite of Deleuze's own proclamations, Badiou argues that 'Deleuze's fundamental problem is most certainly not to liberate the multiple but to submit thinking to a renewed concept of the One' (*DCB*, p. 10). Badiou identifies the means as well as the end of this renewal in 'the terrible law of the univocity of Being' (*DCB*, p. 96). Deleuze's univocal ontology concerns itself with the problem of the 'deployment of things' (*DCB*, p. 30) or the distribution of singular beings under the constraint, sovereignty or aegis of Being. This condition, which lies at the heart of Deleuze's philosophy and dictates its programme, raises, according to Badiou, the difficulties concerning the task of understanding multiplicity.

The problem concerns the equivocity of beings. On the one hand, Deleuze rejects any account of this difference on the basis of the analogical conception of Being. On the other hand, according to Badiou, the univocal conception of Being renders ontic plurality unreal:

On the one hand, Deleuzian intuition has to apprehend the separation of beings as disjunctive synthesis, divergence and equivocity, and so avoid succumbing to the sirens of the categories or to the tranquil classification of beings under generalities that rescind the univocity of Being. But it must also equally think separated beings as simulacra that are purely modal or

formal, and thus, ultimately, unseparated in their being, for they are merely local intensities of the One.

(DCB, p. 35)

In what way does univocity, the doctrine that there is only a single sense in which Being is said, imply the unreality of beings? Badiou distinguishes two theses relating to the doctrine of univocity in Deleuze. First,

the plurality of forms does not involve 'any division within Being or plurality of ontological senses' [...]. In other words, it is in a single and same sense that Being is said of all its forms. [...] The multiple acceptations of being must be understood as a multiple that is formal, while the One alone is real.

(DCB, p. 24)

So, according to Badiou, Deleuze's first thesis states that Being is, not numerically but ontologically or really, one. From this follows the second thesis: the multiple forms of Being – beings – are not ontologically but only modally or formally many; thus, 'beings are local degrees of intensity or inflections of power that are in constant movement and entirely singular' (DCB, p. 24). The doctrine of univocity commits Deleuze to a formal and modal account of the nature of the multiplicity of beings *qua* 'expressive modalities of the One' (DCB, p. 24) so that the equivocity of beings (which Badiou equates with numerical distinction) 'has no real status' (DCB, p. 24). The ontological oneness implied by the doctrine of univocity dictates the reduction of numerical distinction, which defines Badiou's understanding of a plurality with a real status harbouring ontologically distinct beings, to the illusion of phantasmatic constitution, according to which individuation operates in a 'purely' or 'merely' formal/modal fashion:

The price one must pay for inflexibly maintaining the thesis of univocity is clear: given that the multiple [...] is arrayed in the universe by way of a numerical difference that is purely formal as regards the form of being to which it refers [...] and purely modal as regards its individuation, it follows that, ultimately, this multiple can only be of the order of simulacra. And if one classes – as one should – every difference without a real status, every multiplicity



whose ontological status is that of the One, as a simulacrum, then the world of beings is the theatre of the simulacra of Being.

(DCB, p. 25)

But this means, Badiou argues, that Deleuze lacks the means necessary to think of pure multiplicity and that his pluralism is reluctantly but necessarily a *numerical* monism. Rather than the Stoics, it is the Megarians who are Deleuze's real philosophical progenitors.<sup>138</sup>

The validity of these criticisms depends on the equation of real/ontological distinction with what Badiou terms 'numerical distinction' (DCB, p. 24). It is due to the fact that modality falls short of accounting for such an understanding of equivocity that the reductions of formal distinction to a distinction without real status and of modal constitution to illusory being, both of which Badiou deduces for Deleuze, have purchase. In other words, the account of the real distinction between beings, which is the desideratum of a pluralist ontology, demands the elimination of the One. Since Badiou interprets the principle of univocity as an invocation of unity, he construes the ontological oneness that the principle demands in terms of a numerical monism. The doctrine of univocity, to which Deleuze subscribes so emphatically, is 'from beginning to end' tantamount to 'an ontological pre-

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<sup>138</sup> Cf. *Met.* 1046b29 ff. For an overview of Megarian doctrine, cf. A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics* (London: Duckworth, 1974), pp. 8-9. The Megarians were Socratics, 'renowned for their skill at dialectic' (Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy, op. cit.* p. 9). At the same time, they are heirs of Parmenides and Zeno's monist ontology. Diogenes Laertius notes that for Euclides 'the good is one thing, called under many names' (quoted in Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy, op. cit.* p. 8). As a result, Megarian philosophical activity and training focused on utilising the dialectic for the purposes of the Eleatic injunction against *δόξα*, putting the Socratic *ἔλεγχος* in the service of Parmenides' ontological *ἔλεγχος*. To this end, the Megarians produced puzzles and elicited paradoxes that aimed to give 'reasons for distrusting the evidence of the senses' (Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy, op. cit.* p. 79; and cf. p. 111). They also made important contributions to logic and the philosophy of language (for a discussion of Megarian logic and its influence on Stoic logic, see the following: Keimpe Algra, Jonathan Barnes, Jaap Mansfeld and Malcolm Schofield (eds), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 83-92; Kneale and Kneale, *The Development of Logic, op. cit.* pp. 113-17; John Sellars, *Stoicism* (Chesham: Acumen, 2006), pp. 56-9). The importance of the school of Megara lies primarily with the pivotal place that it occupies in the development of monist ontology, standing between Eleatic and Stoic monisms (on the impact of Megarian teaching on Stoicism, cf. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy, op. cit.* p. 111).

comprehension of Being as One' (DCB, p. 19) – and this monist formula is how Badiou understands the univocal requirement.

As a consequence, the thesis of univocity necessarily implies 'the fictive character of the multiple' (DCB, p. 28); an implication which forces Deleuze and Plato to converge in the account of the constitution of multiple beings ( $\tau\acute{\alpha}$   $\pi\omicron\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}$  in Plato), for both of whom 'the paradoxical or supereminent One immanently engenders a procession of beings whose univocal sense it distributes, while they refer to its power and have only a semblance of being' (DCB, p. 25).

### **The virtual as ground (*le fond*)**

In the notion and operation of the virtual Badiou discerns the implications of the sovereignty of the One in Deleuze's philosophy. The virtual is, however, also the very concept of this sovereignty, the innovation through which the renewal of the One is brought about. Through the virtual Deleuze attempts to articulate a renewed conception of ground, a renewal which is part and parcel with the renewal of the concept of the One which Badiou discovers in Deleuze. 'The virtual is the ground of the actual' Badiou claims (DCB, p. 42), where ground (*fond*) refers to a causal, generative and derivational principle, an explanatory apparatus and an ontological origin. Admittedly, Deleuze's simulacra defy the grounding operation on which the copy is rooted as well as the equivocal ontology in which the copy is ontologically distinguished from the model, and, hence, of the equivocal vision of Being that makes this ground necessary. In other words, Badiou grants that Deleuze undoes by means of univocity the mimetic link between Being and beings along with the categories (of the Similar and the Same) on which this link could be based and, therefore, that 'it is indeed the ruin of this thought [of ground] that is expressed by Deleuzian univocity' (DCB, p. 43). Alas, *this* thought, i.e. the idea of ground and its pathos as diagnosed by Deleuze, only refers to 'a restricted version of the idea of ground' (DCB, p.43). For, in the concept of the virtual Badiou identifies the renewed presence of the concept of ground in Deleuze's thought; a presence which reveals Deleuzianism to be 'a thinking of ground' (DCB, p. 44) akin, rather than opposed, to Platonism, as a 'Platonism of the virtual' (DCB, p. 45). It is the virtual that comes to

serve as ground, that is, as 'that which is determined as the real basis of singular beings, [...] that revealing the difference of beings to be purely formal in respect of a univocal determination of their being' or, in other words, 'that eternal "share" of beings by which their variability and their equivocality are moored in the absolute unity of Being' (DCB, p. 44). Through the virtual Deleuze retains 'the univocal sovereignty of the One' (DCB, p. 45) in the guise of 'the infinite reservoir of dissimilar productions' and the ideal ground in the form of 'the virtual totality' (DCB, p. 45).

What 'strategic role' does the virtual play such that Badiou is led to claim that Deleuze's philosophy is, 'of all the contemporary configurations, the one that most obstinately reaffirms that the thought of the multiple demands that Being be rigorously determined as One' (DCB, p. 44)? The virtual re-introduces transcendence into the thought of the multiple: a realm 'beneath' simulacra and 'beyond' beings, the One lingers as the 'end point of the multiples' so that multiplicity is understood only as 'the multiple of Ones' (DCB, p. 45). The virtual fulfils the role of a unity, a *ὅλον*, and the multiple may assume only the status of a secondary product-fragment that continuously refers to this primary unity for its equivocality; and this is precisely the way in which the virtual 'captures what secures beings to their being' (DCB, p. 46).

Univocity dictates that the virtual be both 'the Being of beings' but also 'beings *qua* Being, for beings are but modalities of the One, and the One *is* the living production of its modes' (DCB, p. 47). From such a univocal configuration of the relation between virtual and actual, Being and beings, Badiou deduces a number of principles that concern actualisation, that is, the manner in which Being is deployed and distributed in beings and that encapsulate his interpretation of Deleuzian ontology.

To begin with, *the virtual is distinct from the possible*. The process of coming into existence *qua* being does not involve reference to a possibility out of which it might erupt (and which would render Deleuze's ontology equivocal), but 'to exist is to come to pass on the surface of the One as a simulacrum and inflection of intensity' (DCB, p. 47). In other words, genesis in a univocal ontology must be accounted for not in terms of the realisation of a possibility but of the actualisation of a virtuality, this movement and its termini constituting reality:

the One can indeed be, *in* what exists, the virtual of which the existent is an actualisation or a differentiation, and that under no circumstances whatsoever can it be separated from the existent in the way that the possible is from the real.

(DCB, p. 47)

Thus, 'contrary to the equivocal abstraction of the possible, the virtual is the deployment of the One in its immanent differentiation' (DCB, p. 48). Genesis, therefore, must be conceived as 'an innovation and an attesting to the infinite power of the One to differentiate itself on its own surface' (DCB, p. 48).

This means that *the virtual is absolutely real*. In contrast to the pair possibility-reality, both virtuality and actuality are real, 'the former as the dynamic agency of the One, the latter as simulacrum' (DCB, p. 48). The actualisation and genesis of beings are processes 'by which the real is arrayed within itself as the intermingling of virtualities invested, in differing degrees of power, in the beings that they actualise' (DCB, p. 48).

Furthermore, *the virtual is completely determinate*. Actualisation does not involve the passage from indetermination to determination, since virtuality and actuality do not resemble matter and form. The determination of actual beings, actualisation, does not take place by the imposition of categories upon the indeterminate. The virtual determines doubly, first as 'the ground of the actual, *qua* the being of the virtuality that the actual actualises'; but also as 'the ground for itself, for it is the being of virtualities, insofar as it differentiates, or problematises, them' (DCB, p. 49). The latter – 'the "deep" determination that concerns the expansion and differentiation of the virtualities themselves', constitutes 'a sort of interior of the One' (DCB, p. 50). The former concerns the actual surface doubling this depth. But this means that the virtual must be grasped as 'simultaneously, virtuality of the actual and multiform expansion of the One' (DCB, p. 50).

Thus, *the virtual is a strict part of the actual object*: there is a 'duplicity of beings which is simply the formal expression of the fact that univocity is expressed as equivocity' (DCB, p. 35). What of this splitting of parts, however? Badiou's conclusion is that it introduces equivocity into the account of the constitution of beings and that, for this reason, 'the virtual cannot, *qua* ground, accord with the

univocity of the Being-One' (DCB, p. 52). In effect Deleuze ends up with a dichotomy between virtual and actual images such that what is instated is an 'unthinkable Two, an indiscernibility beyond remedy' so that the virtual 'determines the destiny of everything, instead of being that to which everything is destined' (DCB, p. 52).

### **Philosophies of death**

The doctrine of univocity thus understood has severe consequences for the expressed task of pluralism, i.e. the thinking of 'the world's confusion' (DCB, p. 9), since it reduces multiplicity to 'a misleading surface' (DCB, p. 10). The proclamations of this pluralism assume only an 'adventitious value' (DCB, p. 15): in effect, the opposition between One and many is never truly abolished but only renewed. What effect does this renewal have for the character of Deleuze's philosophy, as diagnosed by Badiou?

The operation of this undercurrent, the occurrence of the One, leads Badiou to interpret Deleuze's thought, which purports to be a joyous affirmation of life, as a philosophy of death. If 'everything always stems from afar – indeed, everything is always "already-there", in the infinite and inhuman resource of the One' (DCB, p. 11), then the moment of thought, i.e. the event of the comprehension of this distant source, cannot but come about as a result of 'purification, sobriety and a concentrated and lucid exposure to the immanent sovereignty of the One' (DCB, p. 11). In this way Deleuze, far from reversing the Platonist programme, shares with Plato the conception of philosophy as a practice for 'death and dying [ἀποθνήσκειν τε καὶ τεθνάναι]' (*Phaedo* 64a6) ('identity of thinking and dying' (DCB, p. 13)). Indeed, 'Deleuzianism is fundamentally a Platonism with a different accentuation' (DCB, p. 25) and, underneath the anti-Platonist proclamations, Badiou finds an 'involuntary Platonist' (DCB, p. 60).

The claim that Deleuze's philosophy has an otherworldly orientation and, further, that this orientation compromises pluralism (or, in terms of practice, the nature of our involvement in a world) is also defended by Hallward.<sup>139</sup> Hallward argues that Deleuze's philosophy constitutes 'an exercise in creative indiscernment,

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<sup>139</sup> Cf. Peter Hallward, *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (London: Verso, 2006).

an effort to subtract the dynamics of creation from the mediation of the created' (p. 3); what is decisive is 'the subtractive orientation' of this philosophy (p. 4): 'rather than a philosopher of nature, history or the world, rather than any sort of "fleshy materialist"', Deleuze is most appropriately read as a spiritual, redemptive or subtractive thinker, a thinker preoccupied with the mechanics of *dis*-embodiment and *de*-materialisation. Deleuze's philosophy is oriented by lines of flight that lead out of the world' (p. 3).<sup>140</sup>

If Deleuze's philosophy is a 'hymn to death' (*DCB*, p. 13), this is because the preoccupation that animates it is not the thinking of multiplicity: 'the question posed by Deleuze is the question of Being' (*DCB*, p. 19) and only secondarily of multiplicity. Badiou concludes that Deleuze is a thinker of the One, a true Presocratic physicist of the post-Eleatic kind for whom multiplicity must be thought by reference to the unity of Being, 'the total contemplation of the Universe' and the 'intuition of the virtual' (*DCB*, p. 101): Deleuze in the company of the post-Eleatic pluralists.

For Badiou, Deleuze shares Heidegger's 'conviction that philosophy rests solely on the question of Being' (*DCB*, p. 22). The priority accorded to this question delimits Deleuze's enquiry, at the centre of which lies the very question that Heidegger 'raises anew' in the opening pages of *Being and Time*, namely, 'the question of the meaning of Being'.<sup>141</sup> Deleuze's task, like Heidegger's, is exhausted in raising this question anew and this means raising it as ontico-ontologically prior to questions about beings, either in the context of ontical or in terms of ontological enquiry. These are suspended, and beings are withdrawn, 'if [ontology] has not first adequately clarified the meaning of Being, and conceived this clarification as its fundamental task'.<sup>142</sup> Thus, since Deleuze operates from within this Heideggerian perspective, the virtual constitutes Deleuze's response to the question of the meaning of Being and the virtual-actual complement represents Deleuze's attempt to articulate the terms of the difference between the ontological and the ontic, the

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<sup>140</sup> I return to the examination of Hallward's interpretation in section 7.1.

<sup>141</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.* p. 1.

<sup>142</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.* p. 31. For Heidegger's account of the ontical and ontological priority of the question of Being in *Being and Time*, see pp. 28-35.

ontological difference, that is, between the 'being of beings' and beings themselves.<sup>143</sup> In Deleuze's enquiry, Badiou claims, "'virtual" is without any doubt the principal name of Being' (*DCB*, p. 43). Such then is the central question, the task and the character of Deleuze's ontology according to Badiou: a pre-scientific, pre-ontic enquiry, which is a *μελέτη θανάτου* (*Phaedo* 81a1).

This conception of philosophy necessitates the instigation of the movement of counter-actualisation, a preparation for death conceived of as 'de-differentiation' and dissolution but also as liberation (*DR*, pp. 322-23). In Parmenides, this movement is undertaken in the proemium, which narrates the youth's *κατάβασις* (descent) to the divine abode. In Deleuze, as in Plato, the dramatisation of the chariot journey of the proemium becomes the true philosophical task. The philosopher is the one who follows the trajectory of *κατάβασις* in order to 'attain that empty place' of attunement and revelation, that is,

the point where [individuals] are seized by their pre-individual determination and, thus, by the power of the One-All – of which they are, at the start, only meagre local configurations – they have to go beyond their limits and endure the transfixion and disintegration of their actuality by infinite virtuality, which is actuality's veritable being.

(*DCB*, pp. 11-12)

Thus, according to Badiou, *Difference and Repetition* exhibits significant structural similarities to Parmenides' poem in that both pursue not only the description but also the implementation of a double movement: of descent 'from beings to Being', towards 'the inhuman neutrality of Being' (*DCB*, p. 33); but also of ascent 'from Being to beings' (*DCB*, p. 39), towards 'superficial inflections or simulacra' (*DCB*, p. 80), the latter articulated in an appended – second – part:

The result of this is that intuition [...] must simultaneously descend from a singular being toward its active dissolution in the One – thereby presenting it in its being *qua* simulacrum –

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<sup>143</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. by Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 152.

and re-ascend from the One toward the singular being, in following the immanent productive lines of power, and thereby presenting the being in question as a simulacrum of Being.

(DCB, p. 35)

The double movement requires two parts for its articulation that correspond to the two parts of Parmenides' poem: the first diagnostic part that attains the ground (*ἀλήθεια*) and a second descriptive part that returns to the surface (*δόξα*). As becomes clear from the history of the interpretations of Parmenides, the difficulty resides in discerning the need for this (re-)ascent: the second part seems to be pulled back into the depth of the first.<sup>144</sup>

### **Badiou's *ἔλεγχος*: questions and problems**

Badiou's critical interpretation of Deleuze raises important questions that concern both the way in which the equation 'pluralism = monism' is to be understood in relation to Deleuze as well as the manner in which the formula is accomplished in Deleuze's philosophy:

1. Is Badiou's conflation of the principle of univocity with a monistic demand of a post-Eleatic type legitimate? Does the principle necessarily re-instate the One? How is the ontological oneness demanded by the principle of univocity to be understood?

2. Does univocity preclude multiplicity? Is it the case that a univocal ontology must account for multiplicity by denying its reality? What *is* Deleuze's analysis of multiplicity?

3. How does the oneness of being become dispersed in the multiplicity of beings? Is the relation between virtual and actual a relation between ground and grounded? If the virtual-actual complement constitutes Deleuze's own rendering of the ontological difference, what is the conception of the ontological difference, of the relation between being and beings, virtual and actual in Deleuze?

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<sup>144</sup> For my solution to the problem of the relation between the two parts of the poem, see section 1.1.



4. Does Deleuze's philosophy share the orientation of Platonic ontology and its foundational aim of distinguishing between 'underlying fundamental' entities from 'what is on the surface', appearance from reality, the real from the unreal, 'in terms of either priority or dependence'?<sup>145</sup> What is the meaning of *effondement* and what are the consequences of this operation for the conception of the philosophical task as a whole in relation to Deleuze's own philosophical practice?

These questions may be rephrased succinctly in the following way: how is it possible for the one to be and to become many? In the vocabulary employed in Badiou's critique, in what sense is the virtual/one/being thought of as a generative, derivational and causal principle (as ontological cause, *fond*, ground, origin and substrate) that *explains* the actual/many/beings (as ontic *causatum*)?<sup>146</sup> In respect to this question, Badiou's criticisms reiterate the dilemma that Plato raises in the *Parmenides*: *either* being is absolutely transcendent in relation to beings *or*, if it is participated in by beings, being is divisible and divided. In the latter case, the Platonic theory of Ideas (and, for Badiou, Deleuze's theory of virtual Ideas),<sup>147</sup> which finds in ontological structures of unity the ground for the multiplicity of  $\pi\omicron\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}$ , is abandoned by default, in favour of a Parmenidean theoretical consistency and rigour; in the former, beings are made to circulate without anchor and become, according to Plato (and Badiou, for whom this is 'the price one must pay' for the insistence on univocity, *DCB*, p. 25), unreal. In both cases, the immanence of Being in beings cannot be simultaneously upheld with its being one, or, what is the same, the reality of beings entails the dispersion of the oneness of Being. The theory of Ideas, which seeks to explain multiplicity by means of oneness, is shown to be 'self-defeating'.<sup>148</sup> The exercise thus culminates in an impasse: according to Badiou's formulation,

the impasse of the *Parmenides* is that of establishing that both the one and the others do and do not possess all thinkable determinations, that they are totally everything [ $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\varsigma$

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<sup>145</sup> Julius Moravcsik, *Plato and Platonism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 56.

<sup>146</sup> To be sure, this is a normative terminology, that is, one that valorises the repudiation of ground, *fond* etc. As such, these terms are already part of Badiou's argument against Deleuze.

<sup>147</sup> 'A *contrario*, I uphold that the forms of the multiple are, just like the Ideas, always actual and that the virtual does not exist; I sacrifice, however, the One' (*DCB*, p. 45).

<sup>148</sup> Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology*, *op. cit.* p. 36.

ἔστι] and that they are not so [τε καὶ οὐκ ἔστι]. We are thus led to a general ruin of thought as such by the entire dialectic of the one.

(BE, p. 31)

One might pose, therefore, the challenge to which both Plato and Deleuze rise: to offer an account of the relation between one and many in which the one 'is in many places at the same time [πολλαχοῦ ἅμα] and is none the less not separate from itself [μία καὶ ἡ αὐτῆ]' (*Parm.* 131b2), or to explain how one becomes many while the many remains one, without the one becoming ontologically divisible or the many becoming reduced or explained away in the one. This is a demand for an account of multiplicity and oneness that should overcome the perennial duality and that would escape the dilemmatic objections made in the *Parmenides* and raised anew in Badiou's critique.

The problem of the relation between one and many is not only a problem for Deleuze's metaphysics but for the orientation of his philosophy as a whole. Deleuze's conception of philosophy as a practice in death, that is, the practice of becoming equal to the nature of being, requires that the philosopher be in possession of a diagnostic apparatus according to which illusion may be identified (as, for example, in the case of the transcendental illusions of representation diagnosed in the third chapter of *Difference and Repetition* ('The Image of Thought')). In this way, Deleuze's philosophy purports to make available the intellectual apparatus to sustain this critique and to possess normative power that allows philosophy to 'realise its project of breaking [rompre] with *doxa*' (*DR*, p. 170). However, given the demands of immanence and univocity, it seems that it is impossible that anything will fail to be equal to being, if, from the start, actual situations are the immanent configurations of the one. An account of illusion entails that some things have less of a claim to being or *are* only secondarily or even not at all. In other words, the diagnosis of illusion and the break with *δόξα* demand the distinction between being-divine and being-human (and even not-being). Although, Deleuze will claim that the being of God does differ (in mode) from the being of actual beings, this distinction cannot by itself make available the normative capacity that Deleuze assumes to be the consequence of his ontology. For if being is one, then the account of actual constitution (*δόξα*) must

absolutely rely on immanent principles of being; it must exclude any reference to not-being (or anything equivalent that is other than being, non-being) that would admit the being of not-being and, hence, something other than being. It seems, then, that an ontology of the one that remains consistently within monism and abides rigorously by the demands of explanation on immanent principles, will lack or even disavow the capacity to diagnose illusion or to explain the status of actuality and mortality. In other words, Deleuze's monism must affirm everything, even the most stable of configurations, and, in this affirmation, surrender its normative power to prescribe modes of being that would be more equal to being, since, in a properly Parmenidean move, being must be conceived as allowing of no gradation. To judge a being according to its power is to judge it according to its reality of being and the scale of *κρίσις* presupposes that being has an outside in which it is found in varying degrees (more or less, equal or unequal), and, therefore, an other-than-being. But how can anything fail *to be* (unconditionally, fully and exclusively) if to be is said of in one and only sense?

This same problem afflicts the very structure of Parmenides' poem, or rather the possibility of it constituting *one* poem, students of which, since antiquity, have been puzzled by the status and intent of its second part, in which the goddess offers an account of the constitution of the many objects of *δόξα*.<sup>149</sup> Such an offering raises the problem, given her revelation in the first part of the poem, of the superfluosity of this account as well as, more importantly, of its impossibility. For the goddess turns to consider what is not and to explain, i.e. to give a status to, illusion. But, as I have argued, monism either, if the one is transcendent, negates the relation between one and many, rendering the latter without status, or, if the one is immanent, accepts the absolute reality of the many. In the former case, the account of multiplicity becomes impossible, while in the latter it is rendered superfluous as it merely repeats the account of being. In both cases, an account of multiplicity, and of the mode of knowing multiplicity, *δόξα* or illusion, become unavailable in the parameters of a consistent and rigorous monism. This means that monism has no normative power: it

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<sup>149</sup> My solution to this problem is proposed in section 1.1 above.

cannot coherently prescribe some ways of being over others and it cannot establish a scale according to gradations of being according to the extent to which beings are; for the truth of monism is that beings are. This truth seems to prohibit any account of actuality or mortality *qua* actual. As a consequence of this prohibition, monism lacks the diagnostic and thereby prescriptive power Deleuze and Parmenides take it to have.

Again, the dilemma is the one presented in Plato's criticisms in the *Parmenides*. The demands of oneness and the simultaneous demand for an account of multiplicity from within the immanence of oneness seem to generate an irresolvable antinomy. As a result, philosophy must decide between total and unconditional affirmation (as a consequence of immanence) or unconditional repudiation (as a consequence of oneness). If beings *are* being (since to be is to be univocally), it follows that philosophy lacks the power to trace a way out of actuality towards being; if beings are not being, then philosophy's diagnosis does prescribe a therapeutic orientation at the price of transcendence. The conclusion is that if philosophy is a critical discipline then its *κρίσις* can only have insight on the presupposition that beings are not being and that being is not univocal.

Thus, the problem of the relation of the one and the many is the problem of the possibility of a discourse that does not recognize an outside. The second part of the *Parmenides* raises the same question that Mullarkey raises for all philosophies of immanence: 'how can a philosophy of immanence critique its outside' if immanence entails that 'there is ultimately no "outside"'?<sup>150</sup> The problem is wide, as it afflicts all kinds of ontological monism, and profound, as it puts into question the normative possibility of immanent systems of thought. Ever since Parmenides, monism has been taken to afford a diagnostic apparatus which, in turn, establishes a discipline, metaphysics, with the normative task of identifying what is real. This task consists not in cataloguing the inventory of what exists but in producing reductive accounts of multiplicity. Phenomena then are analysed as derivatives of fundamental processes of and within being. But such derivation cannot go *too* far (or far enough,

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<sup>150</sup> John Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy: An Outline* (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 7.

from the perspective of multiplicity): in identifying the real, monism cannot claim to be identifying what is not real if a dualism of being and not-being is to be avoided. If non-being, what is outside, is not, then it has no place in the account of phenomena. This means that immanence entails that the reductions attempted by monist ontology be ultimately descriptive rather than normative. The Eleatic philosopher can only re-describe the world, contemplate it but, on pain of inconsistency, she ought not to prescribe its transformation or undertake its critique.<sup>151</sup> What is put in question then is the validity of 'the major metaphilosophical censure placed against the actual by Deleuzians'<sup>152</sup> or against becoming and multiplicity by Eleatics and Platonists since this seems to rest upon 'a duality inscribed within immanence'.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> This relates to the ontological and cosmological silence imposed by Parmenides' challenge, identified in section 1.2 above.

<sup>152</sup> Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy, op. cit.* p. 36.

<sup>153</sup> Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy, op. cit.* p. 33.

## 4 Deleuze and mereology

### 4.1 Complexity and structure

#### The problem of composition

In the previous chapter I identified the theoretical challenge facing Deleuze's univocal pluralism, which I characterised in the terms of the *Parmenides*: namely, as the task to offer an account of the relation between one and many in which the one 'is in many places at the same time [πολλαχοῦ ἅμα] and is none the less not separate from itself [μία καὶ ἡ αὐτῆ]' (*Parm.* 131b2). In other words, to explain how one becomes many while the many remains one, without the one becoming ontologically divisible or the many becoming reduced or explained away in the one. Therefore, it becomes clear that the dilemmatic objections *prima facie* afflicting the passage between the one and the many, on which both Deleuze and the young Socrates of the *Parmenides* insist, require, if they are to be overcome, an account of divisibility and indivisibility or, in other words, of complexity and simplicity. Such an account would explain separation and unity and would amount to a study of the metaphysics of parts and wholes.

The problem of the relation between unity and multiplicity, of the equation of monism and pluralism, repeats itself on the level of theories of ontogenesis. Such theories, according to Beistegui, are discourses 'on the way in which systems and phenomena of various types come into being';<sup>154</sup> in other words, they describe the processes that are at work when a being comes into being and that sustain it in being as well as the conditions or causes that are necessary and sufficient for such processes to occur. The *differentiation* of parts and the *composition* of wholes constitute examples of such ontogenetic processes and concepts. Any being is a whole composed of ordered parts – although it is possible that some beings will be composed of just one part. Such partial ordering is the result of a structuring operation. The problem that theories of individuation encounter arises as soon as the

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<sup>154</sup> Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis*, *op. cit.* p. 223.

explanation begins, as soon as questions are asked about the nature and power of structure, that is, when a precise formulation of the whole and part relation is required. The crucial question of a theory of individuation is ‘what is it to be a component part?’, in other words, an account of the factors that *make* a being. Such making is the subject of what Deleuze calls a ‘logic of multiplicities’; and since Deleuze’s philosophy is a theory of emergence of actual one-effects out of virtual multiplicities, this logic of multiplicities coincides with a mereology.<sup>155</sup>

Mereology studies the relationship between a whole and its parts and formulates the principles that govern composition, that is, the *making* of wholes out of parts or the collecting of parts into a whole.<sup>156</sup> A theory of mereology, therefore, is a theory of composition: it asks what it is to be a part making a whole, what it is to be a whole collecting its parts or, in short, in what the relation of *making* or *composing* consists. That composition constitutes a problem, that it demands explanation, is a result of the fact that the terms of the mereological relation are the one and the many. Making oneness out of multiplicity and collecting the multiple into oneness, parthood, the relation between part and whole, is, as my previous examples of relations between one and many have shown, a paradoxical or, as Harte notes, a mysterious formula: ‘the mystery of composition is how one thing – a whole – can be made up of many things – the parts’.<sup>157</sup> In other words, mereology asks, with Van Inwagen, ‘in what circumstances do things add up to or compose something? When does unity arise out of plurality?’<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> For Badiou, Deleuze’s decision to equate the logic of multiplicity with mereology marks the point of rupture between two forms of classicism, Badiou’s ‘Platonism of the multiple’ and Deleuze’s ‘Platonism of the virtual’ (cf. *DCB*, pp. 4 and 46-8). The decision to think the multiple by means of the one-many and the whole-part relations can only ever produce ‘all sorts of abysses’ (*BE*, p. 81). Set theory undoes the equation of the logic of multiplicity with mereology by suppressing both the All and the One of traditional theorising about the many.

<sup>156</sup> For present purposes, summing, adding, aggregating, fusing are treated as synonyms of the undefined *making*. In other words, the relation of composition is a primitive one. I provide a more formal introduction to mereology in analytic philosophy in section 5.1.

<sup>157</sup> Verity Harte, *Plato on Parts and Wholes: The Metaphysics of Structure* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), p. 26.

<sup>158</sup> P. Van Inwagen, *Material Beings* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 30-31.

The problem, then, of a theory of composition is to identify those conditions under which composition constitutes a real process; to determine when composition takes place. But this is a complex problem: not only does it require a descriptive explanation of composition, but it also asks for criteria for what counts as composition and separates it from other processes of bringing-together. Magic and violence are the extreme cases between which such identification oscillates. A magical mixture is possible on the assumption that the division of its parts is unreal; the oneness of the elemental mixture remains the inexplicable prior fact. On the other hand, in terms of mereology, violence is the principle or cause of a formation that is not composed. For example, in terms of political mixtures, the oneness of a political formation such as Hobbes's commonwealth, held together by means of the violence employed by the Leviathan, is an artificial aggregation; in reality, there is no one political body, not even after the act, as the body of the commonwealth gathers the bodies of the political subjects, but does not comprise them. The failure of composition, for Hobbes, makes violence the principle of political formation, admitting that the unification proper, composition, is impossible. If fascist legitimations of composition presuppose magic, Hobbes's illegitimizations presuppose violence; indeed, they raise it to a principle of making, building, structuring. In both of these examples, magic and violence amount to the admission that the philosophical articulation of composition, securing a concept for composition, has failed. Either a principal prior unity is posited, in which case composition is real but theoretically inexplicable, or the unity is seen to be the effect of a violent aggregation, a process made explicable but distinguished from composition.

### **Mereology and the logic of multiplicity**

The claim that a terminology of parts and wholes is legitimate for the presentation of Deleuze's logic of multiplicity presupposes that this logic is in essence a metaphysics of parts and wholes and that, even if not a full-fledged mereology, this metaphysics entails the explication or rethinking on Deleuze's part of the notions of 'part' and 'whole', or of 'structure' and 'construction', or of 'composition', 'complexity', 'compound' and 'component'. In other words, it means that Deleuze's account of



multiplicity raises and attempts to respond to the paradoxes, problems and dilemmas associated with such mereological notions and that in order to understand multiplicity as a substantive one must understand in what Deleuze's responses to these problems consist. Now, this is a valid and necessary presupposition insofar, as I have argued, Deleuze's theory of multiplicity entails an account of divisibility and indivisibility or, to use the Eleatic vocabulary, of scattering and holding fast.

