Philosophies of the Event: The Continuing Problems of Freedom and Subjectivity

Brian Anthony Smith

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Declaration

I am the sole author of the following thesis. I have consulted all cited references, and completed all the work presented here. The thesis has not previously been presented or accepted for a higher degree.

Signed……………………………………… Brian Anthony Smith

Abstract

My analysis of the Event in this thesis follows a continental tradition in philosophy that begins with Heidegger's Event, or *Ereignis*. This approach recognizes the Event as a radical beginning, in the form of a selection that is non-subjective, unconditioned and free.[1] And the selection marks the limits within which systematic and rational thought operates, and that Heidegger calls Metaphysics. This tradition is separate from the equally important analytic tradition, which follows Donald Davidson's treatment of mental and physical events as the basic elements of a metaphysical system, or the later process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. These two approaches treat events as *ordinary* or *general* occurrences, whereas the continental tradition, that I will follow, considers the Event, or events, as *exceptional* or *singular* occurrences. Although this distinction is not absolute, as Deleuze's engagement with Whitehead demonstrates, it provides an initial means to narrow the focus of this thesis.

In particular, it is Heidegger's use of the Event in his later work to mark the end, or exhaustion, of metaphysical thought and his assertion that thinking must abandon this philosophical practice in favour of a radically passive, poetic, form of thinking, that I seek to challenge. This challenge is first opened up by the reception of this later work in post-war France. Here, there is already a rejection of the possibility of escape, even if the end of Metaphysics is affirmed. This deviation can, in part, be attributed to the pervasive influence of Sartre on French philosophy; an influence that stems mainly from Sartre's early criticisms of Heidegger in *Being and Nothingness*.

This critical French reading of Heidegger introduces one of the most important themes for this thesis, the difference between a *single* Event and *multiple* events. My study of the Event will concentrate on this problem opened up by Heidegger, Lyotard and Derrida, at the limits of phenomenology: the emergence of a difference between a single Event and multiple events. The context in which this problem is raised is not sufficient to explore the full scope of this difference; the proclamation of the end of Metaphysics prevents such a possibility. In order to provide a context in which both the Event and events can be understood, a new positive approach to systematic philosophy and Metaphysics must be adopted. This move will see a shift from a de-centred subject to an emergent subject, and a transformation in the understanding of freedom, which I will chart through a reading of Sartre's concept of freedom.

This question of the Event and events will be played out in the philosophies of Deleuze and Badiou, and, in the final chapters of the thesis, a combination of their two approaches will be examined.

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[1] This is the broadest technical definition of the Event that I will be using, and it is close to Deleuze's understanding of the Event, which also incorporates the difference between an un-situated Event and situated events.

List of Abbreviations

Heidegger

BT   *Being and Time*

Sartre

BN   *Being and Nothingness*
CDR1   *Critique of Dialectical Reason Vol. 1*
CDR2   *Critique of Dialectical Reason Vol. 2*

Deleuze

ES   *Empiricism and Subjectivity*
DR   *Difference and Repetition*
LS   *Logic of Sense*
AE   *Anti Oedipus*
ATP   *A Thousand Plateaus*
WP   *What is Philosophy?*
Fold   *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*

Badiou

EE   *L'etre et l'evenement*
LdM   *Logique des Monde*
MP2   *Second Maifeste pour Philosphie*
TM   *Theory of the Model*
BE   *Being and Event*
MP1   *Manifesto for Philosophy*
CoB   *Deleuze: The Clamour of Being*
E   *Ethics*
LoW   *Logics of Worlds*
TW   *Theoretical Writings*

0: Introduction

0.1 Motivation and Theme

My analysis of the Event in this thesis follows a continental tradition in philosophy that begins with Heidegger's Event, or *Ereignis*.[2] This approach recognizes the Event as a radical beginning, in the form of a selection that is non-subjective, unconditioned and free.[3] And the selection marks the limits within which systematic and rational thought operates, and that Heidegger calls Metaphysics. This tradition is separate from the equally important analytic tradition, which follows Donald Davidson's treatment of mental and physical events as the basic elements of a metaphysical system, or the later process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead.[4] These two approaches treat events as *ordinary* or *general* occurrences, whereas the continental tradition, that I will follow, considers the Event, or events, as *exceptional* or *singular* occurrences. Although this distinction is not absolute, as Deleuze's engagement with

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[2] The term Event, or events, is a term shared by a number of different philosophers throughout this thesis and the aim of this work is to look for common aspects shared across its many and varied uses. It for this reason that I will use the English terms, Event and events, as much as possible, avoiding debates over the translation of specific terms, such as Heidegger's *Ereignis*.

[3] This is the broadest technical definition of the Event that I will be using, and it is close to Deleuze's understanding of the Event, which also incorporates the difference between an un-situated Event and situated events.

[4] Whitehead, Alfred, North, Concept of Nature, (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 15, 52. Whitehead, Alfred North, Process and Reality, (Free Press, 1985), p. 70. Davidson, Donald, 'Mental Events' in Essays on Actions and Events, (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 207 – 224. Although there is a shift in Whitehead's use of event between these two texts, from being a static part of a perception, to being the dynamic change unifying a series of actual entities, the event still constitutes an ordinary and common metaphysical object.

Whitehead demonstrates, it provides an initial means to narrow the focus of this thesis.[5]

In particular, it is Heidegger's use of the Event in his later work to mark the end, or exhaustion, of metaphysical thought and his assertion that thinking must abandon this philosophical practice in favour of a radically passive, poetic, form of thinking, that I seek to challenge.[6] This challenge is first opened up by the reception of this later work in post-war France. Here, there is already a rejection of the possibility of escape, even if the end of Metaphysics is affirmed. This deviation, which affects the work of, amongst others, Blanchot, Levinas, Derrida and Lyotard, can, in part, be attributed to the pervasive influence of Sartre on French philosophy; an influence that stems mainly from Sartre's early criticisms of Heidegger in *Being and Nothingness*.[7]

This critical French reading of Heidegger introduces one of the most important themes for this thesis, the difference between a *single* Event and *multiple* events. Heidegger's reading of the history of Western Metaphysics sees only one truth in the variety and diversity of metaphysical systems; each expresses to some greater or lesser degree the forgetting of Being.[8] Developing from the same phenomenological

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[5] The Fold, pp. 76 – 82. Although I do not address this relation directly, the difference between Deleuze and Whitehead will become clear in the distinction between the Event and multiple events, which will be a major theme in this thesis. Deleuze's events communicate through dissonance in the Event, whilst Whitehead's events harmonize in their relation to God.

[6] Heidegger, Martin, 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking', in Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger, (Routledge, 1993), p. 446. The theme of the end of philosophy begins to appear from Heidegger's work of the 1930s, such as *Contributions to Philosophy* and *Besinnung* (*Mindfullness*), but the development of a poetic response to this end is developed in his later works, mainly in from the 1960s onwards. Two books that collect together his work on this poetic response are *Poetry, Language, Thought* and *On the Way to Language*.

[7] Rajan, Tilottama, Deconstruction and the Remainders of Phenomenology, (Stanford University Press, 2002), see Chapter Three, 'The Double Detour: Sartre, Heidegger, and the Genealogy of Deconstruction', pp. 65 – 68.

[8] Heidegger, Martin, 'End of Metaphysics' in Time and Being, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (Harper & Row, 1972), p.56.

background as Heidegger, both Lyotard and Derrida pull Heidegger's analysis back into a metaphysical context, and in doing so seek to problematize the Event by giving some significance to the *actual* differences between various metaphysical systems.[9] Each different system or approach to philosophy relates to its own unique event, rather than relating to one single Event that underlies them all. At the very least, this difference between a single Event and multiple events might, itself, be an undecidable question.

Lyotard offers a rejection of Heidegger's Event, through the affirmation of a multiplicity of events.[10] Heidegger's Event is one final attempt at a grand narrative, and as such must be resisted.[11] Derrida's approach complicates things further, by stressing that we cannot escape Metaphysics due to the undecidability as to the whether there is one Event or multiple events. If a decision is made that all of metaphysics has covered over and forgotten the same problem of Being, then the specificity of each individual system, or approach, to philosophy is forgotten and covered over. But if these differences become the key focus, then Heidegger's original analysis still stands, and Being remains forgotten and covered over. Lyotard and Derrida are successful in their challenge to Heidegger's escape from Metaphysics, but they both share in his vision of the end of Metaphysics.

The end of Metaphysics is marked by its scepticism toward all forms of systematic thought in philosophy, every system is part of a history to be overcome, a violence to

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[9] Derrida, Jacques, 'Oussia and Gramme' in <u>Margins of Philosophy</u>, trans. Alan Bass, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982), pp.51-52

[10] Bennington, Geoffrey, <u>Lyotard Writing the Event</u>, (Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 127 – 128.

[11] Lyotard, Jean-François, <u>The Differend</u>, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele, (University of Minnesota Press, 1996), Nos. 173, 202.

thought, or just so much material to be deconstructed. I believe this inability to give credence to any form of systematic thought on its own terms is the result of a shared phenomenological heritage. The end of Metaphysics can be understood as nothing more than the limitation of phenomenology as a philosophical starting point. Two fundamental relations that ground phenomenology are key to this reading. The first is the central notion of intentionality, captured by the correlation between consciousness and phenomena: consciousness is always consciousness of something. The second is the correlation between thinking and subjectivity: consciousness is always the consciousness of some subject. This subject is always present, whether its Husserl's minimally reflective transcendental ego, the remainder left behind after the phenomenological reduction, Sartre's non-reflective transcendental field, from the *Transcendence of the Ego*, or Heidegger's Dasein. Admittedly, phenomenology becomes increasingly critical of these fundamental relations. At its limit, phenomenology ungrounds itself through its own analysis of the clear distinctions at the heart of these fundamental relations.[12] This ungrounding crisis can be seen in the various forms of the Event, each, in its own way, displaces the centrality of the subject, introducing an excess that resists a subjective re-centring and assimilation. In their later work, Heidegger, Lyotard and Derrida may no longer simply be described as phenomenological philosophers, but the problems that they focus on are those that have been given to them by the limits and impasses of phenomenology.

The subject of phenomenology becomes *de-centred* as each of these fundamental relations is challenged. Intentionality, as the free direction of consciousness toward

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[12] Rajan, Tilottama, <u>Deconstruction and the Remainders of Phenomenology</u>, (Stanford University Press, 2002), Chapter 1, 'Phenomenology and/as Deconstruction' provides a detailed discussion of these points.

phenomena, suffers an internal and external disruption, as the full influence of both the unconscious and brute materiality is explored. Similarly, the relation between thinking and the unity of subjectivity is disturbed by an exposure to the same unconscious and material influences. From this phenomenological starting point the fate of a unified metaphysical system of thought is tied to the fate of the independent subject; as the subject becomes de-centred in relation to the material forces that traverse it and the unconscious drives that compose it, Metaphysics is fragmented and rendered impotent.

I will argue that in order to put forward a new positive project for Metaphysics, one that gets beyond the malaise of the end of philosophy, two things are necessary. The first is to break the bond between thinking and subjectivity; thinking occurs beyond and outside of subjectivity. The clearest way to demonstrate this is to move from a *de-centred* subject to an *emergent* subject. Philosophy should be able to account for the emergence of the subject from within a metaphysical framework, rather than having the subject found that framework. The second is that a new Metaphysics should be able to resolve the problem of the Event and events that marks, for Derrida, the aporia of phenomenology and philosophy. In this thesis I will explore the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Alain Badiou, as two philosophers who can affirm *both* the Event and events, and differentiate between them.

This point forms the central concern of this thesis, and is therefore worth repeating. My study of the Event will concentrate on the problem opened up by Heidegger, Lyotard and Derrida, at the limits of phenomenology: the emergence of a difference between a single Event and multiple events. The context in which this problem is

raised is not sufficient to explore the full scope of this difference; the proclamation of the end of Metaphysics prevents such a possibility. In order to provide a context in which both the Event and events can be understood, a new positive approach to systematic philosophy and Metaphysics must be adopted. This move will see a shift from a de-centred subject to an emergent subject.

0.2 Problems of the Infinite

At the core of this distinction between the Event and events lies a new understanding of the infinite. If thought is tied to the finitude of the phenomenological, or existential, subject the infinite always appears as something transcendent to its immanent operation. It is this horizon of the finite phenomenological subject that confuses the Event and events, as from this point of view there can be no affirmation of an *actual* infinite, but only a *potential* infinite. The potential infinite is a legacy of Aristotle's contention that the only coherent understanding of the infinite, as that which is unlimited, is of a series that is not complete and can never be completed.[13] An example of this is often given by noting that the natural numbers are unlimited in this way, when we count 1, 2, 3… the ellipsis indicates that the series does not end, we can always add one more number, and therefore the series cannot be completed. Heidegger's radical finitude reflects this Aristotelian heritage, and asserts a strong influence over post-Heideggerian phenomenology. Mary Tiles' description of the potential infinite as an endless process of becoming without being, marked by *lack*,

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[13] Tiles, Mary, The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), pp. 26 – 27. Dauben, Joseph, Warren, Georg Cantor: His Mathematics and Philosophy of the Infinite, (Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 120, 122.

has a strong resonance with the works of Derrida and Lyotard.[14] Her further comments on the consequences of this position perfectly capture the commitments of phenomenological finitude: 'To insist on the potentially infinite as the only legitimate infinite requires… an insistence on the reality of time and the importance of the notion of becoming'.[15]

In contrast to the potential infinite, there are two other general conceptions of the infinite: the *actual* infinite and the *absolute* infinite. Georg Cantor, the founder of set theory and the first to propose a credible theory of actual infinities in the form of transfinite numbers, fought against this finitist prejudice in mathematics in the late C19th, and was keen to distinguish these three forms of the infinite.[16] Set theory, and Cantor's development of transfinite numbers as actual infinities, will feature heavily in this thesis, and I give only simple introduction here.   Cantor's intuitive argument for the actual infinite follows from the way we actually use collections such as the natural numbers. Although it is clear we cannot complete the natural numbers through a process of counting, we nevertheless treat natural numbers as a completed whole, especially within mathematics. The finitist fallacy rests on the need to produce the infinite from the finite, and to assume that the realm of actually infinite numbers would share the properties of finite numbers.[17] Cantor showed that taking such collections as the natural numbers as an actual completed infinity was not inconsistent, and his set theory provided a theoretical ground for establishing a whole range of transfinite numbers of different infinite magnitudes. Cantor's naïve, pre-axiomatic, set theory did, however, lead to a number of paradoxes relating to certain

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[14] Ibid, pp. 26, 28.
[15] Ibid, p. 28.
[16] Dauben, Joseph, Warren, <u>Georg Cantor: His Mathematics and Philosophy of the Infinite</u>, (Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 120 – 125.
[17] Ibid. p. 122.

types of collections, such as the set of all cardinal or ordinal numbers.[18] Cantor actually embraced these contradictions, seeing them as marking the boundary between the mortal and the divine.[19] He called these sets absolute infinities, or inconsistent collections. Joseph Dauben summarizes Cantor's attitude as follows:

> By recognizing the connections Cantor drew between his transfinite numbers and the Absolute, it is easier to understand why the paradoxes of set theory did not upset him as they did so many mathematicians at the turn of the century. Essentially, he had recognized the impossibility of subjecting the entire succession of transfinite numbers to exact mathematical analysis. The nature of their existence as a unity in the mind of God constituted a different sort of perfection, and Cantor was not disturbed that it was beyond his means to comprehend it precisely.[20]

Cantor's faith in the consistency of his set theory was justified by its later rigorous axiomatization, which eliminated these paradoxes.[21]

Despite Cantor's radical theory of actual infinities, in the form of transfinite numbers, his attitude toward the absolute infinite remained relatively conservative. The absolute infinite, as an image of God and of *totality*, surpassing the understanding of the mortal mind, is familiar to the history of philosophy. Two well-known examples would be the God of Leibniz, as an uncreated perfect monad, or the single substance

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[18] Ibid. p. 245. Tiles, pp. 114 – 115.
[19] Ibid. p. 246.
[20] Ibid. p. 246.
[21] Tiles, Mary, The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), pp. 116 – 117.

of God/Nature in Spinoza's *Ethics*.[22]   And it is this idea of infinity that resists consistency and determination, providing a rich resource for generating paradoxes.

All three, by adhering to a conservative understanding of the absolute infinite as God, apologise for the apparent inconsistency of this idea, and the paradoxes it generates, by placing the blame on the limitations of the human intellect. We are not able to understand God's choice of the best of all possible worlds, nor fully comprehend the infinite attributes of God. Cantor makes this point most clearly by showing how even if we can determine certain infinite sets, if the human mind is not limited to the merely finite, we are still incapable of totalizing this new infinite realm. The Absolute, or God, is always internally consistent and harmonious; it is only our limited conception of it that renders it inconsistent and paradoxical.

This tension between the actual and the absolute infinite was felt most acutely in the field of the philosophy of mathematics during the C19th. Mathematicians began to feel increasingly uncomfortable with both the actual infinite, which remained in the informal use of infinitesimals within the differential calculus, and the paradoxes of the absolute infinite that it seemed to entail.[23] The solution to this problem was to affirm only potential infinities, and to ground the calculus on a rigorous finite foundation, a task begun by Augustin-Louis Cauchy, and completed by Karl Weierstrass. Their method of limits proved to be both consistent and adequate to ground the differential calculus, thus suspending any need to discuss the nature and difference between actual and absolute infinities. This finitist attitude and a desire for new rigorous

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[22] Leibniz, G. W., Philosophical Texts, (Oxford University Press, 1998), 'Monadology', §§ 36 – 43.
Spinoza, Baruch, Ethics, trans. Samuel Shirley, (Hackett, 1991), book 1, propositions 11, 14 and 15.
[23] Grabiner, Judith, The Origins of Cauchy's Rigorous Calculus, (MIT Press 1981): pp39-40.

foundations passed over into philosophy more generally at the start of the C20th, especially in projects such as Husserl's transcendental phenomenology.[24]

The consequence of this affirmation of the potential infinite is that it conflates and rejects all other ideas of the infinite, consigning both the actual and the absolute infinite to a realm of inconsistent illegitimacy. No distinction can be made between a multiplicity of consistent actual infinities and the inconsistency of the absolute infinite. It is my contention that the major strand of continental philosophy stemming from phenomenology and existentialism, suffers from this same finitist prejudice, and only when pushed to its limits does it glimpse the possibility of this distinction between actual and absolute infinity, in the form of the difference between events and the Event. A new metaphysics that can separate the Event from events must also be able to differentiate between actual and absolute infinity. Furthermore, to avoid simply repeating the same historical, or divine, use of the absolute infinite, it will be important to recognize the inconsistency, or paradoxical nature, of the absolute infinite as its own *positive* character, rather than *negatively* in terms of the limits and imperfections of our intellect.

0.3 Deleuze and Badiou

Deleuze and Badiou take up this challenge to reinvigorate Metaphysics through a more comprehensive and open approach to the infinite.[25] One way to differentiate

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[24] Hobson, Marian, <u>Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines</u>, (Routledge, 1998), pp. 53 – 54.
[25] DR, p. 264.

between their positions is to outline their understanding of the relation between the Event and events.

Deleuze actively courts the inconsistency of the Event as a source of paradox and change, and the fixity that events take on, as the foundation of traditional metaphysical systems, is freed in the moment of the Event. As Deleuze states: 'the paradoxical instance is the Event in which all events communicate and are distributed. It is the Unique event, and all other events are its bits and pieces'.[26] For Deleuze, there is an intimate relation between the Event and events, which he places at the heart of his philosophy. This intimate relation leads Deleuze to encourage the proliferation of different metaphysical systems, finding in their individual inconsistencies and paradoxes a moment of shared communication between systems, and the potential to create truly novel forms of thought. Due to his approach, Deleuze makes a particularly inventive and generous reader of the history of philosophy. Instead of dismissing historical systems of philosophy, or subsuming them under some grand narrative of progress or development, he seeks to identify and remove the blocks that repress the system's inconsistent and paradoxical elements. Through this method of immanent critique, Deleuze affirms these systems of thought more faithfully than those who invented them.

As an example, in *the Fold* Deleuze inverts Leibniz's system of monads by transforming God from a *rational* being who selects the best of all possible worlds, to becoming an *irrational* Process that forces change and divergence, a maximal

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[26] LS, p. 56, see also pp. 50, 53.

dissonance between a multiplicity incompossible worlds.[27] Put in terms of the themes introduced above, Deleuze affirms Leibniz's system of monads, a system of actual infinities, but replaces the rational and consistent idea of the absolute infinite, conceived of as God, with the inconsistency of the Event. As a result, Deleuze will stress the self-organizing capacity of the monads, negating the need for a rational organization from above. Deleuze is always looking for this self-organizing aspect, something that has led to his work being linked with current research into complexity theory and self-organizing systems. I will focus on this particular process reading of Deleuze in Chapter Three, where I will examine some of the leading figures working in this area.

I believe that much of Deleuze's work is engaged in revealing these differences between the absolute infinite and actual infinities, and transforming historical systems of philosophy by affirming the inconsistency of the idea of the absolute infinite, over the rational idea of God. Deleuze's understanding of the infinite and its uses within the history of philosophy is clear, often referencing minor figures such as Solomon Maimon, who developed Leibniz's infinitesimals in a philosophical direction in his transcendental philosophy.[28] He also makes frequent reference to concepts of number and the infinite invented by Cantor, from the use of the ordinal/cardinal distinction in *Difference and Repetition* to his discussion of Badiou's philosophy in *What is Philosophy?*, his final work with Felix Guattari.[29] One of the most important uses of Cantor's distinctions between types of infinity is again with Guattari, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, where they use the distinction between denumerable and non-denumerable

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[27] Fold, p. 81.
[28] DR, pp. 174 – 175. Fold, p. 89.
[29] DR, pp. 232 – 233. WP, pp. 151 – 152.

infinites to characterize the difference between major and minor politics.[30]   I will

examine this use in detail in the final chapter of the thesis.

In contrast to Deleuze's close relation between the Event and events; leading to a

proliferation of metaphysical systems, Badiou proposes a radical separation or non-

relation between the two, putting forward his own new metaphysical system, based on

the innovations of set theory, as the only possible system.[31]   Badiou captures this

separation in his inaugural declaration, in *Being and Event*, that the one is not and it is

therefore the multiple that constitutes ontology, thereby opposing Heidegger's

withdrawal of being.[32]   Badiou's set theoretical ontology is based on the axiom of the

empty set, which claims the only consistent multiple that exists is the empty

multiple.[33]   All consistent being, as consistent multiples, are formed from this empty

multiple.   No set is composed of elements or ones, only the multiple exists and the

one is not.   Badiou then traces the historical withdrawal of the one into its

identification with the inherent failure and inconsistency of the idea of totality, citing

the inconsistent multiples that formed the paradoxes of Cantor's naive set theory as a

key example.[34]   Badiou affirms that the absolute infinite is in itself inconsistent:

'Inconsistent or "excessive" multiplicities are nothing more than what set theory

ontology designates, prior to its deductive structure, as pure non-being'.[35]   But this

inconsistent multiplicity should in no way be taken as a one, a mistake that Badiou

sees as the common mistake shared by Cantor and Heidegger, and all ontologies of

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[30] ATP, pp. 469 – 470.
[31] BE, p. 15.
[32] BE, p. 23.
[33] BE, pp. 66 – 69.
[34] BE, p. 42.
[35] BE, p. 42.

presence.[36]   Furthermore, this inconsistent multiplicity is completely removed, or subtracted, from all ontology, which deals only with consistent multiples, built from the empty set. For Badiou, inconsistent multiplicity is *always* inconsistent, no matter what situation it appears in, I call this subtraction of inconsistent multiplicity the Event, but it is not a term that Badiou uses, or would recognize. While events, or more precisely the trace of events, are only inconsistent *relative* to a particular situation.

If both Deleuze and Badiou are taken on their own terms they adopt these two contrasting positions. For Deleuze the Event is intimately tied to events, thus making all metaphysical systems relevant in their own terms, and encouraging the proliferation of new systems of thought. For Badiou the radical separation and non-communication between the Event of the subtraction of inconsistent multiplicity, and the events that disrupt consistent ontology can only be adequately thought within the confines of a single new metaphysical system. This is the system he sets down in *Being and Event*, and elaborates in *Logics of Worlds*, by adding a phenomenological/logical dimension to the purely ontological/mathematical base. These two different approaches both transform, in very different ways, the form and function of the subject.

Deleuze's approach is tied to an *overcoming* of the phenomenological context of the discussion given above. Put simply, thinking for Deleuze extends beyond the subject. There is thinking both before and after the subject, and the subject both emerges from thinking and dissolves back into it. As such, the subject presents a block or limit to

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[36] BE, p. 42.

thinking's potential, rather than being the horizon within which thinking occurs. The question of subjectivity is closely linked to that of systematic thought, Deleuze makes this clear in his early work on Hume, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, where he argues that what is meant by a *subject* is the transformation of a distributed collection into a *system*.[37] The limitations of the subject/system are seen most clearly in the finitist position of phenomenology, which covers over the actual infinite presuppositions that ground it. For Deleuze the subject/system, which emerges from this background, can recover this resource and reintroduce the actual infinite into thought. The result is that the subject/system is capable of producing paradoxes that overcome its own structure. This is not the collapse of thinking, but its liberation from all conditions; thought becomes aleatory and free.

Badiou's approach begins from the flat rejection of the phenomenological tradition; there is no need for an immanent overcoming of the phenomenological subject. This leaves Badiou free to create a new theory of the subject, one that he places at the heart of his philosophy. Badiou shares with Deleuze an affirmation that free thought expresses something unconditioned and aleatory, but their difference stems from where this free thought can be expressed. For Deleuze it involves escaping from any specific system or situation of thought, not to attain a transcendent absolute realm but to play between systems and situations. For Badiou, this unconditioned free thought can and must occur within a situation, and set theory provides a means of explaining how this is possible. Once the realm of the actually infinite has been opened up, by post-Cantorian axiomatic set theory, a new concept of the unconditioned can be given. We usually think of infinite sets in terms of some condition, such as the set of all even

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[37] Deleuze, Gilles, <u>Empiricism and Subjectivity</u>, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), hearafter ES, pp 22-23, 92.

numbers: every number that belongs to the set of all even numbers satisfies the condition of being even. Badiou points out that modern set theory allows for unconditioned infinite sets, these are called non-constructible sets, as no condition can be used to select the elements that would compose such a set.[38] As such, the elements of this set are chosen in a completely free or arbitrary manner. From these non-constructible sets Badiou is able to create a metaphysical system within which the unconditioned can be presented as unconditioned, it is not covered over, neutered or betrayed.[39] Borrowing heavily from Paul Cohen's theory of forcing, which relies on the use of non-constructible sets, Badiou creates a model of subjectivity that involves the affirmation and incorporation of non-constructible sets into a situation. This process eventually results in a radical transformation of a situation, by contradicting one of the independent axioms that condition the situation.[40] For Badiou, the subject affirms the unconditioned trace of an event, and this activity leads to an *extension* of the subject's situation, rather than Deleuze's *destruction* of the situation and subject.