It might be objected that an ontology of becoming, as Deleuze's philosophy purports to be, is inimical to the mereological categories of composition; that such a philosophy forbids or severely impedes reference to partial ordering and structural wholes. After all, does not a logic of composition amount to a 'calculus of individuals', as Leonard and Goodman famously describe it in the title of their landmark essay on mereology?<sup>159</sup> And is Deleuze not expressly concerned with processes that are precisely pre-, supra- and sub-individual? Boundas, for example, warns that Deleuze's 'theory of difference is grievously misunderstood whenever "multiplicity" is taken to denote a set of entities, each one of which is identical to itself and also different from all the other entities of the same set'.<sup>160</sup> Similarly, Goodchild's exposition of the Deleuzian concept of multiplicity is premised on a warning against the relevance of mereological considerations for the purposes of understanding the nature of the becomings that are its elements: as he writes, 'a multiplicity designates neither a group nor a structure of several terms [...]. Instead, the multiplicity is the set of relations which produces each term; it is the assembling of the assemblage, and not its parts'.<sup>161</sup> Boundas's and Goodchild's proscriptions should rightly serve to dissuade attempts to treat multiplicities in terms of parts that are, in Boundas's words, 'identical to [themselves]' inhering in wholes that are sets of such entities; but they should not dissuade attempts to understand Deleuze's reliance on 'part' and 'whole' as other than merely metaphorical or ornamental or to assess the role that they play in Deleuze's ontology. Some of Deleuze's most fundamental

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<sup>159</sup> H. S. Leonard and N. Goodman, 'The Calculus of Individuals and its Uses', *Journal of Symbolic Logic*, 5 (1940), 45-55.

<sup>160</sup> Boundas, 'Deleuze-Bergson: An Ontology of the Virtual', *op. cit.* p. 82.

<sup>161</sup> Philip Goodchild, *Gilles Deleuze and the Question of Philosophy* (London: Associated University Press, 1996), p. 93.

claims and conclusions rely upon terms such as ‘composition’, ‘part’ and ‘whole’ and the account of multiplicity that lies at the heart of his philosophy is expressed in mereological terms and put forward as a theory of parts and wholes as well as a theory of connections or relations between parts. How are we to understand, for example, Deleuze’s emphatic pronouncement that ‘lines [*lignes*] are the basic components [*éléments constitutants*] of things and events’ and that ‘what’s interesting, even in a person, are the lines that make them up [*composent*], or they make up, or take or create’.<sup>162</sup> What is, further, the meaning of ‘make up’ in the claim that ‘whether we are individuals or groups, we are made up [*faits*] of lines and these lines are varied in nature’;<sup>163</sup> of ‘constitute’ in the assertion that ‘all this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes [*constitue*] an assemblage’ (*ATP*, p. 4); of ‘compose’ when he claims that the rhizome ‘is composed [*fait*] not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion’ (*ATP*, p. 23)?

It, therefore, becomes apparent that Deleuze relies upon mereological terms to formulate a theory of connectivity and composition. If, as Goodchild rightly observes, ‘a multiplicity does not consist of several parts or points, but merely of several entangled lines’,<sup>164</sup> this does not mean that the notion of parthood becomes obsolete. It is rather the case that the notions of part and whole are reworked and recast in the context of Deleuze’s account of multiplicity. This account raises new questions about parthood and wholeness, the answers to which are by no means obvious, trivial or readily available. Goodchild’s mereological formula already invites such questioning: what kind of entanglement is it that belongs to these lines; and how does this kind of entanglement differ from the entanglement of points?

The centrality of mereological notions becomes apparent not only in Deleuze’s analyses but also in those of his commentators. Rajchman’s and DeLanda’s

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<sup>162</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 33. Hereafter cited as *N*. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>163</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 93. Hereafter cited as *D*. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>164</sup> Goodchild, Gilles *Deleuze and the Question of Philosophy*, *op. cit.* p. 93.

interpretations of Deleuze's philosophy, for example, place mereology, in the guise of a theory of construction, at the heart of the Deleuzian project.<sup>165</sup> Rajchman describes Deleuze's logic of multiplicity as a 'constructivism' or as 'an art of multiple things held together by "disjunctive syntheses", by logical conjunctions prior and irreducible to predication or identification';<sup>166</sup> as a logic that prescribes 'another way of thinking about and connecting things'; and as an enquiry that asks 'what then is a whole that includes multiplicity; what relations between multiple and the one are involved?'.<sup>167</sup> Thus, according to Rajchman, the problem of Deleuze's philosophy 'becomes one of forging conceptual relations not already given in construction whose elements fit together not like pieces of a puzzle but rather like disparate stones brought together temporally in an as yet uncemented wall'.<sup>168</sup> This conceptual recasting of mereological terms in Deleuze takes the form of a metaphysical enquiry into the nature of 'singularities and the space and time in which they can co-exist'.<sup>169</sup> Elsewhere, Rajchman qualifies the complexity exhibited on this plane of coexistence as 'a multiple intensive complexity in things prior to simplicity and totality of compositional elements'.<sup>170</sup> The centrality of mereological concepts becomes even more conspicuous in DeLanda's interpretation of Deleuze's ontology explicitly in terms of 'a general theory about the relations between parts and wholes'.<sup>171</sup> Accordingly, his investigation focuses on Deleuze's construal of the 'part-to-whole relation' exhibited by all assemblages;<sup>172</sup> and on the way that this relation allows us to

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<sup>165</sup> As does Bell, whose main claim is that 'Deleuze is developing a metaphysics of dynamic systems at the edge of chaos' (in *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos: Gilles Deleuze and the Philosophy of Difference* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), p. 199). In addition, Véronique Bergen argues that 'the Deleuzian image of thought, being a throw of the dice, is inscribed in a constructivism along the lines of which thought has to extricate itself from chaos by giving itself consistency' (in 'The Precariousness of Being and Thought in the Philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and Alain Badiou' in *Deleuze and Philosophy*, ed. by Constantin Boundas (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 62-73 (p. 63)).

<sup>166</sup> John Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000), p. 4.

<sup>167</sup> Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections*, *op. cit.* p. 57.

<sup>168</sup> Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections*, *op. cit.* p. 20.

<sup>169</sup> Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections*, *op. cit.* p. 12.

<sup>170</sup> John Rajchman, *Constructions* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), p. 32.

<sup>171</sup> Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 9.

<sup>172</sup> DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 15.

distinguish 'between assemblages and totalities'.<sup>173</sup> DeLanda argues that assemblages offer 'the main theoretical alternative to organic totalities'<sup>174</sup> and casts assemblage theory against 'taxonomic essentialism'.<sup>175</sup> The contrast between the Deleuzian and essentialist positions resides in the different kinds of connections that obtain between the parts of assemblages and totalities:

unlike wholes in which parts are linked by relations of interiority (that is, relations which constitute the very identity of the parts) assemblages are made up of parts which are self-subsistent and articulated by relations of exteriority.

(DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 18)

In chapter 7, I return to examine the difference between relations of interiority and exteriority and, hence, between mereological essentialism and the Deleuzian alternative. I will also identify the way in which my construal of this difference diverges from Rajchman's and DeLanda's accounts. My disagreement concerns, with reference to DeLanda, the exact manner in which Deleuze's metaphysics constitutes an alternative to mereological essentialism; and, with reference to Rajchman, the precise sense in which Deleuze's multiplicities may be said to be paradoxical or, in Rajchman's words, to involve 'a logic of a peculiar sort',<sup>176</sup> a 'vagabond' mode of construction,<sup>177</sup> or an 'odd grammar'.<sup>178</sup>

### **Question and plan**

My question, then, is this: what happens to parts and wholes when they are no longer the terms of a 'calculus of individuals' and, instead, become the terms of a differential calculus of individuation? My aim, accordingly, is to reach an understanding of Deleuze's theory of composition, of his account of the relations of parts to other parts and to wholes, that is, to determine the precise meaning of

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<sup>173</sup> DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 25.

<sup>174</sup> DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 10.

<sup>175</sup> DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 28.

<sup>176</sup> Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections*, *op. cit.* p. 8.

<sup>177</sup> Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections*, *op. cit.* p. 55.

<sup>178</sup> Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections*, *op. cit.* p. 57. I proceed to explicate this 'oddness' or paradox of Deleuze's mereology in section 4.2.

Deleuze's mereological terms and to assess their importance for Deleuze's logic of multiplicity.

One need only look at one of Deleuze's most renowned offerings, the concept of the rhizome, in the 1976 essay opening Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* ('The Rhizome'), in order to realise that this mereology is an unorthodox one, in a sense that I will try to qualify and make precise in section 4.2. Deleuze's wholes are made of parts, this much is certain. The rhizome is an 'open system [*système ouvert*]' made of lines (*N*, p. 32). But the parts, the wholes and the logic of composition which guides the Deleuzian part-whole relation stretches the traditional meanings of the mereological terms to the point that one, Deleuze included, becomes convinced that new terms are required to express the new *making* and constituting relation that Deleuze attempts to articulate, so that one is suspicious of the terminology of composition and, hence, of structure as pertinent to express Deleuze's formula of individuation and genesis.

In the next section, I will undertake a reading of the essay on the rhizome in order to survey and to identify the central concepts and problems of Deleuze's theory of composition and to secure a body of substantial evidence on the range, scope and place of mereological terms in Deleuze's logic of multiplicity. To understand for what reason, to what extent and in what manner Deleuze's account of composition deviates but also builds upon the problems of traditional conceptions of structure, I will turn, in chapters 5 and 6, to the examination of two such conceptions: Husserl's study of parts and wholes and Epicurus' account of entanglement. Husserl's is a logic of dependent parts composing total or integrated wholes, Epicurus' is a theory of independent parts becoming entangled in non-total or open wholes. Thus, the two systems are opposed along the axes of parthood (dependence – independence) and wholeness (totality – openness). However, their opposition is revelatory of the theoretical parameters traditionally framing the metaphysics of parts and wholes, viz. the axes themselves along which the theories diverge: dependence and independence of parts, totality and openness of wholes. Thus armed with a clear account of these parameters, I will then try to qualify the sense in which Deleuze's employment of traditional terms can be said to be unorthodox and to

elaborate on the strangeness of his mereology. In reading Husserl and the atomists, my aim will be to determine the way in which the problem of composition is taken up in their pervasive but antagonistic metaphysics of parts and wholes and, hence, to determine the terms, notions, questions and problems that have been central to the philosophical discussion of composition. On the one hand, the examination of Husserl's analysis of wholeness will furnish a precise conception of ontological foundationalism and, I will argue, sheds new light on the Deleuzian precept of ungrounding, of what it means to uproot and undo the foundation. On the other hand, my treatment of atomist doctrine will focus on showing what such ungrounding does *not* consist in, with the intention of drawing out, by means of a negative exercise, the conditions for a rigorous understanding of partial multiplicity and differentiation. In addition, in reading Epicurus and Lucretius I hope to achieve a clear and original understanding of the notion of complication which forms, in Deleuze's hands, the basis for the relationality of the parts of a multiplicity. As my criticism of atomism aims to show, Deleuze's recasting of complication involves a new account of the AND and of disjunction, i.e. a Deleuzian theory of connection and composition. Therefore, the aim of my excursions into Husserl and ancient atomism and their influential and contrasting theories of differentiation is to make clear, by shedding new light from new angles, the orientation of Deleuze's account of multiplicity, the direction of his reworkings, recastings, criticisms of concepts and positions in the philosophical tradition, the problems and questions with which it is faced and to which it responds, before I proceed to examine Deleuze's theory of the multiple in Deleuze's own terms.

## **4.2 The paradox of Deleuze's logic of parts and wholes**

### **Arborescent structures: *κόσμος* and *ἀρχή***

The rhizome is a crucial philosophical concept for the thinking of the many, taking centre stage with *A Thousand Plateaus* and *Dialogues*, and develops, although not in an unproblematic or linear way, Deleuze's account of multiplicity in *Difference and Repetition*. The way in which Deleuze and Guattari construe the antithesis between rhizome and tree, presented by means of a complex examination of points and

counterpoints, is telling of Deleuze's confrontation with Aristotle (a confrontation to which I return in section 7.2). Further, it exhibits and bears witness to the strangeness of the mereology that underlies Deleuze's account of individuation and, hence, of the kind of shift that he attempts in relation to the notions of ground, structure, unity and composition. This oddness is present in the prescriptions to 'reach a thought of the multiple as such'; to understand the many as noun; to refrain from referring the multiple to 'anything other than itself'; to view the focuses of unification and wholeness as belonging to the multiple 'and not the reverse'; to see the many as 'becomings without history' but with a geography; to begin from the middle, not to begin, with 'the between, a set of relations which are not separable from each other' (*D*, pp. vi-vii); to think 'with AND, instead of thinking IS, instead of thinking for IS' (*D*, p. 43); in the dualisms of 'geography against history' and 'the line [*ligne*] against the point' (*D*, p. 25) and against the lineage [*lignées*] (*ATP*, p. 23), of the dimension against the unit; in casting a 'geography of relations' against the grammar of being (*D*, p. 42) and a 'geometrical plane' against the 'teleological plane' (*D*, p. 69), the map [*carte*] against the tracing [*calque*] (*ATP*, pp. 13-14), 'short-term memory, or anti-memory' against genealogy (*ATP*, p. 23), 'forgetting as opposed to memory' (*ATP*, p. 327), involution against evolution (*ATP*, p. 263), the rhizome against the tree, the model of consistency against that of organisation. In each of these formulations of his philosophical project, Deleuze's intention is to interrupt the standard conception of the multiplicity of parts as antecedents of a foundational unity to which essentialist ontologies of parts and wholes are committed.<sup>179</sup> This disruption is connected to the anti-foundationalist project of *effondement*: to 'establish a logic of the AND [*instaurer une logique du ET*], overthrow [*renverser*] ontology, do away with foundations [*destituer le fondement*], nullify endings and beginnings [*annuler fin et commencement*]' (*ATP*, p. 28).<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> In what follows, I examine Hesiod's cosmogonical account (in this section) and Husserl's formal theory of part and whole relations (in chapter 5) in order to characterise foundationalism/essentialism.

<sup>180</sup> I return to the meaning of *effondement* in section 7.1.

The antithesis between arborescent and rhizomatic structures turns on the problem of oneness and multiplicity. ‘The tree [*l’arbre*] and root [*la racine*] inspire a sad image of thought that is forever imitating the multiple on the basis of a centered or segmented higher unity [*une unite supérieur, de centre ou de segment*]’ (ATP, p. 18). When the world is made in the image of the tree, the root becomes the site of structuration: an ἀρχή, a point of origination, that makes possible and presides over the advent of order and the emergence of ordered multiplicity out of the chaotic πλήθος that precedes the advent of coherence. The root proceeds to produce multiplicity; this means that ‘the One becomes two [*Un deviant deux*]’ (ATP, p. 5). Multiplicity is produced by means of the self-bifurcation of the one as the ordered, structured multiplicity of a κόσμος, as the multiple parts *composing* a whole. The cosmos, standing as the opposite of chaos, is a system revolving around its ‘centre of significance and subjectification [*centres de signification et de subjectivation*]’ as a ‘centred system [*systèmes centrés*]’ (ATP, p. 18-19), ‘with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths’ (ATP, p. 23).

Arborescence ‘is the most classical and well reflected, oldest, and weariest kind of thought’ (ATP, p. 5), one that is found at the beginning of Greek cosmological speculation. Hesiod’s *Theogony* provides an exemplary case of an account that returns the world to its explanatory and constitutive origin, to what is there ‘in the beginning’ (πρῶτον and πρώτιστα, *Theogony*, 115 and 116), in order to bear witness to the act of structuration.<sup>181</sup> As Woodard remarks, Hesiod’s epic poem is ‘a work about origins, and no less a cosmogony (an account of the origin of the cosmos) than a theogony’.<sup>182</sup> Beginning with those ‘things that are and that shall be and that were aforetime’ (*Theogony*, 45), the Hesiodic epic traces the ‘twisting genealogical tree’ of the gods and the cosmos back to the origin (ἐξ ἀρχῆς) to the dichotomous root herself:<sup>183</sup> ‘wide-bosomed Earth [*Γαῖ’ ἐρύστερνος*], the ever-sure foundation’ of all

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<sup>181</sup> Evelyn-White, Hugh G., *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homeric, text with translation*, The Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1936).

<sup>182</sup> Roger D. Woodard, ‘Hesiod and Greek Myth’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Mythology*, ed. by Roger D. Woodard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 83-165 (p. 85).

<sup>183</sup> Woodard, ‘Hesiod and Greek Myth’, *op. cit.* p. 86.



(*Theogony*, 117). The ἀρχή-root lends her enduring support (ἔδος); she remains unmoved even when, bifurcating, she moves. Earth constitutes the oneness of the cosmos, the unit and unity (*unité*) according to which the elements are organised into a cosmos and, hence, one might say that Earth fashions the cosmos by ‘measuring elements according to their emplacement in a given dimension’ (ATP, p. 9).

Hesiod’s *Theogony* recounts a cosmogony, a making of the cosmos, because Earth operates both as the genetic axis (*axe génétique*), that is, as the ‘objective pivotal unity upon which successive stages are organised’, and as the deep structure (*structure profonde*), that is, as the transformational dimension, of the cosmos (ATP, p. 13). In Hesiod’s cosmo-geneological account, Earth constitutes the unity of the cosmos and a multiplicity of elements is measured and unified into a cosmos on the provision of her support. Earth’s ἔδος provides ‘a pivot-unity [*l’unité-pivot*] forming the basis for a set of biunivocal relationships between objective elements or points’; Earth is ‘the One that divides following the law of a binary logic of differentiation’ (ATP, p. 9).

For Deleuze and Guattari, the genealogical and cosmological oneness that binds together the cosmos and establishes the lines of descent of gods ‘operates in an empty dimension supplementary [*une dimension vide supplémentaire*] to that of the system’ (*overcoding - surcodage*).<sup>184</sup> Hesiod’s Earth and Greek pre-Eleatic ἀρχαί in general are such empty supplementary dimensions.<sup>185</sup> The Greek myths tell the story of the advent of order out of chaos by recourse to ἀρχή-roots, supporting axes and deep structures. In other words, in these myths structuration is the result of overcoding, cosmic structure is identical to overcoding structure and ordering is effectuated only by means of overcoding. The absence of the superfluous dimension,

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<sup>184</sup> In section 5.1, I will explicate in more detail the notion of supplementarity that Deleuze and Guattari identify as a feature of foundationalist structures in terms of Husserl’s definition of the foundation as a supplement.

<sup>185</sup> The qualification ‘pre-Eleatic’ refers to the fact that Parmenides’ challenge was primarily directed against attempts (whether mythological, as in Hesiod, or naturalist, as in Ionian reflection) to identify and endow such ἀρχαί with the power to explain coming-into-being. Remember that Parmenides’ being is ἀναρχον: it does not function as a concept or source of origination nor is it susceptible to processes of origination. For Parmenides, in relation to its holding-fast, being is *passive* (see section 2.1 above).

ἀρχή), is tantamount to the negation of ordering, to the dissolution of the cosmos. To decode is to disorder; decoding means reverting to chaos and chaos is nothing but the decoded itself. In this way, the Greek conception of structure that underlies Hesiod's tales of structuration and ordering is genealogical, that is, Hesiod's cosmogony thinks of the emergence of structure exclusively as the effect of the constant referral to the overcoding supplemental dimension (Earth's support) and conceives of structure solely and exhaustively as overcoding.

Arborescence, then, traces a composite whole that Deleuze calls a plane of *organisation*. This is the plane internal to the being of the founding supplement and on which grammatical (expressing legality), historical (measuring distance), teleological and genealogical (measuring development) relations are established when parts are formed, developed, caused and assigned a definite place on it. All these operations refer to 'a supplementary dimension, one dimension more, a hidden dimension' (*D*, p. 68) that is the organising principle and subject.<sup>186</sup>

### **Unity and structure of the assemblage**

To return to *A Thousand Plateaus* and to the question of rhizomatic oneness and structure, in contrast to Greek cosmo-genealogy, 'the rhizome is an anti-genealogy' (*ATP*, pp. 12 and 23), which means also an anti-cosmogony in which there are 'neither stages on a genetic axis nor positions in a deep structure' (*ATP*, p. 14); or as he puts it elsewhere, what counts is 'geography and not history, the middle [*le milieu*] and not the beginning or the end' (*D*, p. 17). To 'subtract the unique [*soustraire l'unique*] from the multiplicity to be constituted; [to] write at  $n - 1$  dimensions' (*ATP*, p. 7); this constitutes the fundamental commitment of Deleuze and Guattari's

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<sup>186</sup> This dimension is also the abode of the gods, a divine dimension. According to Herodotus, '[the Pelasgians] called them "gods" [θεοὶ], because they had set [θέεντες] all things in order [κόσμω] and assigned everything its place [νομᾶς]' (Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. by Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 117). Herodotus here associates the divine with the advent of order (erroneously deriving θεός from τιθέναι). Although his etymology is false, Herodotus' is a definition of the divine that is in line with the epic conception of the gods as champions and bearers of cosmic order. Homer and Hesiod, as Herodotus notes, established the fields of 'provenance' for each of the gods: 'they were the ones who created the gods' family trees [θεογονίην] [...], gave them their names [ἐπωνυμίας], assigned them their honours [τιμάς] and areas of expertise [τέχνας]'.

metaphysics of structure. The subtraction of this empty dimension leads to the admission of mereological structures lacking parts and not composing wholes; in other words, to an ontological universe inhabited by rhizomes defined as '*flat multiplicities of n dimensions*' (ATP, p. 10), in the sense that 'they fill [*remplissent*] or occupy [*occupent*] all of their dimensions' (ATP, p. 9). More strictly, multiplicities can only ever be flat; to reach an understanding of multiplicity is to understand multiplicity as flat, the many as lacking empty, foundational dimensions. Since, in the construction of the rhizome, oneness is subtracted, rhizomatic structuration does not consist in building the cosmos upon the bosom of Earth, that empty supplemental dimension that acts as the genealogical foundation; instead, all rhizomatic structure constitutes a *plane of consistency*:

The plane of consistency [*le plan de consistance*] (grid) is the outside [*le dehors*] of all multiplicities. The line of flight marks: the reality of a finite number of dimensions that the multiplicity effectively fills [*remplit*]; the impossibility of a supplementary dimension unless the multiplicity is transformed by the line of flight; the possibility and necessity of flattening [*aplatir*] all of the multiplicities on a single plane of consistency or exteriority, regardless of their number of dimensions.

(ATP, p. 10).

In other words, although the rhizomatic structure contains 'focuses of unification, centres of totalisation, points of subjectivation', these 'are in the multiplicity to which they belong, and not the reverse' (ATP, p. 10); that is to say, the unity of a rhizome is not the unity emanating and guaranteed by an unfolding, pivoting, dichotomizing or even abortive ἀρχή but arises as the effect of co-functioning and alliance: 'being-multiple, instead of a being-one', a substantive multiplicity or, what is the same, a subtractive unity (D, p. vii). It is in this sense that the structure of the plane of consistency, in contrast to composition as organization, is not to be understood as the assembling of a multiplicity 'as an adjective which is still subordinate to the One which divides or the Being which encompasses it'; instead, this milieu is an inter-being, multiplicity as such that has

become noun, a multiplicity which constantly inhabits each thing. A multiplicity is never in terms [*les termes*], however many there are, nor in their set [*ensemble*] or totality. A multiplicity is only in the AND, which does not have the same nature as the elements, the sets or even their relations.

(*D*, p. 43).

As a result, rhizomatic multiplicity

is reducible neither to the One nor the multiple. It is not the One that becomes Two [...]. It is not a multiple derived from the One, or to which One is added ( $n + 1$ ). It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle from which it grows and which it overflows.

(*ATP*, p. 23)

The rhizome, on the other hand, signifies a structure – an assemblage (*agencement*) – in which the multiple ‘has been raised to the level of a substantive’ (*ATP*, p. 4). This means, firstly, that multiplicity becomes unattributable: although an assemblage does have the appearance, when looked on from the side of its ‘lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories’, of ‘a kind of organism or signifying totality’ in which the many is attributed and, hence, reductively explained away as the effect of the will of a subjective or objective oneness, the structure of the assemblage, its being-one, the unity of its body, is being continually dismantled by the operations of a principle of multiplicity on its other side: ‘lines of flight, movements of deterritorialisation and destratification’ (*ATP*, p. 4); this constitutes the ‘working of matters’ continually making and unmaking the oneness of a machinic assemblage.

This description brings to the fore the strangeness that I earlier claimed to characterise Deleuzian mereology. The rhizomatic structure is the paradoxical result of a process of multiplication: a structuring that constructs insofar as it destructs its unifying boundaries. To say that an assemblage ‘exists only through the outside and on the outside [*par le dehors et au-dehors*]’ (*ATP*, p. 4) means that the construction of its body, the body of a machine, is not the result of a structuring principle of unity; instead, a rhizome is one only as far as it is many.

Arborescent thought ties the production of the many on the assumption of 'a strong spiritual unity' (*ATP*, p. 6), namely, by attaching the many either to a 'pivotal taproot' supporting, as an ἀρχή, the multiplicity of secondary roots in the object, or to a 'dichotomous root' that produces the two out of the one by separating the object from its subject (as, for example, in the case of the book and its author); or, further, as the 'even more comprehensive secret unity' or 'more extensive totality' of the fascicular root, the aborted but possible unity that subsists 'as past or yet to come' (*ATP*, p. 6). All the configurations of the tree that Deleuze and Guattari consider, dichotomous root, pivotal taproot and fascicular root, produce the multiple as the effect of a prior ordering. The tree, in other words, maps and determines the multiple elements of a cosmos that arises out of chaos by means of the ordering imposition of structure. This constitutes a root-cosmos (or even a radicle-chaosmos) in which the multiple is only the many of the one, the structured result of a structuring unity. The conclusion drawn is that the arborescent account 'has never reached an understanding of multiplicity' (*ATP*, p. 6).

Deleuze and Guattari arrive at a diagnosis of the inability of arborescent thought to think of multiplicity not because they presuppose that structure is inimical to the nature of the multiple but because they discern as necessary to this thought an account of structuration (production and individuation) that cannot but bar pure multiplicity: 'one can never get beyond the One-Two, and fake multiplicities' (*ATP*, p. 18). To put it differently, if in the tree the many is always the many of the one, this is because it is assumed that oneness cannot but disallow a many without oneness; or that structure cannot but abolish chaos as its antithesis, non-chaos. Therefore, 'whenever a multiplicity is taken up in a structure', and here the authors refer to the root structures, 'its growth is offset by a reduction in its laws of combination' (*ATP*, p. 6).

The rhizomatic structure, in contrast, relates to the multiplicity that grows from it not as the higher dimension in which the many find their place but as what subtracts itself: 'the only way the one belongs to the multiple: always subtracted [*soustrait*]' (*ATP*, p. 7). A structure that is subtracted in structuring: in this way the rhizomatic structure of the 'subterranean stem is absolutely different from roots and

radicles' (*ATP*, p. 7). To begin with, whatever structuration may mean in the case of the rhizome it is made clear that rhizomatic structure does not 'fix an order' of the cosmic kind. Instead, 'any point of a rhizome can be connected [*connecté*] to anything other, and must be' (*ATP*, p. 7). In other words, whatever the result of this structuring might be, it does not amount to a cosmogony since its effect does not form a cosmos, a system with a unifying  $\dot{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta$  making the multiple. This means that 'radical breaks' separate the heterogeneous parts of the rhizome (thus, the theoretical affinity with the atomist metaphysics, which I examine critically in chapter 6). The paradox or strangeness of the rhizome, therefore, concerns the possibility of the connection between radically separate parts, or, in other words, of the oneness required and implied by the rhizomatic structure, or the possibility of a bringing-together of what cannot but break apart. Can one still talk of structure or connection in light of such radical claims to heterogeneity?<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Before proceeding to provide an answer in chapters 6 and 7, it is important to note that it should not be taken for granted that the answers that Deleuze gives to this question at different stages and in different writings tell the same story or correspond to an unchangingly or gradually developing Deleuzian ontology. For example, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the difficulty of thinking about connections on the assumption of radical heterogeneity leads the authors to use the term 'structure' disapprovingly and exclusively for the kind of oneness demanded by arborescent accounts of individuation (cf. *ATP*, p. 23). In *Dialogues*, for example, Parnet describes the tree as 'a structure, a system of points and positions which fix all of the possible within a grid, a hierarchical system or transmission of orders, with a central instance and recapitulative memory; it has a future and a past, roots and peak, a whole history, an evolution, a development' so that multiplicities 'do not let themselves be agglomerated' and 'break free from structure' (*D*, p. 19). The same is true for 'organisation' which is exclusively associated with the plane of organisation or of transcendence (*D*, p. 68) and is contrasted with the plane of consistency and immanence. Thus, the awkwardness of terms such as 'rhizomatic structure' or 'rhizomatic organisation'. In the monograph on Foucault, Deleuze goes as far as to define multiplicity in contradistinction to those 'models or realities that we call structures' (*F*, p. 14). A multiplicity is 'not a structure or a system [*une multiplicité et non pas une structure ou un système*]' (*F*, p. 6). In contrast, in *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze does not exclude the terminology of structure from being applied to the description of the genetic processes of individuation, as when he claims, for example, that 'we see no difficulty in reconciling genesis and structure' (*DR*, p. 231), a claim to the examination of which I return in chapter 7. This is also the case in *Logic of Sense*: its 'Eighth Series of Structure' presents the main mereological claim of the book, namely, that structure teems with evental singularities (cf. *LOS*, p. 50) or, in Deleuze's formulation, that 'a set of singularities corresponds to each one of the series of a structure' (*LOS*, p. 52).

## **Principles of heterogeneity, connection and multiplicity**

Deleuze's response, in *A Thousand Plateaus* as well as in *Difference and Repetition*, consists in the articulation of a many without one or a theory of subtracted oneness. When it comes to characterizing the relations between the one and the many of an assemblage in terms of the mereological relations between part and whole or ordered and order, the rhizome may be described as a multiplicity without elements or parts; or, conversely, as a unity without wholeness. In a rhizomatic assemblage 'the multiple is effectively treated as a substantive' (*principle of multiplicity*) so that the many 'ceases to have any relation to the One'; this is the difference between rhizomatic multiplicities and 'arborescent pseudo-multiplicities' (*ATP*, p. 8). If the rhizome is not composed of parts in the way that an arborescent structured multiplicity is made up of 'points or positions' determined according to the distance or function of its part in relation to the unity that serves to organise and assign places and values, either as a pivot, or as principle of division or even as an act of abortion, in short as the principle of unity gathering its parts, then what *makes* an assemblage? Nothing but lines, that is, 'determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature'. If there is unity of and within an assemblage, then this is to be found without: the unity of heterogeneous terms that can only subsist between, unable to confer any unification or structuration other than the unity of 'co-functioning [*co-fonctionnement*]: it is a symbiosis, a "sympathy"' (*D*, p. 52). A rhizome then, in contrast to the tree, is not a totality constructed with the structuration of parts as homogeneous elements of a unity, but is always 'an assemblage of symbiosis, defined by the co-functioning of its heterogeneous parts' (*D*, p. 53). The unity of the rhizome, the oneness of a collective assemblage that even allows it to be 'designated by a proper name' (*D*, p. 73), is an effect of the convergence or co-functioning of its heterogeneous elements: 'structures are linked to conditions of homogeneity, but assemblages are not' (*D*, p. 39). That is to say, the structure of a collective assemblage is a 'plane of consistency' and not a 'plane of organization': what is collected into an assemblage is not organised according to a principle of unity emanating from a 'supplementary dimension' beyond the immediate collected multiplicity; in other words, there are no criteria of

collection other than the principle of sympathy between the heterogeneous elements of the collection: 'the tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance' (*ATP*, p. 27). Thus, the oneness or structure of a rhizomatic collective assemblage constitutes a 'plane of immanence because it possesses no dimension supplementary to what occurs on it: its dimensions grow and increase with what occurs on it' (*D*, p. 69). This means that the resulting unity lacks an  $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta$ , that 'structural instance' playing the 'role of law, or of cause', and, therefore, does not concern 'connections between dependent terms' as is the case with cosmic, mechanical or organic structures (*D*, p. 77). Instead, the unity of the assemblage is only machinic: 'a proximity grouping between independent and heterogeneous terms [*un ensemble de voisinage entre termes hétérogènes indépendants*]' (*D*, p. 77). The machinic or rhizomatic oneness of a collective assemblage is precisely the elliptical or subtracted oneness that lacks the principle of beginnings and can assign no place for its members since the collection is not organised according to the distance that the members have from the origin, which is to say that the structure of the assemblage neither presupposes nor effectuates the homogeneity of its components: 'the machine, in requiring the heterogeneity of proximities, goes beyond the structures with their minimum conditions of homogeneity' (*D*, p. 77). These are only proximate; the place occupied by each is measured in terms of "'proximities" independent of distance' (*D*, p. 83): 'what defines a machine assemblage is the shift of a centre of gravity along an abstract line' (*D*, p. 77).

What then of the elements composing an assemblage, if the wholeness to which they belong turns out to be so elliptical? Do these not possess in themselves the oneness of beings that *enter* a collection as its parts and that make up a multiplicity only as an effect of such gathering, that is, on the assumption, or *after*, unity? If Deleuze is allowed to start with multiplicity *before* unity, this is because the assemblage is not a totality of points and elements; composition and parts here are the terms of a strange mereology or 'logic of multiplicity'. The important question again concerns the nature of the heterogeneity between the parts. This, Deleuze argues, is ineliminable so that the parts of the rhizome are irreducibly incommensurable to a common principle of unification, criterion of collection or line



of connection (*principle of heterogeneity*). To draw a line of connection going from one part to another would violate the condition of heterogeneity that makes multiplicity primary in relation to oneness. For the same reason, 'any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be' (*principle of connection*) (ATP, p. 7). On the assumption of heterogeneity, the partial ordering of the lines and flows making an assemblage does not and cannot go through foci of origin and unity, which would render rhizomatic parts homogeneous. Instead, heterogeneity demands that the relationality or connectivity of the parts be accounted for in terms of the very subtraction of oneness or of the immediacy of the multiple. If connection does not and may not proceed by means or as a result of unity, if, that is, the rhizome 'never has available a supplementary dimension over and above its number of lines, [...] over and above the multiplicity of numbers attached to those lines' (ATP, p. 9), then the composition of the rhizome does and must proceed by means of immediate connections between all the parts of the rhizome, i.e. by establishing 'transversal communications between different lines' (ATP, p. 12). In other words, transversality, as a mode of connection, is not only possible but also necessary if reference to a genealogical supplementary dimension ( $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta$ ) is not only unnecessary but also impossible. We are already in the middle, 'proceeding from the middle and through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing' and swept up in 'a stream without beginning or end' (ATP, pp. 27-8).

With the postulation of transversal relations I reach a point at which the paradox surrounding Deleuze and Guattari's conception of parts and wholes becomes emphatic, when the unorthodox character of this conception stands out in relief. The next step will be to determine more precisely what it is that sounds so paradoxical, strange and unorthodox about the wholeness of pure multiplicities composed of heterogeneous parts that are transversally connected. Accordingly, I shall now proceed to show how the three fundamental dimensions of Deleuze and Guattari's account of multiplicities, namely, the principles of heterogeneity of parts, of substantive multiplicity and of transversal connection, go against the grain of ontological orthodoxy and challenge the essentialist parameters in which Edmund Husserl undertakes his seminal and influential study of wholeness. My intention will

be to arrive at a new set of conditions and, hence, of parameters for the theory of composition that will allow me to measure the paradox of the theory propounded in *A Thousand Plateaus*, that is, to situate it safely and precisely outside the field of governance of philosophical orthodoxy. How, then, can one measure the paradox and assess the strangeness of a Deleuzian theory of composition? I propose to do this by determining the way in which the metaphysics of parts and wholes underlain by Deleuze and Guattari's mereological principles can be assigned to a position on the grid of coordinates defined by the two axes along which orthodoxy has organised its discussion, namely, the dependence and independence of parts and the totality and openness of wholes; or whether, instead, this theory cannot be assigned coordinates in this way and, hence, becomes situated outside the parameters of orthodoxy, as paradox.

## 5 Husserl's logic of parts and wholes

### 5.1 Moments and pieces

#### On mereology

The *locus classicus* for the modern discussion of parts and wholes is the third of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* ('On the Theory of Wholes and Parts'), which deduces, informally, the definitions, axioms and principles governing the relation of parthood and associated notions, such as wholeness, separation, simplicity and complexity.<sup>188</sup>

In relation to the centrality of Husserl's writings for the discussion of parts and wholes, I offer the following evidence: (1) according to Kit Fine, 'Husserl's third *Logical Investigation* is perhaps the most significant treatise on the concept of part to be found in the philosophical literature';<sup>189</sup> (2) Varzi, another prominent contemporary mereologist, comments that Husserl's analysis 'may rightly be considered the first attempt at a rigorous formulation of the theory' of parthood relations;<sup>190</sup> (3) Smith and Mulligan claim that Husserl's analysis of mereological dependence is 'the single most important contribution to realist (Aristotelian) ontology in the modern period';<sup>191</sup> (4) finally, Simons, in his comprehensive study of mereology, characterises Husserl as 'the earliest systematic mereologist of this century'.<sup>192</sup>

Nevertheless, insofar as the modern paradigm for the study of parts and wholes, at least in the analytic tradition, is exhausted by 'classical extensional mereology' (CEM), then its beginnings are found in the work of the Polish logician

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<sup>188</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. by J. N. Findlay, 2 vols (London: Routledge, 1970), II, pp. 435-489. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>189</sup> Kit Fine, 'Part-Whole' in *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, ed. by Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 463-485 (p. 463).

<sup>190</sup> Achille Varzi, 'Mereology', *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2006 Edition), ed. by Edward N. Zalta <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2006/entries/mereology/>> [accessed 1 May 2008] (para. 1).

<sup>191</sup> B. Smith and K. Mulligan, 'Pieces of a Theory' in *Parts and Moments: Studies in Logic and Formal Ontology*, ed. by B. Smith (Munich: Philosophia, 1982), pp. 15-109 (p. 37).

<sup>192</sup> Peter Simons, *Parts: A Study in Ontology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), p. 255.

Stanislaw Leśniewski.<sup>193</sup> CEM is defined by Simons as a ‘formal theory of part, whole, and related concepts’.<sup>194</sup> CEM studies the relations between parts in *extensional* wholes. At its heart lies the notion of mereological extensionality, that is, ‘the thesis that objects with the same parts are identical’ (p. 1). What this means is that that an extensional whole exists ‘just when all the constituent parts exist’ (p. 324). In this respect, CEM is a formal theory of descriptions of part and whole relations: its aim is to systematise mereological concepts (e.g. proper and improper part, atom, universe), principles (e.g. transitivity, reflexivity, antisymmetry) and relations (e.g. disjointedness, overlapping, underlapping, overcrossing and undercrossing, binary and general products and sums).<sup>195</sup>

For reasons that I will explain below in the framework of an argument against atomism, theories of sums and aggregates that take extensionality as granted overlook the problem of unity rather than resolve it. Simons mentions two ways in which the centrality of the concept of ‘mereological extensionality’ limits the relevance of CEM for the discussion of the metaphysics of parts and wholes: first, it is unsuitable to explain the constitution of ‘mereologically *variable*’ things or of things ‘in flux’, i.e. having ‘different parts at different times’ (p. 1); and, further, it seems incapable of treating everyday objects that ‘are not modally *rigid* in their parts’ (p. 2). This is why, according to Simons, ‘despite their elegance’, the formalised extensional mereological theories developed in the wake of Leśniewski’s work, ‘leave much to be desired as general theories of part and whole’ (p. 5). In particular, CEM lacks ‘the resources to deal with temporal and modal notions in connection with mereology’ (p. 1), which means that it is ill equipped to deal with the problems and paradoxes involved in the metaphysics of individuation. In the terms of the Badiou-Deleuze dispute, extensionalist mereology is a resolutely actualist doctrine. CEM describes relations between parts and wholes but has little to contribute to a discussion of the unity of the whole or of the multiple being of the parts or of the nature of the

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<sup>193</sup> Cf. S. Leśniewski, ‘Foundations of the General Theory of Sets I’, trans. by D. I. Barnett, in S. Leśniewski, *Collected Works*, ed. by S. J. Surma, J. Szrednicki, D. I. Barnett, and F. V. Rickey (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1992) i, pp. 129-173)

<sup>194</sup> Simons, *Parts, op. cit.* p. 1.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. Simons, *Parts, op. cit.* pp. 9-18 for a comprehensive account.

connections and relations of composition. It is with the rejection of extensionality that metaphysical problems are reanimated, raising questions about the oneness of the partial manifold. According to Simons, 'the rejection of extensionality has as a consequence that more than one object may have exactly the same parts at the same time' and this opens the way for a non-descriptive examination of parthood: 'Consideration of the conditions under which distinct things may be in the same place at the same time leads to a discussion of the nature of composition, constitution, and matter in their mereological ramifications. With the rejection of extensionality, it becomes possible to distinguish different concepts of proper-or-improper-part which enrich our conceptual palette' (p. 3). In other words, the problem is not that CEM considers wholes to be mereological sums and examines them only insofar as they are sums but that CEM does not raise the question of the distinction between 'mere sums or aggregates' and 'unities, wholes, or totalities' (p. 324) in which the relation that composes the whole (the relation of integrity) is not 'merely formal' but ontological, whether essential or functional (p. 3). Remaining unaware of or unconcerned with this difference, CEM offers little insight into the 'internal connectedness' of wholes (p. 290), into 'an integrity that sums lack' (p. 253) but also fails to recognise the need for an account of the distinction.

It is telling that when Simons turns to precisely such a discussion, he turns to Husserl: 'The modal approach developed here is used to re-examine traditional problems in this light, and to reassess Husserl's achievement in this field [the study of substance and conditional and unconditional existence]' (p. 3); in order to explain this idea of integral or unified wholes and of the kind of interrelations between parts that it involves, Simons takes his bearings from 'unjustly neglected work by Husserl' (p. 254). This explains why, in seeking for a *locus* that would allow me to characterise with legitimacy a standard or normal mereology, I chose to extract the principles, concepts and questions of such a theory from Husserl's philosophical logic of parts and wholes and not from Leśniewski's technical logic, in spite of the latter's more manifest prominence in the bibliography on mereology. It is an ontology of parts and wholes, a metaphysics of the relations inhering in wholes and connecting diverse parts that is required and not a formal description of the logical relations holding

between the parts of sums. As Simons makes clear, 'the treatment of ontological dependence', and, hence, of integrity, unity, wholeness and parthood, '[...] leads naturally to a discussion of the traditional problem of substance' (p. 254). Logic will not do: it is metaphysical questioning that animates the problems and raises the questions that concern me here.

### **Moments and pieces**

Uncontroversially, Husserl begins by establishing a connection, on the one hand, between complexity, or the quality of being composed of parts, and separation or disjointedness and, on the other, between simplicity and indivisibility. 'Complex' (*zusammengesetzt*) and 'simple' (*einfach*) are defined

by the qualification of having parts or not having parts [*Teile habend – keine Teile habend*]. They may, however, be understood in a second, possibly more natural sense, in which complexity [*Zusammengesetztheit*], as the word's etymology suggests, points to a plurality of disjointed parts [*eine Mehrheit disjunkter Teile*] in the whole, so that we have to call *simple* whatever cannot be 'cut up' [*auseinanderlegen*] into a plurality of parts, i.e. that in which not even two *disjointed* parts can be distinguished [*unterscheiden*].

(p. 436)

A complex object is one with a plurality of parts, while a simple object is a whole without parts. To be a compound means to have parts or, more precisely, that there is 'plurality of disjointed parts in a whole'; whereas to be simple means not to have parts or, more precisely, not to submit to cutting-up in a plurality of parts. Thus, Husserl's mereological definitions allow him to distinguish simple from complex objects: complexity entails plurality of parts and presupposes distinction (*unterschied*), separation or disjointedness, whereas simplicity consists in indistinction, the lack of the very disjointedness that allows a complex object to be cut up. A part (*Teil*), accordingly, is 'anything that can be distinguished [*unterscheidbar*] "in" an object, or, [...] that is "present" in it' (p. 437).

What is not unambiguous, however, is the way in which complexity corresponds to divisibility, that is, the meaning of disjointedness. Husserl recognises two forms of separation between parts or, what is the same, of being present in a

whole: parts are either independent *pieces* (*selbstständige Stücke*) or non-independent *moments* (*unselbstständige Momente*) of wholes. Complexity is either the disjointedness of the piece or the disjointedness of the moment. Pieces are parts of wholes ‘which are broken up [*zerstücken*], or could be broken up’ into pieces: ‘the parts are here not merely disjointed [*disjunkt*] from each other, but relatively independent, they have the character of mutually-put-together *pieces*’ (p. 437); for example, ‘the head of a horse’ in relation to the other parts of the whole and its setting (p. 439).<sup>196</sup> A piece is a part that

can exist without a whole *in* which it exists; it can exist by itself, not associated with anything else, and will not then be a part. Change in, or complete annihilation of associations, does not here affect the part’s own, peculiarly qualified content, and does not eliminate its existence: only its relations fall away, the fact that it *is* a part.

(pp. 456-7)

Moments, in contrast, compose wholes in which ‘the parts have relative dependence as regards one another: we find them so closely united [*vereint*] as to be called “interpenetrating”’ (p. 437). Moments are, to put it by means of an informative tautology, non-independent ‘moments of unity [*Einheitsmomente*]’ (p. 442). The non-independence of a moment entails that such a part ‘can only be what it is [...] in a more comprehensive [*umfassenderen*] whole’ (p. 453) or that ‘without any association, as non-parts [*Nicht-Teile*], they are unthinkable’ (p. 457). In contrast, a piece is ‘separably [*getrennt*] presentable’ (p. 439).

What are the criteria according to which we measure our ability or inability to think of a part as separate? What are the criteria of independence and non-independence? The separability of a part is ascertained by the non-existence of ‘a self-evident, necessary, functional dependence [*funktionelle Abhängigkeit*] of its changes on those of coexistent phenomena [i.e. phenomenal things and pieces of

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<sup>196</sup> Husserl’s example of the severed head and limbs makes an intriguing but not, as I hope to show, inexplicable reappearance in *Difference and Repetition*. Like Husserl, Deleuze resorts to the image of ‘scattered members’ in order to characterise formal or structural indifference: the white nothingness is described as a surface on which float ‘a head without a neck, an arm without a shoulder, eyes without brows’ (*DR*, p. 26).

things]' (p. 439). Whenever, 'despite the modification or elimination' of its coexistent parts, a part remains unaffected by this change in the coexistent parts alongside which it is presented, such a part constitutes a separably presentable, independent piece. When a modification in the coexistent parts produces a modification in the part under consideration, then this part constitutes an inseparable, non-independent moment that can 'only be conceived' as part of 'more comprehensive wholes' (p. 439). Pieces, in contrast, 'appear possible, even if nothing whatever exists beside them, nothing therefore bound up with them to form a whole' (p. 439). The criterion that distinguishes, then, between independent and non-independent parts – pieces and moments, and, hence, that identifies the difference between non-comprehensive and comprehensive, 'emphatic' (p. 449) or 'total' wholes to which these parts respectively belong, is 'ability or inability-to-be-separately-presented' and this, in turn, is decided according to the existence or non-existence of 'relations of functional dependence among the changes' undergone by coexistent parts (pp. 439 and 440). This means that the non-independence of moments amounts to a 'functional dependence' and entails the existence of 'a certain necessary relationship' among moments (p. 441).

Non-independence (*Unselbstständigkeit*), thus, implies not only that the moment-part 'requires a whole', a supplementation of coexistent parts necessary for its completion, but also, and as a direct result of the previous requirement, that, in the case of moments, the whole determines the mode in which the part inheres in it. In particular, this kind of whole describes the nature of, but also prescribes the supplements needed for, the completion of the moments that compose it. The whole, that is, determines 'quite specific possibilities of law-governed inherence' for its moments. In other words, moments compose a whole by inhering in it in such a way that the composed whole constitutes an 'essential unity' that establishes its own 'definitory lawfulness' of 'fixed, necessary connections' between parts that are 'functionally interrelated' (p. 454). Thus, the unified and comprehensive wholes that are composed of moments are not 'merely factual' but, rather, 'law-bound' combinations. Unity or comprehensiveness, then, is non-independence of parts or, what is the same, the formation of a whole composed of moments is subject to and exhibits 'lawfulness in unified combinations [*einheitlichen Zusammenhängen*]' (p. 455).



### Foundation, wholeness and unity

From this analysis of the two forms of complexity in terms of separation and non-separation, independence and non-independence, Husserl extracts a definition of foundation (*Fundierung*) as the complexity of a whole of non-independent moments:

If a law of essence means that an *A* cannot as such exist except in a more comprehensive unity which connects it with an *M*, we say that an *A as such requires foundation by an M* or also that an *A as such needs to be supplemented by an M*.

(p. 463)

To be a part that requires supplementation or that is founded upon a coexistent part means that the part in question is a non-independent moment that stands in 'a *foundational relationship* [*Fundierungsverhältnis*] or in a relationship of *necessary association*' with its supplement or foundation (p. 463). The foundational relationship is a transitive one: if *A* requires *M* as its supplement, then (1) every whole in which *A*, but not *M*, inheres requires supplementation and (2) every whole in which *A*, but not *M*, inheres is itself the non-independent moment of 'every superordinate independent whole' in which *M* (the supplement) is contained. At the same time, independence and non-independence are also transitive relations: (3) if *W* is an independent part of *F*, then 'every independent part *w* of *W* also is an independent part of *F*' and (4) 'if *C* is a non-independent part of a whole *W*, it is also a non-independent part of every other whole of which *W* is a part' (p. 464). From these propositions a general conclusion ensues in relation to the wholes composed of non-independent parts, namely, that moments 'are immediately [*unmittelbar*] or mediately [*mittelbar*] founded on each other' or that they 'found [*fundieren*] a new content', in both cases 'without external assistance' (p. 475).

The upshot of the deduction of these propositions from the definition of foundation or supplementation is the attainment of 'the *pregnant concept of Whole* by way of the *notion of Foundation*' (p. 475), by means of which a rigorous concept of comprehensive or total wholes and of non-independent parts composing them is formed. How should the complexity of such wholes be understood?

By a whole we understand a range of contents which are all covered *by a single foundation* without the help of further contents. The contents of such a range we call its parts. Talk of the *singleness of the foundation* [Einheitlichkeit der Fundierung] implies that *every content is foundationally connected, whether directly or indirectly, with every content.*

(p. 475)

This makes clear why a whole of this kind is not a sum, '*a mere aggregate* [Inbegriff] or mere coexistence [Zusammen-sein]' of pieces, but concerns a functional or essential coexistence (*wesenhafte Koexistenz*) of moments (p. 480). An aggregate is not a new object since its members are associated not according to the necessity and lawfulness emanating from the parts and that is 'rooted in the pure generic nature of the contents in question'; instead, the process of composition according to which aggregates proceed is arbitrary, in that it is not governed by 'a priori laws or "laws of essence"' and, hence, in truth, the mere coexistence of pieces does not constitute composition. There is a qualitative difference between aggregation and composition. An aggregate merely involves a '*unity of reference* [...]. The objects themselves, being only held together in thought, do not succeed in founding new content [...]; no material form of association develops among them through this unity of intuition, they are possibly "quite disconnected and intrinsically unrelated"' (p. 480). In contrast, a unified whole, which is always a whole of non-independent parts, is '*a unity due to a foundation* [Fundierungseinheit]' and not merely a categorial, factual or arbitrary unity that is, when properly conceived, not a unity but the result of a coercion from outside. Unity consists in founding: '*the Idea of unity* [Einheit] or the Idea of a whole is based on the idea of "Founding", and the latter Idea upon the Idea of Pure Law' (p. 481). It is legality, not factuality, that makes a whole. A whole is '*a real* [reale] unity' of parts (p. 481); this means that its unity is the result of internal coherence, not external coercion. A '*proper whole*', as Drummond notes, requires 'no additional moment of unity over and above this interconnected unity of moments.

[...] The whole is just the interconnected unity of founding and founded moments, and its unity is just the lawful interconnections of moments'.<sup>197</sup>

The implication for the theory of parts and wholes culminates in the clarification of parthood in terms of the distinction between partial and non-partial objects. As Husserl defines separability, a separable piece of a complex whole, an atom,

is not at all conditioned by the existence of other contents, that it could exist as it is, through an *a priori* necessity of essence, even if nothing were there outside of it, even if all around were altered at will, i.e. without principle. [...] *In the 'nature' of the content itself, in its ideal essence, no dependence on other contents is rooted [gründet];* the essence that makes it what it is also leaves it unconcerned with all other contents. It may *as a matter of fact [faktisch]* be that, with the existence of this content, other contents are given, and in accordance with empirical rules.

(p. 443)

In contrast, the inseparability (*Unabtrennbarkeit*) defining inseparable moments of a complex whole

lies likewise in the positive thought of *dependence [Abhängigkeit]*. The content is by its nature bound to other contents, it cannot be, if other contents are not there together with it. We need not emphasise the fact that they form a unity with it, for can there be essential coexistence [*wesenhafte Koexistenz*] without connection or 'blending' [*Verschmelzung*], however loose? Contents which lack self-sufficiency can accordingly only exist as *partial contents [Inhaltsteile]*.

(p. 443)

Thus, Husserl arrives at a reconciliation of the two terms that had threatened to reduce the metaphysics of parts and wholes either to the convention of aggregates or to the inexplicability of magic potions, namely, the possibility of a complex whole made of parts, in which oneness and multiplicity, unity and complexity do not simply cancel each other out. Partition does belong to a whole and complexity does

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<sup>197</sup> John J. Drummond, 'Husserl's Third Logical Investigation: Parts and Wholes, Founding Connections, and the Synthetic *A Priori*' in *Husserl's Logical Investigations*, ed. by D. O. Dahlstrom (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003), pp. 57-68 (p. 62).

belong to unity, and a metaphysics of parts and wholes *is* possible, because, without reducing one to the other, essential oneness is implied in the disjointedness of multiple moments. In the end, fragmentation must not be confused with complexity and oneness must be disassociated from simplicity.

## 5.2 The foundationalist paradigm

### Separation, divisibility and parthood

Husserl's solution to the *φιλονικία* between monists and pluralists depends for its success on the claim that in it neither oneness nor multiplicity, neither wholeness nor complexity, is reduced into its opposite but that both are sustained as real. In other words, it is insisted that the unity of a whole does not amount to simplicity or lack of partial differentiation, of complexity and of partial separability; and, conversely, that the multiplicity of parts does not amount to fragmentation, to lack of ontological oneness, i.e. to the kind of partial differentiation, separability and complexity of aggregates and their pieces. The question then concerns the extent to which Husserl's account of complexity (or, what is the same, of wholeness) allows an understanding of plurality that does not at any stage reduce the many, or the part, to the one, or the whole (or, what is the same, that does not reduce the one, or the whole, to the many, or the part). The whole must be rigorously theorised as one but not simple: complex; as many but not fragmented: unified; as composed but not coerced: founded. The parts must be strictly understood as many but not fragmenting: totalisable; as unified but not undifferentiated: different. Both wholeness and parthood are real properties of things, which are, in an ontologically real sense, both multiple and one. It is to the question of whether Husserl is in the position to consistently preserve this formula to which I now turn.

I will now identify the problems arising from Husserl's account of the distinctions between moments and pieces and between the wholes that these compose, i.e. between comprehensive, ontologically unified wholes, or totalities, and fragmented, non-unified quasi-wholes, or aggregates. The difference between moments and pieces not only determines the senses of partial dependence and independence but also makes apparent what is involved in the notions of separable

parts of a divisible whole, to which I will refer as *fragmented* or non-unified, and in the notions of non-separable parts of a non-divisible whole, that is, a whole that is *unified*. A part, Husserl claims, is ‘separated’, ‘relieved from or cut apart from’ other parts if it does not ‘flow undividedly [ohne Scheidung] over into them’: the part can then be said to ‘make itself count on its own, and stand forth independently’ (p. 449). What defines the indivisibility of flow and the absence of division and separation here is that it proceeds ‘without a point of difference [unterschiedslos]’ so that the whole is partially ‘undifferentiated [unterschiedslose Einheit]’, that is, it constitutes a whole in which the transitions between moments ‘pass unbrokenly’ and the parts of which are ‘continuously conjoined [stetig aneinanderschließen]’ with neighbouring parts (p. 450). Difference, which marks separation, is discontinuity (*Diskontinuität*) and break, the demarcation of an inside and an outside of a part. A moment, then, ‘blends’, which means that in passing from it to other moments we flow on a line of continuity (*Stetigkeit*) from what it is intrinsically, from its interior, to what it relates to, to what exists outside. This continuity is, as I have argued, functional or essential: it refers to the being of parts that are related uninterruptedly in an essential whole.<sup>198</sup>

But here we notice a problem that Husserl’s theory comes up against: what is the status of this outside if it is already internal and encompassed within the being of the part? And, further, what is the status of the part if it is merely a segment of a continuous flow out of which it is abstracted? Is the explanation of non-separation of moments in terms of blending that requires more than being ‘bound up with’ other objects not equivalent to the theoretical expulsion of parthood, to a reduction of wholeness to simplicity and, hence, to the subordination of multiplicity to unity? These questions revolve around the problematic notion of differentiation, or in the case of parts and wholes, of partition as the corollary of composition: if partition, the differentiation of parts, implies difference, discontinuity and break, if, that is, parthood entails that disjointedness have a real, albeit at the moment unclear, status,

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<sup>198</sup> By ‘blendedness’ I do not mean a spatial or temporal smoothness or uninterruptedness. Spatio-temporal blending is conceived as a species of functional or essential continuity. Thus, two moments, a cause and an effect, may be blended in spite of the fact that they are apparently separated in time and space.

then it is hard to see how Husserl's theory can accommodate such an understanding of differentiation as the one required for moments. Moments require that their wholes be partially undifferentiated without succumbing to partlessness, i.e. to ontological simplicity. Thus, Husserl's theory of parts and wholes ends up with the seemingly paradoxical task: how to think of the differentiated parts of an undifferentiated whole.<sup>199</sup> It seems that mereology, the attempt to formulate a philosophical account of parts and wholes, to characterise their status, to develop theories of individuation, composition, ontogenesis and coming-into-being, fails to overcome the great dualities that, since the Presocratics, have instituted fundamental oppositions leading to paradoxes, forming dilemmas and requiring decisions and exclusive sidings: chaos and cosmos, indifference and differentiation, many and one, pieces and moments, partition and composition, conjoining and disjoining, outside and inside, complexity and simplicity, separation and non-separation, independence and dependence, parthood and wholeness, fragmentation and aggregation, separation and blending.

### **Internality and conjunction in Husserl**

Husserl's account of the relation that a part has to a whole and to other parts is important for my analysis of Deleuze's conception of one and many in more than one way. For Deleuze, the abolition of the category of the foundation is the prerequisite for a rigorous conception of parthood and multiplicity. It is precisely for this reason that such an account must take the form of a logic of unfoundedness. The examination of the theory of composition in Husserl's *Logical Investigations* provides a precise but also original determination of the concept and function of the foundation in the framework of a theory of multiplicity and, hence, it points towards the terms, aims and methods of a non-foundationalist metaphysics of parts and wholes – to the means and ends of ungrounding.<sup>200</sup> I will now try to present in a

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<sup>199</sup> Deleuze also undertakes the task of presenting and resolving this paradox by means of the notion of differenc/tiation in *Difference and Repetition*. I return to this in chapter 7.

<sup>200</sup> However, shifting mereology away moments and their wholes is only half the story of *effondement*. The next question that must be posed concerns what the theoretical alternative for the notion of parthood might be. Does doing away with moments entail the move towards

systematic way the contrasts between Husserlian and Deleuzian mereology so as to explain my earlier claim that Deleuze's account of parts and wholes develops upon the problems facing traditional accounts.

To begin with, Husserl's investigation culminates in the conclusion that composition consists in more than the function of syncategorematic ANDs: a whole, being more than merely an aggregate, gathers its parts according to the necessity and essential lawfulness of the whole that it constitutes. It is the being of the whole that has ontological priority over the being of the parts and, as a consequence, of the AND that binds the parts in the whole. The AND is nothing other than the expression of the essence of the *Fundierung* that overflows into other parts, gathering them, penetrating them and constituting them *qua* relational non-independent beings, i.e. as *Inhaltsteile*. The being of the whole also enjoys an epistemological and logical priority over the AND, since, as Drummond observes, 'the lawful necessities that unite moments depend upon the essences of those moments'.<sup>201</sup> Husserl notes that 'if we wish to be clear as to the meaning of the word "and", we must actually carry out an act of collection, and bring to fulfilment in the aggregate thus genuinely presented a meaning of the form *a and b'* (p. 508). The conjunction of moments is subject to the being of the whole or, what is the same, to the relational being of the parts; as Sokolowski puts it, 'each part, by virtue of what it is, contains within itself a rule dictating the necessary progression of supplements that it must possess, the necessary series of horizons within which it must rest'.<sup>202</sup> The part relates to co-existent parts and, hence, composes a whole but this relating precedes the part in the sense that it is the relation that prescribes the nature of the part and not vice versa; this is what it means to be a moment rather than a piece, namely, that the parts are inherently relational or that their relations are internal to the parts. To be a man is to be a whole in which reasoning and animality inhere not arbitrarily but because this is

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accounts of aggregation in terms of pieces? As I will show in the next chapter, such a move would keep mereology within the parameters of foundationalist metaphysics and would involve an impoverished conception of *effondement*.

<sup>201</sup> Drummond, 'Husserl's Third Logical Investigation', *op. cit.* p. 62.

<sup>202</sup> Robert Sokolowski, 'The Logic of Parts and Wholes in Husserl's *Investigations*', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 28 (1968), 537-553 (p. 539).

what it means to be a human being. Thus, we do not here have a conjunction of reason *and* the animal but, instead, the constitution of an animal *with* reason, the two formulas marking different kinds of wholes and referring to diverting operations of composition. A house is another such whole of moments, as is a machine conceived, in Deleuze's words, as 'a system of closer and closer connections between dependent terms [*entre termes dépendants*]' (*D*, p. 77); so is an organism defined as a 'signifying totality, or determination attributable to a subject' (*ATP*, p. 4). As Aristotle writes in the *Metaphysics*,

why are these materials a house? Because that which was the essence of a house is present. And why is this individual thing, or this body having this form, a man? Therefore what we seek is the cause [*αἴτιον*], i.e. the form [*εἶδος*], by reason of which the matter is some definite thing; and this is the substance of the thing [*οὐσία*].

(*Met.* 1041b6-8).

With Aristotle, Husserl conceives of the unity of a whole composed of moments in terms of the essential, whether functional or biological, and invariably formal or structural oneness of a definition. Composition, the law-bound arrangement of material parts, is tantamount to a formal structuring not from outside, as is the case with the coercion operative in aggregation, but either from above, from the formal being of the whole, or, what is the same, from below, from the depth of a founding part. As a consequence, the parts of a house, although in themselves indifferent, become moments: the relation between parts is inscribed in the formal definitory patterns and pre-exists the *relata* themselves *qua* the *relata* that they are.<sup>203</sup> The terms are already relational or, in Husserl's terminology, partial; relation to co-existent parts and to the whole is inherent in the part. This means that the parts are homogeneous, always opening according to their nature, which is that of the whole and the foundation, to each other. There is nothing between the parts that would imply the separability and independence accorded to the pieces of a fragmented

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<sup>203</sup> It becomes evident from this example that accounts of differentiation, composition and grounding can be correlated to accounts of building and composition in the context of architectural theory. I will explore this connection in section 7.2.



whole, no interruption of the overflowing, structuring and penetrating essence of the foundation. To found (*Fundieren*), then, is to establish a homogeneous plane, without schisms, breaks or enclosures between the related terms that inhabit it. To inhabit this plane means to be instituted as related and, hence, relation presupposes the homogeneity bestowed by the foundation, founding the relational plane that is the whole and exhaustively penetrating its parts.

One way in which this becomes apparent is with Husserl's hierarchisation of parts according to their distance from the foundation. Husserl's structures are hierarchical since, in relation to the whole, parts are further or closer from a point of structuration which is not strictly speaking a structural element, a point in or of the structure, but, more precisely, the principle of structuration itself. In this sense, Husserl's *Fundierung* has all the characteristics of an ἀρχή: it constitutes, according to Deleuze, 'a structural instance' that plays 'the role of law, or of cause' (*D*, p. 77), the fountain of legality and necessity and the subject of the unity. This point engulfs the parts and the unity of composition is *its* unity, the concomitant of *its* 'spiritual labour' (*ATP*, p. 6). On account of this labour, the *Fundierung* effectuates an *active* synthesis: a composition that is the result of its agency.<sup>204</sup> Deleuze, therefore, describes such a foundation as both 'structural *and* genetic' (*D*, p. 68) in that its spiritual labour takes a number of determinate forms. In particular, the hierarchical structuring of the foundation involves a grammar, a history, a genealogy and a teleology. Composition has a history or a genealogy which, when traced, leads back to the point of genesis; as Deleuze puts it, unified wholes possess 'the history in which they are developed' (*D*, p. vii). On account of this 'structural or generative' point (*ATP*, p. 13), these wholes are also governed by 'logico-grammatical laws', which regulate the progression of the relational conjunctions of composition (p. 494). These relations, the ANDs of conjunction between parts, directly correspond to the essential, internal nature of the foundation, which, accordingly, establishes a logic of relations or a grammar of possible conjunctions. Further, the foundation establishes the conditions

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<sup>204</sup> This activity repeats the contrast between Parmenides' passive being and Hesiod's active Earth identified in section 4.2. In chapter 7, it will also be seen to contrast with Deleuze's conception of passive synthesis.

of completion and acts not only as the origin out of which composition flows but also as the end, the destination (*ATP*, p. 323), towards which it tends, so that the structure that it develops is teleological, what Deleuze calls, 'a teleological plane' of organisation (*D*, p. 69). Thus, this point, the Greek ἀρχή, Husserl's *Fundierung* or Deleuze's 'root-foundation, *Grund, racine, fondement*' (*ATP*, p. 20), the 'point of origin, seed or centre' (*D*, p. 19), sustains the multiplicity of parts in a way that the separation necessary for the recognition of parts needs to be supplemented by the dimension of the historical, genealogical, grammatical and mereological whole in which they co-exist with other parts. In all these ways, the root imparts its own logic of causality and constitutes the causal agent of the composition, or, what is the same, of an *active* mereological synthesis. The metaphysics of composition, then, consists in the description of the cause and effect relations between the founding and founded parts of wholes.

This history imposes upon the parts a logic or, according to Husserl, 'an *a priori grammar*' of necessary composition (p. 493); that is to say, with Deleuze, that the main characteristic of this grammatical, historical and genealogical structure is the 'subordination of conjunctions to the verb to be' (*D*, p. 42). Although, the whole is a plane of homogeneous relations, homogeneity allows the measurement of distances. The root-foundation constitutes a 'hidden principle of organisation' (*D*, p. 70) that measures and establishes distances not only between its centre and the parts but also between the parts themselves. As Sokolowski notes in relation to the distinction between mediate and immediate moments, 'there is a rigid, a priori rule governing the "distance" and the mediations' between moments since 'moments cannot be haphazardly blended with one another'.<sup>205</sup> Pieces, in contrast, 'have none of the necessary hierarchical structure of mediation found in moments': 'an arbitrariness and separability are possible here that could not be found in the logic of moments and wholes. [...] One leaves the necessary logic of moments and wholes and enters the factual, contingent structure of pieces and wholes'.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Sokolowski, 'The Logic of Parts and Wholes in Husserl's *Investigations*', *op. cit.* p. 540.

<sup>206</sup> Sokolowski, 'The Logic of Parts and Wholes in Husserl's *Investigations*', *op. cit.* pp. 540 and 546.

With the notion of 'distance' I have come full circle in my examination of the parameters of traditional theories of parts and wholes. The paradoxical nature of transversal connections can now be explained in a precise manner. Transversality illustrates the contrast between the proximities between the parts of an assemblage and the distances between the founding and founded parts of Husserl's structures. In the case of pieces, the distinction between immediate and mediate parts, parts and parts of parts, is, if not arbitrary, dependent upon the preferred 'order of division' (or piecing, *Zerstückung*):<sup>207</sup>

There are diverse possible divisions in which the same part comes up, sometimes earlier, sometimes later, so that we have no temptation to accord any privilege to one part over another as regards the way in which it is contained in the whole. [...] But in themselves the remotest of these parts are no further from the whole than the nearest.

(Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, *op. cit.* p. 470)

However, in comprehensive wholes composed of moments, the relation of founding necessitates its order of division that is none other than the nexus of the essential relations that the foundation has to other parts or that the whole has to its moments. This nexus puts in place a system of coordinates, a means of measuring distance from the *Fundierung*. In this way, there is an objective and necessary division of mediate and immediate horizontal relations between parts and parts of parts, forming neighbourhoods. At the same time, the parts are vertically related to their founding supplement; these relations are also measurable and, hence, either immediate or progressively mediate. Therefore, there are two operations of measuring at work in a whole of moments: first, the horizontal measuring of proximity involved in demarcating neighbourhoods. However, distances are measured between parts because distances are measured between each founded part and the foundation. By means of the position they occupy relatively to the foundation, parts are said to be nearer or remoter (*nähere - fernere*) in relation to other parts, thus standing 'in relations of nearer or remoter connection', and, at the same

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<sup>207</sup> As I will argue in the next chapter, the parts of Deleuze's wholes are *not* to be construed as Husserl's pieces.

time, in relation to the whole, thus constituting 'primary, secondary... parts of a whole' (p. 472). Thus, the proximity of moments, their neighbourhood or 'the requisite gradations of "distance"' (p. 474), presupposes that these neighbourhoods occupy a position in the plane of organisation on which they find themselves, whether mediately or immediately, relating to an organising and founding centre.

To conclude, composition is a law-governed operation that proceeds to gather parts that are intrinsically related (relations of interiority) as the parts that they are to a foundation that supplements them and causes them and which bestows and sustains the unity of the whole: the unity of the whole is the unity of the foundation and cause, in which all parts are positioned and measured, genealogically referring back to the foundation, the history of which is the history of the composition of the whole, which, in turn, is hierarchically structured according to the criterion of distance and the principle of causality.

## 6 Epicurean accounts of partial differentiation

### 6.1 How to escape essentialism

#### Line-parts and structure

The principles of heterogeneity, connection and multiplicity are the fundamental principles of the mereology developed in *A Thousand Plateaus*. By means of these principles, Deleuze and Guattari develop a theory of parts and wholes that aims to escape the mereological essentialism of Husserl's logic. Opposing the homogeneity of the plane of organization, the authors affirm the heterogeneity of the composing elements of the plane of consistency; against the reduction of compositional connection to the being of the overflowing foundation (IS), they seek to focus on the operation of a pure and transversal conjunction (AND); and in contrast to the account of the multiplicity of parts in the adjectival terms of the arborescent whole that founds its parts as its moments, they seek to develop a theory of multiplicity that is not mediated by the being of the root but that reaches multiplicity immediately as a noun. In these three ways Deleuze and Guattari develop a metaphysics of composition that resists explaining the relations between parts with other parts and with their wholes as relations between founding and founded objects, that is, in the foundationalist terms of essential dependence. Composition does not take place within the essential continuity of a total whole but between heterogeneous elements in a whole that remains open. We have discovered, therefore, some of the conditions that a theory of partial differentiation must satisfy if it is to be successful. Positively, these were already contained in the account of the rhizome; but also negatively, the study of Husserl's logic has identified the peril that a theory of connections must avoid.

At the same time however, the principles of heterogeneity, connection and multiplicity raise difficult questions concerning the oneness of the rhizomatic structure and the metaphysics of composition that underlies the account of the assemblage. To begin with, what of parts and composition, what of assemblages that are, after all, collective? What are the principles according to which assemblages

collect and what kind of oneness do their collections exhibit? Deleuze and Guattari's response consists in the claim that the rhizomatic assemblage is a collection of lines, not of points:

Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations between the points and biunivocal relationships between the positions, the rhizome is made only of lines: lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialisation as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature.

(*ATP*, p. 23)

An assemblage is composed of lines, that is, moving parts that relate only insofar as they remain heterogeneous. Being unassignable to boundary points, these lines should not be 'confused with lineages [*lignées*] of the arborescent type, which are merely localisable linkages between points and positions' (*ATP*, p. 23). Rhizomatic composition, therefore, does not consist in the drawing of connecting lines between points. Instead, it is the lines themselves that are the constitutive components of the rhizome: 'a line does not go from one point to another, but passes between the points' (*D*, p. vii). Insofar as an assemblage is composed of lines or dimensions it constitutes a non-totalisable multiplicity. Individuals and groups are assemblages; they are 'neither unities nor totalities, but *multiplicities*', that is, composed of 'a set of lines or dimensions which are irreducible to one another' (*D*, p. vi).

The nomenclature of lines 'that do not amount to the path of a point' (*D*, p. 19) and of becomings in which 'there is no history' (*D*, p. 22) is meant to meet the need to refer to parts in a way that does not, from the start, inscribe them under the constitutive governance of the structuring foundation and its structured whole. It remains to be seen how Deleuze and Guattari think that line-parts explain the resistance to totalisation, that is, how wholes that are 'neither unities nor totalities' are wholes the parts of which must be conceived as lines and not as points or, conversely, how being composed of lines amounts to being constituted as a non-total whole. What is a multiplicity of line-parts? And in what does wholeness *without unity or totality* consist? These questions, the first concerning the nature of parts of non-

totalisable wholes and the second concerning the nature of non-totalisable wholes themselves, may be expressed in the terms that Husserl employs in his analysis of parthood and composition. Since, according to Husserl, the unity or totality of a whole is the result of essential dependence or founding, what, then, is a part that is neither founded nor founding; and what is a whole that lacks foundation? What is involved in 'unfounding' (*effondement*), undoing the *Fundierung* with the overflowing of which Husserl identifies totality and unity? In particular, is the transition from points to lines equivalent to a shift from moments to pieces?

### **Beyond pieces**

I will try to show that the reversal of priority between part and whole or, what is the same, between parts as lines and as positions, does not end up with the arbitrariness of pieces and their artificial aggregative wholes. Deleuze's multiplicities are not aggregates; their parts are not pieces. Instead, I will argue that, for Deleuze, mere aggregates are, as Husserl, following Aristotle, had noted, philosophically uninteresting. This is because in theories in which composition is purportedly reduced to aggregation the problem is not resolved or legitimately evaded but only overlooked or deferred. When the self-enclosed unity of the pieces is taken to be the proper starting point, no thought of multiplicity before unity has been reached; rather unity has now been secured *in* the enclosed atom. If pieces resist unification, if they are available only as independent parts of a fragmented sum, it is because they are already unities enclosed upon and in themselves. Being thus secure (*ἀσφαλές*), the atom is a micro-Earth or micro-cosmos. Pieces repeat the problem rather than bypass it: this is the crux of Deleuze's dissatisfaction with ancient atomism.

What is the significance of understanding parthood in terms of line-parts? How does the terminological shift from points to lines correspond to a shift in the ontology of parts and wholes? In particular, is such a shift from points to lines equivalent to a shift from moments to pieces? These are the questions that I will try to answer in this chapter by means of an examination of Deleuze's criticisms of ancient atomism (which will lead to an examination of Deleuze's account of parthood in the next chapter). Deleuze's treatment of atomism is significant in three related

ways. First, it shows what kind of ontological shift is involved in the transition from points to lines; second, and as a result, it makes clear Deleuze's aim and motive in shifting the mereological vocabulary from points to lines; and finally, it shows what, in Deleuze's sense, it means to unground, to undo the *Fundierung*, the Earth, the tree. In other words, it sets down the conditions for a successful Deleuzian critique of Husserl's metaphysics of parts and wholes and of the Hesiodic response to the problem of composition. In respect to this last point, my treatment of atomism will aim to make clear that to unfound Husserl's founded moments does not mean to end up with Husserl's unfounded pieces.

In addition, the case of atomism offers rare shared ground between Badiou's and Deleuze's conceptions of pluralism: a set of shared philosophical terms and theoretical aspirations through which the points of contrast stand out in relief. Both Deleuze and Badiou appropriate Lucretius as a philosophical progenitor of their endeavours to establish a coherent metaphysics of multiplicity (*D*, p. 11). For Deleuze, Lucretius belongs to the line of thinkers 'who seemed to be part of the history of philosophy, but who escaped from it in one respect, or altogether' (*D*, p. 11); while for Badiou, Lucretius is 'the one who takes the history of being through a disseminated multiplicity foreign to everything that Heidegger tells us of metaphysics since Plato'.<sup>208</sup> Badiou deems 'the magnificent Lucretius' to be a consummate philosopher of the 'multiple-without oneness' (*TW*, p. 43) and argues that ancient atomism 'firmly establishes [thinking] within the certitude of the multiple' (*TW*, p. 43). However, in contrast to Badiou's enthusiasm, I will argue that Deleuze's appraisal of atomism is reserved, at least in those writings that concern the presentation of *Deleuze's* philosophy. Thus, the examination and appraisal of the atom provides an interface between the two rival ontologies, which reveals with greater precision how Badiou and Deleuze diverge in their construals of 'the theory of multiples (or rational ontology)' (*TW*, p. 197), in their accounts of the conditions for an adequate account of *πλήθος* and in their understanding of the task of *effondement*.

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<sup>208</sup> Alain Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, trans. and ed. by Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens (London: Continuum, 2005), p. 80.



## 6.2 Deleuze and atomism

### Naturalist cosmogony (*Logic of Sense*)

In 'The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy' Deleuze commends the atomist doctrine developed in Epicurus' *Letter to Herodotus* and in Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things* for thinking 'the diverse as diverse' (*LS*, p. 266). It is, he claims, with Epicurus and Lucretius that 'the real noble acts of philosophical pluralism begin' (*LS*, p. 267).<sup>209</sup> Atomism is a speculative and practical naturalism because it is Nature that constitutes the principle of diversity that explains the production of the diverse. Actual or worldly diversity, the diversity of 'the products of Nature', appears in three guises: as specificity, or 'the diversity of species', as individuality, or 'the diversity of individuals which are members of the same species', and as heterogeneity, or 'the diversity of the parts which together compose an individual' (*LS*, p. 266). In all these aspects, the principle that guides the production of the diversity of the products of nature is, according to the atomists, Nature herself. Thus, Nature is 'the production of the diverse' (*LS*, p. 267) or the principle of production of the diversity of parts. As Epicurus explains, 'there exists nothing in addition to the totality, which would enter into it and produce the change' (*Ep. Hdt.* 39). There is no principle of production outside Nature: 'there is no principle for these [atoms and void]' (*Ep. Hdt.* 44). Nature is both product and production. The explanatory elegance of atomism is a result of such ontological frugality, which avoids the hidden, supplementary and divine dimensions of the Hesiodic/Husserlian model of production.

The Epicurean cosmos is a collection of atoms, that is, of parts 'of the sort from which a world might come to be or by which it might be made' (*Ep. Hdt.* 45).

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<sup>209</sup> Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, trans. by Martin Ferguson Smith (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001). For Epicurus' *Letter to Herodotus* [*Ep. Hdt.*] I will be relying on the translations found in the two main anthologies on Hellenistic thought: Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), pp. 5-19; and A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), I. Subsequent references to Epicurus and Lucretius will be given parenthetically in the text.

What is this sort of part and what kind of world does it construct? Elsewhere, and in a different context, Deleuze replies: the atomists' world is

a world in *process*, an *archipelago*. Not even a puzzle, whose pieces [*pièces*] when fitted together would constitute a whole, but rather a wall of loose, uncemented stones [*un mur de pierres libres, non cimentées*], where every element has a value in itself but also in relation to other: isolated and floating relations [*isolates et relations flottantes*], islands and straits [*îles et entre-îles*], immobile points and sinuous lines.

(CC, p. 86)

Insofar as it is Nature that produces the diversity of the world, this world stands in stark contrast to the Hesiodic cosmos in respect of its structure, genesis and power of production. The parts of the Epicurean world, Deleuze writes, compose 'a sum which does not totalise its own elements', so that Nature 'is a sum, not a whole' (LS, p. 267). Whereas Hesiod's Earth bears the cosmos by constituting the causal and productive supplement and totalising foundation of the multiplicity of parts, the atomists' Nature constitutes a principle of distribution of 'parts that cannot be totalised' (LS, p. 267). The resistance to totalisation means that as a principle of composition, Nature is a 'power' of conjunction: 'it expresses itself through "and", and not through "is"'. This *and* that [...] (LS, p. 267). Insofar as the world refers to Nature as the principle underlying the production of worldly diversity, then the product refers not to a producer but to a process of immanent production. Whereas Earth gathers its parts together '*all at once*', this simultaneity even entailing, as I showed, a history, the parts of the Epicurean world exist '*one by one*', their combinations never 'adequate to Nature'. On the contrary, according to Deleuze's interpretation of Lucretius, Nature is the principle of a composition that composes without reference to 'Being, the One and the Whole' (LS, p. 267). Thus, the atomists attempted to make sense of actual macroscopic diversity with reference to a realm of microscopic diversity, that is, in terms of atomic multiplicity and, further, they tried to understand the principle of this multiplicity in a manner that made them anti-Hesiodic in their theology, anti-Platonist in their ontology and anti-Aristotelian in their physics, resisting the identification of 'the principle with the One or the Whole' (LS, p. 267), as ἀρχή,

*Fundierung* or root. The parts of *their* wholes are like the loose and uncemented stones of a wall.

### **Atomist conception of relations (*Immanence: Essays on A Life*)**

The thread is picked up again in a late essay on Hume included in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, in which Deleuze attempts a final appraisal of atomism.<sup>210</sup> As in the earlier essay on Lucretius appended to *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze revisits the theme of the Epicurean cosmos, of its composition and of the type of relationality that obtains between its atomic components. The tone remains one of approval, commendation and intellectual lineage, affinity and alliance. This time, however, the role of the ‘secret link’, as he puts it elsewhere, binding together ‘Lucretius, Hume, Spinoza, and Nietzsche’ (*N*, p. 6) is not played by the theme of naturalism but by the problematic of a logic of relations constituted by ‘the hatred of interiority’ and ‘the externality of forces’ (*N*, p. 6). The atomists’ world is described as

a world of exteriority, [...] a world in which terms are veritable atoms and relations veritable external passages; a world in which the conjunction “and” dethrones the interiority of the verb “is”; a harlequin world of multicoloured patterns and non-totalisable fragments where communication takes place through external relations.

(*PI*, p. 38)

The entanglements of atoms correspond to a way of composition in which the connectivity and relationality of ‘punctual minima’ is always ‘established between these terms’ and are ‘always external to them’. In this way, Epicurean (in the context of this essay, Humean) theory ‘breaks with the constraining form of the predicative judgment and makes possible an autonomous logic of relations, discovering a conjunctive world of atoms and relations’ (*PI*, p. 38).<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. by Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2005), pp. 35-52. Hereafter cited as *PI*. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>211</sup> The externality of relations is also the focus of Deleuze’s treatment of associationism in *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume’s Theory of Human Nature*, trans. by Constantin Boundas (New York: Columbia, 1991). In this early text on Hume’s philosophy, Deleuze, for

### **Fragments, plinths and shattered bricks**

However, the link connecting Deleuze and ancient (Presocratic and Hellenistic) atomism is most conspicuous in a series of writings that develop the notion of the fragmentary, a mereological term that Deleuze casts against the essentialist, Hesiodic or Husserlian conception of parthood. A short section in *Anti-Oedipus* ('The Whole and Its Parts', pp. 42-50) and passages from *Essays Critical and Clinical* (mainly from 'Whitman') and *Foucault* elaborate the notion of the fragmentary.

To begin with, there is the common knowledge that Deleuze's mereology is explicitly committed to a mode of production of wholes (composition) that does not have 'recourse either to any sort of original totality (not even one that has been lost), or to a subsequent totality that may not yet have come about'.<sup>212</sup> This unequivocal commitment fosters the anti-essentialist import of Deleuzian metaphysics. Thus, 'it is only the category of multiplicity, used as a substantive and going beyond both the One and the many, beyond the predicative relation of the One and the many' that can account for the production of wholes composed of fragments (*AO*, p. 42). This mode of production (the 'desiring-production' of *Anti-Oedipus*) is 'pure multiplicity, that is to say, an affirmation that is irreducible to any sort of unity' (*AO*, p. 42). This is a forceful definition of multiplicity; it establishes that the oft-repeated Deleuzian slogan and prescription to think multiplicity as a substantive rather than as an adjective is tantamount to treating the multiple as irreducible to any kind of unity. The fragment responds to this explicit and vocal theoretical commitment.

What does that imply for the conception of the fragment and of the fragmentary whole? A fragmented whole is one composed of 'partial objects, bricks that have been shattered to bits, and leftovers' (*AO*, p. 42); in the 'fragmented universe', on the other hand, 'the law never unites anything in a single Whole (*AO*, p.

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example, claims that 'whether as relations of ideas or as relations of objects, relations are always external to their terms' (p. 66).

<sup>212</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (London: Athone Press, 1984), p. 42. Hereafter cited as *AO*. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

43). This conception of the fragment and of the 'peripheral totality' that it inhabits should be distinguished from a classical version of the notion:

We no longer believe in the myth of the existence of fragments that, like pieces of an antique statue, are merely waiting for the last one to be turned up, so that they may all be glued back together to create a unity that is precisely the same as the original unity. We no longer believe in a primordial totality that once existed, or in a final totality that awaits us at some future date. [...] We believe only in totalities that are peripheral. And if we discover such a totality alongside various separate parts, it is a whole *of* these particular parts but does not totalise them; it is a unity *of* all of these particular parts but does not unify them; rather, it is added to them as a new part fabricated separately.

(AO, p. 42)

These definitions contained in these passages posit an emphatic separation between unity and multiplicity. In effect, Deleuze and Guattari's notion of multiplicity, that is, multiplicity 'used as a substantive and going beyond both the One and the many', can only be reached if the formations of the multiple are divested of any sense of oneness. As Deleuze and Guattari claim, the fragmented whole 'does not totalise' the parts *alongside* which the whole appears and the whole *of* which it is; 'it is a unity *of* all of these particular parts but does not unify them'. Such a non-totalising totality is 'a sum that never succeeds in bringing its various parts together so as to form a whole' (AO, p. 42). This is the sense in which these totalities are construed neither as 'primordial' nor as 'final' but only as 'peripheral', that is, superimposed and fabricated as a by-product of the production:

the Whole itself is a product, produced as nothing more than a part alongside other parts, which it neither unifies nor totalises, though it has an effect on these other parts simply because it establishes aberrant paths of communication between noncommunicating vessels, transverse unities between elements that retain all their differences within their own particular boundaries.

(AO, p. 43)

But the whole is not just a part that coexists alongside the fragments that 'it neither unifies nor totalises' (AO, p. 43): the whole is 'contiguous to them, it exists as a

product that is produced apart from them and yet at the same time is related to them' (AO, pp. 43-4).

What does it mean to say that fragments are non-totalisable parts and that they belong to non-totalising wholes? The formulations of *Anti-Oedipus* seem to push Deleuze and Guattari's metaphysics towards a conception of parthood in terms of independent pieces and of wholeness in terms of fragmented ensembles that are only nominally unified. The description of fragments reflects such a tendency: parts are likened to 'hermetically sealed boxes, non-communicating vessels, watertight compartments' (AO, pp. 42-3). As is the case with atoms, these fragments constitute pieces of a puzzle belonging not to any one puzzle but to many, pieces assembled by forcing them into a certain place where they may or may not belong, their unmatched edges violently bent out of shape, forcibly made to fit together, to interlock, with a number of pieces always left over.

(AO, p. 43)

The issue here concerns the nature of the gaps that subsist 'even between things that are contiguous' (AO, p. 43) and of the kind of 'interlocking' that takes place between fragments and over the intervals that separate them. There is the danger here that Deleuze and Guattari, in their attempt to dissociate their ontology from the essentialism of moments and the internal relations of the life of the foundation, become committed to the existence of independent pieces separated by void that float like moving islands in a sea of not-being (*spatium as vacuum*).<sup>213</sup>

In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, this entanglement is likened to the interlocking of uncemented stones of a wall: 'the world as a collection of heterogeneous parts [*ensemble des parties hétérogènes*]: an infinite patchwork, or an endless wall [*mur*] of dry stones (a cemented wall, or the pieces [*morceaux*] of a puzzle, would reconstitute a totality)' (CC, p. 57). The parts of this wall are singularities, that is, 'remarkable and non-totalisable parts [*parties remarquables et non totalisables*] extracted from a series of ordinary points' (CC, p. 57). These parts are neither moments nor pieces, but

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<sup>213</sup> I explain what the danger involves in detail in section 6.3.

fragments and their walls constitute ‘collections of fragments [*fragments*]’ (CC, p. 56). Fragments are ‘grains, “granulations”, ‘remarkable parts’ that reveal or at least refer to ‘the hidden background’. Conversely, parts are ‘fragments that cannot be totalised’ (CC, p. 58). The wall itself is a whole that must be invented, fabricated or conquered: ‘a kind of whole [*tout*] must be constructed, a whole that is all the more paradoxical in that it only comes *after* the fragments and leaves them intact, making no attempt to totalise them’ (CC, p. 58). According to mereological essentialism, the properties of parts are determined by their distance from the foundation or by the coordinates that it occupies within the whole, so that what parts do or possess is an emergent function that does not pre-exist the whole. The moment has only a function that exhausts its being. The relations between the parts permeate and exhaust them. Deleuze’s stones, in contrast, compose a whole in which ‘relations are external to their terms’ (CC, p. 58). Again, it seems that the outside is here construed in atomist terms as *vacuum*; this guarantees and explains in what externality consists and how the *relata* that are irreducible to the relations that are assigned them in a whole and *after* the unity of the whole come to be related – *before* unity – by means of relations that remain firmly outside them and which pre-exist the formation of the whole or the filling of the ‘empty places [*places vides*]’ by fragments (F, p. 14), which *become* interlocked, entangled relational parts *after* the relations and *before* the whole the parts of which they are. On the contrary, Deleuze argues that ‘relations are not internal to a Whole [*les relations ne sont pas intérieures à un Tout*]; rather, the Whole is derived from the external relations [*le tout qui découle des relations extérieures*] of a given moment, and varies with them’ (CC, p. 59). In this way, the claim that relations are external to the *relata* implies the primacy of relations over the *relata* and of the parts over the whole (as is argued in DeLanda’s interpretation).

Like the atomists’ cosmos, the world that Deleuze charts in his writings on the notion of the fragment neither needs nor allows a cosmogonical principle that would reside outside the cosmos. The externality of relations is the fundamental premise of his naturalism. Nature, Deleuze writes in true Epicurean spirit, ‘is not a form, but rather the process of establishing relations [*mise en relation*]. It invents a polyphony: it is not a totality but an assembly [*réunion*], a “conclave”, a “plenary

session''' (CC, p. 59). All one is allowed to say about this process of establishing relations is that they constitute

processes of companionship [*commensalité*] and conviviality, which are not pre-existent givens but are elaborated between heterogeneous living beings in such a way that they create a tissue of shifting relations [*un tissu de relations mouvantes*], in which the melody of one part intervenes as a motif in the melody of another (the bee and the flower).

(CC, p. 59)

It is, therefore, important to realise that the parts of the fragmented cosmos hold fast in their heterogeneity: their relationality, which is only added to them when they come to occupy the empty places that are created by relations, does not belong to them from inside and, hence, they do not constitute non-independent partial objects in the way that Husserl's moments were, from the beginning constituted *within* and *after* the totalising whole that they make up, as *Inhaltsteile*. Internal relations delimit 'the empire of structure': structure is defined as a whole that 'has an axiomatic nature' and that 'forms a homogeneous system' (F, p. 14). In contrast, the only connections that the heterogeneity of the parts allows are relations of 'camaraderie' between fragments that are independent in the sense that these relations are established – 'acquired and created' (CC, p. 60) – *between* the fragments and *outside* them. Thus, 'camaraderie is the variability that implies an encounter with the Outside' (CC, p. 60). This is a mode of connection that does not emanate from a foundation that connects parts while staying fast within itself (*ἀσφαλῆς*). This is what it means to say that fragments are spontaneous (*fragments spontanés*): their movement is not pre-determined to cross the positions assigned by the foundation; instead, the parts are free to fall into empty places established by 'living relations' existing outside them and between them. The parts are separated by 'intervals [*intervalles*]' guaranteeing their heterogeneity and it is in these intervals – the Outside and the *entre-deux* – that processes of composition and production take place. Conjunction presupposes disjunction: the AND ceases to be subordinated to the IS only when it takes places between conjuncts that are separate, in the disjunctive expanses of what-is-not.



These are the basic parameters in which Deleuze develops an account of interlocking and entanglement that one may safely situate within the Epicurean tradition. Deleuze's wall of uncemented stones – of 'plinths [*socle*]' (*F*, p. 16) – serves as a model according to which composition is redefined as the weaving of 'a web of variable relations [*une collection de relations variables*], which are not merged [*confodent*] into a whole, but produce the only whole that man is capable of conquering in a given situation' (*CC*, p. 60).

### **The problem of atomic independence (*Difference and Repetition*)**

The focus is different in the brief but significant treatment of atomism in *Difference and Repetition*. The atomists are again commended for positing 'multiplicities of atoms' (*DR*, p. 232). Thus, they insisted that atomic microscopic plurality precedes actual macroscopic unity: the unity of sensible wholes is the product of aggregation of atoms that are 'related to other atoms at the heart of structures which are actualized in sensible composites' (*DR*, p. 232). The aggregative principle that purports to explain the whole made of parts in terms of atomic entanglement is the *clinamen*, which Deleuze interprets as the condition of inter-atomic relationality.

However, the atomists' account of multiplicity as atomic compromises the force of their pluralism. This becomes evident as soon as one poses the question of the nature of the multiple parts of Nature. Nature is a sum, but a sum of what? Deleuze responds reading Lucretius: Nature before individuals, their parts and their species, is 'addition of indivisibles', atoms, and 'empty spaces', void, 'plenitude and void, beings and nonbeings' (*LS*, p. 267); in Epicurus' own words, 'the totality [*τὸ πᾶν*] is [made up of] bodies [*σώματα*] and void [*κενόν*]' (*Ep. Hdt.* 39). It is at this point that Deleuze raises his objection: Nature is 'multiplicities of atoms' but 'the Epicurean atom still retains too much independence, a shape and an actuality' (*DR*, p. 233). If, as Curd puts it, 'each atom is internally unified',<sup>214</sup> then atomism merely transposes the problem of composition within the atom. It is the problem of intra-atomic complexity which now requires explanation. The problem of the manyness of

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<sup>214</sup> Curd, 'Parmenides and After: Unity and Plurality', *op. cit.* p. 47.

the many, of what is essential about multiplicity, parthood and complexity, is pushed deeper within the part that constitutes a whole unto itself.

Thus, in spite of the unreservedly positive assessments one finds in *Logic of Sense, Anti-Oedipus, Foucault, Essays Critical and Clinical* and the late essays on immanence, I will argue that atomism fails to become a rigorous theory of multiplicity since it fails to meet the demands that Deleuze himself places upon such a theory: its elements are the exact opposite of the rhizomatic ‘open system [*système ouvert*]’ (N, p. 32) of the kind of multiplicity or diversity in which conjunctions and relations are ‘set free’ at the expense of identities (N, p. 44). In order to reach a concept of the many that does not presuppose that ‘it’s still Unity, and thus being, that’s primary, and that supposedly becomes multiple’ (N, p. 44), a theory of composition must steer clear of *both* varieties of the logic of totalisation: that is, the danger relies not only in theories that reduce composition to the ‘externalisation of a whole [*exteriorisation du tout*]’, as is the case with the *Fundierung*, but also in those theories that reduce composition to the ‘internalisation in a whole [*interiorisation dans un tout*]’, as is the case with the atom (N, p. 64). We recognize in these two extremes the dangers that, in a more general sense, face the concept of composition: the reduction to magic and to violence and it has now become clear that both these dangers presuppose a logic of totalisation, of founding, whether Epicurean (internalization of the term) or Hesiodic (externalization of whole). Instead, Deleuze declares,

multiplicity is never in the terms, however many, nor in all the terms together, the whole [*totalité*]. Multiplicity is precisely in the “and”, which is different in nature from elementary components [*elements*] and collections of them [*ensembles*].

(N, p. 44)

In other words, I will also argue that, in spite of appearances to the contrary – and there are plenty of those in Deleuze’s writings as my survey has shown – the *fragment*, which constitutes Deleuze’s mereological alternative to the *moment* of essentialist composition and which seemed to situate Deleuze safely in the Epicurean

tradition, is not to be confused with the *piece*; or, what is the same, that the fragment (or any term that designates a Deleuzian part) is *neither* moment *nor* piece.

### 6.3 The critique of atomism: entanglement, disjunction, *spatium*

#### Atoms, the void and entanglement

What does it mean to say that atoms 'have too much independence'? And how does this accusation relate to Deleuze's diagnosis (in *Difference and Repetition*) of the failure of ancient atomism to think in terms of this middle and of the AND of transversal connectivity, as described in section 4.2 above? In order to answer this question, I must first make clear what atomic independence consists in and, further, what, according to the atomists, lies between atomic elements so as to determine the nature and function of the AND as deployed in the atomist theory of construction.

It would be misleading to say that atoms and void are components of macro-structures, since void is precisely not-being and Epicurean physics is intent on guaranteeing that 'the changes are not into what is not nor from what is not' (*Ep. Hdt.* 54, cf. 38-9), in accordance with the Eleatic injunction, which precluded the postulation of not-being as a constituent element in a dualist ontology. Borrowing Sedley's helpful analogy, the division between bodies and void should not be understood as a 'division of a monochrome computer-screen into black and white pixels' but, instead, as the division between the pixels and the computer screen itself: the void 'stands in the background, providing bodies with location, with the gaps between them, and with room to move', but it does not constitute a 'second constituent' of composition alongside body. Thus, strictly speaking, 'compound objects are made exclusively of body'.<sup>215</sup> However, it would be equally misleading to say that Epicurean physics begins with body for Epicurus consistently refers to bodies in the plural. This explains why the void is posited by Epicurus as the second of the two irreducible existents or 'complete natures' making up the universe (*Ep.*

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<sup>215</sup> David Sedley, 'Hellenistic Physics and Metaphysics' in *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. by Keimpe Algra, Jonathan Barnes, Jaap Mansfeld and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 355-411 (p. 369).

*Hdt.* 40). Insofar as the Epicurean elements are a multiplicity of bodies (τὸ πλῆθος τῶν σωμάτων) (*Ep. Hdt.* 41), then, in Deleuze's words, 'the Nature of things is coordination and disjunction' (*LS*, p. 268), although, as I shall argue, Deleuze's understanding of disjunction differs significantly from the Epicurean discontinuity or discreteness. Again, it must be kept in mind that the atomists' disjunction is not another way of being or of being-a-constituent but is what is other than being, not-being; bodies and void are not two constituents of body but bodies are located in the void. The atomists understood that in order to begin with a multiplicity of bodies, they must begin with a disjunction that is real and for which they account in terms of 'that which we call void and space [χώρα] and intangible nature [ἀναφή φύσιν]' (*Ep. Hdt.* 40), and Lucretius qualifies the intangibility of the void (*intactile*) as the inability of 'empty space [*vacuum*]' to 'prevent anything from passing through it in any direction' (*Lucr.* 1.437-9). The nature of body, on the other hand, is 'to prevent and obstruct' (*Lucr.* 1. 337). As Sedley observes, 'body *per se* is treated as absolutely resistant, *space* as absolutely non-resistant'.<sup>216</sup> Thus, the void is not an element of being that becomes mixed with being; body and void have, as Lucretius explains, 'two completely different natures' so that 'wherever there is empty space [*spatium*] [...] there is no matter [*corpus*]; and again, wherever matter is stationed, under no circumstances is there empty void' (*Lucr.* 1.504-9).

Atomic being, then, receives its fundamental determination in Lucretius' qualification 'without void [*sine inani*]' (*Lucr.* 1.538). From this Epicurus draws two further qualifications: 'solid [στερεόν] and undissolved [ἀδιάλυτον]' (*Ep. Hdt.* 54), both of which, however, refer to a single characteristic ('without void') viewed from two different angles. First, bodies are undissolved and this means, on the one hand, that they 'remain firmly [ἰσχύοντα ὑπομένειν] during the dissolutions [ἐν ταῖς διαλύσεσι] of compounds' (*Ep. Hdt.* 41) and, on the other hand, that they are that 'from which compounds both come and into which they are dissolved [διαλύονται]' (42) while themselves constituting permanent entities, 'not being subject to dissolution [διαλυθήσεται] in any way or fashion' (41). Primary elements are,

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<sup>216</sup> Sedley, 'Hellenistic Physics and Metaphysics', *op. cit.* p. 369.

therefore, 'atomic [ἄτομα] and unchangeable [ἀμετάβλητα]' (40). Second, bodies are full (μεσπᾶ, 42); they are, according to Long, 'wholly impenetrable' or, according to Sedley, 'completely rigid' because they are wholly bodies.<sup>217</sup> Deleuze comments that the being of atomists, bodies in the plural, is not, in contrast to the being of their Presocratic and Aristotelian predecessors and contemporaries, 'fleeting, porous, friable, or brittle' (*LS*, p. 268). Atomic solidity (στερεότης, 44) signifies the absence of emptiness from within the atom and the fact that no residue of void is contained in it. The atom, therefore, constitutes 'a complete plenum' in itself (*Lucretius*, 1.525). For this reason atoms are 'solid and simple' (1.548) and it becomes clear that when Lucretius describes them as 'solid and without void' (1.510), he means that atoms are solid *because* they are without void. Thus, he argues that 'it is impossible for anything containing no void to be crushed or smashed or cut in two' (1.532-3) precisely because there is no other way in which such partition could take place: for the ancient atomists, partial differentiation is understood exclusively in terms of discreteness, that is, in terms of the discontinuity of not-being.

Hence, the void resides between atoms and separates them but also marks the unity of the atom itself: it is because the atom is devoid of void that it is indivisible and unified in itself. The unity of the atom is reflected in the fact that it remains wholly foreign to the void, while the externality of the void is the prerequisite for atomic unity. Thus, it is on account of the absolute separation of bodies from each other, guaranteed by the fact that between bodies and, that is to say, outside bodies there is void, that atoms are indivisible unities. The void is between and external to beings; in it being what is not being, outside and other than being, it is not-being. However, the void exists – and here Epicurus resorts to cognate forms of εἶναι – *qua* what is not, outside being, on the outside of beings, that is, between beings. Bodies exist and move through 'the void which separates [διορίζουσα] each of them'.