The shared aspect of affirming *free* thought as unconditioned and aleatory will provide the means to move beyond a simple assessment of Deleuze and Badiou, and mount a powerful critique of both their positions. This point of comparison is the basis for Deleuze and Badiou's debate over the nature of chance, especially as it is explored in Mallarmé's poem *Un coup de dés*. Badiou's *situated* use of non-constructible sets leads him to affirm chance in each situation and for each event, whereas for Deleuze there is only one single affirmation of Chance in sum, a non- or

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[38] Tiles, Mary, The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), p. 186.
[39] BE, Meditation 33, pp. 355 – 371.
[40] BE, Part VII The Generic: Indiscernible and Truth. The Event – P. J. Cohen, pp. 327 – 390.

intra-situational affirmation.[41]   This transformation of freedom from an intuitive conception of choice, as the subjective positing of ends, to the affirmation of chance is vital to Deleuze's thought freed from subjectivity and the free action of Badiou's subject. These two different approaches can be understood in relation to Sartre, the canonical figure of the philosopher of subjective freedom. Sartre's work contains a repressed philosophy of the Event, a repression that is necessary to maintain the intuitive concept of freedom as existential choice. By highlighting how Sartre represses the Event in his work, both in his early existential work *Being and Nothingness* and, in a different way, in his later political work of the two volumes of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, I will show how both Deleuze and Badiou's understanding of freedom, as the affirmation of chance, are prefigured in Sartre's work. Freedom, along with the problem of the Event and events, is a problem that also only fully comes to light at the limits of phenomenology.

My critical project, in the final chapters of the thesis, opens up a productive dialogue between Badiou and Deleuze. By identifying a blind spot in Badiou's use of set theoretical forcing I am able to put forward a new subjective figure, a subject that conforms to neither Badiou's positive faithful subject, nor to his subsequent negative figures of the reactive and obscure subjects. I identify this new subject with the work of Deleuze, thereby incorporating his work into the framework of Badiou's set theoretical ontology. This incorporation transforms both Badiou and Deleuze's philosophical programmes, and I highlight these transformations through a reassessment of the key terms of the thesis: Event/events, freedom and subjectivity.

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[41] CoB, p. 76. Fold, p. 67.

0.4 Thesis Structure

The thesis is split into three informal sections and six chapters. The first section deals with the phenomenological heritage and development of the Event, subjectivity and freedom. Chapter 1 looks at the limitation of the phenomenological approach to the Event, examining how phenomenology constantly excludes one or other of the pair of a single Event, or multiple events: the Event excluding events, Heidegger's *Ereignis*, events excluding the Event, Lyotard's differend, and Derrida's aporia that recognizes this constant mutual exclusion.

Chapter 2 focuses on Sartre and his examination of the Event in relation to freedom. Sartre offers an alternative development of the Event, due to his break with the Heideggerian tradition that both Lyotard and Derrida follow.[42] His work is also influential for both Deleuze and Badiou. Sartre's relation to the question of the Event is a neglected area of study, despite recent renewed interest in his work.[43] In this chapter I examine how the Event and events are a repressed theme that Sartre fails to fully tackle. In his early work *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre talks about the absolute event of the collapse of the self-sufficient in-itself into the for-itself, but concludes that any discussion of this topic is a metaphysical rather than an existential issue.[44] Later, in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre discusses events as the Apocalypse

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[42] Rajan, Tilottama, Deconstruction and the Remainders of Phenomenology, (Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 55.

[43] See for example Nick Farrell Fox's *The New Sartre*, as well as Rajan, Tilottama's *Deconstruction and the Remainders of Phenomenology*, both omit any real discussion of either the Event of the collapse of the in-itself into the for-itself, or the events of group formation, the Apocalypse, preferring to concentrate on the newly formed group in fusion. In his work on Badiou, *A Subject to Truth*, Peter Hallward makes the connection between Sartre's Apocalypse and Badiou's event, but does not discuss the Event of the collapse of the in-itself into the for-itself.

[44] BN, pp. 619 – 620.

of group formation, something that is 'neither group nor series'.[45] The reason for this repression is that the Event, or events, threatens Sartre's existential conception of freedom as subjective choice, the free positing of ends, in favour of an affirmation of chance, or contingency. This transformation of freedom into the affirmation of chance and contingency will be vital for understanding the subsequent chapters.

The second section introduces Deleuze and Badiou on their own terms, as two philosophers who reject the approach of phenomenology in order to tackle both the Event and events.

Chapter 3 looks at the close relationship between the ideas of system and subjectivity in Deleuze's philosophy. Deleuze equates system and subject, as early as his first work on Hume, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, where one of the key questions is how does a distributed collection of cases in the imagination become a faculty or system?[46] Deleuze calls this transformation from a passive collection into an active selection both a system and a subject. This is a key point for process readings of Deleuze's philosophy, a reading followed by, amongst others, Manuel DeLanda, John Protevi and Jeffery Bell. All three of these commentators are interested in Deleuze's bottom up approach to the emergence of complexity, here taken as the formation of a system/subject. These readings draw heavily on the science of complexity, and in particular the use of the term emergence. I will analyse this reliance on the term emergence, suggesting that it uncritically takes too much of the burden of explanation away from philosophy and onto the new sciences of complexity.

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[45] CDR, p. 357.
[46] ES, p. 92.

To highlight this I will examine how Deleuze takes up Sartre's challenge to think a world without the other. In this world the subject is not just de-humanised, as Sartre claims, but de-subjectified. Here, Deleuze shows how thought can extend beyond the limits of the (phenomenological) subject, to affirm both the Event and events, and freedom must be transformed into an affirmation of chance, in order to overcome the subject.

Chapter 4 turns to Badiou and his central systematic work *Being and Event*. The aim of this chapter is twofold: first, to provide a detailed and technical overview of Badiou's philosophy, and in particular his set theoretical ontology, explaining how he separates the Event from subjective events through his subtractive ontology. Second, to highlight the importance of the Axiom of Choice in the formation of the subject, focusing on Badiou's explicit and formal transformation of freedom from existential choice to the affirmation of chance, through the use of this axiom. The result of this analysis will point to a blind spot in Badiou's own use of set theoretical forcing as a model for subjectivity, as he does not consider the unique style of forcing used to prove the independence of the Axiom of Choice, preferring to focus only on the independence of the Continuum Hypothesis.

The final section explores the possibility of combing Badiou and Deleuze's philosophy. This combination leads to a dramatic change in the way both philosophers are read, leading to a broader conception of the subject, freedom and events.

Chapter 5 explores this alternative style of forcing used to prove the independence of the Axiom of Choice. A new type of Badiouian subject must be born from this procedure, one whose aim is to overcome the capacity of free choice and extend the situation in such a way that subjectivity itself is overcome. This new subject shares much in common with Deleuze's philosophy, especially his conception of the subject. I use these similarities to open a critical dialogue between these two thinkers, concentrating on the concepts of *freedom* and *events* in both their work. The result of this analysis is the embedding of Deleuze *within* the systematic framework of Badiou's set theoretical ontology, a move that transforms both Deleuze and Badiou's philosophy. Deleuze's philosophy as a whole is given a specific cause or aim within this framework, the overcoming of a capacity of free choice, in the form of the Axiom of Choice. His affirmation of creation and the proliferation of the new is a technique directed toward specific purpose. Badiou's limitation to four genres of truth, as the conditions of philosophy, is rejected and the simple and uncritical affirmation of faithful subjectivity is questioned.

Chapter 6 examines the main obstacle to incorporating Deleuze's thought into a Badiouian framework, his rejection of axiomatics as capable of capturing the true creative power of thought. In Deleuze's work with Felix Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus*, truly creative and transformative thought is called *diagrammatic*, something they clearly distinguish from any axiomatic approach: 'Above all, diagrammaticism should not be confused with an operation of the axiomatic type'.[47] This final chapter mounts a criticism against this dismissal of axiomatic thought, through a careful examination of Deleuze and Guattari's characterization of Capitalism as the

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[47] ATP, p. 143.

archetypal axiomatic system. Deleuze and Guattari conceive the axiomatic nature of Capital along the lines of mathematical model theory, a theory that plays a key role throughout Badiou's philosophy, especially in his early work the *Concept of the Model* and remains central to *Being and Event*. The chapter concludes with a new broader definition of the *subject* to complement the definitions of freedom and events given in the previous chapter.

1: The Event at the Limits of Phenomenology

1.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to concentrate on the question of the Event, principally through an analysis of its emergence as *Ereignis* in the work of Heidegger, after *Being and Time*. Through this analysis I will establish the importance of the question of the Event in contemporary continental philosophy and, through identifying a critical blind spot in Heidegger's own work, I will begin to open up my distinction between a single unique Event and multiple events. This will lead to the introduction of the figures of Lyotard and Derrida, two philosophers who I take to be working both with and through a phenomenological legacy. As such, although they can maintain a strong critical position with respect to Heidegger's theory of the Event, as *Ereignis*, they cannot escape the bounds of phenomenology, which I propose is an inability to think both the Event and events together.

1.1 Heidegger and the Critique of Metaphysics

Heidegger's continual and changing relation to *Being and Time* is key to understanding his subsequent characterization of this work as signalling the end of Metaphysics. The end of Metaphysics is signalled by Dasein's recognition of the limits of its capacity to rationalize, explain and master the world, and in the moment

of the Event to let Being be. The initial project of *Being and Time* is to approach the forgotten question of the *meaning* of Being in general, along two distinct lines that are outlined in the introduction, but not actually completed in the final work.[48] These two strands correspond to two different analyses of Dasein, an *existential* analysis, taking time as the clue to Dasein's fundamental structure, and an *historical* analysis, as Dasein is an historical entity, through the destruction, or dismantling, of the history philosophy.

Being and Time becomes for Heidegger a *failed* work of Metaphysics; it fails in its attempt to establish a fundamental ontology, one that is sufficient to control Being.[49] The imperative to clarify and make transparent the *meaning* of Being runs throughout the introduction, and is the primary task of any adequate ontology.[50] *Being and Time* seeks to elaborate the meaning of Being in general through an initial analysis of the meaning of the being of Dasein. The failure to make this transition from Dasein to Being in general constitutes the success of *Being and Time*, as it allows the question of Being to be truly raised for the first time, that is, outside of a metaphysical framework. The question of the *truth* of Being, as Heidegger will come to express it, is *not* a metaphysical question; it is not amenable to rational explanation/exposition.

By the end of *Being and Time* Heidegger admits that only: 'Something *like* "Being" has been disclosed in the understanding-of-Being which belongs to existent Dasein.'[51] Only the structure of Dasein has been revealed, which is *like* Being, but is not Being itself. The work is successful in that it fails to begin, it fails to establish the meaning

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[48] BT, pp. 31 (11), 63 – 64 (39 – 40).
[49] BT, p. 49 (27).
[50] BT, pp. 31 (11), 44 (22), 49 (27).
[51] BT, p. 488 (437). My emphasis.

of Being in general, and it therefore fails to provide the ground for a fundamental ontology. Heidegger leaves the question open and exposed, rather than covering it over with an inadequate metaphysical fix. But Heidegger has not given up on the possibility of a metaphysical exposition of the meaning of Being in general. This is clear from the closing pages of *Being and Time*, where he is still speculating on possible metaphysical strategies for resolving this problem. The final question is a well-known case in point: 'Is there a way which leads from primordial *time* to the meaning of *Being*? Does *time* itself manifest itself as the horizon of *Being*?'[52] The ultimate answer to this question must be no, there is no smooth progression, or passage, *through* metaphysics to establish an adequate *meaning* of Being in general.

1.2 A Return to the Historical

The stance that Heidegger comes to adopt is to recognize the finality of *Being and Time*; it is not the beginning of a true metaphysics or fundamental ontology, but recognition of the limits of metaphysical thought. It is:

> [A]t best an "epilogue" to metaphysics, so to speak, a kind of anthropological "epistemology" of "ontology". If *Being and Time* cannot be this, all that is left is that at best a more primordial metaphysical questioning is being attempted here, but still a metaphysical one.[53]

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[52] BT, p. 488 (437).
[53] Heidegger, Martin, 'The Ambiguity of the Question of Being Metaphysics and *Being and Time*' in the appendix of <u>Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom</u>, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (Ohio University Press, 1985), p. 187.

There is no way of moving, or progressing, *through* the meaning of the being of

Dasein, as temporality, to the meaning of Being in general. Heidegger makes this

clear when he states that:

> I have still not "gotten any further" today because I know with ever increasing clarity
> that I must not get any "further", but perhaps I have gotten closer in some things to
> what was attempted in *Being and Time*.[54]

Here the conception of 'further' relates to the idea of rational metaphysical

explanation as progress.

That to which Heidegger feels that he has "gotten closer to" is the question of

grounding revealed by the proposed, but incomplete, destruction, or dismantling, of

the history of philosophy, as the history of Metaphysics. The idea of such a project,

which is initially discussed in the introduction to *Being and Time*, still retains an

interest for Heidegger.[55]

Why is this historical analysis likely to succeed where the existential analysis fails?

The problem with the existential analysis is that it presupposes that it will find a

meaning of Being in general. Within the technical language of *Being and Time*, this

means that Being in general must be capable of *appearing* in the *present*, such that it

can be subject to an *interpretation*.[56] Understanding the meaning of *a* being involves

an interpretation of its appearance, and it is Dasein that holds open this space of the

present, in which a being might appear. The *truth* of a being is the manner in which it

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[54] Ibid. p. 189.
[55] Heidegger, Martin, <u>On Time and Being</u>, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (Harper and Row Inc, 1972),, p. 9.
[56] BT, §32, pp. 188 – 195 (148 – 153).

appears as unconcealed in presence, but at the same time this truth is equally dependant on the *un*-truth of what remains concealed. At this initial stage truth as being unconcealed is not equated with correctness, and being concealed cannot be conceived of as falseness, or incorrectness.[57] For Heidegger, this is a later metaphysical development of the concept of truth. This leads him to state that Dasein is equiprimordially both in the truth and untruth.[58] Beings are always uncovered in the World according to Dasein's point of view, this point of view is to be understood both as a spatial and an intentional point of view; this is Dasein's *throwness*.

Dasein assesses the situation into which it has been thrown, according to its projection toward its intentional goals. The meaning of a being within the World is interpreted according to this directionality of Dasein. This point of view means that objects within the world are only ever partially uncovered, we can neither see round the back of an object, nor exhaust all the possible uses that an object might be put to; in being uncovered other aspects remain, or return, to a state of being covered over, or concealed. What is important about this conception of truth is that a being is always structured according to Dasein's relation toward it; it has an unconcealed aspect, which is in the truth, and a concealed aspect, which is in the untruth. This relation is dynamic, with aspects of the thing constantly passing from concealment into unconcealment. The dynamism of this relation reveals that there is no fundamental difference between *what* is revealed and concealed: every specific aspect of a being that is concealed can equally be unconcealed, and vice versa. It is Dasein's intentionality that separates a being into aspects that either concern it or do not concern it, into aspects that appear *essential* or *inessential*. As for Dasein itself, it is

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[57] BT, §44.
[58] BT, p. 265 (223).

clearly the horizon of all truth: '*Because the kind of Being that is essential to truth is of the character of Dasein, all truth is relative to Dasein's Being*'.[59] The truth of Dasein is also revealed, or unconcealed, within the world, as the limit or horizon of the structure of every being which is engaged, in its relation to Dasein, in a continual process of concealing and revealing aspects of itself. If we presuppose one, either truth or Dasein, the other becomes necessary.[60] Dasein and beings *give* necessity to each other, but cannot ground the necessity of their relationship outside of a presupposition of either one or the other. Heidegger agrees that: '"In itself" it is quite incomprehensible why entities are to be *uncovered*, why *truth* and *Dasein* must be'.[61] This incomprehensibility is what lies at the heart of the problem of the *meaning* of Being in general. Dasein is implicated in the appearing of any being within a World, and as such also appears necessarily within that world: both beings and Dasein are capable of being interpreted and given a meaning. But Being in general does not appear, not even by implication. This metaphysical approach can only ever conceive of Being as an incomprehensible *beyond*, as that which would *give* necessity to the relation between Dasein and the objects it discovers and utilises within the World.

At this point it becomes clear that the existential analysis of Dasein will not lead to the meaning of Being in general, separated from any specific individual being. Being never appears in a world, neither as object, nor as the limit, or structure of appearance. In itself it is neither revealed nor concealed, it is completely withdrawn from the commerce of metaphysics. By definition, for Heidegger, an interpretation of Being is impossible; no meaning of Being in general can be uncovered. A deeper meaning of

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[59] BT, p. 270 (227).
[60] BT, p. 271 (228).
[61] BT, p. 271 (228).

the Being of Dasein can be given, and Heidegger goes on to analyse this in part two of *Being and Time*, resulting in the celebrated understanding of Dasein as tri-partite ecstatic temporality.[62] But, as Heidegger later reflects: 'stressing the "ontological difference" only indicates that the attempt at a more originary question of being must be a more essential appropriation of the history of metaphysics'.[63]

1.3 History of Metaphysics/Ontology

We must return to the proposed destruction of the history of ontology to glimpse a manner of access to Being that does not go through metaphysics and ontology. The fundamental task of the dismantling of the history of metaphysics is to reveal, behind all of its traditional determinations, our primordial experience of Being, an experience that first *grounds* our subsequent determinations of its nature.[64] Here, although Being is put forward as the ground of all our metaphysical and ontological determinations, it is also posited as being *before* all such determinations. As a result, the recovery of this primordial experience carries no imperative to present itself in terms of any particular system of representation. It is expected to present itself as itself, without even the imperative to be *determined* in any way, or to have any *meaning*. Heidegger will later claim that our primordial experience of Being is not a determination of Being, but only that which makes all such determinations possible. The primordial experience of Being is *necessary* for systematic and rational thought, but thinking

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[62] BT, pp. 376 – 378 (328 – 330).

[63] Heidegger, Martin, <u>Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)</u>, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, (Indiana University Press, 1999), §266 p. 329.

[64] BT, p. 44 (22).

back to this primordial experience is neither systematic nor rational. This type of thinking requires a *leap* outside of all such metaphysical thought.[65]

This primordial experience of Being is what Heidegger will call *Ereignis*, or the Event, and our attunement or leap into this non-metaphysical thinking, from out of all Metaphysics, constitutes Dasein's *decision*, a decision to let Being be. Here Heidegger begins to introduce a difference between Being (*Sein*), understood within a metaphysical context as the Being of a being (*Seiendes*), and the primordial experience of be-ing (*Seyn*) in the Event.[66] Heidegger's use of the old German term for Being signals the primordial nature of this relation to be-ing. Within the context of metaphysics it is Dasein that *appropriates* the different beings within its situation, including itself, but it cannot appropriate be-ing itself. What occurs now is a shift in focus, a de-centring: in the Event be-ing *appropriates* Dasein. Dasein decides to let itself be determined by be-ing, and as such, experiences itself as being something true, or unconcealed, *for* be-ing. Hence Heidegger moves from asking what is the *meaning* of Being, to what is the *truth* of be-ing. Dasein's leap is an *active* leap into *passivity*. In the Event, Dasein is appropriated by be-ing, or by one of the other synonymous terms, which Heidegger uses, such as language, or the 'it gives' (*es gibt*). Dasein does not have the truth of be-ing revealed to it, but is rather *for* be-ing: 'So needed and used, man is given to belong to the propriative event of truth'.[67] For there to be anything like truth there must be something structured like Dasein, but what gives this

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[65] Heidegger, Martin, '*The Principle of Identity*', in Identity and Difference, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p.32

[66] Heidegger, Martin, Contributions to Philosophy: from Enowning, trans Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, (Indiana University Press, 1999). This distinction is deployed throughout this work. He begins to use this distinction from his work on Schelling, the use of the word *Syen* to denote a more primordial sense of Being, was already being used by Schelling in his late works, such as *Ages of the World*.

[67] Heidegger, Martin, 'The Question Concerning Technology', in Basic Writings, Ed. David Farrell Krell, (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 337. See also 'The Way to Language' in the same volume, pp. 423-25.

structure is not Dasein but be-ing. Be-ing appropriates Dasein as the necessary structure for revealing truth. It gives this necessary structure, as the belonging together of identity and difference, Being and time or thinking and Being, which Dasein maintains.[68]

From our enquiring perspective, in the form of the curiosity and concern of Dasein, this belonging together in the Event is completely withdrawn.[69] We can only experience this as a withdrawal, and the history of Metaphysics is necessary in order to experience this withdrawal. This withdrawal can only occur at the *end* of Metaphysics. Metaphysical thought provokes an expectation that this ultimate origin of be-ing can be brought to presence, either as God, infinite thought, the completion of the dialectic or the self evidence of logic, to name but a few historical solutions. At the very least, metaphysics is thought to be progressing or approximating this ultimate truth; it is on the way. For Heidegger the end of Metaphysics means its completion, but not in the above sense of perfection or arrival.[70] Rather, the end of Metaphysics signals the realization of the impossibility of ever bringing be-ing into unconcealment. The task of thinking, at the end of metaphysics, is to realize the true significance of this impossibility.

The expectation of the fulfilment of metaphysical thought, represented by a number of different terms in the above examples, is lost. From the perspective of Metaphysics, these terms that represent the fulfilment and goal of philosophical thought are seen as empty, devoid even of formal structure; they are nothing. For metaphysical thought,

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[68] For examples of the belonging together of certain fundamental metaphysical dualisms see the essays *Identity and Difference* and *On Time and Being*.

[69] Heidegger, Martin, <u>On Time and Being</u>, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (Harper & Row Inc, 1972), pp.22 – 23.

[70] Ibid. p. 56.

this realization can only appear as something negative; a bad debt so severe that it threatens the whole philosophical enterprise. From within Metaphysics this end can only appear as something negative, something to be avoided, rather than taking the positive leap out of Metaphysics, which would embrace this end.[71] The denial of this end leads to an attitude of despair and nihilism within metaphysics. With a sense of despair, philosophy extends its credit beyond reasonable bounds, refusing to write off this promise of a full and complete presence as a bad debt. Or, in writing off this crippling debt, philosophy becomes directionless, a blind and ultimately purposeless nihilism. Heidegger feels that these dangers are present in our unbridled fascination with technology. We attempt to block our sense of loss through the production of novelty, and as this sense of loss becomes more intense our fascination with novelty grows and we demand from technology an ever-greater rate of innovation and diversity. The greatest danger in facing the emptiness of these terms is a sense that somehow, historically, these terms have not always been empty. This sense of purpose and meaning was something that we had, but have now lost. It is very important for Heidegger that we realize that be-ing does not withdraw from metaphysics today, at its end, but that it is withdrawn from the entire history of philosophy. This realization constitutes a parallel history; coextensive with the explicit aims of the history of philosophy is an implicit history of the forgetting of be-ing, that is a forgetting of the withdrawal of be-ing. The Event founds a dual beginning: the first beginning of philosophical enquiry, grounded on Dasein, and the other beginning, which is the withdrawal of be-ing.

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[71] Heidegger, Martin, <u>Identity and Difference</u>, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 32.

Dasein can only maintain the openness given to it through its engagement with problems in the world, with those matters that concern it. Dasein preserves this gift through its activity, but it is not the origin or producer of this gift: Dasein is not self-grounding, but preserves and maintains the ground. For Heidegger, we can only *think* this difference between the gift of presence and the preservation of this gift through the necessary forgetting of be-ing's withdrawal. What is important to note here is that, for Heidegger, metaphysics comes to an end, it serves a purpose, allowing us to think the withdrawal of be-ing historically. This is the parallel history of the forgetting of be-ing, it is experienced when we let be-ing be, in the *withdrawing* of be-ing from the entire history of metaphysics. This withdrawing is something that is maintained in thinking poetically, as opposed to metaphysically: poetic thinking is not something that comes to an end. It would be a lapse back into metaphysical thought if it were asserted that be-ing was some*thing* withdrawn: be-ing is *withdrawing* not *a thing* that is withdrawn. But we cannot experience it as withdrawing unless it is withdrawing from something, that is, from the history of metaphysics. Heidegger's fascination with Ancient Greek philosophy, especially the pre-Socratics, is not a nostalgic desire to return to a more simple and pure time *before* metaphysical thought, but recognition of the necessity of metaphysics for a true relation to be-ing. Before metaphysics there is no possibility of experiencing be-ing as withdrawal. For Heidegger, Ancient Greece is the first time that such a history is present, and therefore the first time a true thinking of be-ing becomes possible.

Therefore, for Heidegger, the specific questions, problems or ideas that a *particular* system of philosophy claims to address are always *secondary* to the possibility opened up by philosophy: the *primary* and *general* question of be-ing. The term 'general' is

provocatively deployed here, as Heidegger would claim that generality relates to a certain species of metaphysical thought, and that the question of be-ing is a *singular* question. The aim of the rest of this section will be to highlight how it is possible to question Heidegger's claim that the question of be-ing is *singular* and *unique*. The problem does not lie in the singularity of the question, but in its uniqueness. By making the question of be-ing unique Heidegger opens himself to a criticism that this uniqueness reduces the singularity of the question to one of generality, thus returning his thought to the metaphysical fold. Heidegger's approach to the history of philosophy is to divine the question that motivates all philosophy, he is not interested in the *multiple* specific problems that motivate each particular metaphysical system of thought, stating only that: 'Each epoch of philosophy has its own necessity. We simply have to acknowledge the fact that a philosophy is the way it is'.[72] Heidegger claims that this guiding question of metaphysics is always and only the single and same question of be-ing, which he believes is the recurrent problem running through all metaphysical systems of thought.

1.4 Single or Multiple Event(s)

In his lecture *Time and Being*, Heidegger examines the Event of *Ereignis* in terms of the belonging together of Being and time, giving themselves together in an *undetermined* way in the moment of the Event.[73]

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[72] Heidegger, Martin, <u>On Time and Being</u>, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (Harper & Row Inc, 1972), End of Metaphysics, p. 56.
[73] Ibid. 'Time and Being'.

From the perspective of Metaphysics, Dasein persists as a block, gap, or permanent absence, preventing the *determination* of the relation between Being and time. Dasein *represents* the limit of metaphysical thought. As we have seen above, the question of the meaning of Being in general is blocked by Dasein as a limit; we reach a limit with the meaning of the Being of Dasein given as time. To reverse the question, beginning from the question of the meaning of time in general, would likewise end with the metaphysical block of Dasein. The meaning of time for Dasein would be Being. Any attempt to think Being and time sequentially results in circularity; a circular sequence that is always mediated by Dasein. Time gives Being to presence *through* Dasein, and, vice versa, Being allows time to presence *through* Dasein. But, originally, Being and time are simply given *together*, they are not directed towards each other, but *belong* together: this is what Heidegger calls *Ereignis*.[74] Neither is one first nor the other second, but both are given together.