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<sup>217</sup> Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, *op. cit.* p. 32; Sedley, 'Hellenistic Physics and Metaphysics', *op. cit.* p. 369.

Conversely, the void exists between bodies; it is the place in which they are and through which they move without resistance (*Ep. Hdt.* 44.).<sup>218</sup>

Thus, a compound whole composed of atoms is an entanglement (*περιπλοκή*) of absolutely separate elements. The conjunction of atoms in such compounds presupposes disjunction between the elements, which therefore become entangled (*πλεκτικῶν*) from without and never from within. Enclosure requires closure: atoms are enclosed in compounds *because* they are closed in themselves. As a consequence, the atomists do not propound a theory of composition by mixture of being and not-being, but a theory of entanglement or intertwinement (an account of *περιπλοκή*) according to which discrete beings interlock when they are trapped or enclosed (*στεγαζόμενοι*), confined or locked (*κεκλειμέναι*) with other beings existing and moving in empty space (*Ep. Hdt.* 43). This does not amount to a theory of mixture because the density and solidity of body is constant, being invariably absolutely full; the same applies to the intangibility and non-resistance of the void, being invariably absolutely empty. Macroscopic objects, the products of complication, are more or less porous precisely because they are compounds not of being and not-being but of beings in not-being. Phenomena of relative porosity (the fact that ‘sounds penetrate partitions and wing their way through the walls of houses’ and that ‘numbing cold permeates to our very bones’, *Lucr.* 1.354-5) presuppose an absolutely non-porous element (porosity=0) existing and moving in an absolutely porous medium (porosity=1). Void is absolutely permeable, body absolutely impermeable; these are exhaustive definitions. Phenomena of relative fluidity and solidity observable in macroscopic bodies concern neither the absolute rigidity of bodies nor the absolute intangibility of the void, but only the ratio expressing the number of atomic magnitudes locked in a particular segment of space. This ratio expresses a relative density neither of being nor of not-being nor, what is more, of a mixture of being and not-being but a density that is relative to the entanglement of absolutely full bodies in absolutely empty space and that determines the nature of the entanglement or interlocking: relatively solid or fluid,

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<sup>218</sup> Cf. *Ep. Hdt.* 61: the atoms ‘move through the void and nothing resists them [*μηθενός ἀντικόπτοντος*]’.

earth, water or air. As Lucretius observes, 'the more void each thing holds within it, the more its internal structure is weakened' (*Lucr.* 1.536-7), the more permeable or penetrable it becomes. Thus, the question that the Epicurean physicist asks, and which helps to explain what it is about this physics that appeals to Deleuze and draws him to Lucretius' naturalism, is a quantitative question: 'How many locked atoms?' and 'How large an area of confinement?'. With Epicurus and Lucretius, Deleuze comments quoting directly from Lucretius' poem, 'it is a matter of resemblances and differences, compositions and decompositions, "everything is formed out of connections, densities, shocks, encounters, concurrences, and motions"' (*LS*, p. 268). However, despite this intellectual affinity and alliance, Deleuze will attempt to amend, reformulate and radicalise the atomists' question, for reasons that I will proceed to identify.

### **The Epicurean account of disjunction**

The atomist conception of the elements has important theoretical ramifications for the atomist account of conjunction and disjunction. First, atomism is revealed to be a pluralism. Epicurean physics studies the making and unmaking of entanglements made of independent and discontinuous elements, parts which do not blend or pass without break from the one to the next, which are not connected 'unbrokenly' or fluently according to the legality of essence. For Epicurus the composition of wholes proceeds by conjunction and disjunction: a procession of conjunctions of absolute disjuncts. *There is nothing between the parts*. In this sense, insofar as atomism seeks to understand the nature of discontinuity and disjunction, the AND becomes its ineliminable category of composition, its starting place and explicit assumption. The logical space in which conjunction takes place, namely, the *between* of fissure, discreteness and discontinuity, is real and irreducible to the internality of a founding part. In other words, in Epicurus and Lucretius, Deleuze finds a way of understanding conjunction and connection in terms other than those of essential dependence. The atomic parts of compounds are expressly not connected as parts that are foundationally structured in a total whole. The unity of a total whole implies the absence of breaks of being: the whole is ontologically continuous because the

being of the foundation permeates the parts uninterruptedly. Such uninterruptedness of being entails the impossibility of the logical emptiness of what is *between*-parts and other than the being of the parts and of the whole. The presence of this interrupting emptiness would imply the essential differentiation and discontinuity of parts and, hence, the dissolution of the total whole. Instead, the conjunctive relations between atoms, the AND of atomic entanglement, entail disjunction and essential independence, interruption and discontinuity of being. Being is discrete, conjunction is unfounded: this means that the connections and conjunctions between beings are not the result of an overflowing foundation.

However, secondly, the way in which the atomists account for conjunction and disjunction, the AND and the *between*, brings to the foreground the shortcomings of their pluralism and points to the limits of their unfounding. It is this second ramification that I now try to elicit and clarify by means of a critique of the central premises of atomist doctrine. My argument takes its cue from Deleuze's elliptical criticism in *Difference and Repetition*, aiming to understand it but also to reconstruct it in such a way so as to widen its scope and extend its relevance in terrains that are not necessarily or strictly Deleuzian. My intention is to reconstruct a critique of the atomist concept of disjunction that will identify the way in which atomism fails to become a consistent account of multiplicity and to draw out, in a negative fashion, the conditions that such an account must satisfy.

### **The doctrine of *minimae partes***

Bodies, as we saw, are either compound (*συγκρίσεις*) or the non-compound elements (*στοιχεῖα*) composing compounds – the mereological term used here is the verb *ποιεῖν*: 'those things from which compounds have been made [*πεποιήνται*]' (*Ep. Hdt.* 40). What does it mean to say that atoms are the non-composed elements of composition? If 'there are ultimate components which do not themselves have components', then these ultimate building blocks must not lend themselves to further dissolution or partition (*διάλυσις*), that is, they must contain no void gaps.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Sedley, 'Hellenistic Physics and Metaphysics', *op. cit.* p. 372.



But this requirement for indivisibility, which, as noted, is identical with the demand for absolute rigidity, raises problems for the explanatory function with which Epicurus invests atoms. The problem concerns the fact that atoms are claimed to be simultaneously partless, because non-composed, ultimate, full and rigid; but also differing: atoms have a definite but ‘ungraspable [*ἀπερίληπτον*]’ ‘shape [*σχήμα*], weight [*βάρος*] and size [*μέγεθος*]’ (*Ep. Hdt.* 42). This simultaneity presents a problem when supplemented by the most fundamental of atomist assumptions, namely, that disjunction and divisibility, the distinction of parts, is only possible along gaps of void. This means that underneath the multiplicity of atoms and within the atom there resides another multiplicity of ‘exact submultiples’,<sup>220</sup> the nature of which as parts differs dramatically from the nature of atom-parts. In effect, as I shall show, in order to describe this submultiple order, Epicurus must insert or assume a non-atomist account of parthood and multiplicity that threatens not only to undo ‘the explanatory elegance of the atomic theory’<sup>221</sup> but also to limit the extent to which atomism may constitute a rigorous metaphysics of the AND purged of the IS or a theory of connection and composition without recourse to foundation.

Why does Epicurus think it is necessary, in contrast to the earlier atomism of Democritus, to assert that atoms differ in respect of their ‘masses and configurations’ (*Ep. Hdt.* 54), that is, in respect of characteristics – shape, size and weight – that are structural? The answer lies in the explanatory capacity with which atoms are endowed.<sup>222</sup> The diversity of shapes, weights and sizes explain the diversity of species, individuals and parts on the macroscopic level, the qualities of things which appear.<sup>223</sup> In Deleuze’s French but also in Epicurus’ Greek terms, this diversity *makes*

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<sup>220</sup> Sedley, ‘Hellenistic Physics and Metaphysics’, *op. cit.* p. 376.

<sup>221</sup> Sedley, ‘Hellenistic Physics and Metaphysics’, *op. cit.* p. 379.

<sup>222</sup> This is not to say that it was the only reason. The doctrine of *minimae partes* is designed to address a range of issues concerning the theoretical account of atoms, among them Aristotle’s criticisms of Abderite atomism. According to Furley, Epicurus’ theory evolved ‘as a modification, adopted for the purpose of meeting Aristotle’s criticisms, of a doctrine which the earlier atomists put together to meet and thwart the Eleatic attack on pluralism’ (David J. Furley, *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 21, cf. pp. 111-130).

<sup>223</sup> The diversity of the directions of movement is another such factor of explanation. Atoms ‘move continuously for all time’ (43). Their movement is triply determined: atoms fall on

(*faire – ποιεῖν*) difference: ‘differences in compounds [*διαφοραὶ συγκρίσεων*]’ (*Ep. Hdt.* 55) or ‘differences of qualities [*διαφοραὶ ποιότητων*]’ (56) are made by means of ‘differences in [atomic] magnitude [*διαφοραὶ μεγεθῶν*]’ (55) or ‘differences among their shapes [*διαφοραὶ σχημάτων*]’ (42). The shape, size and weight of atoms, in short, atomic structure, determine the quantitative nature of the entanglements (Epicurus refers to this as *ποιότης*; for example, relative fluidity and porosity) and, on the macroscopic level, the qualitative nature (*συμβεβηκότα*) of the compounds of which they are parts. We move, therefore, from differences of atomic structure to the differences in macrostructures. This constitutes the basic explanatory manoeuvre of atomism and the source of its economical elegance as a theory of production of the diversity of the diverse. But it is a manoeuvre that is only executable at too high a price since it necessitates reference to atomic structure and, in doing so, invites questions about the composition of the indivisible atom itself. In particular, it makes sense to ask what it is that, in turn, makes the differences in the sizes, weights and shapes of atoms. The difficulty for the atomists is that differences of atomic structure imply diversity in atomic structure that invokes a world of partial differentiation internal to the solid atom. If the atom is to have the explanatory function that atomists want to invest it with, i.e. to explain why and how macroscopic formations are as they are by means of the nature of atomic entanglements which themselves refer to atomic movement and structure, it seems inevitable that atoms must come in different sizes, weights and shapes. Difference between atoms amounts to difference in atoms and this means that atoms, while simple and indivisible, are at the same time partially differentiated. In other words, atomism needs a theory that will account for such sub-atomic complexity, for the complexity exhibited by simple entities.

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account of their weight and so have ‘a unidirectional movement’ downwards but also ‘an unpredictable tendency to deviate from this [*παρέγκλισις*]’, i.e. Lucretius’ *clinamen* (2.216-93); lastly, the atomic trajectory is a result of collisions with other atoms, that is, of blows (*πληγῆ*) and rebounds (Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy, op. cit.* p. 38). In addition, ‘both the number of bodies and the magnitude of the void’ are unlimited (42).

Epicurus responds to such a requirement by referring to a diversity of minimal parts internal to the atom (*τὸ ἐν τῇ ἀτόμῳ ἐλάχιστον*) that explains the diversity of atomic shapes and sizes and that in turn explain the qualities of actual conglomerations. These *minimae partes* are not only physically but also theoretically indivisible; they constitute ‘minimal and indivisible parts [*τὰ ἐλάχιστα καὶ ἀμυγῆ*]’ (*Ep. Hdt.* 59), or according to Lucretius, the smallest existence without part (*sine partibus et minima*) (*Lucr.* 1.601-2). What, then, constitutes the difference between the parthood of atoms and the parthood of their minimal parts? Modern commentators of Epicurus commonly respond to this question by claiming that atoms are ‘divisible in thought but not physically’.<sup>224</sup> This is a distinction developed in Furley’s influential study of ancient atomism. Furley defines physical division as ‘the division of something in such a way that formerly contiguous parts are separated from each other by a spatial interval’.<sup>225</sup> In this sense, atoms are physically indivisible entities since they have been defined as solid, rigid and pure or, what is the same, as without spatial intervals or void gaps. And yet, although they are physically indivisible, atoms *are* divisible *in a way* (as Epicurus writes, ‘in their own special way’, *Ep. Hdt.* 58) since they are internally differentiated, being composed of *minimae partes*. Furley calls this kind of divisibility, which is not physical, i.e. which does not take place along gaps of void, theoretical. An object is theoretically divisible ‘if parts can be distinguished within it by the mind, even if the parts can never be separated from each other by a spatial interval’.<sup>226</sup> In this sense, Furley continues, ‘the *minimae partes* of atoms in Epicurean theory were theoretically indivisible portions of matter’,<sup>227</sup> since they did not allow the kind of (theoretical) partition to which atoms are susceptible. *Minima*, like atoms, are not divisible along gaps of void, thus they are physically indivisible; but, unlike atoms, they are also not divisible theoretically. Atoms, in contrast, exhibit a kind of divisibility which is different from the physical kind of divisibility along gaps of void and by means of intervals of *spatium* exhibited

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<sup>224</sup> R. W. Sharples, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics: An Introduction to Hellenistic Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 37.

<sup>225</sup> Furley, *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists*, *op. cit.* p. 4.

<sup>226</sup> Furley, *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists*, *op. cit.* p. 4.

<sup>227</sup> Furley, *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists*, *op. cit.* p. 4.

by macrostructures. As Long explains, the difference between atoms *as* parts and *their* parts consists in the fact that

the Epicurean atoms cannot be split into smaller bodies. They are physically indivisible. But they are not the smallest units of extension. The atom itself consists of minimal parts which are not merely physically unsplittable but indivisible in thought: nothing beyond these *minima* can be conceived of.<sup>228</sup>

Thus, the Epicurean atom is defined as a physically indivisible but theoretically divisible body: the atom is the ultimate product of a prior operation of physical division exerted upon the fluent body of actual macrostructures; its minimal and sub-atomic parts are the products of a process of theoretical division exerted upon the body of the atom. Two important consequences follow from this definition. On the one hand, the atom, being physically indivisible, is also, as Long notes, 'the smallest magnitude which can exist as a discrete independent body'.<sup>229</sup> On the other hand, since the atom is divisible *only* theoretically, the parts internal to the atom are 'inseparable from the wholes they constitute',<sup>230</sup> since the parts are not the products of physical division. *Minimae partes*, then, are non-discrete, non-independent, theoretically indivisible entities since, as Jones points out, they 'are both physically and conceptually inseparable from one another and have no existence independent of the atom itself'.<sup>231</sup> Their atom-wholes, on the other hand, are, according to the description of Brunschwig and Sedley, 'physically indivisible portions of pure body',<sup>232</sup> but theoretically divisible into their minimal non-independent parts.

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<sup>228</sup> Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, *op. cit.* p. 33.

<sup>229</sup> Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, *op. cit.* p. 34.

<sup>230</sup> Pierre-Marie Morel, 'Epicureanism' in *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, ed. by Mary Louise Gill and Pierre Pellegrin (London: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 486-504 (p. 489).

<sup>231</sup> Howard Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 31.

<sup>232</sup> Jacques Brunschwig and David Sedley, 'Hellenistic Philosophy' in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*, ed. by David Sedley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 151-183 (p. 159).

### Atomist accounts of partial differentiation

On what grounds – and at what price – is such theoretical divisibility and indivisibility accorded to atoms and their parts respectively? Does Epicurean metaphysics have at its disposal the theoretical resources that would allow it to account for a differentiation of parts internal to the atom without at once undoing the purity of this body? The key question to ask in order to decide this question is: on what grounds are *minima* ‘denied the power of discrete existence’?<sup>233</sup> If the atomic body is undifferentiated, in accordance with the definition of atomicity as wholly being or, in Epicurus’ words, as ‘full by nature [πλήρη τὴν φύσιν ὄντα]’ (*Ep. Hdt.* 41) or, in the terms used by Furley, as physically indivisible and, further, if bodily discontinuity, fissure and break are only possible ‘along void gaps between’ atoms,<sup>234</sup> that is, in the emptiness of the *spatium* outside the atom, then it is because atoms ‘contain no void gaps at all’, in Sedley’s words, that atoms are indivisible. But if body is composed of minimal parts, then it is possible for bodies to be partitioned in ways other than along void gaps: their partition is a distinction that does not require not-being; their divisibility does not involve the interval of *spatium*. On this admission, it follows that, underneath their solidity, atomic bodies possess a fluency that is their own: an intra-atomic multiplicity of differentiated parts, which correspond to Furley’s theoretical divisions. How to account for this structure, for its connections and distinctions?

One way to deal with this differentiation would be (A) to reject it and to retreat to the position of the classical atomism of Leucippus and Democritus.<sup>235</sup> When the unity of the atom is called into question, the Abderite atomist insists upon atoms as the partless end-points of a division that is both physical and theoretical. Atoms then become, according to Rist, ‘theoretically as well as physically *indivisible*’,<sup>236</sup> thereby sacrificing their explanatory function. This, however, is a path that the Epicurean physicist cannot take. Instead, for reasons I have explained, the Epicurean

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<sup>233</sup> Sedley, ‘Hellenistic Physics and Metaphysics’, *op. cit.* p. 377.

<sup>234</sup> Sedley, ‘Hellenistic Physics and Metaphysics’, *op. cit.* p. 372.

<sup>235</sup> See section 1.2 above.

<sup>236</sup> J. M. Rist, *Epicurus: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 53.

must (B) substitute the complexity of Epicurean atoms, that is, of simples with parts or, what is the same, of physically indivisible *and* theoretically divisible bodies, for the simplicity of the atoms of earlier atomism. But, as I will argue, the oxymoron of 'complex simple' is overcome only insofar as the Epicurean account of this paradoxical complexity in the atom develops into a theory of non-independent moments and total, arborescent, cosmic wholes. To see why this is the case, I need to consider the options available for the Epicurean atomist and to deduce the consequences of the atomist's decision.

Given that the Democritean alternative (A) is no longer available, the postulation of such a realm of intra- and sub-atomic differentiation (B) is necessary. In order to account for *this* differentiation, the atomist must either (B1) insist on the central atomist hypothesis that differentiation is ontological disjunction along rifts of void; or, conversely, (B2) modify or abandon the atomist account of disjunction. In the first case, it must be admitted that the differentiation internal to the atom presupposes a division of the physical type that, hence, introduces not-being within the atom and, thereby, undoes its unity and renders it dissoluble, permeable. Against Lucretius' definition, this atom is *with* not-being. If the atom becomes physically divisible, this physical complexity fatally undermines its unity and, hence, invalidates its role as the ultimate principle with the explanatory power to account for the production of phenomenal diversity. Fissure leads to fission: the atom is not only theoretically but also physically divisible in an infinity of submultiple levels of pieces, without hope of totalisation. The theory then succumbs to incoherence as it is led to postulate atoms that are not atomic, neither unchangeable nor solid. There is but one alternative (B2) available for the atomist: to salvage the unity of the atom from the ruins of its minimal parts by means of a non-atomist account of disjunction. An immediate consequence is that the theory, then, becomes trivial or unnecessary: if the atom does maintain its unity in spite of the presence of *minimae partes*, then what need is there for atoms, which are themselves compounds of being-parts *without* not-being, to explain the macrostructures that initially faced the problem of not-being? At any point anything may be described as atomic, even a house, a machine or the human organism. More importantly, however, the account of disjunction substituted

in B2 redefines atoms as wholes divisible into moments. Atomism must turn into a theory of arborescence, positing the atom as a totalisable whole of minimal non-independent parts, in which case it is transformed, against its will, into a logic of *Fundierung*, root, ἀρχή. In this case, atoms preserve their unity and maintain their explanatory, productive and constitutive primacy as first principles only on the assumption of the doctrine of minimal parts, i.e. on the premise of a logic of totalisation. If, on the other hand (B1 above), atomism ventures for consistency by resisting the introduction of a logic of moments, then atoms lose all explanatory or productive primacy as well as their claim to indivisibility, even of the merely physical variety. Atoms, therefore, are pieces composing aggregate macro-compounds but in themselves they must be admitted to be wholes of moments.

### **Atomist notions of structure and composition**

Thus, there are in atomism two conceptions of parthood as well as two doctrines of connection: one of inter-atomic heterogeneity, along disjunctive fissures of not-being, and one of intra-atomic homogeneity, along disjunctive fissures belonging wholly to being, corresponding to Furley's physical and theoretical types of divisibility respectively. If this is the case, Epicurus implicitly distinguishes three ontological layers of materiality, that is, three kinds of body: the macroscopic or actual multiplicity of compound individuals and their species and qualities; the multiplicity of atomic bodies, their shapes, sizes and weights and the number of locked atoms in a particular area of confinement; and the submultiple of *minimae partes*, a non-atomic multiplicity discovered underneath the multiplicity of atomic bodies. These layers are underlain by two different accounts differentiation or distinction: physical and theoretical. At the top, one finds actual structures with qualitative natures; these presuppose inter-atomic structures that are quantitative in that they encompass extensive discontinuities and physical interruptions between entangled atoms (in terms of void); at the base of this system, atoms in turn refer to the intra-atomic structure of ungraspable sub-atomic parts exhibiting a kind of theoretical differentiation that is expressly *not* extensive or physical (in terms other than those of empty *spatium*). Actual multiplicity, the parts of which are physically separable,

presupposes atomic multiplicity, the elements of which are theoretically but not physically divisible, which, in turn, is underlain by a sub-multiple of moments, of parts that are neither physically nor theoretically divisible.

Since atoms by definition contain no void, the distinction of sub-atomic parts must rely upon criteria other than the ones recognised from within the atomist hypothesis. A new type of fissure, of partial differentiation, is discovered this time within the atom and along lines that are not lines of not-being. This is a dimension the differentiation of which does not admit fluidity, at least in the way that atomists define fluidity: since this dimension is internal to the atom, its partial differentiation is not a differentiation of independent parts separated along cracks of void, in which case non-resistance or intangibility would be introduced into the full body of the atom. The atom cannot be conceived either as a mixture of being and not-being nor as containing fissures of the void type, for that would make it a relatively solid body and not a wholly full body, i.e. a compound that is breakable and, hence, non-atomic. Thus, if there is a dimension of submultiple minimal parts, it is not differentiated along fissures of void. Thus, in order to reach the concept of the atom, Epicurus must and does admit a way or manner of differentiation and composition that had gone unrecognised by the hypothesis with which he began, namely, that it is only by means of the void that partition is possible. In the atom, but not between atoms, one discovers a radically different metaphysics of composition, a way of being a part, this time not as the parts held together in the emptiness of not-being, but as the parts held together in the plenum of being. At this point Epicurean physics reaches its limits: it can say nothing more about these parts and wholes other than that they combine 'in their own unique way' (*Ep. Hdt.* 58), and this is a way that falsifies the inaugurating assumption of atomism, namely, according to Long's formulation, that 'empty space is a necessary condition of divisibility' or, what is the same, that 'nothing can be divided unless it contains within itself empty space'.<sup>237</sup> That this is a limit for the atomists' discourse is made plain by the fact that the account of these minimal parts within atom-wholes constitutes and requires a logic of non-independent parts and of

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<sup>237</sup> Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy, op. cit.* p. 33.



total and comprehensive wholes and escapes the theory of pieces and aggregates that underlies Epicurean physics. Epicurus' theory of entanglement of independent parts is underlain by a theory of non-independent parts. In other words, the multiplicity of bodies, which is understood in terms of a disjunction between bodies relating in conjunctions over gaps of not-being, i.e. as pieces, is conceived as superimposed upon a multiplicity of *minima* in bodies understood in terms of the conjunctive function of the being of the atom, i.e. as moments that are 'inseparable from one another, and therefore inseparable from the whole atom which they compose'.<sup>238</sup>

### **Lucretius on parts and wholes (Lucr. 1.602-12)**

A clear illustration of the theoretical predicament in which atomists find themselves is provided by Lucretius' description of the parthood of *minimae partes*. Since atoms have distinct shapes and sizes, there must be parts according to which shapes and sizes can be distinguished, compared and measured. When Lucretius attempts to determine with precision the difference between atoms and their minimal sub-atomic parts, it becomes clear that the parts of the atom are unlike the parts that atoms are; submultiples relate to each other and to the atom-whole in which they are found as inextricable parts of a whole, the atom, that constitutes for this reason a comprehensive and total whole. The kind of complexity and organization exhibited by these wholes is that of the close formation of the rigidly coordinated ranks of a phalanx rather than of the 'vagabond' assembly of the loose and uncemented stones of a wall. Lucretius writes:

the primary elements [*primordia*] are therefore solid and simple, being formed of smallest parts packed solid in a closely cohering mass [*quae minimis stipata cohaerent partibus arte*]; they are not compounded as a result of the assembly of those parts [*non ex illorum conventu conciliata*], but rather derive their power from their everlasting simplicity.

(Lucr. 1.609-12)

Atoms are said to be 'solid and simple' but, at the same time, they are wholes of parts (*conciliata*). Faced with the dilemma between simplicity and complexity, Lucretius

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<sup>238</sup> Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy, op. cit.* p. 33.

chooses (B2) to save the unity and 'everlasting simplicity' of the atom albeit at the expense of the consistency of atomist doctrine: since he is inclined theoretically to preserve intra-atomic complexity, he attempts to account for it by asserting a way of composition that is not that of 'assembly' of parts differentiated by the existence of the void between them (*non ex illorum conventu conciliate*), but that of 'closely cohering mass' (*minimis stipata cohaerent partibus*) in which not-being is absent. This whole is no longer describable as the whole of περιπλοκή, of conjunction and disjunction, of confinement or trapping of parts existing independently (*per se*) in space, of distinction of parts along gaps of void, of partition by means of intervals of *spatium*. Instead, these 'extreme points' must be conceived in the fashion of Husserl's non-independent moments, or, in Lucretian terms, as parts that do not exist *per se*. This smallest existence, Lucretius writes,

never has had and never will be able to have an independent, separate [*per se secretum*] existence, since it is itself a primary and unitary [*primaque et una*] part of something else. Then rank upon rank of similar parts in close formation [*aliae atque aliae similes ex ordine partes agmine condense*] provide the ultimate particle with its full complement of substance and, since they cannot have an independent existence [*per se*], they must cling [*haerere*] so fast to the whole atom that they cannot by any means be wrenched apart [*revelli*] from it.

(*Lucr.* 1.602-8)

This whole is composed of dependent moments distinguished as moments between which there is nothing: the minimal parts compose a phalanx in which, 'rank upon rank' and 'in close formation' (*condense*), they 'cling fast' (*haerere*). If, as Deleuze has observed, the theory of atomic entanglement is developed on the premise that 'the Nature of things is coordination and disjunction' (*LS*, p. 268), now, on this intra-atomic plane of composition, there is no place for disjunction between the parts, but only for coordination of parts, or for coordination *without disjunction*. *There is nothing between the parts*: but this time, on the plane of intra-atomic complexity, this formula no longer signifies the familiar atomist slogan that it is the existence of the not-being of ontological discontinuity that explains the differentiation of parts; instead, 'nothing' now denotes the absence of emptiness, as is required by the definition of the atom as absolutely full, so that the intra-atomic partition to which it refers is

conceived in strikingly non-atomist terms and falls outside the fundamental parameters of atomist theory. In effect, Lucretius is forced to discover a world of continuous, non-discrete difference that is not explicable in terms of discreteness and discontinuity of being and that requires that *between* parts there be something other than emptiness, void or not-being to explain its hidden complexity. There is something, not nothing, between these parts: it is the *spatium* of the void *between* that is now absent.

Thus, atomism fails to explain on consistently atomist grounds how atomic oneness is constituted from a prior multiplicity. Atomic multiplicity is conceived of as the multiplicity of already constituted unities: the multiplicity of atoms is the manyness of many ones. In order to explain the unity of the atomic structure, the atom is conceived as ἀρχή gathering its minimal parts in the same way that Husserl's *Fundierung* founds its moments or that Hesiod's Earth provides her enduring support, as, in Deleuze's terms, innumerable microscopic arborescent structures. Epicurus insists that 'the principles [ἀρχὰς] must be atomic natures of bodies [ἀτόμους σωμάτων φύσεις]' (*Ep. Hdt.* 41);<sup>239</sup> but in atomism this formula means only that the multiplicity of bodies are but multiplied ἀρχαί. Instead of a theory of multiplicities, the atomist's conception of the task of unbounding results in the mere multiplication of ones.

### **How to escape atomism**

What is the way that leads out of the atomist predicament for the theory of multiplicity? What is the way that leads outside atomism? Let's review how the difficulty arose. For reasons pertaining to the explanatory capacity of the *primordia*, atoms were endowed with differences of atomic weight, shape and size and, hence, with an internal structure that accounted for these differences. However, at the same time, in order to resist violating the Eleatic injunction against the mixture of being

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<sup>239</sup> Translation modified. Inwood and Gerson translate 'τὰς ἀρχὰς ἀτόμους ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι σωμάτων φύσεις' as 'the principles of bodies must be atomic natures' (*Hellenistic Philosophy, op. cit.* p. 7), taking the genitive 'σωμάτων' to qualify the kind of ἀρχαί under consideration. My translation follows that of Long and Sedley (in *The Hellenistic Philosophers, op. cit.* p. 38) in attaching the genitive to 'φύσεις'.

and not-being, atoms were defined as absolutely solid and unchangeable, that is, without void, as 'multiplied Parmenidean being' (DR, p. 232). What, now, are the options facing an atomist when it comes to accounting for the structure, differentiation, disjunction and connection internal to the atom? It seems that the Epicurean must either insist on solidity and, hence, abandon *minimae partes*, or insist on the existence of *minimae partes* and, hence, abandon solidity. (1) To insist on solidity means either (1a) to deny the existence of internal parts to the atom or (1b) to accept the existence of these parts and to seek to accommodate their differentiation in spite or in terms of atomic solidity (as theoretical divisibility). (1a) raises the familiar difficulty: if there are no differences in atoms then there are no differences of and between atoms and this means that (A) the capacity of atomism to explain the production of macroscopic differences is severely curtailed: it is *inadequate* to account for the diversity of the diverse.<sup>240</sup> (1b) leads to a different difficulty: it inaugurates a discussion of non-extensive discontinuity that cannot be undertaken without admitting that, *because* this discussion is still possible, (B) atomism is a theoretically *superfluous* doctrine, since it possesses no resources of its own for accounting for this dimension of differentiation. (2) To insist on the existence of *minimae partes* means either (2a) to deny that their partition is extensive or physical (in terms of the interruption of the void) or (2b) to accept that their partition is extensive or physical. (2a) leads to the conclusion that (C) the theory is *trivial* since it introduces a new definition of atomicity that entails non-extensive differentiation, which indefinitely augments the extension of the concept of the atom: every and any object with parts is describable as atomic. (2b) has as a consequence the introduction of fissures of emptiness in the atom, thereby leading to contradictions concerning the atomist conception of the atom: atomist *primordia* are mixtures of being and not-being and, thus, (D) atomism is shown to be an *incoherent* doctrine. This incoherence may be alleviated, at the cost of abandoning atomism altogether, by admitting that (3) atoms are not indivisible unified wholes, but that they are composed of parts of the same

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<sup>240</sup> It also means that Aristotle's critique of earlier atomism and his argument on the impossibility of movement for entities without parts receive no response in Epicurus' revision; cf. Furley, *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists*, *op. cit.* pp. 111-130.

kind and inhabiting the same ontological layer with atoms. The result would be catastrophic for atomism since it would instigate an infinite regress right in the notion of atomicity, that would undo the indivisibility, both theoretical and physical, of the atom, so that one would no longer be expounding atomist doctrine or even a revised version of it. The regress cannot stop at any point without also making the very reliance on indivisible particles illegitimate: if we can allow, at the same time, for sub-atomic complexity *and* for atomic unity, then there is no reason why the unity of actual compounds should require explanation in the light of their complexity in the first place. At this point, atomism is stretched to its limits where a composition of moments, which atomists from Leucippus down to Lucretius sought to banish, comes to explain atomic oneness.

### **Conclusion: beyond moments *and* pieces**

Deleuze's criticism ('too much independence'), the failure (to unfound), and its diagnosis; these become philosophically important – but also informative – for Deleuze's philosophy because they revolve around the role that not-being plays in the atomist theory of differentiation. In particular, the criticism and the reconstruction that I have attempted point to Deleuze's conditions for an account of multiplicity and parthood, of disjunction and connection, of composition and structure. Central to these conditions is the critique of the atomist conception of the *spatium* of the between, of discontinuity and disjunction and the role that not-being, as void, empty space and nothing, plays in these. For atomism, the void is the site in which relations that are external to the terms are established; between the self-enclosed and self-unified atoms there is spatial emptiness. Parts are considered to be unified in themselves only because they are radically separate; in this way their simplicity, the fact that they are wholes without parts that come to be entangled, but never to mix, in wholes with parts, is theoretically guaranteed. *There is nothing between the parts*. If anything but nothing lay between atoms, atoms would face the danger of fission (assuming, as atomists must, that there is only one kind of stuff, namely, atomic mass, so that, as Aristotle notes, Leucippus and Democritus' 'parts

separated by void' are 'like many pieces of gold separated from one another').<sup>241</sup> The supposition of the void is equivalent to the supposition of atomic simplicity; not-being and simplicity are mutually co-implicating notions, or, in Taylor's words, 'atoms are theoretically indivisible because they contain no void' and, further, the void is 'that which separates from one another'.<sup>242</sup> Thus, commitment to atomic enclosure and unity entail commitment to the existence of not-being. The account of multiplicity in terms of pieces or atoms does not satisfy the 'conditions of structure' (DR, p. 233) that Deleuze has set for the understanding of the many and does not amount to a reversal of the Hesiodic and Husserlian picture of composition and to a radical or consistent conception of *effondement*. To reverse this picture it is not enough to begin with the many, in which case the foundation is now transferred within the atom-pieces, but rather not to begin or to begin in the middle, 'to follow and disentangle lines [*suiivre et démêler des lignes*] rather than work back to points [*remonter à des points*]' (N, p. 86), that is, to place concreteness on the manyness of the many, without any recourse to the mediation of a foundation, whether atomic or substantial.