The Event, or *Ereignis*, is the *indeterminate* relation of Being and time; this indeterminacy is *determined* within Metaphysics by Dasein. As such, Dasein will always appear as the determinate representation of the pure presentation of the indeterminate. What is important for the history of Metaphysics is to recognize Dasein as *the* representation of this indeterminate relation. Hence the analysis of Dasein does not represent a block, or a partial and temporary limit to the progress of metaphysics, but rather the end, or completion, of metaphysics. Dasein represents an indeterminate relation *as indeterminate*, not as something that could become determinate in the future; the future of Metaphysics is to remain incomplete and open.

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[74] Ibid. p. 19.

Every conditioned system of thought, every metaphysical system, is founded on this fundamental unconditioned play. This gives rise to the important reversal of priority; the unconditioned and indeterminate have precedence over the conditioned and determinate. The belonging together of *difference* is the foundation of *identity.* Difference and indeterminacy are no longer conceived of in terms of a lack, they do not lack identity or determinacy. And they cannot be given identity or determinacy through a process, rather, in a *creative* moment they found the ground of all such *production.* Hence, Heidegger never opposes technology, as *techne*, to poetry, as *poiesis*, but only wants to reveal *poiesis* as the forgotten ground of *techne*. They are intimately linked rather than opposed.[75] Thus, *techne* relates to a regular production under given conditions, whereas *poiesis* is an unconditioned original creation. The one, *poiesis*, provides conditions, for the other, *techne*.

The contingency, freedom, or pure chance, expressed in poetic creation becomes occluded and covered over as it forms the basis of a technics. The system asserts itself as something necessary, and hence, retroactively, the contingent moment of creation becomes seen as something necessary. A random array of poetic creations will retroactively be seen to always have had a secret unknown connection, a connection revealed in the system of technical production; their unity no longer a simple chance *belonging* together, but a necessary belonging *together*. The problems and goals of a system are known and its direction clearly defined, in relation to this structure the original creations appear as lucky but blind solutions to these problems. We pass from a collection of contingent creations, to a casuistic system where these creations are exceptional models, or cases; they are the conditions of the system.

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[75] Heidegger, Martin, 'The Question Concerning Technology' in Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger, (Routledge, 1993), pp. 318 – 319.

Finally, this casuistic system gives way to a unified abstract system, where the original creations become simply examples of the system; they are now only examples of general conditions. A move from being unconditioned, to being conditions and then, finally, being conditioned.

For Heidegger, regardless of the specific aspects of a metaphysical system, it will represent some stage of this historical forgetting. The *general* problem is that of the encounter between Dasein and be-ing, an encounter repeated and exaggerated in each stage of metaphysical abstraction. Dasein encounters be-ing as a problem, initially, from the metaphysical perspective of *Being and Time*, as the problem of its own Being.[76] Agency and choice reside firmly with Dasein, Dasein starts the history of metaphysics by creating in the face of the general problem of be-ing. As we have seen, this history is necessary to experience the truth of be-ing as withdrawn from all presence, in the Event. The important temporal point to note is that Dasein resides within and behind every such metaphysical system, even if the system itself has become blind to this. For Heidegger, Dasein is the ground of all Metaphysics and as such Dasein reaches back to the very origin of all Metaphysics. It is the role of the dismantling of the history of ontology to reveal this truth. The first beginning and the other beginning coincide, and their histories are co-extensive. Even if the metaphysical system constructs an infinite time for itself, in comparison to the finite time of Dasein, these two temporal structures are still coextensive, for Heidegger there can be no time before Dasein.[77] In fact it is a sure marker of metaphysical thought if Dasein is taken to be something that has *emerged*, or been constituted *in time*. Dasein is not the kind of entity that could emerge and pass away in time. All

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[76] BT, p. 32 (12).
[77] BT, pp.378-380(330-331)

such theories that propose that Dasein evolved, or is the consequence of material principles, operate with a derivative concept of time, derived from the fundamental *finite* temporality of Dasein.

Dasein's free creative potential lies not in itself, but in its ability to give, or open, itself to be-ing. It is able to initiate and begin Metaphysics by opening itself to the unconditioned openness of be-ing. There is no doubt that this is Dasein's decision, to let be-ing be, to open itself to this creative potential, but be-ing also needs and uses Dasein to express itself through the concerns and projects that Dasein brings to presence.

There is a problem with this desire to have done with Metaphysics, although it is necessary, there is no need to repeat or continue this history. Metaphysical thought continues, but only implicitly within the multiple fields of science. Philosophy, as Metaphysics, is dissolved in the multiplicity of sciences, which deny an explicit interest in the ontological question of Being, and concentrate only on their specific necessity or set of problems.[78] These scientific practices are self-sustaining, focused on the pragmatic task of producing ever more efficient solutions for the specific set of problems conditioning each particular science. Philosophy as Metaphysics has failed, but Metaphysics as Science is successful; in a sense Metaphysics finds its truth in scientific practice rather than philosophical thought. Science investigates the problems determined by the conditions that are given to it: science only deals with determinate problems. The indeterminate problem of the origin of its conditions remains a problem of thinking; this is the task of thinking after the end of philosophy

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[78] Heidegger, Martin, 'The end of Metaphysics' in <u>Time and Being</u>, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 58 – 59.

as Metaphysics.[79] Heidegger in no way wants to deny that metaphysical thought, as employed by science, is *useful* or highly *successful*, he is happy to affirm this pragmatic dimension. The issue is that pragmatic concerns are always concerns that belong to Dasein, they relate to specific problems or projects that Dasein is involved with in the World. All such metaphysical practices are *for* Dasein, and Dasein gathers them together into their most extreme possibilities.[80] But what does this gathering together achieve? It is, for Heidegger, not a meta-level of totalization, a repetition of the closure of each individual scientific field; there is no *meta*physics. And it cannot be approached as a problem, in the metaphysical sense, that is, amenable to a process of producing solutions through action. A problem is always a problem *for* Dasein, so if Dasein is a problem it is a problem for itself, this is the limit of Metaphysics that Heidegger reached in *Being and Time*, but he held back from making the move of claiming that Dasein was self-grounding. Another solution would be to posit a being for whom Dasein was a problem or an issue of concern in the same way that problems concern Dasein. This would be to represent a higher being, or God, in the image of Dasein itself, or create an endless hierarchy of levels.

Dasein's decision to let be-ing be, experienced in the Event, is precisely to open itself to be-ing as something *un-problematic* and *simple*. The Event does not have a problem structure, and the problem of Dasein's ground is solved by letting go of this grounding problem: the solution is that there is no problem. It is the choice of being, in Dasein, that causes this difficulty; for Heidegger, it is always and can only ever be a question of be-ing and Dasein. Dasein unifies, or gathers, the multiple fields of metaphysical/scientific discourse, as that which is common between these fields as

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[79] Ibid. p. 59.
[80] Ibid. p. 57.

their common ground. The multiple enquiries and questioning of each field are reduced, through this common element of Dasein, to a single question of be-ing. It is important for Heidegger to show how each system of metaphysical thought harbours this same underlying question, despite its own specific necessity. The problem of Dasein might seem to *emerge*, or come into being, within a specific metaphysical system, but this simply hints at another history in which Dasein has always been the issue and the ground. This *first* history of the development of a metaphysical system, in which Dasein, or subjectivity, seems to emerge, is in fact grounded on an *other* history, one that posits Dasein as the ground of this first history. The initial specific *practical* concerns of a system gives way to a general *ontological* concern. Take the science of physics for example, it might initially appear to be motivated by a disparate number of specific problems or questions, but taken as a whole it is a human practice and takes on a more general ontological concern. Each specific problem reveals something about the universe in general, and our place in it. It is this deeper level of concern that is seen as the true ground or origin of science, even if it is often forgotten or concealed by the specific problem under investigation.

The specific problems that could be taken, in themselves, to a point of self-differentiating indeterminacy, are all reduced, through this process of becoming problems *for* Dasein, to a single question of indeterminacy. To avoid this difficulty we would have to do away with Dasein, and somehow show how what appear to be specific problems *for* Dasein are somehow problems in themselves. In Heidegger's approach we hear an echo of Leibniz's identity of indiscernibles: if there are no discernible differences between two things then those two things are identical. This concept tends to assume that the two things share some determinate qualities in

common, but with Heidegger we take this principle to the extreme. As the grounding question of each metaphysical system reaches a point of indeterminacy, its conditions seeming to be a pure gift or unconditioned creation, Heidegger inserts a mediating being: Dasein. This indeterminate and unconditioned point of creation is the *same* for each system as no determinate difference can be made between each indeterminacy in each specific system. Only by presupposing the significance of Dasein can it be *recognized* as the limit, or as *the* undetermined being, that *repeats* as the point of determination within countless metaphysical systems and scientific fields. Hence Metaphysics forms a single history, mirrored by its forgotten side, as each system of philosophical thought presents a variation of Dasein's engagement with the world, a particular way in which it manifests its concern and care for the world.

The Event thought of as the impossibility of totalizing all the potential fields of science, or producing a general fundamental ontology, is conflated with the events that found and motivate each individual system of science or metaphysical thought. This conflation is made possible through the positing of Dasein as the *same* being that repeats as the ground of each system, therefore each system fundamentally repeats the same grounding question of Dasein's relation to be-ing, or *Ereignis* as the withdrawal of be-ing. To allow for the possibility of multiple events, which are differentiable from each other and from the Event, we must allow for a multiplicity of different problems, or grounding questions, specific to particular problematic fields. To affirm the Event of the withdrawal of be-ing as the ground of every problematic field, and that every problematic field is a problem that *belongs* to Dasein, is still a Metaphysical decision. This is the collapse of a multiplicity of events into a single Event. Heidegger's appeal to poetic thought enacts this metaphysical choice, the

choice to affirm one single unique Event rather than multiple events. This, as we will see, is Derrida's criticism of Heidegger: there is no escape from Metaphysics. Heidegger's work remains haunted by the rejection of multiple events.

If this is the case, then Heidegger's rejection of questioning the contingent aspect of each philosophical system, or problematic field, can no longer be accepted. This rejection rests on the premise that such a questioning would be metaphysical, and that true thinking must leap outside Metaphysics to a non-metaphysical form of thought. But there is no longer any such non-metaphysical alternative, poetic thought, in its rejection of the multiple event in favour of the Event, is still metaphysical. We must reject Heidegger's claim that: 'We simply have to acknowledge that a philosophy is the way it is'.[81] This is precisely the question of multiple events, an engagement with the specific problems and ideas of a given philosophy, system of thought, or problematic field. Not to reduce these instances to repetitions of the same question of Dasein's relation to be-ing, or the truth of be-ing.

Heidegger does not see this problem at the limits of phenomenological thought. The question must be raised as to whether these two positions can be differentiated, and whether they can co-exist. Is it possible to differentiate between a single Event and multiple events, where the word event still characterizes an unconditioned happening? Is philosophy capable of thinking a single Event that grounds every metaphysical system of thought, and events immanent to these metaphysical systems that account for either radical change within these systems, or ground the specific nature of each system?

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[81] Ibid. p. 56.

This question could be seen to form the horizon and limit of phenomenological thought. Philosophy, to the extent that it remains indebted to phenomenology, cannot proceed beyond this problem: Event or events? It is the centrality of a subjective position that keeps phenomenology bound within these limits, despite the de-centring of the Event. In the next section, I want to flesh out this claim by looking at the work of two philosophers who have pushed phenomenology to the limits: Lyotard and Derrida. I will show how both these thinkers are still bound by a commitment to phenomenology by beginning from a subjective point of view, and are engaged with the problems of the inescapability of such a position. Heidegger, Lyotard and Derrida all problematize the horizon of the phenomenological subject: Heidegger affirms the Event at the expense of events; Lyotard affirms events in order to ward off the Event, and Derrida affirms that every philosophy makes a decision in favour of either the Event or events making one an absent and withdrawn ground, whilst the other term becomes doubly absent. Although it may be argued that Lyotard and Derrida are not strictly speaking phenomenological philosophers, I feel they can be characterized as post-phenomenological to the extent that they work through, or at the limits of phenomenology. In order to pursue a positive affirmation of both an Event and events requires a move to a non-phenomenological approach, a move that will require a radical rethinking of subjectivity separated from the de-centred phenomenological subject of either Lyotard or Derrida. It will be possible to give an indication of what this would involve after I have presented my examination of Lyotard and Derrida.

1.6 Derrida and Lyotard: Heideggerian Variations

Both Derrida and Lyotard remain closely tied to phenomenology. This is most evident in their ready acceptance of the limits of Metaphysics, as envisaged by Heidegger. Phenomenology presents an end to Metaphysics by pushing the consistency of its methods to its limit. It is constantly engaged in examining phenomena that undermine and un-ground its very consistency: Husserl's analyses of self-identity and time consciousness, and Heidegger's analysis of Being in general, to mention two examples.[82] Phenomenology is the most adequate form of Metaphysics as it is capable of revealing its own inadequacies. Therefore Metaphysics is still at an end, as there is no need to construct a new or different metaphysical system, as it would not be able to achieve anything that phenomenology cannot already achieve.

Both Derrida and Lyotard still begin their philosophy from a distinctly phenomenological and subjective position. The basis for this claim will become clear in the following analysis. The subject here is no longer the self-grounding, self-identical, justified and innocent subject of the Cartesian cogito, but becomes a self-undermining, self-differing, unjustified and guilty subject: a de-centred subject. The significant point being that the subject is still witness *to* an event: the event of the correlation between intentional consciousness and phenomena, as consciousness is always consciousness of something. The event manifests itself as *absence* from, or withdrawal from, a subject, and the subject does violence to this event by trying to

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[82] Heidegger's open question at the end of *Being and Time* was examined above. See also §39 of *A Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* where Husserl recognizes the *pre*-phenomenal character of the horizontal, or longitudinal, aspect of time. Husserl equates this with the only other pre-phenomenal entity, transcendental consciousness, which is the pre-phenomenal remainder of the phenomenological reduction. Husserl, also, cannot differentiate between pre-phenomenal occurrences, or events, there is only one Event.

grasp and *present* it. In phenomenology consciousness is maintained as something coextensive, and equivalent to, thinking, even if different degrees of consciousness are considered, for example, in cases such as Merleau-Ponty's notion of bodily intuition as a form of barely conscious intuition, where thought seems to be tending toward an escape from consciousness in the almost unconscious intuitive perceptions of the body. Or, phenomena constantly seem to be escaping consciousness, no object is fully given, there is always an excess, something held in reserve. Thought escaping beyond consciousness, or phenomena escaping beyond the reach of intuition, on both sides this excess is experienced as an affective absence. The correlation between consciousness and phenomena is not an easy one, its limits are not closed and determinate, but open, fuzzy and indeterminate. Nevertheless, phenomenology is bound by a commitment to a strict co-extensive relation between the two; consciousness is always consciousness of something and phenomena are only meaningful to the extent that they are the intentional correlate of an intuition. It cannot be the case that thinking extends beyond consciousness, outstripping phenomena, or that phenomena can have any meaningful existence without being an intentional correlate of consciousness.

The phenomenological subject discovers this affective absence as an empty constantly shifting centre, or groundless ground: paradox and impossibility become the condition for its coherence and possibility.

The difference between Lyotard and Derrida is the way in which they deal with the affective absence that marks the openness of the phenomenological method. Lyotard seeks a reversal of Heidegger's position, rejecting a single Event in favour of multiple

events. This affirmation of a multiplicity of events is the only way to ward off what he sees as the totalizing threat of the Event. Whereas Derrida believes that thinking is always caught in a double bind between affirming either the Event or multiple events, whilst ignoring the other.

1.7 Lyotard: Affirming the Multiple Over the Unique

Lyotard shares with Derrida a conception that philosophy is constantly engaged with a crisis in subjectivity. Both recognize an identity between the conscious rational subject and Metaphysics as systematic and rational thought. The crisis resides in the foundational nature of events for consciousness, as events themselves are unconscious and inaccessible to the conscious subject: events are primarily an irresolvable problem *for* subjectivity. Lyotard's position is to express an affirmation for multiple events, as intensive impersonal experiences.[83] When they are claimed by, or incorporated into, an 'I' or a 'we' they loose their intensive singularity as they become subject to a system of knowledge and representation. Lyotard shares with Derrida this sense that the event is betrayed or wronged in some way, when a subject bears witness to it, and proclaims a faith in it.[84] This is a recurrent theme within the collection of essays *The Inhuman*, where it is often posed in terms of Leibniz's concept of the two limits of the monad: God and the material point.[85] Here an event is conceived as the ground or support that makes synthesis, or, following Kant, experience possible. The material point, or atom, is a degree zero that excludes all interiority, all possibility of synthesis

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[83] Lyotard, Jean-François, <u>Discours, Figure</u>, (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1971), p. 23.
[84] Lyotard, Jean-François, <u>The Inhuman</u>, (UK: Polity Press, 1993), pp. 74 – 75, 204.
[85] Ibid. pp. 60, 64 – 65, 160 – 162.

and experience and therefore denies the event. Whereas God is the totality of all possible syntheses and experience, and all events are subsumed within this single and unique Event. Both positions exclude multiple events, and therefore deny that something happens: either nothing happens or everything happens. In the end there is no real difference between these positions, and the subject, as the witness who testifies to the occurrence of the event, who testifies that something happened, is lost.

To understand the danger that Lyotard sees in the conception of a single unique Event, and the necessity to affirm events as multiple points of resistance against such a conception, it will be useful to return to his early conception of the event in *Discours, Figure*. In the introductory section 'The Figure as Event', Lyotard introduces some of the key ideas that will define the trajectory of his conception of the event. Setting down the two disjoint realms of signification and designation, which he equates with linguistic discourse and phenomenal perception, Lyotard seeks to explain their inextricable connection with each other through the figure of the event.[86] The insertion of elements of the phenomenal in discourse, such as the use of physical gestures and attitudes, bears witness to the trace of an event, a singular point that brings these two realms into contact. As Lyotard says: 'It is not the body that disturbs language; it is something else, which can disturb both language and the body'.[87] This mixing or encroachment is the basis of all poetic and rhetorical thought.[88] But subjectivity must always begin from this mixed position; the subject is always a witness to an event. There cannot be a time *before* the event, in which the realms were in some way pure, just as there cannot be a time *after* the event, in which

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[86] Lyotard, Jean-François, <u>Discours, Figure</u>, (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1971), p. 20.
[87] Ibid. p. 22.
[88] Ibid. p. 22.

every trace of the event has vanished, leaving the two realms as either separated and purified, or merged together into a single homogenous realm. With respect to an event, Lyotard gives these two realms of the phenomenal and the linguistic a classical interpretation in terms of the continuous and the discrete: the phenomenal realm of the body forms a pure continuous space, while linguistic expression presents a discontinuous network of discrete elements. But the temptation to see the continuous and the discrete as absolute properties of the body and language would be an attempt to neutralize the event. They are only opposed as continuous and discrete *relative* to an event. And each realm cannot be considered in isolation; neither can we think of the purely continuous without introducing the figure of the discrete, nor the absolutely discrete without the figure of the continuous. Their interrelation, or connection, is necessary to express and cope with changes and transformations that the trauma of the event triggers. This is the key aim of *Discours, Figure*, to criticise the privileging of phenomenology as a possible founding field of philosophical research, thus privileging the continuous over the discrete and ascribing continuity as a *natural* aspect of the body.   Lyotard intends to show how the structureless field, or rather void, of desire and the event, differs fundamentally from the structured fields of the phenomenal and the linguistic; the 'This' (*Ça*) of desire as opposed to the One/We (*On*) of phenomenology or the I-You (*Je-Tu*) of discourse.[89]

For Lyotard, Merleau-Ponty's attempt to pursue intentionality to the point of passivity is a failure, as a pure passivity cannot operate as a phenomenological support for phenomenology.[90] We cannot pass smoothly from activity to passivity, or from phenomena to language; the ambiguity at the heart of this intertwining is neither

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[89] Ibid. p. 23.
[90] Ibid. p. 21.

phenomenal nor linguistic.   As he later reflects, the subject must be in a state of *passibility*, rather than passivity, as openness to the event.[91]   The interaction between the continuous and the discrete, activity and passivity, or phenomena and language, presupposes the event and therefore the subject's moment of passibility.[92]   For Lyotard, the term passibility attempts to capture the way in which we are seized *by* an event.[93]   When something happens to us it happens outside of all context or formalization; an event occurs without support.

It becomes increasingly important for Lyotard to affirm the specificity of the event, and thereby affirm the multiplicity of events. The structure of *Discours, Figure* risks loosing the specificity of the multiple events of desire in the general structure of the debate between phenomenology and language. Each individual instance of desire merely repeats the irreconcilable nature of phenomenology and linguistic discourse. The *events* of desire are lost in the grand narrative of the *Event* of sensibility and language. Lyotard's critique of grand narratives in *The Postmodern Condition* and his development of the philosophy of language games in the *Differend* are a direct response to this danger in his own work. There is as much violence done to an event if it is absorbed within a closed system, as there is if it is reduced to a repetition of the *same* openness. This would simply be another form of closure.

In *The Differend*, Lyotard abandons the implicit idea of language as a single unified field, and replaces it with a multiplicity of competing genres of discourse and

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[91] Lyotard, Jean-François, The Inhuman, (UK: Polity Press, 1993), p. 116.
[92] Ibid. p. 116.
[93] Ibid. p. 111.

heterogeneous phrase regimens.[94] These phrase regimens present consistent rules for the concatenation of phrases, for example the rules governing prescriptive, cognitive or interrogative statements. For Lyotard, the linking of phrases is *necessary*, but how these phrases link is *contingent*.[95] Therefore the concatenation of phrases does not always follow the rules of a single regimen. The disturbance to a set of phrases linked under a single regimen, caused by a phrase from an incommensurable regimen being linked onto it, is called an *event* and is experienced as a *differend*. The contingent rule breaking concatenation of phrases is an event, but language tries to capture this contingency under a new banner, that of finality or purpose. The unification of a sequence of phrases, from a number of distinct regimens, constitutes a *genre of discourse* when it is unified for an aim or purpose.[96] But just as the original concatenation of phrases was *free*, or contingent, so too is the imposition of an aim: 'Genres of discourse do nothing more than shift the differend from the level of regimens to that of ends'.[97] From a multiplicity of possible aims or purposes the imposition of a particular genre subordinates the contingency of the event to the particular claim of a genre of discourse, presented as a necessity. Other claims, from other possible genres of discourse, cannot be taken as legitimate claims, due to the dominant genre's supposed necessity.

The other claims and genres therefore suffer a wrong at the hands of this dominant genre. These counter claims are felt as wrongs, and continue to resonate and bubble beneath the projected calm of the dominant genre; this tension between a dominant genre and suppressed genres are now events, felt as differends, now at the level of

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[94] Lyotard, Jean-François, <u>The Differend</u>, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele, (University of Minnesota Press, 1996), Nos. 184, 181, 263.
[95] Ibid. p. 29 No. 40.
[96] Ibid. p. 29 No. 40.
[97] Ibid. p. 29 No. 40.

competing genres as opposed to regimens. Even politics, when unjustly taken as a genre of discourse, attempts to recognize and regulate differends through legislation, fails and continues to wrong not only those differends it seeks to neutralize through regulation, but also a residue of differends which cannot be regulated.[98] It is this idea, that the differend marks an irreparable wrong, a wrong that we can only respond to through the endless task of negotiation and deliberation, which continues to mark Lyotard's philosophy with an air of privation, lack and negativity. We are faced with the paradoxical and impossible task of seeking an idiom in which an irresolvable difference can be resolved.

Lyotard's conclusion is that it matters which genre of discourse lays claim to the event, as is evident from the conflict and competition between genres. The genres themselves testify to the importance of which one claims the event. It is therefore of paramount importance to recognize that judgement is always situated within a genre of discourse; judgement cannot operate in the void that opens between genres of discourse, as if this were itself just another situation or genre of discourse. This would make a One of the void, and it would be the commonality expressed through all the genres of discourse, as a unity without finality: the Event. We cannot presuppose a space in which all claims are equal; this would be to speak from the void between genres. What is primary is the conflict itself, and the conflict is born from the opposing claims of other genres making themselves felt as differends *within* a dominant genre of discourse. The differend is born from this inequality. The choice of the dominant genre can be arbitrary, but it is necessary in order to stage the conflict between genres, to allow for the testimony of the event in the form of differends.

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[98] Ibid. p. 172 No. 237.

Geoffrey Bennington, in his book *Lyotard Writing the Event*, emphasizes this centrality of events for Lyotard: 'Perhaps the most coherent view of Lyotard's work as a whole is that it strives to respect the event in its singularity, and has experimented with various ways of achieving that respect'.[99] But in order to respect events, one must deny the Event. Bennington clearly points out this rejection in Lyotard's rejection of Heidegger's *Ereignis*: 'Lyotard would accept… [a] *rapprochement* [with Heidegger's Event as *Ereignis*] up to a point, but against Heidegger (or apparently against Heidegger) Lyotard would stress the *singularity*, the always-only-this-one-nowness of a sentence'.[100] Singling out Geoffrey Bennington and Jean-Luc Nancy, James Williams notes that these commentators uncover a deconstructive reading of Lyotard, mirroring Derrida's critique of Heidegger.[101] Though Lyotard's work may be as complex as Heidegger's it remains a simple reversal: events instead of the Event. As such, it cannot escape Derrida's aporia between the Event and events.

1.8 Derrida: Aporia Between The Event and Events

Derrida begins from the position that we can never escape Metaphysics. This is already evident in his early essay *Ousia and Gramme*, where he proposes that maybe there is no other concept of time apart from the vulgar ordinary conception, which Heidegger believes he has escaped in *Being and Time*.[102] Poetic thought cannot be an

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[99] Bennington, Geoffrey, Lyotard Writing the Event, (Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 9.
[100] Ibid. p. 128.
[101] Williams, James, Lyotard: Towards a Postmodern Philosophy, (Polity Press, 1998), pp. 135, 141.
[102] Derrida, Jacques, 'Oussia and Gramme' in Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982), pp. 51 – 52.

authentic mode of thought that somehow operates outside of Metaphysics, with ecstatic temporality being a sign, or opening, hinting at the possibility of this authentic mode of existence.

To take one example, I will look at Derrida's analysis of death in *The Gift of Death*.[103] This work recounts the familiar Heideggerian theme of death as the temporal horizon of Dasein's possible experience, but death itself is not a possible experience for Dasein: death is the impossibility that grounds possible experience. This is another repetition of the question concerning be-ing and the Event; the gift of death is again the gift of be-ing as that which gives Dasein its structure of openness. Be-ing gives, and in giving is completely withdrawn. Derrida sees in, Jan Patocka's reading of Heidegger, a subtle shift in Dasein's ability to adequately think the Event, by emphasizing the ability within metaphysical thought to think the *possibility* of the Event.[104] Thought, whether poetic or metaphysical, is always inadequate to think the Event itself, but not necessarily the possibility of the Event. Dasein does not need '*the event of a revelation or the revelation of an event*' but it needs to 'think the possibility of such an event'.[105] Within our metaphysical confines we should always be open to the possibility of an event, our system of thought, our metaphysics, should retain an open character. The question that Derrida will attempt to maintain as undecided and undecidable is precisely the choice between a single unique Event or multiple events. For Derrida, this is a choice between the absolute other of God, Kierkegaard's God and the subject as the knight of faith, or the absolute otherness of

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[103] Derrida, Jacques, <u>The Gift of Death</u>, trans. David Wills, (London: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
[104] Ibid. p. 49.
[105] Ibid. p. 49.

others, Levinas's ethical call in the face to face relation to an other.[106] This gift of death is always received as either the unique Event of be-ing or as an event; this difference, as a choice or decision, rests with the subject. The unconditioned occurrence of the event is met immediately by the unconditioned decision of the subject to receive this gift as either the *same* unique Event, or as one event amongst a multiplicity of *different* events. The event operates *immanently* within a system of Metaphysics, as its withdrawn or groundless ground, in the moment when it is considered identical with this subjective decision; that is, in the decision that decides to receive this gift as unique or as one of many. While the undecidability between a single or multiple conception of the event remains totally inaccessible and *transcendent* to any given system of thought, or subjective experience.

What Derrida has sought to do is to extend the frame of Metaphysics to include Heidegger's conception of *Ereignis*. For Derrida, Heidegger himself falls back into a form of Metaphysics by *deciding* that all instances of *Ereignis* are the same unique eternal Event, while the withdrawal of be-ing itself leaves its character as single or multiple completely indeterminate and undecidable. The difference between the numerous different historical examples of Metaphysics can be levelled, as they are dependant on the same groundless ground, the same undecidable indeterminacy. For Derrida, what Heidegger has achieved is to have opened every system of Metaphysics to thinking the *possibility* of the event, rather than having actually provided a path out of Metaphysics. Heidegger's Dasein, in its appropriation by be-ing has decided *passively* to be appropriated *by* be-ing, but it has also *actively* decided on the Event, or *Ereignis*, as unique. Dasein has appropriated be-ing, by recognizing it as the same

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[106] Ibid. p. 83.

unique event. This decision of Dasein presents the double bind that is at the heart of Derrida's philosophy, and his insistence on the inescapable nature of metaphysical thought. Derrida states this clearly in *Aporias*, when he says:

> Each time the decision concerns the choice between the relation to an other who is *its* other (that is to say, an other that can be opposed in a couple) and the relation to a wholly, non-opposable, other, that is, an other that is no longer *its* other. What is at stake in the first place is therefore not the crossing of a given border. Rather, at stake is the *double concept of the border*, from which this aporia comes to be determined.[107]

For Derrida, the unique experience of our own singularity will always allow us to actively decide on the event as singular or multiple. This fundamental *ambivalence* is the truly inescapable aspect of Metaphysics; it is the recurrent doubt or *aporia* that haunts all Metaphysics, including the philosophy of Heidegger.

The difficulty of this question is clear, if the event is always something unconditioned, or wholly indeterminate, how would it be possible to differentiate between events? Heidegger would seem to rely on a principle of the identity of indiscernibles, in asserting the identity of the repetitions of *Ereignis* for Dasein. The reliance on such a principle closes Metaphysics, by denying Dasein an active moment of decision in the moment of the event: the choice for a metaphysics based on a single or multiple conception of the event must be a purely active affirmation. The history of metaphysics will always carry a double secret: the event as that which is covered over and forgotten within the history of Metaphysics, following Heidegger's analysis of the destruction of the history of ontology in *Being and Time*, and the event as an

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[107] Jacques, Derrida, Aporias, trans. Thomas Dutoit, (USA: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 18.

active decision between a unique or multiple event. For Derrida, this second choice is crucial, it emphasizes the *freedom* of the subject's choice, a freedom that caries with it a sense of responsibility, guilt and doubt. It is a decision that follows no norm or law, and yet it founds the possibility of all legislation; all fields of determinate or conditioned knowledge rely on it.[108] Without the reassurance of a framework, or normative support, this decision will always carry with it an absolute responsibility, a doubt as to its legitimacy and guilt over the unknown yet rejected alternatives. No matter how positive and self-assured the affirmation of the choice between a single unique Event and multiple events is, doubt will remain as to its truth. This *aporia* must be understood as the undecidability between these conceptions of the event, and not simply as the possibility of the alternative. The disruption caused by this *aporia* is not a simple oscillation between the two alternative conceptions of an event; it is as likely to return and re-affirm one choice as it is to exchange it for the other. Every such decision involves an absolute risk.[109]

This aporia is a consequence of Derrida's finitist relation to the infinite, which he carries over from Heidegger. Derrida looks at this question explicitly in an earlier reflection on Levinas, in the extended essay 'Violence and Metaphysics'.[110] Derrida makes his understanding of the choice between the unfinished *potential* infinite and the *absolute* infinite clear: 'Metaphysical transcendence cannot be at once transcendence toward the other as Death and transcendence towards the other as God'.[111] Derrida's critique of Levinas rests on Levinas' insistence on *both* the infinite

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[108] Ibid. p. 17.
[109] Ibid. p. 19.
[110] Derrida, Jacques, 'Violence and Metaphysics' in <u>Writing and Difference</u>, trans. Alan Bass, (Routledge, 1995), pp. 79 – 153.
[111] Ibid. p. 115.

alterity of the other, and the positive transcendent infinite of God.[112] This attempt to

affirm both the alterity of the other, through a concept of potential infinity, and God,

through the absolute infinite, is taken up by many theological conceptions of

phenomenology.[113] The third form of the infinite, the positive *actual* infinite of

Cantor's set theory, is missing from Derrida's argument. This absence becomes clear

in Marian Hobson's treatment of Derrida's understanding of the infinite in her book

Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines.[114] Hobson makes this distinction between the two

infinites of the potential and absolute infinite central to her reading of Derrida,

focusing on 'Violence and Metaphysics'.[115] For her reading, it is important that the

only form of the actual infinite in Derrida's work is the paradoxical absolute form,

rejecting Cantor's consistent actually infinite transfinite numbers in favour of the

potential infinite of intuitionist mathematics.[116] Hobson's analysis suggests that this

aporia between the limits of the finite subject, the events of the potential infinite, and

the infinite, the Event of the absolute infinite, is ineliminable for any philosophy

indebted to phenomenology.

It is impossible to determine whether the event is unique or multiple, because of how

beings, things, or phenomena appear *to* a subject. This is the key to understanding the

significance of the event and subjectivity for Derrida.   In conclusion, Derrida's

approach cannot be classified as exclusively endorsing either a philosophy of the

Event, or of multiple events. There is no framework within which the Event can be

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[112] Ibid. p. 114.

[113] Janicaud, Dominique, <u>Phenomenology and the "Theological" Turn</u>, (Fordham University Press, 2000). This volume collects together Janicaud's original attack on this phenomenological turn, and its defence by some of its most well known adherents, such as: Jean-Luc Marion and Michel Henry.

[114] Hobson, Marian, <u>Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines</u>, (Routledge, 1998).

[115] Ibid. pp. 41 – 46, 57.

[116] Ibid. pp. 53 – 54. Hobson is incorrect in her assertion that the Axiom of Choice is responsible for infinite sets in axiomatic set theory; it is rather the Axiom of Infinity that guarantees the existence of infinite sets. Another error in her reading is that paradoxes do not arise from the use of the Power Set Axiom; it is the totalization of the ordinal, or cardinal, hierarchies that is inconsistent.

distinguished from events, as every system of metaphysics has already affirmed one whilst excluding the other. It is for this reason that, for Derrida, Heidegger remains within the circle of Metaphysics. Heidegger fails to recognize that his affirmation of a single unique Event, the Event of the withdrawal of be-ing as the potential limit of every metaphysical project of Dasein is itself a Metaphysical decision. Only the necessary *aporia* that haunts the system leaves a trace of the alternative conception of the event. The subject is always exposed to a double crisis, or de-centring, the absence of the withdrawn Event, or events, and the continual slippage and play of *différance* between these two conceptions of the event. There is the absence that makes presence possible, a trace of this absence is marked in the appearance of all things, and then there is the radical absence that cannot even leave a trace. The exclusion of this second absence always lies outside the power of any phenomenological approach, due to the subjective finite starting point of every phenomenology.

1.9 Conclusion: The Limits of Phenomenology

This identity between thinking and subjectivity is one of the key factors that limit both Derrida and Lyotard's work on the event. We could limit ourselves to Derrida and Lyotard's position that subjectivity, as the *attempt* to neutralize the event through a closed system, a system that posits the explicit goal of neutralizing the event by *naming* it as a goal or purpose, always does violence to the event. But this excludes the possibility that thought can be separated from this type of subjectivity, therefore releasing the thinking of the event from the negative connotations of guilt, injustice

and wrong; essentially freeing thought from a presumed finitude. Or, alternatively there may be a way to rethink the subject such that it is capable of affirming the event, without reducing or mastering its singularity. The indeterminate border between thought and the event, identified by Lyotard and Derrida, is always seen from the systematizing perspective of a finite subject. Seen from this perspective, the border is a limit or horizon at the margins of thought, where the actual and absolute infinite blur together. The subject is always trying to tame this border, or no mans land, by subjecting it to the dominance of the centre and totalization, but, at the same time, it is this border that perturbs and de-centres subjectivity as the trace of the event. It is not considered as a territory in its own right, one that thought might occupy separate from, or outside of, subjectivity. Neither thinker countenances the possibility that subjectivity, as a closed and purposive system, might be the result of, or emerge from, a process of thinking prior to subjectivity.

It is at this point that the two strategies that will condition this thesis can be introduced. It will be a fundamental requirement of any philosophy that wants to pursue a new and positive approach to Metaphysics that it is able to distinguish between and affirm both the Event and events. At this stage I would like to give a clear definition of what I take the difference to be between a single unique Event and multiple events. These definitions should not be taken as the last word on the subject, with my thesis merely supporting this initial distinction. Rather, they will provide a useful and clear starting point for the following chapters. At its most simple, I take the one unique Event to be the question: why is there *something* rather than *nothing*? And the problem of multiple events asks the question: why is there *this* and not *that*? The fact that both these questions are fundamentally unanswerable does not make

them equivalent. It is phenomenology's starting point of consciousness constituted by its intentional phenomenal correlate of the world that tends to blur these two questions, by restricting thinking to only one possible world, the world given to consciousness. It is easy to see how these two questions can become confused; the necessity that there is a world appears as the same necessity that it should be this world, rather than some other. This thesis will argue that any philosophy capable of both affirming and clearly separating the question of the Event from events, must abandon the phenomenological starting point of consciousness. This rejection of phenomenology is a rejection of finitude as a starting point for thought, the clear separation between the question of the Event and events can only be maintained by a clear distinction between finitude, *actual* infinity and *absolute/totalizing* infinity.

The variations explored in Lyotard and Derrida leave us with only radical varieties of subjectivity, de-centred and ungrounded, but they themselves are still central to the method of phenomenological philosophy. In order to fully affirm the difference between the Event and events new, non-phenomenological, theories of the subject and subjectivity will be required. And the subject can no longer be the default starting point for philosophy.

These aims can be achieved in two distinct ways. Recalling phenomenology's commitment to the co-extensive relation between consciousness and phenomena, there were two ways in which this relation seemed to reach its limit and begin to break down. In order to separate the question of the Event, as a fundamental founding ontological question, from the question of events, focused on the specificity of what actually appears, it seems plausible to affirm either one of these two potential

breakdowns in the consciousness/phenomena correlation: *thinking* outstrips conscious thought and phenomena, or objects assert their full excess overwhelming the phenomenological correlation between consciousness and phenomena. These two positions should be adopted as starting points for philosophy, rather than as a point of irresolvable crisis that can only mark the end of philosophy.

Take the first possibility where thought outstrips the correlation between consciousness and phenomena. This could be achieved through simply rejecting Dasein, or some form of subjectivity, as a starting point; the individual and specific necessity of each system of Metaphysics would experience itself as that which is appropriated by being in the Event. The notion of the univocity of be-ing would be transformed from a negative expression of the impossibility of unity to a positive expression of its multiplicity: be-ing is always expressed in the same way, as something purely multiple and as always different. This univocal expression of multiplicity would be expressed immanently through the multitude of *incompossible* systems, problems or worlds; each such system would express its own necessity. These necessities would act, like Dasein, as the indeterminable limit, or horizon, of each system. In the Event these necessities, or events, would immanently differentiate themselves from each other, as they no longer appear to Dasein as countless repetitions of the limits of Dasein. Agency, the power of decision, or selection, passes from Dasein to events; the power of selection is no longer a specific quality or faculty of a unique being, Dasein, but a capacity latent in every problem or idea itself as an expression of that problem or idea.

If the uniqueness of Dasein is abandoned in favour of multiple events as self-differentiating problems, or ideas, then these events found numerous systems, or metaphysical practices. But, just like the Event in Heidegger's philosophy, these events do not happen *within* the systems or situations they found. These events still occur in a non-space, outside of time, they still require the Event; no system of metaphysics, which deploys a determinate sense of space and time, can present the full excess, indeterminacy or unconditioned nature of an event; its full virtual potential. Events must occur in an unconditioned non-systematic place. The Event is this "place" where all the problems, or ideas belong together, to use Heidegger's terminology, or, to introduce Deleuze's terminology: 'the Event in which all events communicate and are distributed'.[117] With Deleuze we have replaced the negative repetition of the same, the impossibility of the Whole as the absent question of all Metaphysics, with a repetition of difference. Each metaphysical system must overcome, dismantle and dissolve itself. The conditions of the system, as represented by belonging to the subject of the system must be dissolved and do not return: only the self-differentiating indeterminate and unconditioned problems return. Therefore, following this approach, be-ing or the Event is still subtracted from all systematic, or metaphysical, thought, but not from the special kind of thinking, or thought, constituted by events. Events occur *outside* of all systematic presentation. Here the question of the Event and events are *linked* by a complex reciprocal determination.

The second approach to a philosophy of multiple events would be to completely *separate* events from the Event by providing a system of thought that was capable of differentiating individual events from each other, and differentiating these events

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[117] LS, p.56

from the Event. Such a system would only have to meet these two minimal conditions: one, it would have to reject the possibility of totalization and thereby *remove* the Event, or the problem of be-ing, from its concerns and, two, allow for the presentation of something completely unconditioned within its systematic framework. This approach is different from the use of systematic thought throughout the history of philosophy, the system is established as completely subtracted from the question of totality, either a closed totality of a complete system or, in relation to the absent Event, as a perpetually open totality. Therefore, when events are presented within this system their singularity, contingency and indeterminacy, are respected and differentiated from what is presented as determinate. There is no reconciliation between this determinacy and indeterminacy, either within the system, which would mark a return to a closed and totalizing Metaphysics, or to a perpetually absent 'outside' or Event. Events happen *inside*, or within, a system, not outside in the Event. The result of this is to transform a given situation, rather than dissolve it in favour of a new situation. Here the question of the Event and events are completely separated. All that is required is that a system is capable of making and sustaining these differences. It is the narrowness of the critique of Metaphysics that equates, automatically, the idea of systematic philosophy with a totalizing project.

In the next chapter I want to examine the work of Sartre, in order to trace his reading of the Event and events. The question of the absolute event of the upsurge of the for-itself from the in-itself always remains a repressed question in *Being and Nothingness*, disappearing completely in his later political works. In the two volumes of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* Sartre introduces a theory of multiple events in the from of the *Apocalypse*, but the event itself soon becomes neglected in favour of

an analysis of the group that is formed from this moment of Apocalypse: the group-in-fusion. This reading will constantly challenge Sartre's understanding of freedom, and explain his repression of the event in his work as an attempt to defend his existential concept of freedom from becoming an affirmation of pure chance and contingency.

The main reason for focussing on Sartre is that he is not engaged with the same problems as Heidegger, his work follows a different path. The contemporary figures of Lyotard and Derrida are occupied by more Heideggerian concerns, and are thus led to contemplate the question of *Ereignis* or the Event as the grounding question and this question as the perpetual concern of Dasein. Sartre rejects this question as early as *Being and Nothingness*, where it is clear that the fundamental ontological question concerning the genesis and differentiation of the for-itself from the in-itself is an absolute Event that cannot be questioned or understood by the for-itself.[118] This is the idea, examined above, of resolving this question through a radical subtraction of the Event from all ontological discourse. Sartre differs from Heidegger in the question of self-foundation: Sartre's for-itself is not its own foundation, whereas Heidegger's Dasein is paradoxically self-founding.[119] This is the basis for the difference between Sartre's facticity and Heidegger's throwness, and also their radically different interpretations of death. In order for Dasein to have an *authentic* relation to the world it must recognize its horizon of possibility in its being-towards-death as the limit of the horizon that Dasein opens up for the unconcealment of things. This ultimate question of death, mortality, finitude and grounding though unanswerable is still Dasein's ultimate concern. Sartre sees no such important relation to death;

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[118] BN, pp. 82, 84.
[119] BN, pp. 79, 484. BT, p. 330.

authenticity lies in the subject's specific free projects. Death does not bring meaning to life as its ultimate horizon; only our projects bring meaning to our life, as Sartre states: 'our projects are independent of death'.[120] In order to experience existence in an *authentic* manner we must recognize that our freedom is radically infinite, and its limitation to the finite is due to our actions and choices in relation to our specific projects, and not due to some ultimate horizon of death.[121]

Although, in *Being and Nothingness*, this authentic existence seems to only require our recognition of the nature and power of our radical freedom, in order to fully realize its potential. In his later political works Sartre begins to recognize that such an authentic existence is only possible through fully reciprocal group action, but the transition from an alienated individual to being a member of an authentic group is not possible on the basis of the free individual's power to act. Something extra is required; some supplement is needed to fuse the individuals together into a group, to break the deadlock of conflict that characterizes interpersonal relations in *Being and Nothingness*.[122] This supplement is the idea that something happens, Sartre calls it an Apocalypse, but I will relate it to the idea of an event, which causes individuals to fuse together in one paradoxical instant to become a group-in-fusion. This development of Sartre's work, from the initial rejection of the question of the Event as a possible concern of the free for-itself and his later introduction of the Apocalypse, or events makes him a perfect case study to observe the birth and separation of these two questions. Both Deleuze and Badiou's work revolves around these two questions

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[120] BN, p. 548.
[121] BN, p. 546.
[122] BN, p. 364.

and, from a historical point of view, both can be seen as reacting to the successes and

failures of this later work.

2: Sartre and Freedom: from Imagination to Chance

2.0 Introduction

Throughout his life Sartre remained faithful to his phenomenological roots. His commitment to the basic ontological categories of the *for-itself* and the *in-itself*, established in *Being and Nothingness*, remains throughout his work, and is still evident in the two volumes of his late political work the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.[123]

What changes in this later work is the role that being-for-others plays and how this relates to the possibility of authentic human existence. This is the basis for Sartre's dialectical approach in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, where he posits two dialectical processes based on the role of the other: a *constituent* dialectic as a process of living an *inauthentic* and alienated existence in collective serial isolation from other individuals, and a *constituted* dialectic as a process of living an *authentic* existence as part of a communal group.[124] The transition from serial to group existence is realised in an apocalyptic moment which gives rise to the *group-in-fusion*. Although each dialectical process is intelligible, the transition from one dialectic to the other is not. Only the absolute freedom of the subject can account for the shift from serial existence to group existence, but the for-itself is not capable of

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[123] CDR2, p. 315. See also Flynn, Thomas, R., <u>Sartre and Marxist Existentialism</u>, p. 4.
[124] CDR1, p. 342.

this shift at any moment, it requires a specific configuration of the situation, an *event*, which it requires in order to act. The event is not a cause, but a set of exceptional conditions, or circumstances, which are necessary if the for-itself to fully realize its freedom and potential. The success of this group formation is signalled by the *novelty* of both its existence and actions.[125]

It is this relation between a subject and an event, along with the consequences of this relation in the form of novelty, or the production of the new, that will be central to my thesis. What this shift in Sartre's work initially shows is that the freedom of the for-itself can only reach it *full potential*, or *truly* engage in action if some *chance* set of circumstances conspire to form an event. The focus of freedom's power no longer lies within itself, in the day-to-day functioning of its nihilating power to give meaning to the meaningless in-itself in general. It is now given over to waiting for and affirming an exterior event, these chance occurrences that the for-itself requires. There is an implicit shift in emphasis in the transition from *Being and Nothingness* to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, from freedom as the general continuous mode of existence of the for-itself, to its operation in singular punctuated moments, affirming the chance occurrence of events and living the consequences. The aim of this chapter will be to give a detailed exposition of this transition, highlighting the development of the role of the Other as central to this movement.

The purpose of this exposition will be to show how Sartre's later philosophy is only capable of maintaining the difference and separation between the question of the Event, in the form of how the for-itself arises from out of the in-itself, and the

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[125] CDR1, p. 398.

question of events, as the question relating to the formation and life of groups, by ignoring the first question. It is this prohibition against asking the question of the Event that will strike both Deleuze and Badiou as philosophically inadequate; philosophy is always drawn to ask those forbidden questions. I will show that if Sartre takes the question of the Event seriously, within the framework of his phenomenological ontology, then the question of the Event will become, for the subject/for-itself, indistinguishable from the question of events. In short, the Apocalypse that sees the birth of the group is just as much the birth of the individual; they are born together. Phenomenology is again incapable of positively addressing and differentiating these two questions.

This reading of Sartre, focussing on the theme of the event and the *ontological* consequences of the event in relation to the development of Sartre's philosophy, is a neglected area of study. Traditional philosophical readers of Sartre have focussed on the individualist existential philosophy of *Being and Nothing*, whilst dismissing the later political philosophy of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, although there has always been a marginal political interest in Sartre's work as a whole.[126] The recent renewal of interest in Sartre has seen a more balanced appreciation of Sartre's work. A political interest in Sartre's later work has been aided by the work of Badiou, with particular focus falling on the similarity between Badiou's event and Sartre's Apocalypse, a point first noted by Peter Hallward.[127] Nina Power develops the relation between Sartre and Badiou in her article 'The Truth of Humanity: the Collective Political Subject in Sartre and Badiou', but she focuses on the political

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[126] For a discussion the general dismissal of Sartre's later political philosophy see Nik Farrell Fox's *The New Sartre*, pages 18 – 20, and Thomas R. Flynn's introduction to his *Sartre and Marxist Existentialism*. Flynn concentrates on the political interest in considering the theoretical unity of Sartre's work.

[127] Hallward, Peter, <u>A Subject to Truth</u>, (Minnesota University Press, 2003), pp. 44 – 45.

rather than the ontological dimension of Sartre's thought.[128] Another strand of recent interest in Sartre has sought to integrate his work into movements of post-structuralism and post-modernism, recasting Sartre as a transitional figure, rather than simply a member of the old guard. The two studies that stand out in this area are Tilottama Rajan's *Deconstruction: the Remainders of Phenomenology* and Nik Farrell Fox's *The New Sartre*. But neither Rajan nor Farrell concentrate on the event in Sartre's work, either in terms of the absolute event of the upsurge of the for-itself from the in-itself, or the Apocalypse of group fusion. Farrell's discussion of groups in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* confines itself to a consideration of the group-in-fusion rather than the event which gives rise to it.[129]

The following two chapters will introduce the main figures of this thesis, Deleuze and Badiou, noting their specific responses to Sartre's philosophy. Sartre's dominant place in the intellectual landscape of post-war France makes it almost impossible for either Deleuze or Badiou to escape his influence. The evidence for this is more explicit in the case of Badiou than Deleuze. Their responses are therefore both historically and philosophically interesting. The difference between Deleuze and Badiou, which I outlined in terms of their two approaches to differentiating the question of the Event from that of events at the close of the last chapter, can be seen as a divergence from the figure of Sartre, in their relation to both Sartre's technical philosophy and his wider commitments.

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[128] Power, Nina, 'The Truth of Humanity: the Collective Political Subject in Sartre and Badiou' in Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy, vol. 20 2009, p. 7. These themes are developed in depth in Power's unpublished PhD thesis From Theoretical Antihumanism to Practical Humanism: The Political Subject in Sartre, Althusser and Badiou, Middlesex University.

[129] Fox, Nik, Farrell, The New Sartre, (Continuum, 2003), pp. 64 – 65.

In Deleuze we find a rebel who, though respectful, is keen to escape from Sartre's stifling influence. Despite his affectionate assessment of Sartre in his short essay *"He Was My Teacher"*, Deleuze's response is usually more critical.[130] The main point, one that he shares with Badiou, is the rejection of the fundamental ontological structures of *Being and Nothingness*, in particular the *necessity* of the for-itself/in-itself relation and the *contingency* of being-for-others.[131] To outline Deleuze's position, let us begin with a remark that Sartre makes in *Being and Nothingness*:

> It would perhaps not be impossible to conceive of a For-itself which would be wholly free from all For-others and which would exist without even suspecting the possibility of being an object. But this For-itself simply would not be "man".[132]

Deleuze's third essay 'Michel Tournier and the World Without Others', in the collection 'Phantasm and Modern Literature', can be read as a direct engagement and development of this proposed thought experiment.[133] In doing so, Deleuze is quick to establish the ontological, or structural, necessity of the for-itself, in-itself *and* being-for-others:

> But the Other is neither an object in the field of my perception nor a subject who perceives me: the Other is initially a structure of the perceptual field, without which the entire field could not function as it does.[134]

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[130] Deleuze, Giles, <u>Desert Island and Other Texts (1953 – 1974)</u>, (Semiotext(e), 2003).
[131] BN, pp. 250, 282-283. DR, p. 260. LoS, 307.
[132] BN, p. 282.
[133] 'Phantasm and Modern Literature' second appendix of LS.
[134] LS, p. 307.

The consequence of this discovery is that the 'perhaps not impossible' for-itself without others *is* impossible, or paradoxical. It is not so much that this for-itself would not be man, or human, but, rather, that it would not be a subject, in Sartre's sense of a free for-itself. For Deleuze, Sartre's dualism of the for-itself/in-itself fails to recognize the constituting role of the Other, which it adds as a contingent feature of this particular *human* situation. True dualism operates between the effects of the Other on the perceptual field, and the effects of its absence.[135] The fundamental reason why thought and perception in a world without the Other cannot be thought of as a subject, or for-itself, is that this world is: 'a world without the possible' and 'a world in which the category of the necessary has completely replaced that of the possible'.[136] This extreme form of the for-itself is no longer free to choose it projects from amongst an infinity of *possible* projects. Understanding this necessity as a higher form of freedom that affirms *chance*, and as liberation from a free for-itself choosing amongst its possibilities, will be one of the key aims of this chapter, and the thesis as a whole. In this introduction I merely want to point toward this radical dualism that underlies Deleuze's thought, and bring it into line with the first approach outlined at the end of chapter one; namely an intimate reciprocal relation between the question of events, which give birth to a world with others, and the question of the Event, of a world without others.