What this means for the conditions of a successful account of multiplicity, as I will argue, is that the single formula 'there is nothing between the parts', which in two contrasting senses lay at the heart of both modern essentialism and ancient atomism, needs to be rejected in both of these employments. There must be *something* between the parts that is *neither* nothing, in the atomist sense of ontological emptiness and the discontinuity of the void, *nor* nothing, in the Husserlian sense of the overflowing of the being of the root: there is the something of the between, the being of the between, which is neither being nor not-being but inter-being. It remains to be considered precisely how Deleuze's account of multiplicity avoids *minima*, partless parts and indivisible magnitudes; how his 'analysis of lines, spaces, becomings' (N, p. 34), namely, *schizo-analyse*, makes available another way of thinking about the *spatium*; what it means to claim that the multiplicity discovered

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<sup>241</sup> *On the Heavens* 275b32-276c1.

<sup>242</sup> C. C. W. Taylor, 'The Atomists' in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. by A. A. Long (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 181-204 (pp. 182 and 183).

within the atom and under the ground is composed of intensities; and how this discovery aims to meet the challenges facing atomism and respond to the problems afflicting its account of multiplicity.

## 7 Deleuze's theory of composition

### 7.1 *Effondement*

#### Requirements for ontology

In the previous two chapters, I presented two contrasting accounts of multiplicity and composition that exhibit the nature and range of the dilemmas and problems encountered by theories that seek to understand partial differentiation and wholeness. My aim was to present the conditions that a theory of multiplicity must satisfy and the course it must keep if it is to steer between the dual perils that face it: *both* moment *and* piece. I have taken my cue from Deleuze's elliptical critical assessment of atomism in *Difference and Repetition* in order to reconstruct a critique of atomism and its manner of ungrounding. On the other hand, I chose to look at essentialist mereology, in the guise of Husserl's logic of parts. I will now turn to Deleuze's account of multiplicity. Having examined an attempt to reduce the AND to the IS (Husserl), a failed attempt to think the AND without recourse to the IS (as its negation) (Epicurus and Lucretius), I will now situate Deleuze's theory in contradistinction to traditional theories of composition and I will establish the relevance of Deleuze's account for the overall discussion and assess the nature of his responses to the traditional problems and questions raised by composition.

*Contra* Badiou's philosophical valorisation of Epicureanism, I have argued that atomism fails to constitute an adequate, coherent account of multiplicity. It is significant that this failure is also measured according to the Badiouian criteria 'for any ontology of pure multiplicity' (*TW*, p. 47). In 'The Question of Being Today', Badiou presents five conditions that an account of pure multiplicity (and its synonymous terms, namely, inconsistent multiplicity and 'multiple-without-oneness') must satisfy, if it is to grasp 'the form of radical multiplicity, a multiplicity that is not subordinated to the power of the one' (*TW*, p. 43). These include the following requirements: (1) Multiplicity must be conceived as 'without immanent unification' (p. 47) or 'consistent delimitation' (p. 44), so that 'the deployment of the multiple is not constrained by the immanence of a limit' (p. 43). This repeats the



exigency that multiplicity must be conceived solely as multiple. (2) Hence, in such an account 'there are only multiples of multiples' (p. 47). (3) As a consequence, ontology should harbour 'no originary principle of finitude' (p. 48). On the contrary, infinity becomes an appellation of multiplicity: 'there are an infinity of infinities, an infinite dissemination of infinite multiplicities' (p. 48). (4) There are no multiples of ones; there are 'multiples of nothing' and/or multiples of multiples. (5) Ontology necessarily presents axiomatically, since 'the thinking of the multiple-without-oneness, or of inconsistent multiplicity, cannot [...] proceed by means of definition' (p. 45).

Atomism fails to constitute an 'ontology of pure multiplicity as discontinuation of the power of the one' precisely because it fails to satisfy the conditions that Badiou himself establishes for the recognition and assessment of such an ontology. I will refer to the first three of these here in order to summarise my argument. Firstly, *there is* 'immanent unification' in Epicurus and Lucretius, namely, atomic unity and the immanent limit that it introduces; and this means, as Badiou acknowledges, that such an immanent delimitation reveals 'the power of the one as the foundation for the multiple itself' (*TW*, p. 43). In other words, it is not the case that the atomist intuition is that 'there is no whole' or 'there is no totality' (*TW*, p. 183); or if it is, it is not successfully translated into an articulated conception of a philosophical a-cosmism. Secondly, it is not the case that for atomists 'the multiple is radically without-oneness'; *there are* multiples of ones, not 'multiples of multiples' (*TW*, p. 47). Thirdly, because there is an immanent limit 'anchored to the one' (*TW*, p. 46), *it is not the case* that finitude is banished as an originary principle of plurality. From these failures follow important consequences regarding our understanding of the process of ungrounding, which I now turn to explore explicitly in relation to recent commentaries on Deleuze.

### **The notion of foundation in Deleuze**

DeLanda and Hallward offer contrasting appraisals of Deleuze's metaphysics. For the former, Deleuzian philosophy is tantamount to a triumphant pluralism; for the latter, to a reluctant monism. I will argue that DeLanda distorts the conditions for the

articulation of coherent and radical pluralist philosophies; that, if Deleuze is to meet these demands, there should be identifiable ways in which Deleuze escapes DeLanda's reading. In a sense, Hallward accepts DeLanda's criteria for a successful pluralism but whereas DeLanda interprets Deleuze as satisfying these criteria, for Hallward (and for Badiou), Deleuze has failed to do precisely that. My position is that, in both cases, the model of what a theory of multiplicity should assume and achieve, which DeLanda and Hallward share, is not adequate for the articulation of a coherent and radical concept of the many. In section 7.3 I will assess the extent to which Deleuze breaks with DeLanda's Deleuze and, with good reason, fails to mastermind the pluralist triumph envisaged in terms of relations of exteriority. At the same time, I will show why Hallward's categorization of Deleuzian philosophy as a monism and a foundationalism is misguided. My disagreement with Hallward does not concern his interpretation of Deleuze's philosophy but the criteria for his (and Badiou's) appraisal of Deleuze's pluralism. The problem is not that Hallward distorts Deleuze but that he distorts what it means to be a pluralist.

Concerning the meaning of *effondement*, my investigation has one immediate significant consequence: it advises against identifying ungrounding with the transition from founded moments to unfounded pieces. Imagining, as some putative pluralists do, that the field of pure multiplicity lies beyond the one, this has been revealed to be as dangerous an illusion for the account of the many as the monist articulation of the many by means of the one, against which the pluralist task of thinking the many in its manyness was intended in the first place. What metaphysicians of the one and the many, monists and pluralists, fail to see is that the problem of oneness and multiplicity and of the productive relation between them is badly posed as long as it is understood in terms of a rigid distinction between unity and dispersion. This is an important condition for anti-foundationalist philosophies and allows me to devise a retort to Badiou's and Hallward's criticisms of Deleuze's account of multiplicity.

Following Badiou, Hallward argues that 'Deleuze is not an anti-foundational philosopher'.<sup>243</sup> I subscribe to this assessment, albeit for reasons that are different from Hallward's. If Deleuze seeks to destroy the *Fundierung*, this cannot be in order to discover a more adequate *fond* or a more stable Archimedean point, or a more genuine occasion of simplicity underneath the complexity of the Husserlian wholes. For Hallward, 'not to be an anti-foundationalist' is logically equivalent to being a foundationalist. In contrast, I have argued that in order to interrupt the operation of a foundation, that is, in order to become anti-foundationalist, one cannot simply choose foundlessness understood in terms of the construction of aggregates: such a choice between the foundation and this seeming foundlessness, construed as the rejection of partial dependence (which is assumed to lead exclusively to a conception of parts as founded moments and of construction as founding), is not only avoidable but also undesirable.

Husserl's logic makes clear the parameters of arborescent construction: its unity is the unity of the being of the foundation that supplements, permeates and constitutes the whole structure. The relations in which parts stand in a whole are exhaustively internal relations and wholly constitutive of the moment-parts. DeLanda refers to this type of relationality, which forms the basis for what he calls 'the organismic metaphor', as 'relations of interiority'.<sup>244</sup> These are relations that imply a 'strict reciprocal determination between parts': 'the component parts are constituted by the very relations they have to other parts in the whole'.<sup>245</sup> In other words, these relations 'constitute the very identity of the parts'.<sup>246</sup> These parts are moments of an organic whole conceived in the same terms in which I earlier described the Husserlian whole and the Hesiodic cosmos: 'as a seamless web of reciprocal action, or as an integrated totality of functional interdependencies, or as a block of unlimited universal interconnections'.<sup>247</sup> Such a whole constitutes a homogenous, continuous and indivisible but *complex* oneness on account of the unity

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<sup>243</sup> Hallward, *Out of this World*, *op. cit.* p. 134.

<sup>244</sup> DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 9.

<sup>245</sup> DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 9.

<sup>246</sup> DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 18.

<sup>247</sup> DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 19.

of the foundation that generates this complexity in the act of generating the parts as its moments. Relations of internality express the organising power of the foundation. Thus, Husserl's metaphysics of parts and whole involves only internal relations, what Hallward refers to as 'non-relations', and reduces composing conjunction to the internal being of the self-differentiating foundation. The AND is, therefore, parasitic on the IS, relations between parts to the gathering expression of the essence of the overflowing foundation, which in this way differentiates itself without ever referring to anything outside itself. In addition, the parts are, in turn, ontologically secondary in relation to the relations from which they receive their constitution.

Herein lies the temptation for anti-foundationalist projects: to oppose the discreteness, discontinuity and divisibility of atomic entanglements to the continuity and indivisibility of total wholes or, what is the same, to oppose the independence of the atomic piece to the relational dependence of the founded moment. This would seem to entail that we affirm the primacy of relations that are external and non-constitutive of the terms that they relate; that, against the IS, we assert the irreducibility of the AND and that we uphold the irreducibility of the *relata* to their relations. Unity is then considered to be the effect of the conjunctive power AND rather than its cause. Relations are asserted to be real precisely in obtaining between already constituted objects that are first and foremost disjuncts, that is, pieces in wholes that are not only divisible but really divided, as Deleuze often appears to be claiming. Thus, the character of the elements of the composition implies the fragmentation of the whole, that is, its failure to lay claim to any sense of oneness, and this in turn entails that in the formation of an atomic aggregate it is not the being of the *relata* that composes but the AND that brings together without principle, i.e. without ever overcoming the discontinuity and intervals between atoms or in any way of reducing it, for example, to the being of a foundation. External relations between atoms presuppose that this discontinuity is not reducible to the differentiation or self-bifurcation of a root. Inter-atomic relations presuppose that between atoms there is not being but not-being: the emptiness that is the result of and the prerequisite for the absence of ontological wholes composed of moments founded upon an ἀρχή. The *relata* presuppose disjunction and division so that their

relations are, according to DeLanda's formulation, 'relations of exteriority', that is, relations that imply 'that a component part of an assemblage may be detached from it and plugged into a different assemblage in which its interactions are different'.<sup>248</sup> In other words, the terms of these relations are independent, 'self-subsistent' pieces that 'may be detached and made a component of another assemblage';<sup>249</sup> although, DeLanda adds, 'relations of exteriority guarantee that assemblages may be taken apart while at the same time allowing that the interactions between parts may result in a true synthesis'.<sup>250</sup> DeLanda's description of their independence makes clear that he conceives the parts of assemblages in the same way in which Husserl describes non-partial objects: 'the exteriority of relations implies a certain autonomy for the terms they relate'.<sup>251</sup> This is, according to DeLanda, what it means to claim that relations are external to the *relata*. In short, the temptation is to deflate putatively our ontology by divesting wholes of primacy or reality and bestowing it to the parts.

I have shown that such a transition is neither deflationary in relation to the primacy of unity nor does it cast any light on the mystery of composition: atomism deflates the *ἀρχή* only in order to multiply it: *ἀρχαί*. Thus, insofar as DeLanda attributes to Deleuze a theory of aggregation akin to atomism, his Deleuze is incapable of properly distinguishing between totalities and assemblages. DeLanda understands *effondement* in terms of the transition from moments to pieces; thus, the way in which he considers multiplicities to offer an alternative to the totalities of essentialism distorts the real issue of the dispute. I have argued that *if* Deleuze's pluralism is to constitute a rigorous account of multiplicity that will avoid the pitfalls of essentialism, then his account must also avoid the traps of atomism: Deleuze must be committed to the inexistence of not-being without, at the same time, succumbing to the existence of an overflowing being. His account of division and differentiation must be premised on a *spatium* that is other than the void. In this way, my understanding of what relations of exteriority involve differs from DeLanda's since

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<sup>248</sup> DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 10.

<sup>249</sup> DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 18.

<sup>250</sup> DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 11.

<sup>251</sup> DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, *op. cit.* p. 11.

this cannot be equivalent to the acceptance of already constituted unity of the atoms and to the not-being that the atomists consider to be a prerequisite of exteriority.

This is the significance of the terminology of inter-being: a rigorously conceived composition, conjunction between the parts is neither, *contra* Husserl, being, nor, *contra* Epicurus, not-being, but irreducible to both and primary in relation to both. Thus, *if* Deleuze is successful in reaching a rigorous concept of the multiple, he must account (1) for the continuity of real wholes without reducing this to homogeneity, and (2) for discontinuity between the parts without reducing this to the emptiness of not-being. Failure to satisfy the second condition would entail that the unity of the whole would succumb to fragmentation and that composition would become reduced to aggregations, with the result of raising anew the impasses that the notion of the many faces in the context of atomist theory. Transversality is neither discontinuity nor continuity, but the mode in which elements that are *unformed* and, hence, only ever *relational* or *partial*, are, nevertheless, *externally* related, not on account of their being. This means that in a mereological theory, the elements might be too open or too closed. They might be too open to remain *qua* the differentiated parts of a whole and too closed to remain *qua* the parts of an undifferentiated whole. The differentiated parts of an undifferentiated whole: another magic formula inviting and giving rise to the paradoxes and dilemmas of the *Parmenides*. Thus, I have argued that the injunction to think the multiple as a substantive does not deliver the theory of multiplicity to a position akin to DeLanda's Epicureanism nor does it entail the outright condemnation of any reliance upon notions of wholeness and oneness. On the contrary, it becomes evident from my examination, that *if* Deleuze offers an alternative mode of construction and connection to the mode of totalities and their non-relations, then Deleuze must steer between Husserl and Epicurus, that the thought of the many cannot be arrived at without simultaneously arriving at the thought of the one without ending up with the inexplicability of unity. The explicability of multiplicity *is* the explicability of oneness, parthood of wholeness.

Thus, I disagree, for reasons that should now be clear, both with Hallward's claim that Deleuze's intention is to 'ensure the exclusive primacy of non-relational difference, a notion of strictly intra-elemental rather than inter-elemental

difference',<sup>252</sup> as well as with the criteria guiding the critical edge of this interpretation. For Hallward, a relation is 'a process that operates between two or more minimally discernible terms, in such a way as to condition or inflect (but not fully to generate) the individuality of each term'; this means that 'a relation is only a relation if it is between terms that can be meaningfully discerned'.<sup>253</sup> In any other case, Hallward argues, relation falls either inside the terms ('Deleuze's concern is always with a logic of difference whereby, before it differs with other anything external to itself, a differing "differs with itself first, immediately", on account of the internal and self-differing power that makes it what it is')<sup>254</sup> or outside the terms ('individuation is a relation conceived as a *pure* or absolute between, a between understood as fully independent of or external to its terms – and thus, a between that can just as well be described as "between" nothing at all').<sup>255</sup> Thus, Deleuze's connections 'have nothing to do with relations between discernible terms' and this means that the terms between which they are putatively established are non-relational.<sup>256</sup> As a result, Hallward concludes, 'there can be little room in Deleuze's philosophy for relations of conflict or solidarity, i.e. relations that are genuinely *between* rather than external to individuals'.<sup>257</sup> Hallward offers little argument to support his claim that inter-individual distinction is the only adequate vehicle for relations of solidarity, tension and integration; but, more importantly, there are good reasons to believe that this account of relationality in terms of the distinction between actual individuals repeats the problems facing the atomists' account of atomic unity. The problem with Deleuze's philosophy, according to Hallward's diagnosis, is that 'Deleuze always affirms the primacy of disparity and "disparation" over any form of relation, including relation of opposition, integration, tension, and so on'; thus, he continues, 'strictly speaking, multiplicities or becomings have no distinct terms at

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<sup>252</sup> Hallward, *Out of this World*, *op. cit.* p. 152.

<sup>253</sup> Hallward, *Out of this World*, *op. cit.* p. 152.

<sup>254</sup> Hallward, *Out of this World*, *op. cit.* p. 153.

<sup>255</sup> Hallward, *Out of this World*, *op. cit.* p. 153.

<sup>256</sup> Hallward, *Out of this World*, *op. cit.* p. 153.

<sup>257</sup> Hallward, *Out of this World*, *op. cit.* p. 162.

all'.<sup>258</sup> The crucial point here is what is meant by 'distinction'. For Deleuze, this cannot mean the discontinuity afforded by gaps of void; indeed multiplicities do not tolerate any such distinctions. But, in contrast to Hallward's inference, neither are we left with the continuity of moments internal to the foundation. Instead, one should say, still strictly speaking, that multiplicities contain no distinct terms of the atomist or actualist (not actual) kind, but also that multiplicities do contain distinct terms, the relationality of which demands an account of inter-being, which belongs neither to being nor to not-being. In particular, I have shown how inter-individual relations, those relations 'of conflict, solidarity, ambivalence and so on' that, according to Hallward, exclusively obtain 'between terms' that are 'meaningfully' discernible and actual, require that they be supplemented by an account of the intra-individual complexity underlying individual independence. Inter-elemental difference is not adequate by itself to account for the relations between elements. Thus, Hallward's criticism at this point proceeds from premises that are arbitrarily chosen (there is no explanation why true relations obtain only between already constituted terms or why the ethics of indiscernibility have nothing to contribute to discernible subjects and their actions). Hallward assumes that failure to endorse a theory of aggregation is equivalent to succumbing to essentialism; there is an exclusive choice to be made between continuity and discontinuity. On the contrary, I have argued that in order to resist the non-relations of essentialism, or DeLanda's 'relations of interiority' or, in the terms used above, the internal overflowing of the founding part, one ought to resist the temptation of aggregations and of their exteriority and discontinuity, as much as one ought to resist total wholes and their interiority and continuity. While purportedly insisting on the *between*, actualist accounts of relationality, which according to Hallward are solely capable of thinking of the logical space of the AND without IS, fail to do precisely that, i.e. to think beings as relational.

My discussion of Hallward's and DeLanda's commentaries rests on a hypothesis that remains untested. The assumption is that Deleuze *is* a pluralist, in accordance with the criteria that I have established. I must now validate this

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<sup>258</sup> Hallward, *Out of this World*, *op. cit.* p. 153.



hypothesis, in other words, I must show that *if* Deleuze's philosophy effectuates the *effondement*, *if* it constitutes a consistent and radical pluralism, *if* it moves mereology beyond the parameters of essentialism and arborescence (by now it is evident that all three designations amount to the same project); that is, *if*, in Deleuze, *parthood* ceases to be conceived in terms of either moments or pieces, *if structure* becomes disassociated from both vitalism and mechanism and *if composition* is a real process that is irreducible either to magic or to violence; *then* Deleuze's philosophy must have already satisfied the 'conditions of structure' established in the course of my investigation. Thus far, the contribution that this investigation has made towards the metaphysics of multiplicity consists in eliciting and specifying the double exigencies that this metaphysics must meet and establishing the parameters in which to think of parthood and composition. Now, in order to validate my hypothesis, that is, to substantiate the claim that Deleuze's philosophy does constitute a pluralism in accordance with the criteria of the apodosis that have been established already, I must find evidence in Deleuze's writings for Deleuzian ontology having recognised and having met these criteria. This task entails the examination of Deleuze's account of multiplicity and the formulation of a *Deleuzian* metaphysics of composition, which I undertake in sections 7.2 and 7.3. The validation of my hypothesis will also confirm the working assumption with which I began in my introduction, namely, that installing Deleuze in the *φιλονικία* and in the parameters of mereological theories sheds new light on the nature of the Deleuzian project.

## 7.2 Towards a Deleuzian account of building

### Fragmentary parthood

I will now identify evidence that confirm my hypothesis that Deleuze recognises and responds to the double exigencies established in chapters 5 and 6 in relation to the account of multiplicity.<sup>259</sup> Having identified the dual perils facing the theory of

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<sup>259</sup> I do not suppose that I have unearthed Deleuze's motive behind his ontology or the aim of his metaphysical formulations. My claim concerns the fact that this ontology harbours resources that allow it to steer between atomism and essentialism.

multiplicity, I will now ask, with Deleuze, what this negative delimitation entails for a rigorous analysis of composition: 'neither a component nor a collection, what is this AND?' (*N*, p. 44). It is this question that will take me to the heart of the Deleuzian metaphysics of relations, since it is the theory of conjunctions that allows Deleuze to substitute inter-being for both atomist not-being and Husserlian being as the *something* that lies between constituted things and events:

AND is neither one thing nor the other, it's always in between, between two things [*entre les deux*]; it's the borderline, there's always a border, a line of flight or flow [...], the least perceptible of things. And yet it's along this line of flight that things come to pass, becomings evolve, revolutions take shape.

(*N*, p. 45)

My aim, therefore, is to consolidate the conclusions of my investigation of Epicurean metaphysics by elaborating the way in which Deleuze's open wholes are composed of 'non-totalisable fragments'. The confusion that needs to be dispelled is the impression that, if Deleuzian fragments are to escape moments, then they must be construed as pieces. Deleuzian metaphysics, if it is to discover a 'rigorous link between the singular and the plural' (*F*, p. 14) by developing a notion of multiplicity that has 'the constitution of a substantive [*substantif*] in which "multiple" ceases to be a predicate opposed to the One' and that 'remains completely indifferent to the traditional problems of the multiple and the one' (*F*, p. 13), then it must escape both axiomatic essentialism and topological atomism.

The brief section on 'Parts and Wholes' contained in *Anti-Oedipus* sets down the double exigencies that the concepts of multiplicity and composition must meet:

As a general rule, the problem of the relationships between parts and the whole continues to be rather awkwardly formulated by classic mechanism and vitalism, so long as the whole is considered as a totality derived from the parts, or as an original totality from which the parts emanate [...].

(*AO*, p. 44)

Here, Deleuze identifies explicitly the dual conditions that the notions of parthood and wholeness, multiplicity and oneness must satisfy. The account of the

mereological relationship must avoid both the mechanistic image of composition, which subordinates a derived wholeness to the movement of pre-existing parts; as well as the vitalistic conception of this operation, according to which parts are reducible to the self-movement of the whole. In vitalism and mechanism, which correspond to essentialism and atomism, parthood is conceived in terms of moments and pieces, respectively. 'Fragment' is the name of the Deleuzian alternative to both pieces and moments.

Thus far, I have been relying on the profusion of mereological terms that one encounters in the different stages of Deleuze's philosophical development: lines, series, becomings, fragments, even, at times, atoms. Although there are definite reasons behind the proliferation of terms in Deleuze, at times corresponding to a change of focus or emphasis in the development of his thought and at others stemming from strategic manoeuvring, I will now fix the terminology on which I will be relying for my analysis of the Deleuzian theory of composition. I will use 'fragment' to denote what I take to be the Deleuzian theoretical alternative and challenge to the traditional duality of moment and piece, or essence and atom. Fragment will signify, therefore, what nominally and putatively constitutes a Deleuzian part composing Deleuzian wholes. Between fragments lies *spatium*, the realm of relations. This *spatium* is the site of heterogeneity and disjunction; but it also accounts for conjunction, connection and structure.

Fragments are the material subject to a process of a distinctly Deleuzian conception of composition and building. This process is not explicable in terms of the imposition of form on inert uninformed matter: these parts are not unified by means of essence and the wholes that they form are not essential unities. What is more, this conception of the process of ontological building, which I will here examine as an ontogenetic process – along with the complementary notions of parthood and wholeness – constitute Deleuze's attempt to instigate an ontological shift away from all versions of mereological essentialism, whether Hesiodic, Aristotelian, Husserlian or atomist. At the same time, the attempt to undertake this shift aims at the development of a truly pluralist alternative, which abides by the elicited demands for a consistent and radical thinking of the manyness of the many. This notion of

composition, and, hence, of parthood and wholeness, is articulated in the fourth chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, entitled 'Ideas and the Synthesis of Difference'; but it is prefigured, in the guise of an ontological architecture and in terms of a theory of building, in Deleuze's presentation of the notion of unilateral distinction, with which Deleuze inaugurates his mereology.

### **'Underneath matters and forms'**

The first chapter of *Difference and Repetition* ('Difference in Itself') begins with a striking statement of intent which prefigures and presents in succinct form the ontological and conceptual shift that Deleuze pursues in relation to the central concepts of the *φιλονικία* – oneness and multiplicity (*DR*, pp. 36-37). Deleuze begins with a contrast between two accounts of ontological constitution, one of which exhibits the recognisable moments of the Aristotelian explanation in terms of matter and form, while the other, despite seeming to maintain matter and form, subverts them and escapes them. Both of these accounts serve as responses to the following question: how do determined beings arise out of the indeterminate? Or in the mereological terms on which I have been relying, how does the composition of real wholes made of real parts take place? What kind of processes are involved in the formation of structure? And what kind of structure is it that a theory of composition entails? The contrast, then, that Deleuze draws is one between modes of composing and building.

On the one hand, one can speak of determination in terms of the imposition of a formal structure, of 'coexisting or complementary determinations', on an intrinsically indifferent and partially undifferentiated material, which, for this reason, is at the same time intrinsically indeterminate: a 'pure indeterminate which remains below' (*DR*, p. 37). Indifference, hence, is the inertial state in which matter and form remain external to each other, the former as the non-differentiated abyss devoid of form and the latter as the epidermic surface lacking a content: the black

nothingness of uninformed matter and the white nothingness of immaterial form.<sup>260</sup> Indifference is also a natural state since determination occurs only between and after the black abyss and the white surface: difference is 'the intermediate between these two extremes' (*DR*, p. 36) of indifference:

Indifference has two aspects: the undifferentiated abyss, the black nothingness, the indeterminate animal in which everything is dissolved – but also the white nothingness the once more calm surface upon which float unconnected determinations like scattered members: a head without a neck, an arm without a shoulder, eyes without brows. The indeterminate is completely indifferent, but such floating determinations are no less indifferent to each other.

(*DR*, p. 36)

Thus, the movement of determination goes from indifference to difference by means of a formal structuring operation that bestows determinacy on the indeterminate. The result of this operation (differentiation) is the state of intermediate difference: an intermediary or propitious field between the two extremes of indifference, pure matter and form. This is a realm of presence and precision in which beings are constituted as things distinguished from other things according to the extrinsic patterns of determinacy inscribed in form. These patterns of pure form account for the empirical differences between beings: they are the principles according to which beings arise as distinct, individuated and determined beings. We find an illustration of such an operation in Aristotle's account of building in the *Metaphysics*:

if you want to define building, you have three choices: Either you can list the stones, bricks and beams, giving what is potentially a building, viz. the matter of a building. Or your account can be enclosed space for the housing of objects or persons (or something of that sort

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<sup>260</sup> 'Once again, at first sight, in the infinite everything must be confused, it must be the black night or the white light' (Gilles Deleuze, 'The Actual Infinite-Eternal, the Logic of Relations, 10/03/1981', *Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze*, trans. by Simon Duffy <<http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=42&groupe=Spinoza&langue=2>> [accessed 30 July 2008]).

of effect). Alternatively, you can put them both together and give the third, composite substance.

(*Met.* 1043a)

On the other hand, instead of accounting for difference and determination as a produced effect which occurs only after and between the states of indifference (matter and form), Deleuze asks his reader to 'imagine' that determination is brought about not as the result of the imposition of a white surface on a black depth, a movement which occurs *in spite* of the indifferent extremes which remain external to each other, but as the 'only extreme, the only moment of presence and precision' (*DR*, p. 36). This imagining requires that we account for determination without presupposing matter and form as mutually extrinsic – that is, inherently indifferent – elements. How might we imagine a depth that is no longer intrinsically indifferent but already inherently determinate and a form that does not hover as the indifferent epidermis but that arises out of what it engulfs? Deleuze resorts to the notion of a unilateral distinction:

Instead of something distinguished from something else, imagine something which distinguishes itself – and yet that from which it distinguishes 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.

(*DR*, p. 36)

To think of the movement of determination as the movement of a unilateral distinction constitutes Deleuze's attempt to substitute a duality of extrinsic extremes with a duality of reciprocally dependent elements within the extreme of determination as such. Lines of sheer determination distinguish themselves unilaterally while the indeterminate persists as the support that refuses to distinguish itself from the distinguished. Thus, maintaining Aristotle's terms, we are led to consider a series of paradoxical notions and images: a ground that itself rises 'without ceasing to be ground' (*DR*, p. 36) or a black sky out of which light emerges in spite of its darkness; that is, a matter informed, already determinate (or, as

Deleuze will say, differentiated). On the other hand, we are led to admit a form that escapes the ground and radiates out of its already determinate depth: the lightning which flashes in and out of the black sky, in spite of its luminosity. Determination, thus, would involve the flashing of the form, the establishing of a surface connection on the epidermis of the pregnant darkness of the ground/sky.

Given such 'imagining', the notions of form and matter undergo such transformation that a terminological shift that will reflect the conceptual renovation is required:

All the forms are dissolved when they are reflected in this rising ground. It has ceased to be the pure indeterminate which remains below, but the forms also cease to be the coexisting or complementary determinations. The rising ground is no longer below, it acquires autonomous existence; the form reflected in this ground is no longer a form but an abstract line acting directly upon the soul.

(*DR*, p. 37)

Once more, Deleuze's formulations lead to a paradox: a membrane exhibiting depth and a ground that, in rising to the surface, becomes superficial. The extrinsic moments of indifference, the pure determination of the white surface and the indeterminate black depth, become the reciprocally dependent dimensions of a mirror and 'combine in a single determination', namely, the extreme of difference and determination. The lightning that flashes where the form had previously shone indifferently (as the white nothingness) is 'an abstract line', which, in distinguishing itself from the ground, cannot but raise the ground in which it participates itself. The mode of the abstract line captures the movement of determination in the way that it proceeds out of the darkness of the ground, perpetuating it only by casting a momentary flash of light. The darkness is pregnant with light and far from signifying the dissolution of determination, it is its receptacle and condition: it is the darkness of the chiaroscuro in which light flashes not as its antithesis but as its complement, espousing what divorces it. The 'laws of light and shadow' (*DR*, p. 84), governing the movement of the black and white nothingness, are interrupted. Deleuze, therefore, moves the theory of determination and composition from the image of the darkness

and light, of determination occurring in the space between the external elements of matter and form, to the image of the abstract line and the resources of the *chiaroscuro*, of determination as ‘that precise point at which the determined maintains its essential relation with the undetermined’: a ‘rigorous abstract line fed by ’ (*DR*, p. 37). The means by which such a shift from matter and form to the deep surface of the mirror is to be undertaken are accounted for in chapter 4 of *Difference and Repetition*.

I will now proceed to explore further the contrast that Deleuze has drawn between accounts of determination and the shift in terms of ontogenetic accounts and compositional theories that he prescribes. I will do this, first, by giving an account of Deleuze’s argument against Aristotle’s theory of individuation. I will then go on to consider the shift prescribed by Deleuze in the context of architecture and theories of building.

### **Aristotle and representation**

I now turn to present the reasons for which, according to Deleuze, determination ought to take ‘the form of unilateral distinction’, in other words, to Deleuze’s account of the failure of representation as an account of determination.<sup>261</sup> The preceding

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<sup>261</sup> ‘Representation’ refers both to a system, or *image*, of thought as well as, more specifically, to an account of individuation. In both of these aspects, organic representation is an Aristotelian conceptual framework, which, although not founded by Aristotle, was given its most adequate and pervasive expression by the Stagirite. It is Plato that founds, selects and delimits the domain of representation, ‘the entire domain that philosophy will later recognise as its own’ (*LS*, p. 259), but it is only with Aristotle that representation becomes ‘a well-founded, limited and finite representation’ (*LS*, p. 259). Even though it is with Plato that ‘a philosophical decision of the utmost importance’ is taken, namely, the decision to subordinate difference to identity and reduce simulacra to the order of icons, it is only with Aristotle that ‘the constituted categories of representation’ appear and that the ‘logic of representation’ becomes deployable (*DR*, p. 155). Deleuze, therefore, interprets Aristotelianism as a continuation or intensification of Platonism. Aristotle, far from breaking with his teacher, pursues in a more systematic way the ramifications of the Platonic decision and motivation. Aristotle ‘saw what is irreplaceable in Platonism’ (*DR*, p. 71), the imperative to subordinate difference to ‘the powers of the One, the Analogous, the Similar and even the Negative’ (*DR*, p. 71), but at the same time identified its limitations: ‘With Plato, the issue is still in doubt: mediation has not yet found its ready-made movement. The Idea is not yet the concept of an object which submits the world to the requirements of representation [...]. The Idea has therefore not yet chosen to relate difference of the identity of a concept in general’ (*DR*, p. 71). That is why ‘the Heraclitan world still growls in Platonism’, a labyrinthine world that becomes untangled, albeit without Ariadne’s thread. In this respect, Aristotle sought to



account of the relation between difference and indifference in Aristotle shows that between the black and white nothingnesses, a third term is invariably required to effectuate the imposition of form on matter or the passage from the indeterminate to the determinate. The movement of determination traverses the natural state of indifference. In other words, difference, 'the state in which one can speak of determination *as such*' (DR, p. 36), is understood as the movement between the two states of indifference, the nothingnesses of uninformed matter and immaterial form, that remain extrinsic to each other. Aristotle's account of formal difference furnishes the 'coherent medium of an organic representation' (DR, p. 37), that is, an account of determination and individuation according to which the constitution of a being is the result of a propitious exchange or mediation between difference and indifference. The moment of difference and determination, which occurs between the two states of indifference, serves a propitious function as it is the third term that mediates between the two nothingnesses in order to effect determination. Beings, in other words, arise out of the indeterminate according to the patterns of determinacy that one finds inscribed in the white nothingness of form. At that precise moment of interaction between the two states of indifference, difference makes beings by relating 'determination to other determinations within a form' (DR, p. 37).