Badiou's relation to Sartre is more direct and positive. One way of characterizing the philosophical difference in Deleuze and Badiou's response to Sartre is to say that Deleuze wants to *overcome* Sartre, while Badiou wants to *continue* his project. This reflects Badiou's overt admiration and identification with Sartre, seeing him not only

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[135] LS, p. 308.
[136] LS, p. 320.

as his early master but also as a figure to emulate.[137] This identification is a clear source of friction between Deleuze and Badiou, as can be seen from a remark that Deleuze makes in an interview discussing Foucault's work:

> Sartre, no matter what his force and brilliance, had a classical conception of the intellectual. He took action in the name of superior values: the Good, the Just, and the True. I see a common thread that runs from Voltaire to Zola to Sartre. It ended with Sartre. The intellectual taking action in the name of the values of truth and justice.[138]

Badiou has often identified himself with Sartre precisely under this banner, claiming that they are the final two C18th French philosophers.[139] The values of truth and justice are central to Badiou's overall project, but it is the subtle shift in emphasis from justice to truth, seen in the transition from his *Theory of the Subject* to *Being and Event*, that will mark the originality of Badiou's own philosophical project. This transition is marked by a more tempered appreciation of the role of destruction as a part of the subjective process and the production of the new. In *Theory of the Subject* the whole situation must be destroyed and purified, prior to its new and novel reconstruction, he calls this a 'Mathematical *justice* for the clean slate' stating that there must be 'a total reversal: let us make a tabula rasa of the past'.[140] From *Being and Event* onwards Badiou gives destruction a more balanced role, positioning himself as a thinker of *minimal* difference as opposed to *maximal* destruction.[141]

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[137] LS, p. 555. Badiou has also gone so far as to say that his desire to write both fiction and plays was motivated by a desire to copy his hero (Comments made in Glasgow, Feb. 2009).

[138] Deleuze, Giles, 'Foucault and Prison' in <u>Two Regimes of Madness</u>, (Semiotext(e), 2006), p. 278.

[139] Comment made at *Paul, Political Fidelity and the Philosophy of Alain Badiou: a Discussion of Incident at Antioch*, University of Glasgow, 13-14 February 2009.

[140] TS, pp. 152, 168 (my emphasis).

[141] BE, p. 407. C, p. 56.

Badiou sees both his work in *Theory of the Subject* and Sartre's apocalyptic group-in-fusion as examples of theories of maximal destruction, a desire for a fanatical purification and authenticity.[142] Badiou's move toward a theory of minimal difference is based around a subject to *truth*, one of the main themes of *Being and Event*, while *justice* becomes the specific mode of the subject of a political truth.[143]

At the time of *Theory of the Subject* every subject Badiou only recognizes a political subject.[144] But Badiou will come to see this as a limitation on philosophy, which needs to be broadened through the addition of the separate genres of science, art and love, to complement that of politics. The consequence of this will be examined in Chapter Four, where, in *Being and Event*, Badiou will realize the importance of recognizing the disruption of an event as *internal* and *relative* to a specific situation of a specific genre.[145] From the perspective of *Being and Event* it is clear to see in *Theory of the Subject* Badiou's decisive break with Sartre, but he is in danger of falling into one of his own negative categories, what he calls a leftist deviation of *dynamicist materialism*, which he equates with Deleuze.[146] If there is only one genre of truth, then it becomes too easy, or tempting, to abandon the separation between the Event and events and reinstate a relation, identity or confusion between them. Badiou calls this over-privileging of a specific genre a suture, a symptom of an illness that has increasingly blighted philosophy since the C19th.[147]

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[142] C, p. 56.
[143] Badiou, Alain, 'Truths and Justice' in <u>Metapolitics</u>, (Verso, 2006), p. 97.
[144] TS, p. 28.
[145] BE, p. 417.
[146] TS, pp. 206 – 207.
[147] MP, pp. 61 – 67.

The purpose of introducing these two figures is to show how, if the two separate questions of the Event and events are taken seriously, the concept of freedom moves from being an *implicit* affirmation of chance, as seen in Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, to an *explicit* affirmation. The clearest example of this is in both Deleuze and Badiou's use of Mallarmé's poem *Un coup de dés*, which I will return to in detail in Chapter Five. This transformation of freedom from the processual mode of the being of the for-itself, as it constantly negates the world in terms of its intentional posited possibilities, to the affirmation of chance will have a radical effect on what a subject can be or do. The main point will be that phenomenology's fundamental relation between consciousness and its intentional correlate of the world cannot allow, or account for, the emergence of subjectivity from within an ontological field that is prior to any subject whatsoever. Recognizing freedom as a positive affirmation of chance makes it necessary to give an account of the emergence/appearance of the subject, as thought can extend beyond the phenomenological subject.

A useful schema that will allow an initial survey of these three philosophers' positions can now be introduced. Contrasting Sartre with Deleuze and Badiou in relation to three key terms: subjectivity, events and the authentic/inauthentic divide. To begin with Sartre's late philosophy: there is both the *inauthentic* subject, who exists *without* an event, alienated in their serial existence, and the *authentic* subject, who exists *with* an event, in communal group existence. Next, Deleuze's radical rejection of Sartre: every subject is *inauthentic*; there is no such thing as an *authentic* subject. The subject has always excluded or covered over an event and is incapable of a direct relation to it. Finally, Badiou's position: first, there is no such thing as a subject

without an event; every subject is formed as a response to an event. An *authentic* subject is a positive affirmation of an event, while an *inauthentic* subject is the rejection or denial of the same event.

2.1 Sartre: From *Being and Nothingness* to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*

In order to appreciate the true depth of the problem of group formation and activity, it will be necessary to fully explore Sartre's treatment of the question of the Event, in the form of the origin, or upsurge, of the for-itself.[148] As well as the relation established between the for-itself and the in-itself after this upsurge. The foundation and separation of the for-itself from the in-itself, and their initial description remain central to any understanding and critique of Sartre.

Key to this discussion will be the idea of the unbearable, or *unliveable*, nature of absolute contingency. In *Being and Nothingness* this idea motivates the absolute Event that sees the birth of the for-itself from the in-itself. Sartre summarizes this in the following way:

> For us, on the other hand, the appearance of the for-itself or absolute event [the Event] refers indeed to the effort of an in-itself to found itself; it corresponds to an attempt on the part of being to remove contingency from its being.[149]

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[148] BN, pp. 79, 82, 84, 89.
[149] BN, p. 84.

But the for-itself, born from the Event, is equally incapable of escaping from or neutralizing this contingency; it remains as the for-itself's *facticity*. As Sartre puts it: 'Thus the for-itself is sustained by a perpetual contingency for which it assumes the responsibility and which it assimilates without ever being able to suppress it'.[150]

What is interesting here is the ascription of *effort* to the in-itself, as an attempt to remove contingency from its being. The in-itself, for Sartre, is the self-sufficient plenitude of being, adequately expressed by the formula: being is what it is.[151] It would seem strange that it *needs* to attempt to remove contingency from its being. The tautological nature of the in-itself is an identity in the form of a pure coincidence with itself. Therefore the in-itself can exist independently of the for-itself, it does not *need* the for-itself in order to exist, but the for-itself does *need* the in-itself.[152]

Also of note is the idea that self-foundation and the removal of contingency are equivalent: necessity is self-foundation. This will be important as the for-itself will be its own foundation, not of its being, but of its nothingness.

It is impossible, on the other hand, to think of the for-itself in terms of a coincidence with itself, rather the 'for-itself is the being which determines itself to exist inasmuch as it can not coincide with itself'.[153] Sartre unpacks this non-coincidence of the for-itself with itself in terms of *desire* and *lack*.[154] Human reality, consciousness and the for-itself are all terms used to describe how desire, lack, meaning, value and possibility are brought to the neutral fully positive in-itself. The relation of the for-

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[150] BN, p. 82.
[151] BN, p. 74.
[152] BN, pp. 94 n.12, 171.
[153] BN, pp. 74, 78.
[154] BN, pp. 85, 88.

itself to the in-itself operates according to three aspects: facticity is the situation in which the for-itself finds itself, it is the neutral contingent in-itself revealed to the for-itself as *lacking*; the for-itself is the existing being which *misses* what is lacking, and seeks to *add* this to the situation, and finally, there is what is *lacked*, an in-itself that is not present to the situation.[155] This structure is familiar, and shared by most forms of existential philosophy: the situation is revealed to the subject in terms of its project, where things are assessed as either a help, a hindrance or irrelevant to this project.

Therefore, being for-itself is not what it is: its facticity is negated, or nihilated, through the negativity that the for-itself reveals as a lack of being. But the for-itself is also what it is not; it is the desire for the lacked being, which it is not. Consciousness is this constant process, and as such it is determined as a *lack* of being.[156] The for-itself is nothing, or rather nothingness, always pursuing its projects, its desires; it is a process of perpetuating and perpetual lack. This leads Sartre to state categorically: 'Desire is lack of being'.[157]

Possibility appears here as the *multiplicity* of ways that the for-itself can apprehend the in-itself as lacking. The for-itself lacks everything, because it is nothing, therefore anything can appear as *lacking* within the situation of facticity, with respect to the for-itself, and anything can be posited as that which is *lacked*. Every situation presents not only a number of possible problems, but also a number of possible solutions for each problem.

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[155] BN, p. 86.
[156] BN, p. 85.
[157] BN, p. 88.

Returning now to the original Event of the upsurge of the for-itself in the midst of the in-itself, as an effort, or attempt, on the part of the in-itself to found itself and remove its contingency, we can now more clearly see the problem. The idea that the in-itself is motivated by the *unbearable* nature of its contingency, the burden that it just is and is what it is, suggests that there is desire at work in the in-itself, in its self-sufficient state prior to its relation to the for-itself. Now if, for Sartre, desire is lack of being what must the in-itself lack which would motivate its desire? Sartre response is the following:

> Since being-in-itself is isolated in its being by its total positivity no being can produce being and nothing can happen to being through being – except for nothingness. Nothingness is the peculiar *possibility* of being and its *unique* possibility.[158]

Being-in-itself lacks nothing, or to put it another way, it lacks the for-itself as nothingness. There is an inherent desire in the in-itself based on the lack of lack, an *unconscious* and *positive* desire, operating in the unconscious realm of the in-itself.[159]

Sartre is careful never to name this effort on the part of the in-itself as desire, and, strictly speaking, any discussion of what the in-itself is prior to its relation to the for-itself falls outside phenomenology; understood as the correlation between intentional consciousness and its intentional object.[160] Ontology as phenomenology must 'limit itself to declaring that *everything takes place as if* the in-itself in a project to found

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[158] BN, p. 79, my emphasis.
[159] BN, p. 85.
[160] BN, see the first part of the conclusion 'In-itself and For-itself: Metaphysical Implications', pp. 617 – 625.

itself gave itself the modification of the for-itself'.[161] The for-itself cannot recover the original contingency of the in-itself; it appears to the for-itself as facticity, always already marked by lack and possibility. This is reflected in the asymmetry of the relation between the in-itself and the for-itself, consciousness thought of without the in-itself is a meaningless abstraction, likewise 'The *phenomenon* of in-itself is an abstraction without consciousness but its *being* is not an abstraction'.[162]

As such, the question of the upsurge of the for-itself in the midst of the in-itself must remain a metaphysical, non-phenomenological, question. Sartre's treatment of these questions in the conclusion of *Being and Nothingness* is highly significant for my thesis, due to the clear separation of three questions. The first question Sartre dismisses as meaningless, this is the question of the origin of the in-itself: how or why is there something rather than nothing?[163] At the end of Chapter One I posited this as the question of the Event. The second question Sartre answers, this is: what is the origin of the world?[164] The world, as the phenomenal correlate of consciousness, is possible because there is a for-itself; the for-itself makes there be a *there*. Finally, there is the third question, which Sartre designates as the question of the Event: what is the origin of the for-itself? The first question cannot be asked or answered, it is meaningless, the second can be both asked and answered, and the third can only be asked but not answered. It is meaningful for consciousness to raise the question of the origin of the for-itself, even if it can't answer it, but it cannot meaningfully raise the question of the origin of the in-itself. Sartre states:

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[161] BN, p. 621.
[162] BN, p. 622.
[163] BN, p. 619.
[164] BN, p. 619.

> The being by which the "Why" comes into being has the right to posit its own "Why"
> since it is itself an interrogation, a "Why". To this question ontology can not reply,
> for the problem here is to explain an event, not to describe the structures of a being.[165]

The question of the origin of the for-itself remains as the metaphysical horizon of Sartre's phenomenological ontology. Sartre is clear that this metaphysical aspect is ineliminable and meaningful, philosophy, and even phenomenology, cannot and should not fully extirpate themselves from metaphysics. This is one reason why Sartre makes a good connection between the orthodoxy of phenomenology and a move beyond, or outside, of phenomenology that could be classed as *metaphysical* rather than *poetic*. At this stage of Sartre's thought, there is as yet no fourth question concerning the origin of groups, which I would call the question of events. The point that I will develop is that Sartre separates the question of the upsurge of the for-itself, as the Event, from his subsequent use of the Apocalypse, or events, to describe group formation. For me, these are the same, they are both events, whilst Sartre refuses to engage with the real question of the Event: the origin of the in-itself. In Sartre's conclusion to *Being and Nothingness* there is very little on the relation of being-for-others; Sartre states only that this question also has no meaning, as there is no synthetic unity of consciousnesses.[166] This position will change in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, where the Apocalypse and the subsequent group-in-fusion is this impossible unity of consciousnesses.

Returning now to a possible metaphysical answer to the question of the origin of the for-itself, in the form of unconscious desire. By saying that the upsurge of the for-

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[165] BN, pp. 619 – 620.
[166] BN, p. 624.

itself in the midst of the in-itself is the 'unique possibility' of the in-itself, is to ascribe to the in-itself a possibility, something that Sartre thinks arises only in relation to desire.[167] But what is this desire? The in-itself cannot bear its contingency, the fact that it just is, and desires necessity as an escape from this contingency. By giving rise to the for-itself the in-itself fails to fully escape its contingency, it becomes *relatively* necessary in relation to something other than itself, in relation to the for-itself.[168] This contingency is internalized as the facticity of the for-itself, and continues to be the motor for change, motivating the for-itself in terms of the lack that the for-itself reveals in its situation. Sartre continues: 'Moreover the failure of the act to found the in-itself has caused the for-itself to rise up from the in-itself as the foundation of its own nothingness'.[169] So, where the in-itself failed to be its own foundation, the for-itself succeeds, not as a foundation of being but of nothingness. The claim that the in-itself lacks *nothing*, and this nothing is the for-itself, is more than a semantic play on words. The for-itself really does have what the in-itself lacks: self-foundation in the form of self-reproduction. The for-itself is constantly producing itself, whereas the in-itself just is.

This is what we find in the relation between the in-itself and the for-itself: the absolute contingency of the isolated in-itself has been transformed into a partial necessity for the for-itself. The desire of the in-itself to remove contingency from its being is partially *satisfied* by the internalization of this contingency as facticity at the heart of the for-itself. The activity of the for-itself is a partial satisfaction of the in-itself's lack of lack. This relation results in perpetually tracing a *quasi-totality*, which

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[167] BN, p. 101.
[168] BN, p. 89.
[169] BN, p. 89.

Sartre ventures to call Being, or total being.[170] In the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* this will become the idea of a *process* of *totalization* without a final totality, or totalizer.[171] Every goal or project is only relative or partial; there is no final aim or underlying goal to the activity of human consciousness.

2.2 A Deleuzian Response

One criticism that can be levelled at Sartre relates to his pessimism: first, pessimism concerning the *failure* of the in-itself to found itself in the for-itself. This failure still leaves the in-itself lacking its own self foundation, but the in-itself is led interminably toward this failed method: 'It is only by making itself for-itself that being can *aspire* to be the cause of itself'.[172] And second, pessimism concerning the for-itself as a process of perpetual *failure*: 'the for-itself is *effectively* a perpetual project of founding itself qua being and a perpetual failure of this project'.[173] But, this perpetual project of the for-itself does introduce self-foundation into thought, its failure to ground itself in terms of being results in it perpetuating and reproducing itself as nothingness. It is for this reason that the appearance of the for-itself can act as a partial satisfaction of the in-itself's desire for self-foundation. The for-itself can appear, metaphysically, as a *first step*, even if its failure prevents it from taking any further steps.[174] Metaphysics becomes trapped by this question of self-foundation as the removal of contingency from being. This is an attempt to cure thinking of the

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[170] BN, pp. 216, 621.
[171] CDR1, pp. 45 – 49, 64.
[172] BN, p. 620, my emphasis.
[173] BN, p. 620.
[174] BN, p. 620.

malady of contingency that it *suffers* from. With regards to the movement inherent in the Event of the upsurge of the for-itself, Sartre states:

> [T]he task belongs to the metaphysician of deciding whether the movement is or is not a first "attempt" on the part of the in-itself to found itself and to determine what are the relations of motion as a "malady of being" with the for-itself as a more profound malady pushed to nihilation.[175]

There is no escape from this distress and suffering, even with the emergence of the for-itself, both the in-itself and the for-itself are still affected by contingency. The in-itself is still in itself contingent; it is necessary only for another, the for-itself. And the for-itself has contingency at its heart, internalized in the form of facticity. But, perhaps contingency is not the problem but the solution? The production of the for-itself from the in-itself could be viewed as a *positive* creation, an event only made possible at the moment of absolute contingency, as the most *intense* experience of contingency. Rather than trying to escape this moment, perhaps there is always an unconscious positive desire to repeat it? Sartre's mistake would then be to cast the desire of the in-itself in a negative light, seeing in this positive production only the negative viewpoint of the for-itself. The for-itself can only comprehend this production as the anguished spasm of the lack of lack.

The impossible, or paradoxical, being, which is the in-itself-for-itself, is the Event, the moment of creation of the relation between the for-itself and in-itself. This being is not an unachievable goal, but a necessary starting point: the relation of the for-itself to the in-itself presupposes the paradoxical starting point of the in-itself-for-itself. It is

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[175] BN, p. 621.

the point of divergence between the in-itself and for-itself. In the Event the in-itself experiences its *contingency* in terms of a *necessity* to express itself, it is a productive expressive moment. The for-itself can no longer be seen as a *failed* attempt to ameliorate the contingency of the in-itself over time, but, rather, as a *successful* expression of the in-itself. The in-itself is no longer bound to Sartre's limited metaphysical view of attempting to escape its contingency; rather the in-itself revels in its fullness, which can only be absolute contingency. As such, the Event becomes a *particular* expression of positive creation, rather than an expression of a *general* malady or suffering.

This reading is highly problematic for Sartre, as it appears to rob the for-itself of its freedom. The Event is now the moment of freedom; the absolute contingency of the in-itself forces it to express itself. The in-itself is free to express itself in any way, but not free to not express itself; a formulation more usually associated with the for-itself. The nihilating process of the for-itself is now the expression of a free unconscious desire and not its own free conscious project. The for-itself becomes an expression of freedom as opposed to free expression.

There appears to be a shift, freedom is now seen as a moment of interruption that supports the process of the for-itself, rather than as the process itself. The stasis of the in-itself is interrupted by the upsurge of the for-itself. But now it is possible to think of a new moment of freedom, as an interruption of the process of the for-itself. Freedom belongs to neither the in-itself nor the for-itself, it sides neither with being nor becoming, it is, instead, the interruption between the two, of the one in and by the other. Contingency, or chance, operates on two levels in terms of the interruption of

the Event: first, neither the static self-sufficiency of the in-itself nor the process of the for-itself can produce the Event. The Event will always appear contingent *relative* to both the in-itself and the for-itself: it is an interruption. Second, the Event is an intensive exposure to *absolute* contingency, as it elicits a necessary and free response.

Although the language used above is heavily influenced by Deleuze, as will become clear throughout the rest of the chapter, I think this model implicitly informs Sartre's move from emphasizing individual freedom to group freedom. If the for-itself is the result of the in-itself's radical encounter with absolute contingency, is it possible for the for-itself to have a similar encounter? This encounter cannot come to the for-itself through the in-itself, as it is always already neutered in its interiorized form as facticity. It also cannot come to the for-itself through the for-itself. The for-itself experiences itself as a constantly failing project to ameliorate the contingency of its facticity. As I mentioned at the end of the last chapter, Sartre does not pursue this typically Heideggerian route of using the horizonal finitude of the subject to engage with the impossibility of self-grounding. We do not find the limit of the for-itself in its finitude, in its horizon as death. For Sartre, this experience can only come from the Other, and my being-for-others. Only the Other can provoke an experience in the for-itself of being in-itself, making it open to the same radical encounter and interruption that the in-itself experiences in the Event.

I will show in the next section how the foundations of this move are laid down in *Being and Nothingness*, through the introduction of the concept of 'the look' and, more significantly, through the collective experience of the look in the 'us object' and the third party. These ideas are then taken to their limit in the *Critique of Dialectical*

Reason, where the third party is reintroduced as the foundation of the true group, the group-in-fusion.

2.3 The Other for Sartre: The Look

Being-for-others is a fact of our situation, we experience it, but we cannot deduce it from the pure ontological structures of the in-itself and the for-itself: it is a "contingent necessity".[176] This fact is experienced by what Sartre calls the *look*. Put simply, I know the other exists because I *feel* myself either being looked at, by an other, or I *feel* myself looking at an other. This experience is to feel myself becoming an object for the other, a becoming in-itself of my for-itself.[177] This is a constant possibility of the for-itself; as nothingness the for-itself is not a thing, but constant action through things. This action is located in the world, through those objects closest to it, the closest of all being the body. The look of the other is the experience of my consciousness being reduced to my body as a thing. There is reciprocity inherent in this relation, my possibility of being seen implies that the one who looks at me can also be seen; I can look at the other.[178] My response to the other's attempt to reduce me to an object, is to resist and strike back by looking at the other. I try to reduce the other to their body, to a mere thing, a being in-itself. It is this *conflict* that defines my relation to the Other.[179]

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[176] BN, p. 250.
[177] BN, pp. 256 – 257.
[178] BN, p. 257.
[179] BN, p. 364.

The important aspect of this conflict is that it is irresolvable; we are caught in a constant circle. Being looked at, I suffer a *becoming* in-itself, but I never become an object for the other. The same is true in reverse; I never succeed in making the other become just an object. The reason that the other looks at me, and treats me differently to an object, is the realization that I can look back. In my dealings with the other, I realize that something escapes me in treating them just like an object, and therefore I treat them differently. No matter how we try to apprehend our relations to others, we will always be limited to this irresolvable original conflict. All attempts to overcome this conflict will eventually lapse into their opposite, perpetuating the never ending circle of appropriating, or being appropriated by, the other. As Sartre states assuredly in *Being and Nothingness*: 'we shall never place ourselves concretely on a plane of equality; that is, on the plane where the recognition of the Other's freedom would involve the Other's recognition of our freedom'.[180]

There is a similar air of pessimism about the ultimate failure of all relations between individuals. Sartre gives the impression that the failure to establish a relationship of equality and reciprocity, based on mutual recognition, is a fundamental structural impossibility. This is similar to the argument offered above, about how the for-itself cannot escape from its contingency through its action on the in-itself. For Sartre, reciprocity between consciousnesses is similar to bringing two particles of the same charge together; their similarity, as both negatively charged for example, leads us to think that they can be brought together, but in reality at close proximity they repel each other. The more vigorously and forcefully they are brought together the more violent the repulsion: masochism, sadism and hate. For Sartre, in *Being and*

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[180] BN, p. 408.

Nothingness, this repulsion is absolute, there is no threshold that if attained could overcome this repulsion.[181] Thomas Flynn is quick to point out this limitation in the ontology of *Being and Nothingness*, recognizing that freedom is structurally untouched by the situations in which appears; even if we experience our freedom with a greater or lesser degree of intensity, we are not in fact any more or less free.[182] For Flynn, it is clear that to overcome this problem the purpose of existence must change; Sartre must abandon an ethics of authenticity in favour of an ethics of disalienation.[183]

This shift is vitally important; an ethics of authenticity sought only a true realization of our situation. The free for-itself has to come to terms with the impossibility of being its own self-cause, in doing so it takes responsibility for its existence and understands its own freedom: the for-itself accepts its contingency. All forms of bad faith seek to escape from this situation by trying to realize the impossibility of being their own self-cause, attempting to become necessary. An ethics of disalienation has a different aim; it does not seek to be its own self-cause, by forming a group of reciprocal recognition, the group is the end itself. More importantly, this project cannot be realized through a negotiated agreement between consciousnesses, but only in response to an exceptional concrete situation. As we will see in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre's aim moves toward maintaining groups *after* they have formed, rather than prescribing methods to induce their formation.

The Apocalypse, in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, completely opposes Sartre's claim that freedom remains structurally unaffected by the material situation. In a

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[181] BN, p. 428.
[182] Flynn, Thomas, R., Sartre and Marxist Existentialism, (University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 27.
[183] Ibid. p. 32.

situation, under exceptional circumstances, a group of individuals experience a radical encounter, which overcomes the threshold of their mutual repulsion and fuses them together into a group. This is what I would call the for-itself's encounter with a radical contingency, not unlike the in-itself's encounter that resulted in the upsurge of the for-itself. In order for Sartre to prevent any sort of circularity, or sense that group formation is a repetition of the formation of the for-itself from the in-itself, he must carefully point out the role of the individual in the group and resist any temptation to posit a group subject. For Sartre, the group must always be a group of coordinated individuals, coordinated by an external event.

2.4 The Group in *Being and Nothingness*

In order to preface this discussion in full, I will first summarise Sartre's notion of the group in *Being and Nothingness*, in terms of the us-object and the we-subject.

It is Sartre's sole aim in his discussion of group, or collective, social experience to demonstrate how it can be broken down into the basic relation of the for-itself to an Other. The experience of being part of a group or collective, at this stage Sartre makes no distinction between the two, is nothing more than a complex emergent phenomenon, resulting from the basic interaction of individuals. In Sartre's own words:

> [T]here are two radically different forms of the experience of the "we", and the two forms correspond exactly to the being-in-the-act-of-looking and the being-looked-at which constitute the fundamental relations of the For-itself with the Other.[184]

These two forms of experience are the us-object and the we-subject. Of the two, it is the us-object that fits most easily into Sartre's system, and for this reason he deals with it first. The move that Sartre makes here is to add a third person to the relation.[185] My relation to the Other is transformed by the appearance of a third, the important aspect is that whatever the conflict between me and the Other is it is flattened and alienated by this Third, who objectifies both of us. We experience this alienation together, we as an object for the Third. The us-object is formed when we are looked at together by a third, and in such a situation: 'the Other and I shall figure as *equivalent* structures in *solidarity* with each other'.[186] At this stage, Sartre does not fully consider what the experience of this Third is. In the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* Sartre will return to the Third, as the third party, to fully investigate its perspective on the situation. At this stage the Third merely appears to us as a *they*, a they-subject, which is *not* the we of the we-subject: there is no simple binary between the us-object and we-subject.[187] One positive suggestion is that the we-subject can appear as a form of emancipation for the *whole* of the us-object, rather than the simple escape and recovery of my own freedom:

> This individual claim of selfness is moreover only one of the possible ways of suppressing the Us-object. The assumption of the "Us" in certain strongly structured

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[184] BN, p. 415.
[185] BN, p. 415.
[186] BN, p. 418.
[187] BN, pp. 415, 429.

cases, as, for example, class consciousness, no longer implies the project of freeing oneself from the "Us" by an individual recovery of selfness but rather the project of freeing the whole "Us" from the object-state by transforming it into a We-subject.[188]

Sartre fails to elaborate what he means here, leaving the above quote, as a remark at the end of his discussion of the us-object, and his subsequent development of the we-subject is less optimistic than this comment suggests. It is clear that whereas the constitution of the us-object is easily encompassed by the ontology of *Being and Nothingness* the formation of the we-subject is more problematic. This is based on Sartre's belief that the us-object has a real ontological unity, whereas the we-subject is merely a psychological effect.[189]

The we-subject is based on recognition that I share my project with others, and that in this sharing my individuality is lost; I become an anonymous *any body*.[190] The basis for this experience is my encounter with manufactured objects, and my relation to the Other through these objects. When I use a manufactured object, such as a pen, I realize that it has been made by others, I perceive these others as an us-object: the workers who made this pen. In using the pen I can see myself in the position of the undifferentiated they-subject, the Third that looks at manufactures through my use of the object: I am one of the "they". But this is not sufficient to form a we-subject, in order for this to happen I must be with others.[191] Sartre's best example is his use of the Paris Metro system; here the network as a whole, consisting of trains, tracks and stations, forms the manufactured object that is encountered. As I travel from A to B I

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[188] BN, p. 422.
[189] BN, pp. 424, 428.
[190] BN, p. 427.
[191] BN, p. 427.

recognize the multitude of other metro users doing exactly the same, together we share the same project. It is this recognition that forms the we-subject; my individual project is absorbed into a general project shared by many. I experience this "we" to the extent that *my* reason for getting the Metro, and the numerous other reasons that other people are using the Metro, are lost in the immediate shared project of getting from A to B. It is the common goal, or project, that is experienced in the "we".

For Sartre, the we-subject is always limited to this idea that the homogeneity of the "we" is only ever a shared *immediate* project, and that ultimately it will form only a partial *mediating* project in our ultimately heterogeneous individual projects. Our sense of togetherness in the "we" is nothing more than a *passive* and partial co-ordination. The we-subject is not an arranged or negotiated position between consciousnesses, neither is it a structure imposed on it by the Other, as the us-object is. The we-subject does not experience the Other as either a subject or an object, in fact the Other is not posited at all.[192] It is on these grounds that Sartre calls the we-subject merely a subjective psychological experience. Again, Sartre takes no account of the actual contingent situation; it is the ontological structure of the in-itself, for-itself and for-others that makes any real shared project impossible. Although we may feel differing degrees of solidarity and togetherness, for example I feel closer to my teammates in a sporting event than I do to the people with whom I wait for a bus, but this feeling is only superficial, in the end we will always diverge from the we-subject experience to pursue our own projects and aims.

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[192] BN, p. 427.

Sartre feels, in *Being and Nothingness*, that to allow for a real structural transformation in the experience of a we-subject would be to affirm a group subject. Sartre puts this most strongly when he states:

> We should hope in vain for a human "we" in which the intersubjective totality would obtain consciousness of itself as a unified subjectivity. Such an ideal could be only a dream produced by a passage to the limit and to the absolute on the basis of fragmentary, strictly psychological experiences.[193]

Sartre's move to a positive understanding of the group, in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, will still reject any possibility of a group subject. This dismissal of the we-subject seems at odds with the case of class-consciousness that Sartre himself mentions; in this case the conditions do appear to be exceptional, such that a real we-subject can be formed in the joint project of emancipation. The example of class-consciousness clearly shows a case of the us-object being transformed directly into a we-subject, whereas Sartre's general analysis of the we-subject suggests that it arises only from out of the they-subject position. The distinctions as they stand in *Being and Nothingness* are inadequate, the we-subject cannot support both descriptions: the "we" as a passive co-ordination or as an active polarization of subjects. In the former, the togetherness is a psychological effect, but the later suggest something more structurally substantial. Sartre's move, in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, is to make this distinction explicit and concrete, abandoning the us-object/we-subject opposition in favour of a more complex interaction between a *constituent* and a *constituted* dialectic. Key to this development will be a positive account of the group, based on a transformation of the us-object under certain exceptional conditions: the

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[193] BN, p. 428.

group-in-fusion will incorporate its Third, the third party will become an internal aspect of the group, rather than an external gaze directed toward a collective.

2.5 The Group in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*

One of the first things to notice in moving to a direct consideration of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* is the change in Sartre's attitude toward the metaphysical speculation of the Event, discussed primarily in the conclusion of *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre now blocks the question, we must simply accept the situation as it stands, any speculation on how this situation arose, or how a different situation may arise in the future have become pointless questions. This is the characterization of our *human* situation in terms of *scarcity*, as the condition for the possibility of History.[194] History itself is born *within* this situation of scarcity as a 'sudden imbalance which disrupts all levels of society'.[195] Sartre's focus is now on radical change within a situation, rather than the formation or dissolution of the situation itself. This is the division between an Event, which for Sartre would found a situation, and events, which occur within the situation and transform it. Sartre states:

> Scarcity is the basis of the possibility of human history, but not of its reality. In other words, it makes History possible, but other factors (yet to be determined) are necessary if History is to be produced.[196]

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[194] CDR1, pp. 124, 126.
[195] CDR1, p. 126.
[196] CDR1, p. 125.

The sudden imbalance and the subsequent disruption to all levels of society is the event of the Apocalypse, which gives rise to the group-in-fusion. This is clearly a more detailed analysis and reassessment of the possibility of group emancipation mentioned in *Being and Nothingness*. These "other factors" will be investigated below. It is this restriction to change within situations, or the question of events, that I am most interested in. Sartre makes the case for this narrowing of philosophical questioning in a number of emphatic statements, such as the following:

> Scarcity… is the basis of the possibility of human history. But… scarcity is not the basis of the possibility of *all* History. We have no way of telling whether, for different organisms on other planets – or for our descendants, if technical and social changes shatter the framework of scarcity – a different History, constituted on another basis, and with different motive forces and different internal projects, might be logically conceivable.[197]

If we try to engage in such speculation we are not fully accepting our starting point in our own human consciousness, and we cannot escape the human for-itself without falling into meaningless abstraction. All thinking that attempts to escape the human situation follows the same path of abstraction:

> A human relation, which can be recognised only because we are ourselves human, is encountered, hypostasised, stripped of every human characteristic and, finally, this irrational fabrication is substituted for the genuine relation which was encountered in the first place. Thus in the name of monism the practical rationality of man making

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[197] CER1, p. 125.

> History is replaced by the ancient notion of blind Necessity, the clear by the obscure,
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> the evident by the conjectural, Truth by Science Fiction.[198]

The idea of scarcity as the fundamental condition of the human situation is a complex idea, but it ultimately extends from the operation of the for-itself as founded on the functioning of desire as lack, discussed above.[199] The for-itself desires what it lacks, and it discovers what it lacks in the world, but it also recognizes that within this contingent situation there is a *scarcity* of that which it desires, and it is also desired by others: the for-itself is always already in competition for limited resources. We have to accept this as our *human* situation, whether this is a simple scarcity of a resource, such as food or fuel, or, more complexly, a scarcity of consumers within a contemporary globalized market economy.[200]

This strong prohibition against speculating on the Event in Sartre's later philosophy paves the way for a discussion of the Apocalypse. The prohibition allows Sartre to present the Apocalypse and the group-in-fusion as something new, and to avoid any comparison or possible confusion between the Event of the *foundation* of the situation with these events of *transformation* within the situation.   The language that Sartre uses to portion off these speculative fields of discourse is significant, and stresses the centrality of the subject, in the form of the for-itself. In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre uses the term *prehistoric* or *prehistory* for the inaccessible speculation on the workings and operation of the in-itself prior to the upsurge of the for-itself, and in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* he uses the term *science fiction* for speculation on

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[198] CDR1, p. 33. Despite warning us away from such speculation, Sartre is surprisingly susceptible to it himself. In volume two of the *Critique* Sartre spends some time contemplating intelligent aliens and humans with the ability of plants, see pp.
[199] CDR1, p. 136.
[200] CDR1, p. 138.

situations other than, or beyond, the human.[201] I highlight these particular terms due to their resonance with the work of Deleuze. I think that Deleuze positively adopts and pursues these terms as a way defying the dominant figure of Sartre, not by a simple rejection but through pushing Sartre's works beyond the limits that Sartre himself is comfortable with. Take, for example, a brief quote from the introduction of *Difference and Repetition*: 'A book of philosophy should be in part a very particular species of detective novel, in part a kind of science fiction'.[202] As will become clear, this is an approach that Deleuze often applies to the work of other philosophers.

From a Deleuzian perspective, Sartre operates at the limits of his philosophy in the careful construction of the concept of the group: from its birth in the Apocalypse and its hot state, the group-in-fusion, through its many forms of ossification and decay toward a state of institutional serial existence. In all its forms Sartre takes care to affirm the group as a group of *subjects*, and to always reject a *group* subject, this is necessary to prevent the collapse of his whole phenomenological ontology. As I will show, through an analysis of the formation of a group, the possibility of a group subject would reignite the problem of the unconscious, and the unity of the for-itself. If there is a group subject then the individual for-itself is lost in this group, and it could be viewed as an *unconscious* component of the group subject. But, if the for-itself can be appropriated from above, into a group, then it can also be threatened from below, in the fragmentation of the unity of the for-itself into a multiplicity of *unconscious* drives. If we push through the limits that Sartre sets, it will be possible to explore a new relation between his events of group formation and the Event of the foundation of the situation.

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[201] BN, pp. 282 – 283, 621. CDR1, p. 77.
[202] DR, p. xx.

2.6 The Apocalypse and the Group-in-Fusion

Sartre's project in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* concentrates mainly on the development of the group after it has formed: from its first reflexive moment, in the pledge, and its characteristically pessimistic decline back towards alienation in serial existence, through the organisation to the final stage of decay in the institution.[203] Many studies on Sartre's work have rightfully followed him along this path of analysis, such as Thomas Flynn, William L. McBride and, more recently, Nina Power, and provide an invaluable assessment and critique of this important work.[204] These studies generally focus on the political and ethical consequences of the *Critique*. My interest lies at the beginning of this process, in the Apocalypse itself, rather than the subsequent development of the group.

When Sartre returns to the theme of the third party in the *Critique* it is from an angle that he had not considered in *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre adopts the position of the third party, and contemplates the affect of his gaze on two people who are ignorant of each other. In *Being and Nothingness* the two, who were brought into relation with a third, were always already engaged in a face-to-face relation of conflict.

The example that Sartre gives is of himself as a bourgeois intellectual on holiday, looking out from his hotel balcony onto a street scene, where he sees a road worker and a gardener separated by a wall and ignorant of each other's existence.[205] The two

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[203] CDR1, pp. 600, 603.

[204] McBride, William, L., Sartre's Political Theory, (Indiana University Press, 1991). Flynn, Thomas, R., Sartre and Marxist Existentialism, (University of Chicago Press, 1984). Power, Nina, From Theoretical Antihumanism to Practical Humanism: The Political Subject in Sartre, Althusser and Badiou, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Middlesex.

[205] CDR1, p. 101.

workers are bound in a reciprocal relation of ignorance, as they do not objectify each other but simply pursue their respective projects in ignorance of the other. But Sartre, as the third party, can objectify both of them, making their coexistence into a relation of ignorance. As Sartre states:

> Of course these mutual ignorances would not come into objective existence without me: the very notion of ignorance presupposes a questioning or knowing third party; otherwise it could be neither experienced nor described; the only real relation would be contiguity, or co-existence in exteriority.[206]

The third party *constitutes* the two workers in a reciprocity of ignorance.[207] This relation of reciprocity lasts only for a moment, and collapses as soon as the facilitating third party becomes aware of their *exclusion* from it.[208] Their reciprocity must remain one of ignorance; although the third party is *conscious* of this reciprocity the two workers remain *unconscious* of it. But the third party is excluded from the reciprocity, and they can do nothing to enter into it, or to make the two workers conscious of their reciprocity without destroying it. If all the members of the triad become aware of their relations to each other, we return to the dynamic of *Being and Nothingness*, described above.

This is already a major change to a positive account of relations between individuals, beyond that given in *Being and Nothingness*. Reciprocity is the underlying aspect of the ternary relation, which lies at the heart of all relations between men.[209] The

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[206] CDR1, p. 103.
[207] CDR1, pp. 103, 106.
[208] CDR1, p. 104.
[209] CDR1, p. 111.

relation of conflict between individuals, that Sartre took as primary in *Being and Nothingness*, is a now only one of the ways in which reciprocity becomes alienated through individual praxis.

In developing this concept of reciprocity Sartre emphasises the need to treat others only as means, contrasting himself to Kant's categorical imperative. For Sartre, in our freedom we treat ourselves as nothing other than the means for achieving our goals and projects, and, therefore, by extension we should treat others as means also.[210] This is, again, just Sartre's idea of freedom as a constant process of the for-itself towards its project; there is no final end, no identity or self-coincidence in the for-itself. For Sartre, reciprocity involves recognizing four things: first, that the Other is a means to the extent that I am a means, the Other is *their* own means towards *their* own project, just as I am *my* own means towards *my* own project; second, in integrating the Other as an object in my project, I also recognize them as working toward their own project, they resist their appropriation in a different way to an inert object; third, I recognize the reversal of the previous position, I recognize myself as an object for the Other, as I try to realize my own project, and, fourth, both of the previous positions are aspects of my action, or praxis, as a whole, they are two dimensions of the same process.[211]

Sartre's approach to reciprocity has shifted and mellowed from *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre no longer takes love as his basic relation, and he can therefore reject the impossible metaphysical desire to become a self-founding being as the basis for all human relations. Instead, he focuses on our actual material praxis, that is, the

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[210] CDR1, p. 112.
[211] CDR1, pp. 112 – 113.

specific projects that we are engaged in. The consequence of this move is that human relations are not simply reducible to conflict; in fact, conflict is a consequence of the contingent circumstances of scarcity rather than a fundamental ontological relation.[212] Real reciprocity is now possible, and Sartre describes both *positive* and *negative* varieties.

Sartre defines one form of positive reciprocity as *exchange*, this is when I recognize the Other as a means to my own ends, and myself as a means to their own ends.[213] In this situation it is clear that our respective aims remain separate and distinct. A stronger positive reciprocal relation is realized when we both share the same aim, and work together towards it. Even though we now share the same aim, we still remain separate from each other. Negative reciprocity is realized when my project clashes with the Other over limited resources, I reject the Other's ends in favour of my own, and we *struggle* to secure these means.[214] Reciprocity between individuals is no longer impossible, but a reality spanning a variety of different relations reflecting their degree of integration: from mutual antagonism, competition and conflict, through exchange and co-operation to, finally, a shared and common goal. The intensity of this experience of reciprocity is felt positively as the level of integration increases, and negatively through the alienation our action suffers, as it is appropriated merely as a means for others. Freedom can no longer simply be categorized in terms of good and bad faith, or the authentic and inauthentic; there are clearly degrees of alienation and of reciprocity.

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[212] CDR1, p. 113.
[213] CDR1, p. 113.
[214] CDR1, p. 113.

The key question for Sartre now becomes what is the maximal level of integration, or, what is the maximum degree of reciprocity between individuals?[215] What is important 'is to find out how far the multiplicity of individual syntheses can, as such, be the basis for a community of objectives and of actions'.[216] For Sartre, this limit will be found in the group, starting with the group-in-fusion as a response to the Apocalypse. To understand this, we must first return to the idea of positive reciprocity, introduced above, to see how the third party imposes itself as the *external* limit of positive reciprocity. The group can only be born through an *interiorization* of this third party position.[217]

Sartre gives an example of two men engaged in a joint project of physical labour, such as two labourers using a large two-man saw on a piece of lumber. They have an immediate shared aim and a shared means toward this aim:

> Each anticipates the Other's movement in his body, and integrates it into his own movement as a transcended means; and in this way each of them acts in such a way as to become integrated as a means into the Other's movement.[218]

Here we have a clear case of positive reciprocity, in this synchronisation of action and harmony of ends, but does it represent the greatest degree of integration? To answer this question involves looking at the reasons why the two labourers are engaged in their task. Sartre opens this specific task onto the full complexity of social reality, the two labourers are employees working for their wage, and their immediate reciprocity

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[215] Flynn, Thomas, R., <u>Sartre and Marxist Existentialism</u>, (University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 178, 180.
[216] CDR1, p. 391.
[217] CDR1, pp. 357, 374, 377, 379.
[218] CDR1, p. 114.

is based on the third party, their employer. They engage in their mutual task only because it is the task given to them by their boss. In this scenario a deviation between the labourers aims can also be drawn out, each worker works for their own wage in order to do something else; to look after their family, save for a holiday, or to spend on a night out.

The unity of the workers is not sustained through their mutual praxis, in its duality, but is distilled in the object that they produce for the third party, who, initially, is their employer.[219] The third party acts as the mediation that makes the reciprocal relation between the two workers possible, but only at the expense of making the two workers into an objective means for this third party. Ultimately the workers experience their reciprocity as a form of alienation and objectification, due to the *external* position of their employer, the mediating third party. The positive reciprocity of their duality has its negative basis unveiled in the triad of the third party:

> Each member of the team comes upon this unity as a negation, as a lack, in a kind of disquiet; it is at once an obscure deficiency arising from the very requirements of each totalisation, and an imprecise reference to an absent witness, and the lived but unarticulated certainty that the total reality of the collective under-taking can only exist *elsewhere*, through the mediation of an Other and as a *non-reciprocal object*.[220]

The reciprocal relation between the workers is mediated by a non-reciprocal, or unilateral, relation to the third party. This is the *objectifying* third party that Flynn recognizes in his study of Sartre's later philosophy, which he contrasts with the

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[219] CDR1, p. 114.
[220] CDR1, p. 115.

mediating third, which constitutes the group.[221] These two forms of the third really express the two limits of the third party's relation to the reciprocal relations of others, which the third objectifies.

Sartre points out that his initial description gives the impression that the third party constitutes a spontaneous hierarchy, with the non-reciprocal relation of the third party constituting a transcendence of the objectified others.[222] But this structure is neither necessary nor fixed, just as in *Being and Nothingness*; these relations of reciprocity between individuals and their unification by a third are dynamic.[223] The spell of objectification can be broken if I now look at my workmate together with the third party as an objectified unity, and make myself the third. It is only the material circumstances of the situation, or, as Sartre puts it in the *Critique*, the specific inertia of the practico-inert field, that affects the flexibility and reversibility of these relations.

At the minimal level the same third party remains objectifying, and the contingent circumstances of the situation manifest themselves as a rigid hierarchy: these are relations such as those of the factory workers to the factory owner. The workers experience a strong sense of solidarity due to the inflexibility of their relation to the factory owner as objectifying third party; the circumstances make this relation appear fixed and necessary. By contrast, we can imagine a more dynamic set of relations if we take a situation in which commodities are being traded. This is the realm of reciprocity of exchange, and the relations of reciprocity and the objectifying third

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[221] Flynn, Thomas, R., <u>Sartre and Marxist Existentialism</u>, (University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 22, 116 – 118, 122.
[222] CDR1, p. 119.
[223] BN, p. 416. CDR1, p. 319.

party will shift with the availability and demand for certain commodities. Alliances, trade agreements and circuits of dependence will develop into a complex web of interlinked and dynamic hierarchies.[224] Finally, the emergence of monopolies will lead us back toward the first example of a minimal level of flexibility.

The problem, for Sartre, is to explain the maximal level of dynamism. If the minimal level is, practically, a static and rigid hierarchy then the maximal level is, practically, a constant flux and movement. The mechanics of this maximal level are not too difficult to describe, the problem arises in trying to give an account of its emergence.[225]

The mechanics involves bringing the third party into the objectified collective: internalizing the third party. This can be achieved through a careful co-ordination of all of the members of the collective so that each member acts as the third party to everyone else. This prevents the third party being a line of escape outside the collective, and bends it back to form a closed circuit. Each member of the group must relate to every other member of the group as their third party, and not to any third party external to the group. The aim, or project, of the third party is the *same* as the project of those who the third party objectifies. And, in reverse, when the original third party recognizes its reciprocal relations with others, it realizes that the transcendent project of the new third party that objectifies this reciprocity is the *same* as its project: my project is their project and vice versa. This relation propagates throughout the group.

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[224] Braudel, Ferdinand, <u>The Wheels of Commerce</u>, (William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1983). See the section on bills of exchange, pp. 138 – 168.
[225] CDR1, p. 365.

But how does this alignment and co-ordination come about? It cannot be reached through negotiation, as negotiation works through the mediation of worked matter, a mediation that it cannot eliminate. Nor can it be reached through any of the processes of reciprocity analysed above. The group's liquidation of its serial bonds in favour of a unity based purely on the mediation of others is an unpredictable event.[226] For Sartre, the only way that this transformation and reorganization can occur is through an extreme threat:

> The explosion of revolt, as the liquidation of the collective, does not have its *direct* sources either in alienation revealed by freedom, or in freedom suffered as impotence; there has to be a conjunction of historical circumstances, a definite change in the situation, the danger of death, violence.[227]

Only such an extreme threat has any chance of triggering the formation of a group. This moment of formation is called the Apocalypse, and although it gives rise to the group, as the hot group-in-fusion, it is itself 'neither group nor series'.[228] The threat, raised by the destruction and death of a collective, is sufficient to push the objectification of the collective beyond the threshold of the *relative* dynamic of objectified/objectifying, to a moment of *absolute* objectification. The inertia of the practico-inert situation makes it impossible to live as I choose; this is the impotence of the passive activity of the alienated for-itself.[229] But, to initiate a transition to the active passivity of group existence there needs to be a threat that makes even the

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[226] CDR1, p. 349.
[227] CDR1, p. 401.
[228] CDR1, p. 357.
[229] CDR1, p. 349.

impossibility to live as I choose an impossibility, by threatening me with death; an impossibility of living, full stop.[230]

> The transformation therefore occurs when impossibility itself becomes impossible, or when the synthetic event reveals that the impossibility of change is an impossibility of life. The direct result of this is to make *the impossibility of change* the very object which has to be transcended if life is to continue.[231]

The threat of death or violence is the real threat to reduce the collective of free consciousnesses to inert materiality. In death, all that remains is the body, which is nothing more than an inert in-itself. This is not the threat of alienation, which threatens to treat me *as if* I were an object, but the threat to *actually* make me an object. The collective's relation to this threatening Other, be it an individual, collective or group, is also radically transformed; it is not only non-reciprocal but also non-reversible. This absolutely Other cannot be seen as a third party objectifying the group, the third party can only exist internally to the group itself. The group forms when the collective is made to suffer and experience the full unbearable contingency of the in-itself.

2.7 Beyond Sartre's For-Itself

For me, this is the same contingency, now modified in its relation to the for-itself, which caused the Event of the birth of the for-itself. At certain unpredictable

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[230] CDR1, p. 350.
[231] CDR1, p. 350.

moments consciousness finds the radical contingency of existence equally as unbearable as the pure self-sufficient in-itself did. The difference is that the event of group formation is experienced by those individuals who participate in it. The Event of the collapse of the in-itself into the for-itself, on the other hand, is not experienced by anyone. This allows me to make the strong distinction between multiple contingent events, the Apocalypse of group formation, and a single Event of contingency, as the decompression of being: the in-itself degenerating into the for-itself. Although the source is the same: exposure to a radical and unbearable contingency.

The full power of freedom is only experienced here; in this moment where the threat of absolute objectification gives rise to a moment of absolute subjectivity. This moment of the Apocalypse gives way to the full and unfettered reciprocity between free individuals, who have liquidated their bonds of alienation and objectification. The resulting co-ordination is experienced immanently as a joint praxis against the violent threat: 'It is not that I am myself in the Other: it is that *in praxis* there is no *Other*, there are only several *myselves*'.[232] Sartre is quick to move from the paradoxical moment of Apocalypse to this intelligible group-in-fusion, as the co-ordinated praxis of a multiplicity of *individuals*.

The philosophical danger of the Apocalypse, for Sartre, is the similarity that it shares with the Event of the upsurge of the for-itself. In the same way that the in-itself strove to remove contingency from its being, and its failed attempt to do this resulted in the decompression of being and the upsurge of the for-itself, the threatened

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[232] CDR1, pp. 394 – 395.

collection of individuals is compressed to form a quasi-in-itself, resulting in an unbearable degree of inertia and alienation. It is not unreasonable to claim that the subsequently formed group, especially the initial group-in-fusion, is the decompression of this quasi-in-itself, and that the group itself is a subject. Sartre rejects this possibility of a group subject, or hyper-organism, because to accept it would be catastrophic for his entire project.

In the moment of the Apocalypse the collective of individuals become indiscernible from each other, due to their shared project and praxis. The important point for Sartre is that all group activity can be explained entirely in terms of the free actions of the individuals who compose it, there is no higher unity. This must be the case for Sartre, as his ontology still begins with the clear positing of a conscious and free subject. The problem is that sometimes the group appears as if it has a life of its own, its own intentional goals and desires. Take a demonstrating group that breaks into a riot, for example, every member of the group will rationalize their activity according to the same shared collective goal, the proclaimed cause of the gathering, but the group itself can appear as a large amorphous organism, and its actions as a whole can seem at odds with the claimed goals of the individuals composing it. On the one hand, contemporary work on cellular automata, or multi agent systems, can support Sartre, in showing how large-scale organised behaviour can be the result of 'innumerable refractions of the same operation'.[233] But, at the same time, this large-scale behaviour is equally real and equally predictable; we can either ascribe intentions to the elements composing the group or *different* intentions belonging to the group as a

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[233] CDR1, p. 409.

whole.[234] It is only Sartre's ontology, which is still based on the phenomenology of *Being and Nothingness*, which forces us to ascribe intention only to the individuals composing the group.