Difference, then, is the relation between determined beings in which beings are made *qua* determined beings. Difference, in other words, is made whenever the indeterminate material becomes informed, i.e. in determination. Thus, in the context

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surpass Plato by applying upon Platonic division (the method of the 'dialectic of difference' in Plato) what Deleuze calls Aristotelian requirements, substituting the requirements of the concept in general, with its rigorous movement of division for Ideas, the invocation of which secures only a 'capricious, incoherent procedure' (DR, p. 71), an erratic method of division that operates 'without mediation, without middle term or reason' (DR, p. 72). Aristotle came to see that Plato's division, and hence Plato's understanding of difference, lacked a rigorous propitious or mediatory moment, 'that is, the identity of a concept capable of serving as middle term' (DR, p. 72), transforming division into a method that presupposes the identity of the concept and that is, thereafter, legitimately deployable for the determination of species, as the inverse procedure of generalisation. For Plato, in contrast, division does not constitute 'a method of determining species, but one of selection. It is not a question of dividing a determinate genus into definite species, but of dividing a confused species into pure lines of descent, or of selecting a pure line from material which is not' (DR, p. 72). Thus, whereas Plato seeks to authenticate, Aristotle wants to identify.

of Aristotelian philosophy, individuation, the process according to which beings are determined and arise out of the indeterminate, is effectuated by means of formal determination or, in other words, depends upon formal distinctions. The sense in which difference is formal in Aristotle needs to be made clear: the principle of individuation is formal in an Aristotelian sense if the differences through which it brings beings into being (out of the indeterminate) are inscribed in the indifference of the white nothingness, or, in other words, if difference presupposes the existence of patterns of unity out of which it is reflectively grasped and recognised.

To put it differently, formal determination requires and establishes the forms of generality, that is, planes of conceptual identity. In addition, formal determination is effectuated through the ascription of formal differentiae, understood reflectively as oppositions between these planes of formal unity. These patterns of formal unity, in turn, are planes of similitude, similarity being the relation between the beings determined by these forms. As far as the relations between the highest of these patterns, the relation between them is one of analogy. Therefore, the Aristotelian account of individuation in terms of formal determination amounts to a quadruple subordination of difference: it is grasped reflectively and mediately *after* identity; it is discerned *within* realms of resemblance as opposition; and it is employed *for* judgment. In representation an object is determined (remembered and recognised) in accordance with its relation to its concept (*DR*, p. 13). Determination (remembering and recognition) is then accounted for (or shackled, as Deleuze puts it) in terms of a formal or conceptual difference, a difference represented, reconciled with and inscribed within 'the concept in general' (*DR*, p. 38).

The concept places the following requirements on determination (and, as a consequence, puts into effect a 'selective test' for difference): 'identity, in the form of the *undetermined* concept; analogy, in the relation between ultimate *determinable* concepts; opposition, in the relation between *determinations* within concepts; resemblance, in the *determined* object of the concept itself' (*DR*, p. 37). Concepts allocate beings along patterns of unity. These patterns result from the fact that a concept establishes a realm of formal identity or sameness, so that whatever is determined is determined as something identical in form with others of its kind.

Further, determination involves not only the imposition of or falling into patterns of unity, but also, between the ultimate patterns of unity (categories), that what is determined be allocated. This means that determination takes place according to the allocation into a unity which is analogically related to other unities. To be recognised as a human being means that you are recognised as identical in form to other men. But, further, to be determined as a man means to be endowed with reason so that man stands opposed to what is not a rational animal. The difference then between man and beast is to be found in the opposition between corresponding determinations (animal with reason, animal without reason) within the common pattern of animality.

The beings determined according to formal oneness, or conceptual identity, are particular objects. Particularity is inseparable from generality, since it is conceptual identity that makes particularising differences. Forms, in other words, are general criteria that bestow a certain character to a particular. In this respect, the particular objects determined according to formal patterns of unity arise as substitutable or exchangeable beings, distributed and allocated into classes, which in turn are instituted as planes of generality, in which beings are determined qualitatively as similar and quantitatively as equivalent. Particularisation is tantamount therefore to a process of specification proceeding from formal differentiae between planes of generality and formal unity. Generality, therefore, is always 'the generality of the particular' (*DR*, p. 2). Thus, formal individuation produces particular beings by means of conceptual generality; to determine is at once to generalise and to particularise. What are the conditions of generality? In other words, under what conditions do concepts establish 'zones of presence' (*DR*, p. xix) according to which they determine formally? What is conceptual difference and how does it effectuate general determination? Generality is the result of artificial logical blockages in the concept which limit its comprehension, such that the extension of the concept becomes 'in principle infinite' (*DR*, p. 14). 'Why a term is applied to a set

of objects is indicated by its intension; the set of objects *to which* it is applicable constitutes its extension'.<sup>262</sup>

Repetition is then understood to be a case of 'extreme resemblance or perfect equivalence' (*DR*, p. 2), i.e. as bare or mechanical repetition of particulars or as 'a difference without a concept' when 'two things repeat one another when they are different even while they have exactly the same concept' (*DR*, p. xiv). Repetition appears to be reducible to generality and becomes understood as reproduction. If repetition can be disassociated from reproduction, if the difference between generality and repetition can be shown to be a difference in kind rather than in degree, repetition may also be separated from the generality in which the laws of reproduction are established and, hence, individuating difference may be understood as falling outside the realm of the generality of forms. Such a discovery would mark the 'advent of a coherence which is no more our own' (*DR*, p. xix). This explains why Deleuze's research task of reaching a concept of pure difference is inseparable, as Williams puts it, from the task of reaching a concept of complex repetition.<sup>263</sup> As Deleuze argues, 'the perpetual divergence and decentring of difference corresponded closely to a displacement and a disguising within repetition' (*DR*, p. xviii). Inseparability also explains the centrality of the concept of repetition in Deleuze's project. The task is to recover a concept of complex repetition of a singularity that is not reducible to extreme resemblance or perfect equivalence and that is clearly and definitely separated from notions of reproduction of particulars according to laws of generality. Accordingly, Deleuze must describe the structure of a repetition in which it is not the same particular that is repeated a second and third time or reproduced according to the laws of reproduction (generality, and, hence, resemblance and equivalence) but in which a non-substitutable and non-exchangeable singularity is carried through to the *n*th power, 'without the need to pass through a second or a third time' (*DR*, p. 4). Paradoxically, what would be repeated here would be

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<sup>262</sup> Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel, *An Introduction to Logic* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 31.

<sup>263</sup> James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), pp. 27-30.

something unrepeatable or irreproducible and this liberated repetition would be understood as the movement instigated by the 'secret vibration' (*DR*, p. 2) *within* what 'has no equal or equivalent' (*DR*, p. 1), that is, as 'an internal repetition within the singular' (*DR*, p. 2). Such a repeating miraculously repeats against, underneath and above laws of generality (*DR*, p. 3), so that law would not and could not ground repetition: 'if repetition exists, it expresses at once a singularity opposed to the general, a universality opposed to the particular, a distinctive opposed to the ordinary, an instantaneity opposed to variation and an eternity opposed to permanence' (*DR*, p. 3). Therefore, the task is one of securing and articulating a concept of hidden, complex, profound repetition which 'in its essence' would refer 'to a singular power which differs in kind from generality' (*DR*, p. 4), which Deleuze would oppose to all forms of generality and upon which he would build a theory of individuation that would escape Aristotle's account of formal determination by means of generality. Therefore, the contrasting conceptions of the relation between difference and repetition in Deleuze and Aristotle corresponds to contrasting accounts of determination and individuating difference.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> As far as the first meaning, representation as an image of thought, is concerned, Deleuze's confrontation with Aristotelianism consists in 'putting into question' the 'more or less implicit, tacit or presupposed image of thought which determines our goals when we try to think' (*DR*, p. xv). An image in this sense, then, refers 'to a whole organisation which effectively trains thought to operate according to the norms of an established order or power, and moreover, installs in it an apparatus of power' (*D*, p. 18). The traditional or classic image of thought presupposes that thought is recognition, that is, 'a common sense or employment of all the faculties on a supposed same object'; that the enemy of thought is 'nothing but error'; and that truth is a matter of solutions, that is, of 'propositions capable of serving as answers'. In this respect, the critique of these presuppositions amounts to 'a liberation of thought from those images that imprison it' (*DR*, p. xv) in order to 'conceive of thought as encompassing those problems which point beyond the propositional mode; or as involving encounters which escape all recognition; or as confronting its true enemies, which are quite different from thought; or as attaining that which tears thought from its natural torpor and notorious bad will, and forces it to think' (*DR*, p. xv). The relation between the critique of representation as an image of thought and representation as an account of individuation is, as Deleuze makes clear, indissoluble. The discovery of the concepts of difference and repetition is conditioned by the search for this new image of thought (*DR*, p. xv).

## Architecture as ontology

Heidegger, in his essay 'Building Dwelling Thinking', notes that *architecture* and its *tectonics* (as well as *technique* and *technology*) are etymologically rooted in the Greek *τίκτειν* (to produce) and *τέχνη*, that is, in the essence of bringing something into being (*γένεσις*), producing it (*τίκτειν*), building it (*bauen*).<sup>265</sup> Architecture, as the practice of structuring and founding, determining and grounding, building and shaping, in short, of individuating, producing and bringing into being (all the activities of *τίκτειν* associated with *γένεσις*), furnishes crucial illustrations of the contrast between the two accounts of determination presented by Deleuze and, hence, of the displacement that he seeks to achieve. One such illustration occurs in Vincent Scully's account of the distinction between Greek and non-Greek architectural forms, their modes of building and the beings that these modes bring into existence, namely, the Hellenic temple and the pre-Columbian Mesoamerican pyramid respectively.<sup>266</sup>

According to Scully, 'the shape of architecture is the shape of the earth as it is modified by the structures of mankind' (p. 1). How is such 'modification' to be understood? Scully's answer is based on the way that he considers manmade (architectural, technical and technological) structures to stand in a determinate relation to 'the vast indifference of nature'. For Scully, the earth constitutes 'the larger reality', the realm of natural indifference, lying 'underneath all the complexity of those urban situations', the manmade city. Lying underneath, this indifferent nature presents itself, when viewed, as is necessarily the case, from within the enclave of the manmade environment, as, simultaneously, 'the challenge – the threat, the opportunity'. Whether the earth presents itself as a threat or an opportunity depends on the way in which its challenge is met.

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<sup>265</sup> Martin Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking' in *Basic Writings*, ed. by David Farrell Krell, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 361. However, Heidegger claims that architecture and technology conceal the essence of *τίκτειν* and *τέχνη* as letting the thing appear remains.

<sup>266</sup> In his monumental *Architecture: The Natural and the Manmade* (London: Harvill, 1991). Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

Scully's distinction between Greek and non-Greek architectural forms, modes and beings turns on the way in which the relation between the natural and the manmade is conceived and played out or 'dramatised' in Greek and non-Greek buildings. The conception of the relation between the natural and the manmade affects the modes of building available: 'the first fact of architecture is the topography of a place and the way human beings respond to it with their own constructed forms: Do they attempt, for example, to echo the shapes of the landscape or to contrast with them?' (p. 1). Echoing and contrast are both principles that apply to the manmade; it is technology and architecture, *τέχνη* in general, that relates to the fact of nature. However, echoing and contrast correspond to two opposed ways of imagining the manmade, of making it, of imagining nature and relating to it, corresponding to Greek and non-Greek ways of building and shaping, individuating and determining, of making 'a new manmade topography' (p. xi).

Nature threatens the city when the human structure gains independence from the shapes of nature, when the natural and the manmade become two mutually enclosed realms, equally and reciprocally indifferent. In this case, forms become unnatural, reflecting a human-divine instead of a natural-divine: 'the temple was one of the essential Greek cultural structures through which human power was focused, aggrandised, and brought to bear on the rest of creation' (p. 56). The Greek temple celebrates 'the ready acquiescence of nature to human action, the victory of the polis over everything' (p. 65) and embodies 'the eventual victory of Apollo over the earth's cataclysmic power' (p. 59). Greek architectural form, in other words, involves an indifferent earth, over which structure hovers at a distance, contrasting with it. This explains the impression of hovering that one has when confronted with a Greek temple: the building-effect is the result of a process of building that proceeds by structuring the earth from the outside and in contrast with it. Shaping the earth, then, cannot but involve the imposition, or investment, of meaning from outside nature. The temple does not rise from the earth; it hovers over it, unnatural, elegant, blazing and weightless, resistant to the gravity of 'architectural weight' (p. 50). Thus, the body of the Parthenon seems to be 'rising and lifting in a broad and obvious upward curve [...], lifting us high in space like a vast ship of the air' (p. 96). Its being is to

constitute a 'countersculptural presence to the natural forms' (p. 37). In this way, the shapes of the Greek temple celebrate human presence, so that even if it attempts to bring 'the human presence into dialogue with the land' (p. 50), such a dialogue is spoken in a new, 'strictly structured, supple, and intense', human language (p. 39).

The pyramidal temples of Mesoamerica follow an entirely different logic of composition. The Mayan temples of Tikal, the Temple of the Moon at Teotihuacán, the pueblos at Taos, Tewa and Keres (p. 11), all 'repeating and compacting' the forms and shapes of the surrounding natural landscape (p. 6), all attesting to a different, pre-Hellenic or non-Hellenic, dramatisation of the relation between man and nature, the manmade and the natural, structure and material, form and matter, and a different principle of building: 'the architectural principle at work in these individual dwellings, therefore, is that of the imitation of natural forms by human beings who seek thereby to fit themselves safely into nature's order' (p. 5). The pre-Columbian Mesoamerican architects 'regarded themselves as an integral part' of the natural landscape (p. 4). Their structures do not attempt to break away, contrast or hover above the earth but, on the contrary, 'to echo its shapes and evoke its depths' (p. 4). Building means raising the earth itself by means of the structures that she herself takes on. As a result, 'manmade pyramids echo those of the sacred mountains still and help them along [...]. In return, the human structures themselves take on enormous power; they resonate to the horizon [...]. So human buildings reinforce the landscape's forms, focus them' (p. 14). Nature ceases to be the great indifference but gives rise to her own forms, structures which, when taken up as principles of individuation in architectural activity, bring into being buildings that rise directly from the earth, raising the earth at the same time, making the ground rise and become surface. This is why the pre-Columbian buildings and the dwellings of the American nomads are mountainous structures: 'the temples at Tikal are at once persons, mountains and clouds. They rise in stages from earth to heaven' (p. 16).

It is the same mountain form at work in the temples of Aztec Tenochtitlán that *makes* the 'set-back skyscraper' rising up 'mountainously' over the New York horizon. The urban fabric of New York, according to Scully, is made in the best tradition of non-Hellenic structuration and makes manifest the influence and



working of 'a pre-Hellenistic attitude toward nature' (p. 4). The 'rising spires of the skyscrapers of lower Manhattan', standing in 'dynamic interrelationships' with each other, tend to rise like mountains (p. 3). The early towers of Park Avenue raise the earth as they go, being themselves earth, immanently animated, self-moving earth, unfolding and raising itself according to its own structuring directives, rising as mountain and making Park Avenue below as a canyon. This 'wonderfully competitive action of the earlier towers' is contrasted with the abstract and 'flat slabs of the International Style' (p. 3), undoing the delicate fabric of the city: the Pan Am Building, the Lever House, the Chase Manhattan Bank and, most visible of all, the 'tall but inert twin chunks of the World Trade Center' (p. 3), themselves 'big and dead', one might say indifferent, in the same way that the earth on which they impose themselves (even lacking the elegant weightlessness of the hovering Greek body) remains dead, buried, inanimate, unstructured: in short, an indifferent, natural and inhuman ground to match the indifference of a technical, abstract, unnatural and human form. The being of these buildings attests to the severity of a 'highly dangerous condition': 'the blindness of the contemporary urban world to everything that is not itself, to nature most of all' (p. xi).

For the Greek mode of building, then, architectural activity and theory take place in the space between the great indifferences of the city and the earth; in this space, architectural form fashions moments of precision and difference, mediating, imagining and dramatising the relation between human and natural environment, *as if* the latter lacked all form. In contrast, for the American architectural tradition, the space of architecture is the earth itself, now imagined as the very realm of difference: the earth springs forth all kinds of forms, shapes and meanings, *as if* all the earth itself shot its arrows and raising its body into a sacred mountain along the trajectory of the arrow.

Similarly, the rejection of the alternative that Greek architecture, myth and philosophy impose, namely, '*either* an undifferentiated ground, a groundlessness, formless nonbeing, or an abyss without differences and without properties, *or* a supremely individuated Being and an intensely personalised Form' (LS, p. 106) delineates a distinctly Deleuzian ontology of building, an account of ontogenesis and

a theory of composition. What precedes the cosmos is chaos and chaos is what precedes the cosmos: this dense formula encapsulates Hesiod's (and the Greek physicists') understanding of structure, according to which to be decoded is to be unstructured. This is a formula that Deleuze, in *Difference and Repetition*, pointedly rejects. Indeed, the premise that the book seeks to establish is that 'far from being undetermined, the virtual is completely determined' (*DR*, p. 260).<sup>267</sup> The virtual, genetic, transcendental field, Deleuze writes in *Logic of Sense*,

is no more individual than personal, and no more general than universal. Is this to say that it is a bottomless entity, with neither shape nor difference, a schizophrenic abyss? Everything contradicts such a conclusion, beginning with the surface organisation of this field. The idea of singularities, and thus of anti-generalities, which are however impersonal and pre-individual, must now serve as our hypothesis for the determination of this domain and its genetic power.

(*LS*, p. 99)

### **The complexity of Deleuze's edict**

From Greek to American modes of building, of imagining the earth, of raising the ground, of structuring matter: this is a shift that both Scully's diagnosis of the modern condition and Deleuze's analysis ask us to undertake. The formula of Deleuze's prescription, to undertake the shift from the first to the second account, elicits interpretative dilemmas. For the edict that we should 'raise up the ground and dissolve the form' (*DR*, p. 37) lends itself to a reading according to which what is here being advanced is a metaphysics that accords primacy to the ground and eschews the form as inessential. The ground, after all, constitutes the origin out of

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<sup>267</sup> In *A Thousand Plateaus*, however, one has the sense that Deleuze and Guattari's account remains embedded within the terms of the overarching Greek contrast between chaos and cosmos; that the relation between structure and non-structure, determinacy and the indeterminate, the ordered, fake multiple of beings and the pure multiple of being, is conceived of as a simple relation between straight-forwardly contrasting terms (chaos and non-chaos, cosmos and non-cosmos); that not only does this Greek contrast remain unchallenged but, what is more, that it constitutes a fundamental premise of Deleuze and Guattari's argument, with significant results for the conception of multiplicity (and, hence, of oneness) advanced. This is a significant reservation that should qualify the application of concepts and terms from *Difference and Repetition* to *A Thousand Plateaus* and vice versa.

which the movement of determination (the abstract line) proceeds, or the black indifferent canvas against which the light of chiaroscuro flashes. Badiou, for example, writes:

The virtual, considered in its chaotic form, is absolute pre-predicative givenness, the nonphilosophical presupposition of all philosophical thought. [...] The virtual here is the ground as the 'there is', preceding all thought.

(DCB, p. 45)

The claim is repeated by Mullarkey, who argues that Deleuze's deconstruction of 'philosophy's classic dualisms', such as those of matter and form, ground and grounded, determinate and indeterminate, amounts, methodologically, to the privileging of one of these terms, excluding '(as mere skin, as superficial) notions of form, "molarity", and "actuality", by giving them derivative status in what was meant to be a non-hierarchical system'.<sup>268</sup> To put it differently, since distinction is unilateral, since, that is, 'the distinguished opposes something which cannot distinguish itself from it but continues to espouse that which divorces it' (DR, p. 36), the distinct terms of a distinction that is unilateral remain one. Such a reading interprets virtuality as a grounding factor and, hence, reiterates Badiou's evaluation of Deleuze's ontology as a philosophy of death which valorises virtual depth against the actual surface. As a result, Deleuze's philosophy is thought to dictate a programme of descent (*κατάβασις*) in the precise sense that it supplants one indifference (white nothingness) for another (black nothingness). The ensuing conclusion, as Mullarkey notes, is that 'univocity, elucidated through unequal conceptual pairings, leads to equivocity'.<sup>269</sup>

However, this interpretation loses sight of important complexities in the images and notions employed in the formulation of Deleuze's programme in the passages under discussion. A closer reading reveals that Deleuze's edict prescribes a complex movement, not from one indifferent state to another, but from indifference to difference; that the ground remains an origin only in being dislocated or rising

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<sup>268</sup> Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy*, *op. cit.* p. 20.

<sup>269</sup> Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy*, *op. cit.* p. 19.

with the abstract line that it espouses; that the black canvas of the chiaroscuro is far from indifferent but pregnant with the light of the determined figures. In the terms that Deleuze will later develop in chapter 4 of *Difference and Repetition*, that the virtual ground, although undifferentiated, is thoroughly differentiated and that the actual surface is not the end result of a process of differentiation but the ineliminable dimension (a solution) of a process of different/ciation. The point is that Deleuze is not here prescribing the dissolution of form into matter but, instead, the dissolution of form into rising matter and this *simultaneously* entails the dissolution of matter into the reflected form as well. In other words, Deleuze's edict challenges 'simultaneously the form [...] and the bottomlessness of an undifferentiated abyss [*le sans-fond d'un abîme indifférencié*]' (F, p. 14).

Now, the question that emerges concerns the extent to which these complexities in Deleuze's programmatic prescription permeate the execution of the Deleuzian programme as a whole. In other words, the passages on determination from the first chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, validate my hypothesis that Deleuze *acknowledges* the criteria of *effondement* according to which, as I have argued, a theory of composition must be evaluated. Now, I must validate the hypothesis that Deleuze not only recognises but also undertakes to articulate his mereology in the parameters established by these criteria, that is, whether the Deleuzian fragment lies beyond the moment and the piece (or whether Deleuzian composition takes place 'underneath matters and forms', outside the parameters of essentialist theories of structure). This means that I must pass from the identification of the ontological programme (which I undertook above) to the examination of the way in which this programme is put into effect or realised in accounts of multiplicity, structure and composition. I must ask, that is, whether, *contra* Badiou, Deleuze's philosophy pursues not merely the mere dissolution of form in matter ('at the expense', as May puts it, 'of unity and coherence')<sup>270</sup> but the overcoming of both matter and form as extreme states of indifference in favour of the only extreme in which such indifference is avoided, i.e. a matter that is only ever informed and a form that is only ever material; whether, in

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<sup>270</sup> Todd May, 'Badiou and Deleuze on the One and the Many' in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, ed. by Peter Hallward (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 67-76 (p. 67).

other words, the complex movement prescribed and announced in the opening pages of the first chapter of *Difference and Repetition* is enacted in the guise of a full-fledged metaphysics of parts and wholes. In terms of Badiou's critique, this question concerns the way in which the relation between actual and virtual should be understood (as dimensions of differentiation), or, in other words, the manner and sense in which unilateral distinction allows distinction to arise out of oneness.

### 7.3 Deleuze's theory of Ideas as a logic of multiplicity

#### Multiplicity as a substantive

Chapter 4 of *Difference and Repetition*, entitled 'Ideas and the Synthesis of Difference [*Synthèse Idéelle de la Différence*]', puts into effect the Deleuzian programme against essentialism in all its versions (Aristotelian, Husserlian, Hesiodic, Epicurean) in the form of a metaphysics the basic category of which is multiplicity (*multiplicité*): 'Multiplicity, which replaces the one no less than the multiple, is the true substantive, substance itself [*la substance même*]' (DR, p. 230). Thus, the ontology developed in *Difference and Repetition* effects a fundamental replacement, namely, that 'the differences between and multiplicities and the differences within multiplicities replace schematic and crude oppositions' (DR, p. 230). As in Plato's *Parmenides*, the schematic and crude oppositions rejected are of the 'one-many and many-one type' (DR, p. 230). Deleuze sketches the principles of a pluralism in which multiplicity does not designate 'a combination of the many and the one, but rather *an organisation belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system*' (DR, p. 230, emphasis added). Hence, the concept of multiplicity is defined as the 'many as such', a substantive – manyness – which is contrasted with adjectival conceptions of the multiple. In addition, in agreement with the previous declaration, the substantive conception of the many as such is purged of any traces of oneness 'whatsoever'. Multiplicity is without unity; it is not a combination or mixture of one and many (one thinks here of a contrast with the Presocratic pluralists and the atomists). The multiple as such is the purely multiple, the many-in-themselves containing no ontological or epistemological reference to the one. Thus, Deleuze's multiplicity – the many as such, the substantive multiple – is proclaimed as radically

conceived (for epistemology) and pure (for ontology) manyness, entirely devoid of any presence of the one. However, the same proposition that divests multiplicity of unity at the same time describes it as ‘an organisation’ forming ‘a system’, albeit without the intervention of the one. Multiplicity is described as a structure, but a structure that configures the parts that come to occupy its positions without recourse to unity. In a vocabulary that does not appear in the account of *Difference and Repetition*, it may be claimed that the wholes formed by this structure are open and non-totalising systems.

Now, these preliminary descriptions of multiplicity (pure, radically conceived, as such, substantive, substance itself) raise a series of questions that I will answer here. To begin with, what is the import of the proclamation that multiplicity is ‘substance itself’? Are there many substances or is substance – somehow – many? Further, whence the compositional, regulatory and genetic capacity of the multiple, if this multiple is not a ‘combination of the many and the one’? Finally, how does multiplicity constitute an organisation, a system and a structure, if it precludes recourse to the adjectival types of the many (among which I count Husserl’s *Fundierung*, Hesiod’s Earth, Aristotle’s *οὐσία* and Epicurean atoms)?

Let me begin by exploring in more detail the kind of shift or replacement that Deleuze attempts to conduct by means of the notion of multiplicity. What happens, in other words, when, as Smith and Protevi write, ‘a typological difference between substantive multiplicities [...] is substituted for the dialectical opposition of the one and the multiple’?<sup>271</sup> Deleuze makes clear that this substitution is the only way to overcome the impasse of the *φιλονικία* – is it one, is it many? – and ‘to bring about the suppression of the opposition between the one and the multiple. It happens the moment the one and the multiple cease to be adjectives and give way to the substantive: there are only multiplicities’.<sup>272</sup> This substitution can be articulated by

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<sup>271</sup> Daniel Smith and John Protevi, ‘Gilles Deleuze’, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition), ed. by Edward N. Zalta,

<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/deleuze/>> [accessed 11 September 2008].

<sup>272</sup> Gilles Deleuze, ‘Dualism, Monism and Multiplicities, 26/03/1973’, *Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith

means of a contrast between two kinds of pluralism, only one of which meets the conditions for a radical, dangerous, enticing account of the many. On the one hand, there are the pluralisms that rest on the crude and schematic opposition between one and many. This opposition allows for the combination of one and many, which is the principal ontological operation in these pluralisms. Ontogenesis is then construed in terms of the combination and 'enormous opposition' of one and many, understood abstractly. The many needs unity in order to form a system such as an entity. This is why, in his lectures at Vincennes, Deleuze identifies this inadequate pluralism with an implicit dualism: 'dualism is defined by the employment of the one and the multiple as adjectives'. For this reason, he makes apparent that the dispute does not concern the choice between monism and pluralism, between which Deleuze establishes a 'strict identity', but between pluralism and dualism: 'a monistic field is indeed a field inhabited by multiplicities'. The passage from dualism to pluralism or, what is the same, from false pluralism (and its corresponding 'false monism') to a *true*, dangerous, enticing and consistent pluralism, entails the working of

this magical operation that consists in forbidding the employment of the adjectives one and multiple, in order to retain only the substantive multiplicities, this is the operation that gives an account of the identity of monism and pluralism and which related the true source of dualism to the duality established between two adjectives: the one and the multiple.<sup>273</sup>

This dualistic pluralism, Deleuze writes, is but 'an empty discourse which lacks a substantive' (*DR*, p. 230). In contrast to this 'inadequate' kind of pluralism, Deleuze presents the following alternative: a metaphysics in which multiplicity plays the role of substance, with the principles of organisation belonging to the many as such and in which everything, even the one and the many, is multiplicity, divesting oneness of its ontological authority and efficacy and abolishing the opposition and combination of one and many as the mechanisms of ontogenetic composition.

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<<http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=167&groupe=Anti%20Oedipe%20et%20Mill e%20Plateaux&langue=2>> [accessed 17 April 2010].

<sup>273</sup> Deleuze, 'Dualism, Monism and Multiplicities, 26/03/1973', *op. cit.*

What becomes of parthood when the multiplicity of ideal parts is thought of 'substance itself'? Deleuze's re-conception of multiplicity as substantive cannot mean that multiple parts are substances in terms of an absolute separation between the parts or in terms of the independence of parts in relation to each other. Such separation and independence would involve the reification of not-being and the re-introduction and multiplication of oneness. The result would be an ontology that does not escape the one-many dilemma.

It is important to take note of Deleuze's formulation here. Deleuze does not claim that substance is multiple, which would imply that there is a multiplicity of substances. At the same time, neither does he proclaim substance to be multiplicity, which might require that we think about a self-organising and self-dividing whole that *appears to be* multiple (in the sense that appearance is used in Plato, as an alternative to being). Instead, Deleuze's formula is: multiplicity is substance itself, the true substantive. This formulation requires a new conception of what it means to be substance as well as what it means to be multiple. Interpreting Deleuze's formulation entails recognising and articulating this conceptual innovation. The following quotation from the lectures at Vincennes makes clear what is at stake when we pass from the adjectival to the substantive conception of multiplicity:

Why do we feel that this use of multiplicity, as a substantive, is at once unusual and important? It's because, so long as we employ the adjective 'multiple', we only think a predicate that we necessarily place in a relation of opposition and complementarity with the predicate 'one': the one and the multiple, the thing is one or multiple, and it's even one and multiple. On the contrary, when we employ the substantive multiplicity, we already indicate thereby that we have surpassed the opposition of predicates one/multiple, that we are already set up on a completely different terrain, and on this terrain we are necessarily led to distinguish types of multiplicity. In other words, the very notion of multiplicity taken as a substantive implies a displacement of all of thought: for the dialectical opposition of the one and the multiple, we substitute the typological difference between multiplicities.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Gilles Deleuze, 'Theory of Multiplicities in Bergson, 1970', *Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze*,



If multiplicity is substantive, the world swarms in multiplicities. In spite of such omnipresence, however, multiplicity proves to be an elusive constituent of the world. Where does one begin to search for such constituents? It seems that at the very moment when the multiple is captured by the metaphysician's system, oneness resurfaces as the oneness of *this* and *that* multiplicity (the atomists' problem). How to grasp multiplicity without - at the very act of grasping it - surrendering it to the one? This is the difficulty that Deleuze recognises and guards against when he insists that 'there is only the variety of multiplicity - in other words, difference' (DR, p. 230). Multiplicity is elusive and resists reification because it *exists* only by *taking place* as a variation, that is, as the proliferation of differences between and within multiplicities.

The account of how multiplicity exists as a substantive in this way leads me to the detailed examination of Deleuze's theory of Ideas. For the reader of *Difference and Repetition*, it becomes immediately obvious that the basis of Deleuze's pluralist metaphysics is his elucidation of Ideas (*les Idées*): 'Ideas are multiplicities: every Idea is a multiplicity or a variety [*variété*]' (DR, p. 230). As Bryant argues, 'for Deleuze the problem of the Idea is one of organisation'.<sup>275</sup> 'Ideas of reason' function as 'focal points or horizons' (DR, p. 215), by means of which the constitution of a unitary field is made possible. Ideas unify; they are the principles through which wholes are formed, so that, in the context of the mereological vocabulary I have been using, they constitute structures that regulate composition (hence, their genetic, regulative function).

Deleuze's metaphysics of parts and wholes proposes a shift in the way that we look upon the actual entities, selves and things, that inhabit our world as 'incarnations, as cases of solution for the problems of Ideas' (DR, p. 230), that is, as the meta-stable, ever-changing results of a process of individuation. Deleuze's ontology may be summarised in the claim that individual actual entities are the interim results of a parallel virtual process of individuation. This virtual field is the

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<<http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=111&groupe=Conf%E9rences&langue=2>> [accessed 30 July 2008].

<sup>275</sup> Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, *op.cit.* p. 230.

'genetic ground of the actual'.<sup>276</sup> Furthermore, these actual individuals are continuously susceptible, permeable and open to the tremors of the virtual processes that bring them into existence. The virtual and the actual, therefore, are not two metaphysically separate realms: there is only one ontologically univocal plane, that of the virtual-becoming-actual. The actual individual *remains* embedded in the virtual realm of individuating processes and is continuously determined by its generative power; while the virtual individuating processes – *only* and *always* – become actualised in the individuals of the actual world. As Williams notes, 'the concept of priority [of the virtual] must not be confused with independence, separateness, abstraction or ethical superiority'.<sup>277</sup> Actual objects are plunged into a 'virtual objective dimension' that is just as real as the actual objective dimension of their actualisation (*DR*, p. 260).

What is distinctive about Deleuze's conception of the ideal focus or of the principle of unification, such that it resists the Husserlian paradigm of the *Fundierung*, is the fact that Ideas are problematising structures engendering solutions: 'every solution presupposes a problem – in other words, the constitution of a unitary and systematic field which orientates and subsumes the researches or investigations in such a manner that the answers, in turn, form cases of solution' (*DR*, p. 215). To say that Ideas are problems or problematic and problematising means that Ideas relate to the parts that they unify as a problem relates to its solutions. An Idea is 'the indispensable condition' without which none of its solutions would ever exist. As such, the Ideal structure is at once immanent and transcendent in relation to the cases of its solution, or to what Deleuze will refer to as its incarnations.

### **Ideal continuity and relationality**

If Ideas constitute foci and horizons of unification, at once transcendent and immanent in relation to the parts that they configure and to the configurations themselves; if, that is, Ideas play the role of generative and productive principles that

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<sup>276</sup> Smith and Protevi, 'Gilles Deleuze', *op. cit.*

<sup>277</sup> James Williams, 'Why Deleuze Doesn't Blow the Actual on Virtual Priority: A Rejoinder to Jack Reynolds', *Deleuze Studies*, 2 (2008), 97-100 (p. 97).

involve the development of correlative notions of parthood and wholeness; then, Ideal organisation must entail some kind of an as yet undetermined notion of continuity. Indeed, the fact that Ideas function precisely as realms and instigators of continuity is inscribed in Deleuze's famous definition: 'an Idea is an n-dimensional, continuous, defined multiplicity [*Une Idée est une multiplicité définie et continue, à n dimensions*]' (DR, p. 230). The fact that Ideas are described as continuous already makes clear that Deleuze's metaphysics is not one of aggregates of discontinuous parts between which there is not-being. Ideal multiplicities are continuous multiplicities; Deleuze goes far enough to describe ideal distinctions as 'fluent' (DR, p. 258). Multiplicities, therefore, constitute *real* wholes. The question is then raised as to the specific mode in which Ideas effect unification and the way in which they constitute unifying foci or horizons. In other words, what constitutes an ideal whole? Or, conversely, what are the 'fluent ideal distinctions' that determine the ideal elements?