If we accept that the group as a whole is a subject of some sort, whose intention is different from the individual intention of its component parts, then the experience that the individual has of their involvement in the group is as an *unconscious* element of this group subject. The conscious desire driving each individual becomes the unconscious desire of the group. The conscious desire of the group subject should in no way be thought of as a higher form of consciousness, the activity of groups is more often compared to basic physical processes, or, at best, to the activity of simple organisms.

The danger, for Sartre, of granting groups this sort of unity is obvious, and highlights the narrowness of his anthropocentrism. The possibility opened up by a group subject also opens the possibility of dissolving the unity of the for-itself. If a real unity can be ascribed to a group, then the individual for-itself might itself be a group, a multiplicity of nothingnesses rather than just nothingness. This would mean questioning the *absolute* opacity, fullness and self-sufficiency of the in-itself, which Sartre claims is its true metaphysical character. These characteristics would become *relative* to the for-itself, upsetting the major asymmetry at the heart of *Being and Nothingness*. The material aspect of our body, and, more widely, the objects of our environment could be reinterpreted as harbouring actual unconscious desires that affect the action of the

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[234] Dennet, Daniel, <u>The Intentional Stance</u>, (MIT Press, 1989), p. 79.

for-itself. Sartre, at times, seems to glimpse these possibilities, take his description of a house for example.

> To preserve its reality as a *dwelling* a house must be *inhabited*, that is to say, looked after, heated, swept, repainted, etc.; otherwise it deteriorates. This vampire object constantly absorbs human action, lives on blood taken from man and finally lives in symbiosis with him.[235]

But ultimately he will reject any such idea by stressing the dependence on human activity. Sartre will also, ultimately, limit his analysis of groups to groups of individuals who share a common goal; this provides the group with a strong homogenous character, which can be seen as a way of warding off the question of group subjectivity. Under these simple conditions there is a coincidence between the explanatory power based on the multiple interaction of individuals, and treating the group as a whole. Given a choice, Sartre can simply assert that we choose the simplest and most consistent explanation, that of a group of co-ordinated individuals, rather than a new group subject. This problem haunts Sartre's two volumes of the *Critique*, and reoccurs constantly as the unresolved problem of counter-finality: how is it that we achieve ends other than those that we posit and pursue?[236] These problems of deviation and drift could be accounted for by recognizing that the intention of a group differs from that of the individuals who compose it, they coincide only under very specific and extreme circumstances. Under more normal conditions these different intentions realize themselves according to different actions, and the individuals who compose a group find themselves in conflict with the desire of the

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[235] CDR1, p. 169.
[236] CDR1, pp. 164, 171, 195 – 196. CDR2, pp. 408, 409.

group taken as a whole.[237] Despite Sartre's complex analysis of the transformation of the group through the stages of being an organization and then, finally, an institution, he always falls short, or draws back from, granting intentionality to these formations.

In the end Sartre will not fully venture into this brave new world, he takes the for-itself to the limit, with the Apocalypse of group fusion, but every time consciousness returns from this limit to recover itself. The development of the group, which is the main focus of the remainder of the first volume of the *Critique*, is an account of the recovery of the for-itself from the limit of the Apocalypse. More importantly, the difference between an Event as something that happens *outside* of the situation and gives rise to it, and events as apocalyptic moments experienced *inside* the situation, is only possible due to the for-itself. Despite Sartre's commitment to the for-itself as freedom, defined as its power to posit and pursue its projects through the negation of its material situation, this power is rarely experienced at its maximal level. The two dialectical processes clearly demonstrate this; the constituent dialectic of serial existence sees the free individual reduced to an alienated and impotent existence, while the constituted dialectic of group existence is, for Sartre, the pessimistic decline into alienation. We have a static existence of *being* alienated (constituent dialectic) and a dynamic existence of *becoming* alienated (constituted dialectic). There are only two possible moments when freedom is fully expressed: the first is the Event of the upsurge of the for-itself in the midst of the in-itself. Sartre rejects this, as it cannot be the act of a for-itself, and increasingly distances himself from even metaphysical speculation on this subject. The second is the Apocalypse of group fusion; a moment that is neither group nor series, and which I have argued is also a suspension of the

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[237] John Protevi follows and develops these ideas in his two books *Political Physics* and, more fully, in *Political Affect*, but he develops his ideas from the work of Deleuze and Guattari, rather than Sartre.

for-itself. The true power of freedom to create something new is produced only at those moments when the for-itself is either absent or suspended: the Event as the very appearance of the for-itself, or the Apocalypse that then returns the for-itself in its co-ordinated group form. Both these moments require not only contingent conditions, but also an intense experience of the unbearable nature of contingency: either in the form of the in-itself or as a collection of for-itselfs. Freedom then becomes the intense experience of being exposed to absolute contingency, and its transformative power will depend on whether this experience is affirmed or denied.

Sartre cannot recognize this question in his own philosophy; his commitment to a phenomenological ontology founded on the conscious for-itself is too strong to allow him to make this radical move. The minimal requirement to be able to think this radical transformation of freedom, as an affirmation of contingency, is an ontology that extends beyond the confines of being the intentional correlate of consciousness. Sartre's claim in *Being and Nothingness* as to the independence of the in-itself gives a hint of this possibility, but, as he rightly points out, it is inaccessible to the for-itself. I think that both Badiou and Deleuze take this question head on.

Deleuze will call the Event the affirmation of all Chance in a single throw, alluding to Mallarmé's poem *Un coup de dés*. This is to adopt the positive reading of the upsurge of the for-itself in the midst of the in-itself, discussed earlier. The Event, as an intense experience of absolute contingency forces a necessary expression. The expression itself is a *free* selection, and the subject, in the form of the for-itself, is the unfolding development of this expression. The Event itself is a potential source of limitless different free selections, and as these selections become adequate expressions they

form a consistent system, which Deleuze will call a subject. Sartre's upsurge of the for-itself is then only one potential expression of the Event, one event amongst a multiplicity of other potential events. Equating the event of the upsurge of the for-itself with the Event of absolute contingency is a mistake that is hard to avoid if you only affirm one event, as Sartre does. As I have shown, Sartre keeps the possibility of other situations, or worlds, open though dismisses our ability to engage and speculate on them as meaningless abstraction: we are stuck with our human situation. Sartre's Apocalypse then becomes the limit of a given expression, by hinting at a new event, in the form of a group subject. The recovery of the for-itself, in the form of the group-in-fusion and its subsequent development, is the subjective *denial* of this new event, in favour of a repetition of the original event that is its foundation: the event of its upsurge over the event of a new group subject. For Deleuze, the subject cannot hope to affirm an event and survive to co-exist alongside side it and its consequences: Sartre's group existence is a failure and the denial of an event in favour of a perpetuation of the subject. This approach retains an intimate relationship between the Event and events, with every event seeing the birth and creation of a new situation, or world, and the Event itself as outside and between all such situations.

Badiou's project, on the other hand, wants to be able to give an account of the subject who can affirm an event and its consequences, who is in fact born in the moment of this affirmation. The event itself gives rise to a transformation of a situation, closer to Sartre's idea that a group can change and transform its situation, rather than giving birth to a totally new situation. In order to achieve this Badiou will need to separate the question of the Event from that of events. Badiou will approach this problem by

reviving the meaningless metaphysical question from the conclusion of *Being and Nothingness*: what is the origin of the in-itself?

Over the next two chapters I will take an overview of these positions.

3: Deleuze and the Subject

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter I want to examine three linked questions in the work of Deleuze: the relation between the subject and systematic thought, the relation between the Event and events, and the role of freedom.

I will restrict my analysis to works of Deleuze's early period, focusing initially on *The Logic of Sense*, before turning to an early essay written around the time of *Difference and Repetition* called 'A Theory of the Other (Michel Tournier)'. This is in order to establish some of Deleuze's fundamental ideas relating to subjectivity, systematic thought and events. I will return to these themes in chapters five and six, where I will shift my attention to Deleuze's later work, with Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

The three questions posed in this chapter will all examine aspects of the difference between the Event, events and process. The first question, of the relation between systematic thought and subjectivity, concentrates on the process aspect of Deleuze's philosophy.[238] Like the subject of his first book, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Deleuze shares with Hume an acute desire to critique the presupposition of subjectivity, and any formulation of the subject in terms of identity. But, this should

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[238] For the sake of simplicity within this introduction, I shall use the term subject in very general sense. I am aware that Deleuze deploys many different terms to distinguish between types of subjectivity and even different aspects of a 'traditional' subject. I will take note of these distinctions when I engage with specific works in detail in the appropriate sections.

not be interpreted as a rejection of subjectivity. For Hume, self-identity may well be a fiction, but so too are all of our habits and beliefs. The fiction of self-identity persists, as do all our beliefs, due to its usefulness; it is a powerful idea. Similarly, for Deleuze, subjectivity plays a vital role beyond the simply negative moment of the critique of self-identity.

Subjectivity and systematic coherence are always problems of genesis for Deleuze; the question is always one of how does the subject, or systematic coherence, emerge? These two questions are practically interchangeable, and in *Empiricism and Subjectivity* Deleuze states that what is meant by a *subject* is the transformation of a distributed collection into a *system*.[239] Similarly in *Difference and Repetition*, every process of actualization, or spatio-temporal dynamism, is accompanied by the *emergence* of an elementary consciousness.[240] The need to give a genetic account to systematic thought prevents any equation, or identity, between the initial selection of singularities and the systematic coherence that subsequently emerges. A set of principles and an empirical given is not the same as a system, it does not even necessarily lead to a system. A system must emerge by creating a consistency and coherence from this given. Deleuze is always careful to stress this separation. In *Difference and Repetition* there is a drive toward a *maximum* of systematic unity, without lapsing into a total systematic closure.[241] Even in his last major work with Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, the purpose of philosophy is still: 'to acquire a consistency without losing the infinite into which thought plunges'.[242]

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[239] Deleuze, Gilles, <u>Empiricism and Subjectivity</u>, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), hearafter ES, pp 22-23, 92.
[240] DR, p 220.
[241] DR, p. 169.
[242] Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix, <u>What is Philosophy?</u>, (Verso, 1994), p. 42.

The question of the emergence of subjectivity is an important one, as it separates Deleuze from the theories of the subject put forward by both Sartre and Badiou. Both Sartre, in his later work, and Badiou begin from a situation inhabited by individuals. An alienated individual is always already given within a situation, and comes to free themself from that alienation by responding to an event that occurs *within* the situation. This action, by the individual, also transforms the situation. For Sartre, this occurs through the formation of a group of individuals, who work toward a common goal.[243] In Badiou's work an individual, or a group, may become a subject through their fidelity to deploying the consequences of an event.[244] Though both require a contingent event to provide an occasion for emancipation, the potential to affirm this event and participate in this emancipation is always a structural feature of the situation. For Sartre, this is the freedom of the for-itself and, for Badiou, it is the capacity for intervention, formalised in the Axiom of Choice.[245]

For both Sartre and Badiou, the event is something that the group/subject actively engages with, from within a situation to transform *that* situation. The transformed situation, or the situation in the process of being transformed, will never be an entirely new situation: certain structures will be preserved, not least freedom, or the capacity of intervention. Badiou also takes on the idea of Nature as an absolute structure that will always be preserved, no matter what event or subjective intervention occurs.[246] While for Sartre, the World, in its brute materiality, must always be the ultimate and consistent horizon for human experience.[247]

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[243] CDR1, p. 374.
[244] BE, pp 339 – 340.
[245] BE, Meditation 22. This will also be the main focus of the thesis, see chapters four, five and six.
[246] Ibid. pp 176, 302 – 04. The ordinal numbers, defined as Nature by Badiou, form a constructible model of set theory.
[247] BN, p 481 – 82.

The idea of a maximum of systematic unity is something that I will return to in the final chapter of this thesis, where I will link it with the idea of a saturated axiomatic model. I will examine it here in terms of Deleuze's understanding of subversion, which can be understood as the subjective incorporation of *events* into a history. In the *Logic of Sense*, the time of Chronos encompasses both a well-defined process and interruptions to that process.[248] In contrast to this will be the instant of *perversion*, which will be seen as the freeing of events from process, in the time of Aion, or the *Event*.

3.1 The Problem of Emergence

For Deleuze, following the emergence of a subject/system requires us to trace the movement of thought prior to this formation, as 'it appears that thought itself presupposes axes and orientations according to which it develops, that it has a geography before having a history, and that it traces dimensions before constructing systems'.[249] What, then, are these dimensions and this geography?

Any processual or genetic account will begin with the extraction of *interesting* forms emerging from some process. This is the idea of individuation, cutting or stopping a process in order to extract a product. This selection gives rise to a second process of actualizing these interesting forms, or singular points, but the initial stage of this process is the very selection of these interesting singular points. This extraction

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[248] LS, p. 168.
[249] LS, p. 127.

already establishes a *dualism* between the world, including the individuals, and the individuals separated from the world.[250] The idea of dualism is a key Deleuzian theme, that runs from the necessity of two heterogeneous series required to form a structure in the *Logic of Sense* right through to the joint declaration, with Guattari, in *What is Philosophy?* that: 'There must be at least two multiplicit*ies*, two types, from the outset'.[251] An event will be necessary for this selection of singularities, a selection traced by the points of contact between *two* series. The singularities are interesting not for any reason immanent to a single series, but to points that are immanent to *both* series, or between series. The event marks the points on the surface of series that touch another series.

The question as to why these particular individuals have been extracted, why these forms are of particular interest, can never be answered in terms of the original process, nor will it be answered by the further actualization of these singularities at the level of the individuals separated from the world. This initial problem of *emergence* is a deep problem for most process readings of Deleuze, where it appears that the extraction of interesting forms, or individuals, from the flow of process is self-evident. The material *cause* of the individual is clear, the original process determines it, but this original process does not explain what *causes* it to be interesting, or significant. Many process readings of Deleuze fail to recognize this second casual aspect. For example, when DeLanda discusses the individuation of a species as the divergence of a species into two distinct species, he only stresses the material causal factor:

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[250] LS, p. 110.
[251] LS, p. 50. WP, p. 152.

A new species, for instance, may be said to be born when a portion of an old species becomes unable to mate with the rest. This reproductive isolation is a causal relation between the members of two sub-populations, and moreover, it is a relation which must be maintained through time.[252]

Nothing in DeLanda's account tells us why the deviation in species is significant or interesting; DeLanda acts as if the significance of these individuations were self-evident. The meta-stable structures that emerge from a process are not intrinsically significant; they are always selected as being significant, or of interest, for something else. The case of the divergence of species is interesting *for* biological science, or perhaps *for* me, if I have an interest in taxonomy and watching wildlife, and it is also significant *for* any member of the species trying to mate. At the flat level of the pure process everything is *potentially* a singularity and hence *potentially* significant. Every actual selection of singularities, presents only one *potential* selection.

The need for a philosophical account of emergence, and an evental account in particular, becomes evident if we look at the scientific problems associated with defining emergence. Most process readings of Deleuze suffer from a reliance on the science of complexity to explain emergence. This reliance tends to flatten Deleuze's dualisms into flat monism, where the single material process gives rise to complex emergent phenomena, without the need for a second series to touch on these phenomena as significant. Manuel DeLanda, John Protevi and Jeffrey Bell all provide interesting process readings of Deleuze, but all three rely on a particular form of emergent behaviour that tends to mask the need for a second series.

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[252] DeLanda, Manuel, <u>Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy</u>, (Contnuum, 2004), p. 57.

In his monumental work on cellular automata, Andrew Ilachinski tackles the problem of defining both complexity and emergence.[253] For Ilachinski, neither complexity nor emergence has a definitive definition; all present definitions are, at best, pragmatic measures targeted toward specific problems.[254]

One way to think of emergence is in terms of the problems that it solves. A lot of work into chaos and complexity theory has been directed toward non-linear systems, and the mathematical equations used to model these systems are notoriously resistant to being solved by analytic methods, requiring numerical methods in order to provide solutions, or approximate solutions.[255] This does not mean that analytic methods are not *theoretically* possible, just that they 'are not susceptible to analytical solution in any reasonably convenient manner'.[256] These non-linear problems are well defined, even if analytic solutions are not readily available, and there are empirical and numerical methods available. From these empirical, or numerical, methods *solutions* emerge. Here it is easy to define emergence, as the emergence of solutions. The whole endeavour is already framed within the well-defined limits of the problem, determined by the equation being examined.

Emergence in the study of cellular automata is not so easily defined, as often there is no clear or well-defined problem that is the focus of inquiry. The *interesting* emergent phenomena that arise in the study of cellular automata do not often correspond to anything as definite as the solutions or turning points of differential

[253] Ilachinski, Andrew, <u>Cellular Automata: A Discrete Universe,</u> (World Scientific Press, 2001), pp. 614 – 632.
[254] Ibid. pp. 611 – 614, 631.
[255] Boyce, William, E. and DiPrima, Richard, C., <u>Elementary Differential Equations and Boundary Value Problems,</u> (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997), p. 415.
[256] Ibid. p. 459.

equations. The term cellular automata covers a broad range of study, but there is a general form which standard cellular automata conform to, Ilachinski defines them as: 'a class of spatially and temporally discrete, deterministic mathematical systems characterized by local interaction and an inherently parallel form of evolution'.[257] The interest in cellular automata (CA) stemmed from the complexity that even simple examples produced, such as Stephen Wolfram's early study of one-dimensional CA.[258] Wolfram's simplest model incorporates all five standard features of a CA: one, there is a discrete lattice of cells, a one-dimensional line of cells; two, there is a homogeneity between the cells, all the cells are equivalent; three, each cell takes on one of two discrete states, either on or off; four, each cell has only local interactions, each cell updates itself according the status of the two cells immediately either side of it, and, five, there is a discrete progression of time, marked by all the cells updating their status together.[259] There are only 256 (2^8) such rules for this simple CA system; this allowed Wolfram to study the system in its totality.[260]

Wolfram's fascination with CA begins with the wide variety of behaviour exhibited by his 256 rules, leading him to develop a general classification of the behaviour of all CA systems. There are four general classes of CA behaviour given in order of increasing complexity: class one CAs result in simple behaviour where all initial conditions lead to the same uniform final state; class two CAs exhibit either a simple static pattern as a final state, or a simple pattern that repeats every few steps; class three CAs are random in their behaviour, there are no fixed structures, and class four

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[257] Ilachinski, Andrew, <u>Cellular Automata: A Discrete Universe</u>, (World Scientific Press, 2001), p. 5.
[258] Wolfram, Stephen, <u>A New Kind of Science</u>, (Wolfram Media Inc., 2002), p. 23.
[259] Ilachinski, Andrew, <u>Cellular Automata: A Discrete Universe</u>, (World Scientific Press, 2001), p. 5.
[260] Wolfram, Stephen, <u>A New Kind of Science</u>, (Wolfram Media Inc., 2002), pp. 53 – 56.

CAs produce *interesting* patterns, a balance between order and randomness.[261] In class four CAs 'localized structures are produced which on their own are fairly simple, but these structures move around and interact with each other in very complicated ways'.[262] Class four behaviour gives rise to the appearance of *emergent* structures, or objects, which leads to a mode of description that treats these object *as if* they were real: Wolfram speaks of interactions between structures, whilst Ilachinski often describes these structures in terms of particle, or soliton, behaviour.[263] Although these four classes have been adopted as a useful form of classification, Wolfram is the first to admit that they are not definitive, allowing for many borderline cases.[264]

Once this general classification has been made there is no obvious way to further classify and catalogue the variety of forms produced, and also no obvious way to justify why they are interesting. Interesting emergent forms do not always correspond to transition points, phase transitions, solutions or turning points of equations; there is no systematic way to either recognize or classify emergence. For Ilachinski, we can only say that '*we know it when we see it*'.[265] To highlight this form of *observational* emergence I will look at Conway's Game of Life as an example of a CA system in which emergent structures seem to be intrinsically fascinating, and in no way relate to a set of predefined problems.

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[261] Ibid. pp. 234 – 235.
[262] Ibid. p. 235.
[263] Ilachinski, Andrew, <u>Cellular Automata: A Discrete Universe,</u> (World Scientific Press, 2001), pp. 11, 64, 91 – 94.
[264] Ibid. p. 64. Wolfram, Stephen, <u>A New Kind of Science,</u> (Wolfram Media Inc., 2002), p. 240.
[265] Ibid. p. 631.

The Game of Life is a simple two-dimensional CA developed by John Conway in the 1970s.[266] Each cell in the two-dimensional square lattice can take one of two values, either alive, on, or dead, off. Each cell updates its status by looking at the status of the eight cells immediately surrounding it, applying the following three simple rules: birth: a dead cell is replaced by a live cell if exactly three of its neighbours are alive; death: a cell dies if it has less than two, or more than three, live neighbours and, survival: a cell remains alive if it has either two or three live neighbours.[267]

The Game of Life is remarkable due to the sheer diversity of complex ordered patterns that emerge from even random starting conditions, clearly classifying it as a class four computation.[268] After being featured in Martin Gardner's 'Mathematical Games' column, the game became popular amongst computer users who experimented with the CA.[269] Much of this work involved creating and cataloguing new patterns, the structures that emerge from this class four computation, leading to a taxonomy based on behaviour, that more closely resembled biology than mathematics. The list of types of pattern in life ranges from the obvious to the eclectic: oscillator, still life, eater, glider, spaceship, puffer train, breeder and rake, to name some of the more well known. This initial phase of exploration is interesting due to its openness, there were few well-defined problems to solve, and much of the work was a pure and joyful experimentation conducted by amateurs. The CA lives up to its name of 'game', in the broad sense that it is fun to play, that is, fun to experiment.

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[266] Ilachinski, Andrew, <u>Cellular Automata: A Discrete Universe</u>, (World Scientific Press, 2001), p. 13.
[267] Ibid. p. 14.
[268] Ibid. p. 131.
[269] Rucker, Rudy, <u>The Lifebox, The Seashell, and the Soul</u>, (Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006), pp. 62 – 65.

My point here is that this classification of emergent types of pattern is arbitrary, there is nothing in the underlying process of the CA that would make it necessary to classify these patterns in any particular way. The classification has been directed by the interests of those working on and experimenting with the Game of Life, these patterns are nothing separate from the underlying process until they have been extracted and classified. Those working on the Game of Life condition the possible ways that the patterns can be separated and classified. This is not to reinforce the importance of a rational conscious subject, but to highlight the *dualism* of the CA system and those people who are interested in it. The Game of Life has had a lot of attention due to the fact that it is interesting, there are many alternative rule sets, over the same two-dimensional two state grid that are undeveloped, due to a lack of interest.

The Game of Life is a good example as it is a human invention, and as such the world is only autonomous whilst it is running, moving from calculation to calculation. It is the interested investigator who starts and stops this process, reconfiguring its starting conditions, due to his interest. It is this reciprocal determination that I want to stress, the creative interaction between the two, which transforms both. The full potential of the Game of Life, the proof that it is capable of universal computation, could only be recognized through this mutual conditioning.[270] The process of experimentation and classification produces a wealth of resources for the study of the Game of Life, and also reflects the interest that the CA system has captured; this process is not a disinterested objective cataloguing, but a creative enterprise. The discovery of *gliders* and *glider guns* plays a key role in this specific history. The glider is a pattern that

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[270] Ilachinski, Andrew, <u>Cellurar Automata: A Discrete Universe</u>, (World Scientific Press, 2001), p. 131.

appears to move across the grid through a five-step cycle that sees the pattern displaced along a diagonal axis, while the glider gun is a pattern that constantly produces and 'shoots out' gliders. The glider's ability to move and the gun's ability to produce gliders are used to form streams of digital data, with the glider representing a bit of information, and a glider gun as a means to produce streams of data.[271] With these components, along with a number of other patterns acting as basic logic gates, it is possible to physically construct a universal Turing machine inside the world of the Game of Life, thereby demonstrating that the Game of Life is theoretically as powerful a computation engine as any other general purpose computer. As Ilachinski puts it, the Game of Life 'is capable of displaying arbitrarily complicated behaviour'.[272]

There are three levels to this process: first, there is the underlying process of the Game of Life; second, the identification and classification of emergent structures, and, three, the manipulation of these emergent structures to form complicated machines, such as a universal Turing machine.[273] The experimentation of the second level does not predict the purposive use of these structures at the third level. The second order process embodies a purposeless fascination and interest, an open experimentation, even though retroactively these emergent forms gain necessity as necessary parts of the machines they are used to construct.

The reason for this diversion into CA systems is to highlight the second order process, which I see as a mapping of singularities. The singularities are not simply produced

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[271] Ibid. p. 143.
[272] Ibid. p. 132.
[273] Ibid. p. 631.

at the level of a *single* series, they are selected by an event, which is the intersection of *two* series, and the exercise of mapping is a mapping of the points where these series touch. The second order process, the identification and classification of *interesting* emergent structures, is dependent on one series capturing the *interest* of another series. The second order process marks this interest through its non-purposive fascination, and the capture of interest results in open experimentation. The third order process signals the birth of the subject, through the purposive use of the singularities actualized in the form of catalogued and ordered emergent patterns. The subject is born in the space between the two series, where the actualized singularities gain independence from both the series that constitute them.

3.2 The limitation of Process Readings

The first type of emergence discussed above, where emergence is taken as something self-evident and obvious, as the solution or turning point of a differential equation, is the type of emergence favoured by most process readings of Deleuze, such as the work of DeLanda, Protevi and Bell. I am not claiming that these philosophers are unaware of the work on CA, only that they have a bias toward examples from non-linear dynamics, often referring to similar examples of phase transitions and fluid dynamics.[274] DeLanda imports tools directly from the study of differential equations, such as phase plane analysis, in order to interpret Deleuze; something he

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[274] DeLanda, Manuel, Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy, (Continuum, 2004), p. 86, DeLanda actually discusses CAs here. Protevi, John, Political Physics, (Athlone Press, 2001), p. 10. Bell, Jeffery, A., Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos, (University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 200 – 201.

acknowledgES is potentially reductive.[275]   And while Protevi is keen to accept

DeLanda's reading, Bell remains more cautious.[276] This method is problematic as it

reduces the philosophical significance of Deleuze's use of singularity to a single

mathematical example.

DeLanda and Protevi equate Deleuze's singularities with the mathematical singular

points of a differential system.[277] DeLanda goes on to introduce the standard means

for analysing systems of non-linear differential equations, such as direction fields, and

phase portraits, used in characterizing the general behaviour of the system and its

singularities.   One simple example of such a system, which will be useful for

illustrating DeLanda and Protevi's method, is that of the Lotka-Volterra predator-prey

equations. These equations model the simple interaction between a prey population,

such as rabbits, or gazelles, and a prey population, such as foxes, or lions.[278] The

system is composed of two equations, each describing the development of the prey

and predator populations respectively. The key assumptions are: the prey population,

in the absence of predators, grows proportionally in relation to the current population;

the predator population dies out in the absence of prey, and encounters between

predator and prey is favourable for the predator and unfavourable for the prey.[279] This

system is useful as its solutions and dynamic character have an intuitive appeal,

avoiding the need for digression into a laborious mathematical discussion.