In order to answer this question, Deleuze postulates three conditions that govern the emergence of Ideas and that frame his conception of ideal mereological distinctions and relations. To begin with, Ideal multiplicities are composed of elements that have 'neither sensible form nor conceptual signification' (DR, p. 231). In this sense, these elements may be said to be indeterminate, if determination refers to the emergence of identity by means of a conceptual operation, such as the application of predicates floating in white nothingness, and to lack actual existence. Instead, the elements of a multiplicity are 'inseparable from a potential or a virtuality' (DR, p. 231). As a consequence of this indetermination, the elements composing an Idea lack the kind of existence that would allow the philosopher (or the architect, the machinist, the artist etc.) to identify them as already determined parts. This injunction ensures that Deleuze's account of multiplicity escapes the pitfalls associated with atomism. Actual indetermination or, what is the same, virtuality, is the first result of the requirement that multiplicity be divested of any trace of oneness.

Further, although the elements are inherently undetermined when considered from the perspective of actuality, they are nevertheless determined reciprocally by

means of reciprocal relations. As Deleuze writes in *Logic of Sense*, 'each of these series [in structure] is constituted by terms which exist only through the relations they maintain with one another' (*LS*, p. 50). What constitutes a reciprocal relation? In particular, how is it possible for an indeterminate element to enter into a relation of determination, albeit a reciprocal one? To put it in Deleuze's mereological terms, how is it possible for an element to be at once undifferentiated and differentiated? In order to explain how it is that such a relation be possible, Deleuze employs the concept of the differential relation  $dy/dx$ .<sup>278</sup> In the metaphysics of the calculus, and especially in 'the old so-called barbaric or pre-scientific interpretations of the differential calculus' (*DR*, p. 217), Deleuze finds resources that he deploys in order to formulate in more precise terms the notion of reciprocal, relational determination.  $dx$  signifies simultaneously three distinct principles: 'a principle of determinability corresponds to the undetermined as such ( $dx$ ,  $dy$ ); a principle of reciprocal determination corresponds to the really determinable ( $dy/dx$ ); a principle of complete determination corresponds to the effectively determined (values of  $dy/dx$ )' (*DR*, p. 217). Now,  $dx$  is 'strictly nothing' in relation to  $x$ ; it is completely undetermined. Nevertheless,  $x$  is 'perfectly determinable' in relation to  $dy$ , such that 'a principle of determinability corresponds to the undetermined as such' (*DR*, p. 219). As he writes in 'How Do We Recognise Structuralism?': ' $dy$  is totally undetermined in relation to  $y$ , and  $dx$  is totally undetermined in relation to  $x$ : each one has neither existence, nor value, nor signification. And yet the relation  $dy/dx$  is totally determined, the two elements determining each other reciprocally in the relation' (*DI*, p. 176).

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<sup>278</sup> On the calculus, cf. Carl B. Boyer, *The History of the Calculus and Its Conceptual Development* (New York: Dover, 1959); and Morris Kline, *Mathematics in Western Culture* (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 247-268. On Deleuze's philosophical employment of the differential calculus, see: Aden Evens, 'Math Anxiety', *Angelaki*, 5 (2000), 105-115; Simon Duffy, 'Schizo-math: The Logic of Different/ciation and the Philosophy of Difference', *Angelaki*, 9 (2004), 199-215; Simon Duffy, 'The Mathematics of Deleuze's Differential Logic and Metaphysics' in *Virtual Mathematics: The Logic of Difference*, ed. by Simon Duffy (Bolton: Clinamen, 2006), pp. 118-144; Simon Duffy, 'The Differential Point of View of the Infinitesimal Calculus in Spinoza, Leibniz and Deleuze', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 37 (2006), 286-307; Daniel W. Smith, 'Badiou and Deleuze on the Ontology of Mathematics' in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, ed. by Peter Hallward (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 77-93.

This account of the process of reciprocal determination explains the dependence of ideal parts.  $dy/dx$ , the differential relation, pertains not between localisable quantities; instead, 'each term exists absolutely only in its relation to the other' (*DR*, p. 219). It is no longer possible to refer to independent parts of a relation. The differential elements are 'completely undifferentiated [*undifferenciés*]' but 'completely differentiated [*differentiés*]' (*DR*, p. 219); that is, they possess 'the determination of the virtual content', at the same time while they lack 'species and distinguished parts' (*DR*, p. 258). The determinability of the terms is the result of a reciprocal synthesis, which, due to the fact that the elements possess no differentiation or determination of their own, presupposes *internal*, determinant relations rather than external connections:

An Idea, in this sense, is neither one nor multiple, but a multiplicity constituted of differential elements, differential relations between those elements and singularities corresponding to those relations. [...] ideal elements – in other words, elements without figure or function, but reciprocally determined *within* a framework of differential relations (ideal, non-localisable connections).

(*DR*, p. 348, emphasis added)

The reciprocally determined parts are not given once and for all, but 'must be secured step by step, and the relations themselves established between them' (*DR*, p. 262). This means that reciprocal determination is also a progressive determination, in which the ideal parts and the relations pertaining between them are progressively constituted in the process of the reciprocal determination. This is a consequence of the fact that reciprocal determination is an internal relation between 'embryonic elements' rather than an external relation between already-constituted pieces (*DR*, p. 260).

Crucially, this means that Deleuze is here putting forward a theory of composition that posits *dependent* parts: 'reciprocal relations [...] allow no independence whatsoever to subsist' (*DR*, p. 231). Partial dependence or the reciprocal determination of ideal parts is a second conclusion that is deduced from the demand that ideal elements must 'imply no prior identity'.

### Partial differentiation and differentiation

Thus, combining the results of the first two conditions, the parts of a multiplicity are subject to actual indetermination and virtual reciprocal determination. Both of these conditions together validate my hypothesis that Deleuze's account of the multiple, his conception of fragmentary parthood and his solution to the *φιλονικία* cannot be reduced to an account of the atomist variety, for reasons that pertain to the coherence and adequacy of such an account. Atoms are inherently determined and, hence, now understanding Deleuze's objection in its full scope, 'too independent'. The relations that pertain between atoms are external spatio-temporal relations that take place between already actually constituted elements and over the expanse of not-being, submerged in a uniform, indifferent *spatium* conceived as *vacuum*. This means that the relations themselves have no determining effect, in other words, that they are not reciprocal relations between actually indeterminate elements. Deleuze's conditions, in contrast, establish that there must be *something* – not nothing – between the elements that bestows determination upon them, an inter-being instead of the atomists' not-being that already contains the elements, which, for their part, subsist as openings upon this inter-being that permeates them thoroughly rather than as solid beings closed to not-being. To put it differently, a multiplicity is 'intrinsically defined' (remember that an Idea is a defined multiplicity), in that its elements reciprocally determine each other by means of relations of dependence. This conclusion and the terminology in which it is articulated undermines the widespread certainty that the principal and exclusive category of Deleuze's ontology is the idea of 'external relations' – at least in the case of the ontology developed in *Difference and Repetition*.

Thus, ideal parts are relational, dependent elements that receive determination only in the context of the virtual *spatium* (no longer a *vacuum*) of the Ideal whole. However, this dangerously aligns Deleuze's conception of parthood with Husserl's *moments*, 'dangerously' because of the limitations of essentialism to account for partial differentiation. Has Deleuze, in his attempt to avoid the hidden pitfalls of atomism and its *pieces*, fallen into the trap of a more obvious enemy that explicitly surrenders parthood and wholeness to the provenance of the one? Does not

his insistence on the interiority of multiplicities mean that the reciprocal relations between the parts are in reality internal relations *within* a multiplicity; and, therefore, does the multiplicity not take on the appearance of a totalising, founded whole that exists prior to its parts? If between the parts there is *something* (inter-being) that is not not-being, what precludes the postulation of this something as *being*, and, hence, what precludes the reduction of the elements to relations of interiority and of the confusion of the actual indetermination and reciprocal relationality and dependence of the parts with the relationality of moments? In other words, on what grounds does Deleuze argue that it is the notion of '(non)-being or ?-being which denounces simultaneously both being and non-being' (*DR*, p. 254)?

Deleuze himself recognises the danger that the notion of 'internal multiplicity' introduces in the following crucial passage: 'spatio-temporal relations no doubt retain multiplicity, but lose interiority; concepts of the understanding retain interiority, but lose multiplicity' (*DR*, p. 231). Deleuze here both confirms the typology of positions (essentialism – atomism, vitalism – mechanism) that I have proposed so far and also validates my hypothesis that he acknowledges that these positions are inadequate for the formulation of an adequate account of multiplicity, a mereological Scylla and Charybdis. The dual demands of interiority and multiplicity provide the axes on which Deleuze's response takes place; they also repeat the dilemmas of the ancient *φιλονικία*, with which Plato also wrestled; and bestow the paradoxical character on Deleuzian mereology: *both* internality *and* multiplicity; *both* genesis *and* structure. This is the conceptual minotaur that both parties of the *φιλονικία* consider to be an impossible abomination: an internal multiplicity with a structural and genetic nature. All the terms contained in this formula seem to cancel each other out.

The third condition of multiplicity aims to resolve this impasse: 'a multiple ideal connection', Deleuze writes, 'a differential *relation*, must be actualised in diverse spatio-temporal *relationships*, at the same time as its elements are actually incarnated in a variety of *terms* and forms' (*DR*, p. 231). This condition relates to the way in which Ideas provide the structure for the emergence of a multiplicity and that govern the process of actualisation. It is in the description of the ideal structure or of the

capacity of ideal multiplicities to constitute structures for the emergence of actual mereological wholes that the internality, relationality and dependence of ideal parts is firmly contrasted with the internality, relationality and dependence of Husserl's founded moments. Upon actualisation, the virtual, reciprocally determined and determining elements of the Idea (what I have called *fragments*), which are indeterminate when considered from the perspective of actuality, elicit actual parts. At the same time, the reciprocal, internal relations between the ideal elements actualise themselves in terms of the spatio-temporal ordering in which the actual parts are found:

Differentiation is always simultaneously differentiation of species and parts, of qualities and extensities: determination of qualities or determination of species, but also partition or organisation.

(*DR*, p. 262)

What then constitutes an internal multiplicity and what defines its efficacy as a structure? An Idea is 'a system of multiple, non-localisable connections between differential elements which is incarnated in real relations and actual terms' (*DR*, p. 231). The inner complexity of a whole, for Deleuze, is a matter of indeterminate elements reciprocally determined giving rise to actual spatio-temporal relations and actual parts. This formula of complexity describes the process of actualisation, that is, the coming-into-being out of inter-being of beings. It is thus a formula of ontogenesis, the cornerstone of which is a conception of structure as genetic. Now, if the notion of a genetic structure seems problematic, if one discerns a 'difficulty in reconciling genesis and structure' (*DR*, p. 231), this is only because the presuppositions about what constitutes a structure and what is involved in genesis are inscribed within mereologies of aggregates and pieces, such as the one underlying the atomists' physics. In contrast, for Deleuze, there is a 'complementarity of [...] genesis and structure, where this takes the form of a passive genesis' which is revealed in actualisation (*DR*, p. 255). The mereology that Deleuze is delineating in the few dense pages under discussion allows for structure to have a genetic function and, therefore, for a conception of wholes that escapes aggregates, atomic pieces and the external



relations pertaining between the parts over the expanse of *vacuum*, because structure refers not to relations 'between one actual term, however, small, and another actual term, but between the virtual and its actualisation' (*DR*, p. 231). At the same time, real genesis, that is, that process the provenance of which is the formation of real wholes, which, according to atomism, belongs to monist ontologies in which the account of multiplicity is surrendered to the magical power of the one, goes 'from the differential elements and their ideal connections to actual terms and diverse real relations' (*DR*, pp. 231-32). Genesis is here reconceived not as a process of the self-gathering of the whole by means of a foundation that assembles, exhausts, permeates, engulfs and ultimately assembles its derivative parts but as a process that takes place between differential elements, that is, elements which are indeterminate outside the whole to which they belong, hence, internal and dependent to the internal multiple whole, *but also* elements that are determined reciprocally by means of relations between each other. Deleuze has abolished the vertical organisation of Husserlian wholes, which necessitates the notion of a mereological distance, historicity and hierarchy between the parts, and recast it in terms of a horizontal geographical transversality which permeates the parts precisely without exhausting them or reducing them to the manifestations of the self-movement of the foundational one. Deleuze describes this horizontal genetic organisation of multiplicity as a static and passive genesis, precisely because it does not refer to the self-determining activity of a prior, however implicit, wholeness and unity or, as Bell notes, because 'there is no active, creative agent directing the process'.<sup>279</sup> Indeed, 'this is a genesis without dynamism, evolving necessarily in the element of a supra-historicity' (*DR*, p. 232); a veritable *static* ontological genesis (*LS*, pp. 109-117) in the sense that neither the movement of atoms in *vacuum* (the *clinamen*) nor the self-movement of the *Fundierung* in *plenum* are adequate to describe the process of ideal composition. In the same vein, the being of the multiplicities that participate in the processes of actualisation is described as impassable and neutral (*LS*, p. 100), echoing the passivity which characterised Parmenides' inviolate being. In the conjunctions

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<sup>279</sup> Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*, *op. cit.* p. 191.

‘impassibility and genesis, neutrality and productivity’, Deleuze’s mereology breaks with foundationalist models of composition in proposing that genesis and productivity are processes that, in the case of being, are separate from the overflowing activity of the being of the foundation. Thus, ‘the reality of the virtual is structure’ (*DR*, p. 260); or, equally, as Deleuze writes in ‘How Do We Recognise Structuralism?’, ‘every structure is a multiplicity of virtual co-existence’.<sup>280</sup>

To sum up Deleuze’s definitions of this ideal structure: the differential, ideal, non-localisable relations between indeterminate, virtual elements that internally determine a multiplicity furnish structures of actualisation or incarnation in real relation between actual terms. This virtual structure, the complexity of this ‘complex theme’, constitutes an ideal system or an internal multiplicity that brings into existence actual terms and real relations. The name of this process of static, non-dynamic geneses is actualisation or incarnation. Ideas are, therefore, systems of differential relations between reciprocally determined genetic elements. The Idea is composed of reciprocally determined elements that are the genetic conditions for the emergence of real objects in determinable in space and time. The actual terms and relations originate within the system of reciprocities of ideal connections. Actualisation is a morphogenetic process that entails the composition and organisation of extensional parts as well as the determination of quality. Behind and beyond the actual multiple there subsist virtual multiplicities, at once transcendent and immanent in the actual pluralities and varieties, that constitute the planes of immanence in which morphogenetic processes take place. As Deleuze puts it in his lectures on Bergson:

there are two types of multiplicity: one is called multiplicity of juxtaposition, numerical multiplicity, distinct multiplicity, actual multiplicity, material multiplicity, and for predicates it has, we will see, the following: the one and the multiple at once. The other: multiplicity of

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<sup>280</sup> In Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts*, ed. By David Lapoujade and trans. by Michael Taormina (London: MIT Press, 2004), pp. 170-192 (p. 179). Hereafter cited as *DI*. Subsequent references will be given parenthetically in the text.

penetration, qualitative multiplicity, confused multiplicity, virtual multiplicity, organized multiplicity, and it rejects the predicate of the one as well as that of the same.<sup>281</sup>

Thus, the dependence of the ideal elements of a reciprocal relation that constructs a multiplicity is a reciprocal dependence that differentiates what is undifferentiated. Partial differentiation in Deleuze refers to the process of co-functioning and co-existence ('Ideas are complexes of co-existence', *DR*, p. 235) of dependent, virtual parts in the context of the reciprocal synthesis that functions not between them, as if the elements were separable, independent differentiated pieces, but within and between them at the same time. The parts acquire a tenable and conditional interiority only by remaining open to the genetic virtual *spatium* that permeates them. In contrast to the atomists' *vacuum*, this Deleuzian *spatium* is the locus of inter-being (or, in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, the being of the problematic, (non)-being, ?-being and 0/0, *LS*, p. 123 and *DR*, p. 253) in which transversal, genetic, internal relations pertain between ideal elements. At the same time, these elements come into existence by already being open to this virtual genetic *field*. As described in 'The Method of Dramatisation' (*DI*, pp. 94-116), this constitutes an 'intensive *spatium* that pre-exists every quality and every extension', 'a pure unextended *spatium*' (*DI*, p. 99) and 'a pre-individual depth' (*DI*, p. 102), 'a pure implex' (*DR*, p. 288). In this way, virtual elements inhabit a continuous 'pure element of quantifiability'; the part of the multiplicity – the fragment – being neither solid *quantum* ('the fixed quantities of intuition') nor *quantitas* (the 'variable quantities in the form of concepts of the understanding') (*DR*, p. 218). The best available conception of the relation between such *quanta* would be, to be sure, the atomist conception in terms of 'a fractional relation', the element of which is the *vacuum* and in which the *quantum* 'maintains a value independently of the relation' (*DR*, p. 218). Thus,  $dy/dx$ , the reciprocal relation of the differentiation of undifferentiated elements, does not signify a fraction between solid beings: there is no room for independence in multiplicity; instead, it stands for a principle of reciprocal, relational determinability between relational parts. The space in which these connections

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<sup>281</sup> Deleuze, 'Theory of Multiplicities in Bergson, 1970', *op. cit.*

pertain is not extension, but the depth 'beneath matters and forms', out of which both the *extensio* and the *extensum*, the *qualitas* and the *quale* arise: 'the extensity whose genesis we are attempting to establish is extensive magnitude, the *extensum* or term of reference of all the *extension*. The original depth, by contrast, is indeed space as a whole, but space as an intensive quantity: the pure *spatium*' (DR, p. 289). In this depth, dynamic processes dramatise the Idea:

A living being is not only defined genetically, by the dynamisms which determine its internal milieu, but also ecologically, by the external movements which preside over its distribution within an extensity. Everything is even more complicated when we consider that the internal space is itself made up of multiple spaces which must be locally integrated and connected, and that this connection, which may be achieved in many ways, pushes the object or living being to its own limits, all in contact with the exterior; and that this relation with the exterior, and with other things and living beings, implies in turn connections and global integrations which differ in kind from the preceding. Everywhere a staging at several levels.

(DR, pp. 268-69)

## 7.4 Inter-being and *spatium*

### The being of the AND: inter-being

The study of Deleuze's account of multiplicity in terms of reciprocal relations as developed in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* has allowed me to extract, this time in a positive fashion, the 'conditions of structure' for a theory of multiplicity. I would now like to return to the examination of Deleuze and Guattari's metaphysics of parts and wholes and their employment of mereological terms in *A Thousand Plateaus*. I will attempt to translate the ramifications of the failure of atomism to respond to the challenge of essentialism, the Husserlian version of which I have here presented and evaluated, in the mereological terminological and conceptual framework developed in *A Thousand Plateaus*. This reprise is crucial for a number of reasons. To begin with, inter-being, a concept on which I have relied in order to formulate a theory of composition, is a term that is introduced in the framework of the analysis of rhizomatic structure: 'the rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, inter-being, *intermezzo*' (ATP, p. 27).

In the characterization of this *intermezzo*, I will further qualify the contrast between *spatium*, *vacuum* and *plenum*. Secondly, this will also allow me to arrive at and conclude with a series of insights on the significance of the shift away from an ontology of points to one of lines, with which I began my presentation of the paradox of Deleuze's mereology. Understanding this shift has provided the framework in which to consolidate an account of the conditions of structure and composition. Finally, arriving at such a framework will reveal in another context what it means to unfound, to uproot the mereological foundation. It is the possibility of this action, as both detractors and followers of Deleuze agree, that coincides with the possibility of establishing a radical pluralist ontology and of formulating a consistent theory of multiplicity.

What, then, does it mean to say that the composing parts of an assemblage, i.e. a rhizomatic whole, are not points but lines, that these wholes have no history but only a geography? And how does this facilitate the prescribed beginning amidst parts rather than at their beginning? The aims, as I have argued, in such formulations is to avoid thinking of multiple parts in terms either of the preeminence of a foundation, which would mean that these parts are multiple moments *of* and *after* unity, or of the simplicity of atomic pieces that are radically separated by not-being, which would furnish a multiplicity as an aggregation of elements that are constituted as many ones, as *already* unities *within*. In the first case, the many is explained away in the primacy of the one, while in the latter the many is either inexplicable or, again, succumbs to the primacy of the one, this time in the atom. If 'it is very difficult to reach a thought of the multiple as such' (*D*, p. vii), this is because such a rigorous account must steer clear of succumbing to the conveniences of either of these accounts, neither as inexplicable simplicity (composition as aggregation and as a result of coercion and violence) nor as reduced complexity (composition as founding according and due to the legality of the foundation).

In both cases, atomism and essentialism, it is relations of internality (predication and the logic of the IS) that *make* the whole and that assign the parts; in the latter case, this is so explicitly; while in the former, beneath relations that purport to be purely external lurks a domain of non-relations, internal unfoldings, lawful

assignments and composing essences. The logic of multiplicity and composition as a pure theory of conjunctions (AND...AND...AND...) remains subordinated to the logic of being because the atomist account of conjunction (theory of entanglements) is not complemented by a conception of disjunction, *spatium* and interval that will rigorously explain partial differentiation and separation without recourse to the internal life and unfolding of an foundation that is and – by being – also makes the whole that it is. The warning, then is the following: if the *spatium* is conceived as *vacuum*, as is the case in atomism, then the atom must be conceived as a pre-established unity of moments. Therefore, in atomism the principles of transversal connection, heterogeneity and multiplicity refer to a more profound level of metaphysical arborescence: to hierarchical predicative connections established within the realm of a homogeneous being (atom) that is one before and while it becomes many. The atom renews and intensifies the image of the tree: whereas ‘the rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, offshoots’ and constitutes ‘an acentred, non-hierarchical, non-signifying system [...] defined solely by a circulation of states’ (*ATP*, p. 23), the Epicurean atom constitutes a hidden arborescent structure.

If the concept of lines without and against points illustrates the kind of simplicity and complexity exhibited by the parts of a rhizomatic structure, this means that rhizomatic complexity should not be construed or imagined in atomist terms. The elements of a multiplicity are lines, not atomic points; this is not only to say that lines are inter-relating parts of a whole, as this would not be enough to distinguish lines from inter-relating atomic pieces, but also intra-relating parts: they constitute relational fields. Like atoms, these parts are disjuncts; unlike atoms, they are the exact opposite of a closed system. They are open fields of complexity in stark contrast to the self-enclosed simplicity of the atom: they are pure relations. An assemblage is not composed of terms, whether moments or pieces, but of multiple relations that, like pieces, are ‘external and irreducible to their terms’ and that, like moments, are by nature exhaustively relational such that there is no residue of enclosure and abstractness. Both a divisible simple and an indivisible complex, the line-part is the alternative between second-order moment-parts and piece-parts and affords a strange kind of foundation on which to compose wholes. This is not a foundation

that bestows its essential legality on the composition, that produces the whole with an essential nature localisable in the foundation and disseminated from the beginning onwards. Husserl's foundation marks what the whole *is* and gathers parts according to this essential determination: the development of the composition is predetermined in accordance with the essential nature of the foundation so that the activity of conjunction and inter-relating is invariably referred back to and remains 'subordinate to the verb to be' (*D*, p. 42). In other words, the whole develops on the plane of organization marked by its foundation according to its essential determination. Instead, the line as a foundation refers solely to the activity of conjunction; but this conjunction is not the mixing of atomic elements that are simple and separate by means of the not-being that they lack and that subsists between them. The AND of lines between things is 'extra-being, inter-being' (*D*, p. 43) rather than not-being. This means that what the *spatium* separates (*entre-deux*) and provides a place for (*le dehors*) is not simple or separate but already complex and related. To insist on the externality of relations is not to place concreteness and ontological primacy on the *relata* but to view the relation as primary in relation to what it relates. Like moments, the parts that are related along the line are subordinate to the trajectory of the line; however, like pieces, the relationality of the parts is not an internal principle flowing out of the part but is external to the parts. On the one hand, Husserl's moments are internally related to each other on account of their relation to their founding supplement so that the outside of moments, the space between moments, is also their inside, invariably the being of the founding part that permeates exhaustively the inner life of the founded parts. On the other hand, pieces are only ever externally coerced into aggregative formations so that their outside (not-being) is not inside (atomic solidity). Against both the plenitude of being and the barrenness of not-being, Deleuze posits the existence of inter-being, a pure relational *spatium* that is not explicable in terms of the actual parts that it engulfs, i.e. it is not reducible to the relational being of founded moments that are internally related to each other and to the whole. In addition, the relationality of this inter-being is not to be confused with the outside of atoms, the empty *spatium* between atoms that are only externally related to other parts in a whole. Inter-being is neither not-

being nor being but, in being posited as metaphysically primary, it constitutes a milieu of relations, a line, in which relations are freed from their terms. This means two things; that the relationality of parts in a composition is neither an effect of the internality, the being and the essential structure of parts, all of which are situated in and flow from the foundation, nor the result of a purely external operation on intrinsically simple and enclosed pieces. Instead, the parts of the line are related from outside but this outside exhausts their being or, what is the same, externality becomes what is most internal about parts.

Of what are the lines the relations, if not of simple pre-formed elements? The plane of consistency 'knows only relations of movement and rest, of speed and slowness, between unformed, or relatively unformed, elements' (*D*, p. 68), to which Deleuze refers as molecules, virtual particles, pure intensities, ahistorical becomings, blocs, fluxes, haecceities, affects, degrees of power, lines of flight, images, events. Does the line found its parts, do the parts require it as their founding complement? Is it not the line that now becomes the agent of composition? But there is no agent other than the trajectory of the line itself, what Deleuze calls desire, so that every assemblage, as Deleuze puts it, 'is already collective' (*D*, p. 107): 'If the machine is not a mechanism, and if the body is not an organism, it is always then that desire assembles' (*D*, p. 81). Thus, the line grounds and acts as a foundation of the parts that are related along its trajectory as the parts of this line, but it has none of the legality of Husserl's and Hesiod's foundations, since it does not constitute the being of the whole nor the not-being that the atomists posited in the place of the outside but the inter-being necessary for a relationality that is at once immediate (against genealogy and history) and real (not merely aggregative, against atomism). Against the 'nostalgia for being' that is the characteristic orientation of Husserl's wholes and Hesiod's cosmos, Deleuze's composites are founded on 'a fundamental sobriety, a poverty, an ascesis' appropriate to the AND (*D*, pp. 43 and 44). The AND is the AND of unity but it operates not by reflecting (and being subordinate) to the being of the foundation but in constituting the being of the foundation, the agent and subject of composition, the inter-being that is at work in the rhizomatic composition of an assemblage.



## Conclusion

### Theoretical exigencies

Insofar as the rhizomatic multiple is expressly dissociated from the adjectival multiplicity of points and comes to be identified with a system of lines by means of which a more essential determination of multiplicity as a substantive is reached, the concept of 'line-parts' compresses and presents in a single determination the conditions that a rigorous account of multiplicity must satisfy. My aim has been to identify what such theoretical rigour involves and to determine, in terms that are not strictly Deleuzian, the 'conditions of structure' that must be satisfied if we are to understand 'multiplicity as a substantive'. Let me summarise what the discussion of different metaphysics of parts and wholes has established. My argument against atomism focused on the independence of atoms that dissatisfied Deleuze and sought to understand this independence in terms of the questions, problems and concepts found in the traditional discussion of composition. My examination of atomism culminated in a series of negative qualifications that a theory of multiplicity must seek to avoid. The criticism of 'too much independence' was seen to mean that, in order to begin in the midst of parts, the parts are not to be regarded as enclosed pieces with relations external to their being; to think of parthood and multiplicity *before* unification and totalisation does not mean to abolish the philosophical problem of composition; to abandon the Husserlian notion of part as internally related to other parts in a unified and structured whole by means of a structuring foundation is not to argue 'that each state of things is itself multiple (which would simply be to indicate its resistance to unification' (*D*, p. vi). In other words, the case of atomism showed that in order to reach an understanding of composition and parthood in terms other than those of Husserl's mereological foundationalism, that is, in terms foreign to the founding of moments, then it is not enough to resist moments and, hence, their foundation or to 'unground' the unity of the wholes they compose and to surrender the theory of composition to accounts of aggregation of pieces. Instead, it emerged what was already explicit but elliptical in Deleuze's account of the multiple: that in order to unground, i.e. in order to substitute a logic of substantive multiplicity

for the logic of the *Fundierung*, it is not enough simply to reject the relation of founding. In order to understand parthood and multiplicity, it is not enough to deploy a theory of pieces in order to replace the theory of moments. Atomic simplicity does not do away with the problem of composition.

In all these ways I have tried to shed light on Parnet's remark that 'it is not the elements or the sets which define the multiplicity. What defines it is the AND, as something which has its place between the elements or between the sets' (*D*, p. 26) and to connect this remark with problems in the history of philosophy. Thus, in relation to the 'conditions of structure' that a theory of multiplicity must satisfy, I argued that this *spatium*, the place of the between, is inadequately conceived both in Husserl's essentialist logic of parts and wholes, when it is nothing in the sense that the between is situated within the uninterrupted continuity of the being of the total whole, and in atomism, when it is nothing in the sense that, although it is placed outside being and between beings, it is conceived as not-being. With Husserl, the *spatium* is the space of essential and legal conjunction *in* the parts (there is nothing between the parts because the parts are unbrokenly connected), with atomism the *spatium* is the space of disjunction outside the parts (there is nothing between the parts because the parts are separated from one another). Thus, both Husserl's mereological foundational wholes and atomist entanglements bear witness to a single formula: in both cases, there is nothing between the parts. I have thus reached by means of a series of injunctions the positive prescription for a theory of multiplicity in general: the formula to which it must subscribe is 'there is something between the parts'. This *something* cannot be the something or existence of the foundation nor the something or existence of the void, either of which would return as to the old inadequate formulation. Instead, these conditions require that this something be *between*: a rigour that will belong to the between, both being, because it is not outside being – it is not explicable by means of the existence of not-being, and not-being, because it is not within being – it is not explicable by means of the existence of the foundation; but more precisely neither being nor not-being, neither in nor outside the part but invariably between parts. This is the *spatium* of inter-being and its study amounts to an elaboration of Deleuze and Guattari's principles of

composition: a theory of heterogeneity that explains disjunction neither as not being nor as being; a theory of connection that focuses on a pure conjunction irreducible to the overflowing and productive internality of a founding part nor as the aggregation from outside of points, a principle of composition that is neither magic nor violence; and finally, a theory of multiplicity in which wholeness and parthood are expressed in terms of virtual differentiation, of the intensive character of the *minima*. In these three ways, the conception of parts and wholes and of the relations between them must be aligned with inter-being and its conditions.

### **Deleuze and the 'conditions of structure'**

In the essay on Lucretius in *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze credits the Epicureans with the realization that 'naturalism requires a highly structured principle of causality to account for the production of the diverse inside different and non-totalisable compositions and combinations of the elements of Nature' (*LS*, p. 268). I have tried to show that, even though Epicurus and Lucretius do recognize such a requirement, their atomism fails to meet it. Atomism fails to think the diverse in its diversity and to account for its production because it understands multiplicity as the conjunction of solid beings separated by non-resistant not-being in totalisable compositions, namely atom-wholes made of *minima*-moments. In order to 'generate the whole out of the diverse', atomism must have first generated 'the diverse out of the whole'. Thus, I have shown, occasionally *contra* Deleuze, that it is not the case that 'we may generate the diverse out of the whole, *only* if we presuppose that the elements which form this whole are contraries [that is, being and not-being] capable of being transformed into one another [that is, to form mixtures of being and not-being]' (*LS*, p. 268, my italics). In fact, contrary to Deleuze's claim, it *is* possible to generate the diverse out of the whole without necessarily presupposing that these wholes are mixtures of being and not-being, that is, without assuming that the elements forming this whole are contraries capable of being transformed into each other. This is precisely the case with ancient atomism. In other words, from the study of atomism we have learnt that to be a naturalist, in the sense of being in the position to account for 'the diversity of the diverse', it is not sufficient ('only') to accept 'to consider the void' (*LS*, p. 268), as

the case of the atomists proves. This constitutes a necessary, albeit not sufficient, condition for a philosophy of Nature that thinks the diversity of the diverse, 'the multiple as multiple', the manyness of the many.

The lessons learnt from the failure of atomism provide a series of requirements for a successful theory of multiplicity. It was already known that in order to move beyond Husserl's essentialist mereology, philosophy would need to delve under the ground and dig up the Husserlian foundation, that this would take the form of substituting the pure conjunctions of AND for the reflected conjunctive power of IS: 'the tree imposes the verb "to be", but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, "and...and...and...". This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb "to be"' (ATP, p. 27). Now, the examination of atomist doctrine reveals in more precise terms what this uprooting entails. It now becomes clear that a theory of parts and wholes that does away with the total whole in favour of entanglements of independent elements separated by not-being does not escape the foundation but only postpones its explicit thematisation. To dig up the root, to unfound the foundation, to do away with total wholes and moment-parts, it is not enough to judge in favour of pieces and aggregates. The fragmentary parts of Deleuze's multiplicities *are not* independent pieces. This suffices to show that an account of multiplicity and, in this case, Deleuze's account, cannot abandon the concept of wholeness; on the contrary, to understand multiplicity is to understand oneness. However, the nature of the non-independence of fragments, as well as the nature of their wholes, requires that they be conceived in terms foreign to the dependence of moments on foundations fashioning total wholes.

Thus, the examination of Husserlian and atomist metaphysics of parts and wholes culminates in the conclusion that a rigorous theory of multiplicity, a version of which rhizomatics purports to be, must venture outside and beyond atomism – and, hence, beyond the atomist conceptions of conjunctive synthesis, disjunctive *spatium* and entanglement, in other words, beyond the atomist conception of structure – in order to develop a non-arborescent logic of pure conjunction – and, hence, a logic in which partial multiplicity and differentiation are irreducible to the essential oneness of a foundation.

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