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[275] Manuel, DeLanda, <u>Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy</u>, (Continuum, 2004), p. 8. Protevi is open to many of the same criticisms as he adopts DeLanda's reading of Deleuze; see his book *Political Affect* pages 11 – 16.

[276] Protevi, John, <u>Political Affect</u>, (Minnesota University Press, 2009), pp. 11 – 16. See also 'Deleuze, Guattari and Emergence' in *Paragraph: A Journal of Modern Critical Theory*, 29.2 (July 2006): 19-39. Bell, Jeffery, A., <u>Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos</u>, (University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 218 – 221.

[277] Manuel, DeLanda, <u>Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy</u>, (Continuum, 2004), p. 29. Protevi, John, <u>Political Affect</u>, (Minnesota University Press, 2009), p. 11. I will stick to the term singularity, though other popular terms within mathematics are used, such as: critical point and equilibrium point.

[278] Boyce, William, E. and DiPrima, Richard, C., <u>Elementary Differential Equations and Boundary Value Problems</u>, (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997), p. 504.

[279] Ibid. p. 504.

In a situation where prey is abundant, the chance of predator-prey encounters increases, and the predator population increases whilst the prey's decreases. When this reaches a certain point, prey becomes scarce and there is an overabundance of predators, and the predator population begins to decline. Again, when this reaches a certain threshold the lack of predators gives rise to favourable conditions for the prey, and their population begins to increase. This process describes a stable cycle, with the period of this cycle depending on the number of predators and prey, and the ratio of predators to prey. A *phase portrait* is the plotting of a number of these cycles, or trajectories, on a graph. In this case the phase portrait yields a number of nested oval, or egg-like, orbits centred on an ideal point.[280] This point represents a *singularity*, a point where both the predator and prey populations remain constant, another such singularity exists if both the predator and prey populations are zero. The difference between these two singularities is that the one at the centre of the nest of ovals, called a centre point, is *stable*, starting values that start close to the singularity produce trajectories that remain close to it; in this case the trajectories orbit this point. The singularity where both populations are zero is *unstable*, and is called a saddle point, it attracts along one access and repels on the other: if there is no prey, no matter how large the predator population is it will tend to zero (attraction), but if there are no predators, then no matter how small the initial prey population is it will increase indefinitely (repulsion).[281]

In general, the behaviour of trajectories on the phase portrait is conditioned by the location and nature of singularities. These singularities are classified according to the

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[280] Ibid. p. 507.
[281] Ibid. p. 505.

local behaviour of points surrounding them and fall into two main categories, *stable*, such as centre points, stable foci and stable nodes, and *unstable*, such as unstable foci and nodes, and saddle points.[282] The phase portrait describes a family of trajectories covering the full range of *possibilities* for all initial conditions. The phase portrait only considers changing the initial conditions, allowing the singularities to remain an invariant constant, conditioning the behaviour of all trajectories. But, if we start to vary other *parameters* of the equation, such as its *coefficients*, the location, number and nature of the singularities can change: such transformations are called *bifurcations*.[283] The classic example of bifurcation is the Lorenz equations used to model the movement of an air column that is cooler at the top than at the bottom.[284] One of the parameters in this system of equations, usually called *r*, is a coefficient that is proportional to the temperature difference across the column.[285] As *r* increases the system experiences two bifurcations, first a change from relatively little movement in the air column to the regular stable movement of convection currents, and as *r* increases again this stable pattern breaks down into a chaotic pattern. The first bifurcation sees the original single singularity give rise to two new singularities, both of which are stable, the second bifurcation occurs when these new singularities become unstable.[286]

For DeLanda the distribution of singularities in a system of differential equations is a virtual multiplicity, with these singularities conditioning the trajectories of actualization, determining the field of the possible. The transformation of the virtual

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[282] Drazin, P. G., Nonlinear Systems, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 176.
[283] Ibid. pp. 1 – 2.
[284] Boyce, William, E. and DiPrima, Richard, C., Elementary Differential Equations and Boundary Value Problems, (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997), p. 533.
[285] Ibid. p. 534.
[286] Ibid. pp. 535 – 536.

is conditioned by a different process, a variation of certain parameters, outside the variation of possible starting conditions, these transformations of the virtual are, for DeLanda, Deleuze's events. Protevi makes this distinction clear by introducing a temporal dimension of two processes considered as fast and slow relative to each other.[287] The fast, short term, process gives rise to *synchronic* emergence, this is the pattern of behaviour described by the phase portrait of a system, in which all the parameters other than the starting condition remain constant. The parameters that would affect the distribution of singularities change according to a slower, long term, process, and this transformation of the behaviour of the system as a whole is described as *diachronic* emergence. This separation is supposed to explain how the singularities of a system act as transcendental conditions for the behaviour of trajectories, but also how these transcendental conditions are not themselves fixed, but are also open to transformation and change. The problem is that the two procedures are separate, the process of actualization, of tracing a trajectory in the phase portrait, has no effect on the singularities that condition it. This transformation of the virtual must be given over to another process, or procedure, of varying other parameters of the system. But this new procedure that deals with the transformation of the virtual is not fully free and open to chance, the transformation of the virtual is still conditioned by the same system of equations that conditions each phase portrait. This event does not give rise to a chance encounter with a potentially unrelated series, but is determined by the system of equations. Philosophically, if not mathematically, these equations provide background continuity to all the transformations of the actual and the virtual; the event remains a conditioned selection, rather than a truly unconditioned selection. Without an explanation of how the process of actualization

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[287] Protevi, John, <u>Political Affect</u>, (Minnesota University Press, 2009), p. 8.

can affect, rather than just describe, the distribution of singularities Deleuze's understanding of the relation between the virtual and actual remains incomplete and one-sided. The system of differential equations model of Deleuze restricts what can be, potentially, a singularity, both in the static distribution of the phase portrait and in the dynamic transformation of bifurcation, whereas Deleuze affirms that anything can be a singularity.

James Williams argues against this mathematical reduction of Deleuze, stressing that the series that compose a structure are not restricted by kind, that is, they are not necessarily mathematizable and therefore singularities are not restricted to being singular points of equations.[288] Jeffrey Bell's treatment falls somewhere between DeLanda and Protevi's support for a strongly mathematical/scientific reading of Deleuze and Williams' philosophical reading. In his book, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*, Bell relies on many of the same examples as DeLanda and Protevi, and takes the significance of emergent structures to be self-evident, but his overall treatment is to take the system theory aspect as an example of Deleuzian thought, rather than as *the* model of a Deleuzian ontology.[289] This is seen most clearly in his criticism of DeLanda's multiplication of abstract machines beyond the double articulation machine, which Bell favours.[290] The double articulation machine needs no further refinement, or supplementation with other machines, as it captures in a more open philosophical register all these possible developments. I will follow my own

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[288] Williams, James, <u>Logic of Sense: A Critical Introduction and Guide</u>, (Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 119 – 120. John Protevi explicitly positions himself in opposition to Williams' philosophical reading of the event, see footnote three of his 'Deleuze, Guattari and Emergence' in *Paragraph: A Journal of Modern Critical Theory*, 29.2 (July 2006): 19-39.

[289] Bell, Jeffrey, A., <u>Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos</u>, (University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp. 200

[290] Ibid. pp. 218 – 221, 273 – 275 n.29.

understanding of double articulation in Deleuze's work in the next section, where I will develop the ideas mentioned in the CA model from above.

3.3 Deleuze's Events: *The Logic of Sense*

It will only be possible to tackle the question of why specific individuals are selected, through an engagement with the relation between the original process and the individuals extracted from it. For Deleuze, the selection of singularities is an event.[291] This selection of the event is the coming together of two processes, or series, and the event selects its singularities according to the points at which the two series touch. The initial process is a process of actualizing these singularities, resulting in an open experimentation and a simple listing of significant individuals, or the gathering of a collection of interesting cases. This is a case of *emergence*, a simple process gives rise to emergent forms, or patterns, which are *selected* and *extracted* from this process as something significant. Emergence is this selection of significant forms the immanent process. Emergence is dependent on two series, or processes, otherwise the significant emergent forms cannot be justified and extracted. The philosophical singularities are not immanent and self-evident to a single process, but mark the points of intersection between two processes. This is the *quasi-causal* power of the event, it does not create the individual through a process of efficient causation, but it does create it to the extent that it marks the individual as something significant when it appears. This first level of actualizing singularities, through their selection, gives

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[291] LS, p. 56.

rise to a second level.[292] The second level is the transformation of the individuals into a new process, separate from the original processes, or series, that produced them. It is the true productive power of the event, after its quasi-causal intervention in the selection of cases. The event both selects the individuals and makes those individuals productive:

> We have seen that this cause is nothing outside of its effect, that it haunts this effect, and that it maintains with the effect an immanent relation which turns the product, the moment that it is produced, into something productive.[293]

There comes a point where observation, listing cases and organizing taxonomies gives way to an active and purposive experimentation and speculation. At this point the first level of actualization gives way to a second level, as the individuals take on a life of their own.[294] In *Difference and Repetition* this is the shift from the first synthesis of time, the formation of habit, to the second synthesis of memory, and in Hume this is captured by the shift from habit to the formation of general rules. And in the example of the CA system, the Game of Life, discussed above, this marks the beginning of thinking in terms of the emergent individual patterns, rather than in terms of the underlying process. Compositions of gliders, guns, still lifes, oscillators and eaters are now considered, as opposed to raw patterns.

This shift captures the move from a casuistic structure to one based on generalities. The first level of actualization was casuistic, focused on interesting or significant cases; these exemplary cases form the basis of a categorization of other forms

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[292] LS, p. 113.
[293] LS, p. 95.
[294] LS, p. 113.

measured as being more or less similar to these originals. The second level comes into operation when something is seen as being common to all the cases collected under a particular case, an identity that ranges across all examples. This common feature becomes the determining and categorizing factor, reducing the exemplary case to just another example of the common feature. The singularity of the exemplary case becomes ordinary, and becomes embodied in a general property. Deleuze calls this move the shift from the individual to the person, or Ego. He states: 'the Ego as a knowing subject appears when something is *identified* inside worlds which are nevertheless incompossible, and across series which are nevertheless divergent'.[295]

This is the birth of *possibility*, in the form of other possible worlds. The event as a distribution of singularities actualized through individuals is only ever a description or presentation of certain salient and interesting aspects of a particular world.[296] The world itself, as discussed above, is itself totally determined. These same singularities, now actualized through persons, have become general properties. The cases collected so far from empirical experience now represent points on a line of variation, expressing certain degrees of this property, transforming the singularity into a *productive* source, capable of filling in the gaps with new *possible* cases. A multitude of parallel incompossible worlds can now be imagined running in parallel to the world as it actually is, and, furthermore, the future opens up from the present moment onto an infinite number of possible future worlds.

It is at this point that the affect of other events is felt, through their resonance with other possible worlds that are incompossible with the given world. Other possible

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[295] LS, p. 113.
[296] LS, pp. 115, 116.

worlds are always seen from the perspective of this given possible world, and as such they are conditioned by the event that selected this specific distribution of singularities. Other possible worlds are always seen as a possible rearrangement of this, given, world; the possible world is seen in terms of a rearrangement of the *individuals* of this world, with no regard given to conditions or process that gave rise to those individuals. The difference between this possible world and other possible worlds gives rise to a tension depending on the extent to which these other possible worlds resonate with other events. This tension is often felt as desire, such as the desire of lack that I looked at in the work of Sartre, the actual world deviates from a desired possible world, leading to a desire to change this world such that it conforms to the desired possible world. This cannot happen under the given conditions of the present world, as conditioned by the selection of the event. In this *given* world the other possible world can only ever be a *possible* other world. In order to change the world a new event is necessary in order to reselect and redistribute new singularities. This intervention of a new event can only occur as a rupture or interruption to the dominant selection and process, and never as part of the original process.

There is a problem in this approach, in that there is no way to guarantee that the new world that emerges from this new selection will conform to an actualized version of the desired possible world. The new conditions may well give rise to a world that bares no resemblance to the desired possible world, with none of the familiar individuals, or general properties, re-emerging. This problem is, again, well expressed by Sartre as the problem of counter-finality:

So *in progress* we go towards what we want (goal) and what we could neither want nor predict (*totalizing end*).

Furthermore, labour transforms us and we arrive other at the pursued end.[297]

In the classic manner of Sartrean existentialism, a free individual (being for-itself) posits its intended aim, or project. The *abstract* goal is projected as the *meaning* of the individual's *action*. The tasks and activities that this agent engages in, working on matter (being in-itself), negotiating with others (being for-others) and so on, in order to achieve in *reality* the projected goal, produces a number of *counter-finalities*. These counter-finalities deviate the action from its initial goal, such that the finality arrived at might have suffered considerable drift, or alteration. What is more, the individual pursuing their goal is also transformed by the work of producing this end, to such an extent that the deviation, or drift, of the final result cannot be simply measured by comparing the original abstract goal with the final real end. The transformation of the individual allows for a retroactive reassessment of the original goal/project. Sartre puts it thus:

Who says that what you *want* – no longer existing, other than as a partial structure, in what you will have done – will not be a change such that: (a) in the simplest case, it contradicts the schematic beginning; (b) in the more complex case, it creates a practical individual radically different from the one existing at the beginning?[298]

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[297] CDR2, p. 408.
[298] CDR2, p. 409.

This variability and deviation removes the possibility of an external measure of *success* or *progress*; otherwise the for-itself's action would simply be a *process*. This movement and drift is inextricably part of human action, and leads Sartre to tackle the problem through the two dialectical processes of the constituent and constituted dialectic.

Sartre cannot escape from the disappointment engendered by counter-finality, because he cannot separate the event from a comparison between the desired new world, and the new world as it is actualized, in terms of a measure of success. Deleuze, on the other hand, will focus on the event itself as a productive instant: the purpose of desire is to invoke the event, not to create an identity between a previous possible world and a now actual world, or to measure the difference between this previous world, and the world now actualized.

The re-selection of the new event, provoked by the dissonant resonance between events and possible worlds, can be taken up as either subversion or perversion. The first, subversion, is the mode of the subject/system, and leads back to Sartre's problems. This is precisely the concatenation of events, which seeks something common between the worlds actualized by events, a continuity over and through change. The Sartrean example, given above, shows how the idea of a for-itself connects these events in its disappointment and resistance to drift and counter-finality. This continuity is not an essence or a determinate quality, but the nothingness of human freedom. This also relates to the discussion of process readings of Deleuze, with the variation of a parameter causing the redistribution of mathematical singular

points in the phase portrait of a non-linear system, acting as a system/subject. This sequence of events constitutes a subject/system with a history, a history of development and transformation, but this focus on the system/subject detracts from the events freed in the Event, the instant of the singularities' redistribution:

> The metamorphoses or redistributions of singularities form a history; each combination and each distribution is an event. But the paradoxical instance is the Event in which all events communicate and are distributed. It is the Unique event, and all other events are its bits and pieces.[299]

The Event has no history, in this instant the singularities are truly free, rather than seen as the free choices of a subject, or the dialectical development and unfolding of a system. The singularities in the Event are pre-individual and pre-personal, here all events communicate with each other, rather than the linear communication of a few events, embodied in the progression of a subject/system.

The subject/system is born in the moment when the original selection *opens* itself to the *potential* of deviation, subversion and transformation. The consistency and coherence of a system is this openness and flexibility, rather than a strict logical condition of non-contradiction. Through its own operation it can produce novel structures that are capable of transforming both what the system can process and what principles condition that process. These novel structures provoke the system to either operate directly, but in an *informal* way, on these new structures, or to *formally* incorporate these new structures through an extension, or addition, to the principles of the system, or to what counts as empirically given.

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[299] LS, p. 56, see also pp. 50, 53.

The system, or subject, is the embodiment of this loose unity of diverse realizations, and the potential for an incalculable number of other *possible* realizations. Set theory will provide a good example of the flexibility embodied by a system, and will be particularly significant for this thesis. The initial development of set theory, after Georg Cantor's pioneering and foundational work, focused on providing an axiomatic foundation that avoided paradoxes, such as Russell's paradox.[300] Today the *language* of set theory, a concept I will return to in Chapter Six, is capable of expressing a number of formal axiomatic theories, such as: Zermelo-Frankel (ZF) set theory, which deals exclusively with sets; Bernays set theory, which allows for classes as well as sets, and even permutation theories that include both sets and atoms, or individuals.[301] Each theory is itself capable of realizing a range of possible forms through the addition of new and independent axioms. The language of set theory is more than capable of realizing an infinite number of possible theories, and an idea that proves problematic, paradoxical or inconsistent in one theory can always be found a home in some other possible theory, with the addition or subtraction of certain axioms. The subject embodies this flexibility to tolerate paradox and inconsistency, and even encourages it, in order to neutralize it in the name of possibility. Each disruptive event, each paradoxical singularity will find its place in a new *possible* realization of the *same* system. This is what leads Deleuze, with Guattari, to claim that the axiomatic approach, and specifically set theory as the universal, or foundational, language of mathematics, is the form of capitalism itself. This claim will form the main focus of Chapter Six.

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[300] Tiles, Mary, The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), pp. 114 – 117.

[301] Chang, C., C. and Keisler, Jerome, H., Model Theory, (Elsevier Science Publishers B. V., 1990), pp. 579 – 596. Jech, Thomas, The Axiom of Choice, (Dover Publications, Inc., 2008), p. 44.

Although this conception of the subject allows for the interruption and expansion of the original process, these interruptions and expansions are always seen in the light of this original process. All new events, and the processes and structures they select and gives rise to, are taken as a realization of, and measured against, a possible world from a previous selection. Even if this new world exceeds, rather than disappointing, the expectations it raised as a possibility, it is still measured and identified with this previous selection. For Deleuze, this makes the subject, as an end, a reactive figure. The event that interrupts the original process, that hints toward a radical outside or exterior is reduced to being a mere repetition of the original event that founded the original process. The subject orientates all change, creation and novelty in terms of an original event, and everything is seen as an extension, development or variation of this original event. As such, the subject is born, or comes into its own, when the event provides an occasion for the subject to change and expand the conditions of a situation. The subject, in effect, forces an identity between events by making them appear in a situation as subsequent repetitions of the original founding event. Any such system faces the danger of elevating the arbitrary founding event to the level of a single necessary Event, and forcing all subsequent events to appear as simply echoes and repetitions of its original power. We saw this in the previous chapter, where Sartre comes to increasingly affirm the human situation of the arbitrary Event of the upsurge of the for-itself in the midst of the in-itself, and with the formation of groups seeming to mirror or echo this original upsurge. This danger is also present in Badiou's *Theory of the Subject*, as thought is restricted to a single political situation. This danger of equating an arbitrary event with the unique Event will always remain as long as only *one* situation, or World, is affirmed.

For Deleuze though, the event is not so much the moment that the subject comes into its own, but the moment of its dissolution. The structures of subjectivity and systematic coherence, which emerge in response to an event, are also completely dissolved by the return of a truly new event, as 'neither the *condition* nor the *agent* return'.[302] The event as the intersection of two series that selects its conditions, or singularities, for a process cannot occur *within* a structure of systematic and subjective coherence. The new selection is not limited or measured against a previous selection; it is not the development of some subject, but its own free expression. For Deleuze the subject emerges as a passive response to an event. The subject is more the continued expression of a *past* creative moment, rather than the *future* of a new creative moment. The subject presents itself as a limit to the creative possibility of a situation: negatively it enacts a *closure*, in terms of *possibility*, but, positively, it can affirm its *openness* onto a *potential* that exceeds its systematic stability. The positive role that the subject can take on, of affirming the Event along with events, is the *perversion* of the subject. The positive affirmation of the Event constitutes a perversion as it works against the subject's own self-preservation and development: it embodies a death drive.[303]

The second question, concerning the relation between the Event and events, follows naturally from the problems raised above. Put simply, if the event cannot freely select its new conditions from within the framework of a subject, or coherent system, then *where* does this selection occur?

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[302] DR, pp. 90-91.

[303] Deleuze makes constant use of this link between a death drive, or death, and the Event. See for example p. 115 of *Difference and Repetition*, or pp. 151 – 153 in *The Logic of Sense*.

Each specific selection of conditions constitutes an event, but the Event is that which is in excess of each specific selection's power to render a consistent system.[304] The Event is that which causes the repetition of events. The specific conditions selected by an event can only retroactively appear as necessary from within a field of systematic coherence and from the perspective of a subject, produced under these conditions. But, the only *real* necessity lies in the Event, which must select, but it is indifferent to each specific selection.[305] The Event is the paradoxical moment, a moment of nonsense, while each selection constitutes a moment of sense: the conditions of consistency are born form an eternal moment of inconsistency.

This Event occurs outside of time and space, or rather outside of a time and space of process and history. In *Difference and Repetition*, this moment is the moment of the eternal return, the third synthesis of time: a moment that concatenates periods of process, or duration. But this concatenation is now a free connection; there need not be anything linking these periods, such as a developing subject/system. The leaps, cuts and jumps that the event brings can now be truly discontinuous, aleatory and free. The Event, then, cannot appear on its own, but only as a decisive cut between two processes, drawing together a *before* and *after*.[306] In the *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze differentiates between a time of process, Chronos, and an eternal time, outside of process, Aion.[307] Aion cuts the process time of Chronos; it initiates and disrupts this time through the power of events.[308] The purpose of this moment is for Deleuze to be able to affirm a wholly *positive* philosophy. Inconsistency, nonsense and delirium are

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[304] LS, p. 56.
[305] LS, pp. 56, 100.
[306] DR, p. 89.
[307] LS, pp. 62-63.
[308] LS, p. 63.

no longer impassable limits to be warded off, but a positive resource into which thought should plunge.[309]

For Deleuze, the encounter with the event must occur outside of any such structural constraint, such as the World or situation of Sartre and Badiou. The univocity of Being, the eternal paradoxical moment, is beyond all structure and consistency.[310] Rather than affirm anything so complex and structured as a World, or situation, Deleuze's minimal background, against which events happen, is the Event of the univocity of Being: 'the minimum of Being common to the real, the possible, and the impossible'.[311]

In the end the truly radical dualism that Deleuze affirms is that between *inconsistency*, in the Event in which events make a pure selection of conditions, and *consistency*, in which events are subordinated to the particular dualism of a subject/system. In the Event, events are freed from subjective/systematic organization. It is this idea that will be central to the critique of Deleuze in Chapter Six, being freed from organization does not necessarily mean being freed from a system. The event in its free selection may surpass a subjective capacity of freedom, which would subject that event to its project, but it does not necessarily escape the situation, into the timeless outside of the Event.

I will now develop this idea of the subject through the case study of Deleuze's essay 'A Theory of the Other (Tournier)'.

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[309] LS, See the Twenty-Fifth Series of Univocity, pp. 177-80.
[310] LS, p. 178.
[311] LS, p. 180.

3.3 Tournier, and a Theory of the Other

For Sartre, embracing the group as a new form of subject would amount to a perversion of his ontology, in the sense discussed in the previous chapter of destroying the individual subject through the formation of a group subject. In this transformation the individuals would become the unconscious drives and desires of the group subject. Once this is recognized, it is also possible to suspect the for-itself as a perversion of a multiplicity of unconscious drives. The for-itself is both already multiple and is itself capable of acting as an element in a new composition.[312] The for-itself only operates 'normally' between these two limits of dissolution and composition. It is for this reason that Sartre is forever denying these limits: there is neither a truly isolated individual, without others, nor a single group consciousness. Existential throwness, or facticity, is used to limit thought and thinking to the middle ground of the 'normal' subject: the subject is *always already* there, as an individual in the midst of others.

For Deleuze, these limits of dissolution and composition should not be thought of as either a form of reductionism or of progress, either dialectical or evolutionary. The movement of dissolution is *not* the discovery that the supposed self-conscious subject is *really* only the result of unconscious desires, and that the subject can be fully explained in terms of these drives. Rather, the subject is a *perversion* of these unconscious desires. Uncovering the tension between the two is not a call to return to

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[312] John Protevi also explores this relation of the subject to groups and to the unconscious drives to the subject, in what he calls going above, below and alongside the subject in his recent book *Political Affect*.

some pure and rectified original field of free unconscious desire, but a collapse of the system as a whole; a collapse of the relation between these two levels of the self-conscious subject and their unconscious desires. Sartre is correct in his criticism of the unconscious, by pointing out that once these unconscious desires have been uncovered they have already become conscious.[313] It is the same in the case of composition; the group presents a perversion of the individual. The self-sufficient normal subject is a myth, as on the one hand the individual is itself a perversion, and on the other hand the group is perverting the individual, in turn. What Deleuze seeks in the Event is to free the singular points of connection that relate the levels to each other. The subject is a perversion of their unconscious desires because the *interest* of the subject differs from the unconscious desires themselves, and, likewise, the aims of the group differ from those of the individuals that compose it. They meet and converge at only a few key points: the points where interest and novelty are generated. We saw this in the last chapter, where Sartre's individual consciousnesses share a brief moment of shared interest with the activity of the group in the moment of Apocalypse and fusion. After this moment the interests of the group and the individuals diverge.

Deleuze, in his attempt to make something positive out of this movement of perversion, takes Sartre up on the challenge of imagining a world without others, in order to show that what remains is neither human nor a subject, but the elements of a pre-subjective and unconscious field.[314] In his essay, 'A Theory of the Other (Tournier)', Deleuze shows how the unified subject is dissolved and broken apart in

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[313] BN, pp. 50 – 51.
[314] BN, p. 282. LS, pp. 306, 317.

the absence of the Other, through an analysis of Michel Tournier's novel *Friday*.[315] Tournier's novel is a reworking of Daniel Defoe's classic novel *Robinson Crusoe*, in which the marooned Robinson is transformed by the solitude of the desert island to such an extent that he rejects rescue and social rehabilitation.

The seed for this essay can be found in the concluding pages of Chapter Five of *Difference and Repetition*. Deleuze opens his criticism against Sartre by transforming the role of the other. For Deleuze, the other becomes a necessary structural feature of the individual, whereas, we recall, for Sartre it was a contingent, but inescapable, feature of our world. Deleuze claims that psychic systems are caught in a circle where:

> Theories tend to oscillate mistakenly and ceaselessly from a pole at which the other is reduced to the status of object to a pole at which it assumes the status of subject. Even Sartre was content to inscribe this oscillation in the other as such, in showing that the other became object when I became subject, and did not become subject unless I in turn became object.[316]

Deleuze wants to bring the other into the heart of this psychic system of the I-Self system, or the individual-person relation discussed above. He does this by equating the other with possibility: 'In every psychic system there is a swarm of possibilities around reality, but our possibles are always Others'.[317] To identify possibility with the other is clearly a decisive break with Sartre, for whom possibility was the independent directing power of the for-itself, prior to any relation to the other.

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[315] LS, pp. 301 – 321.
[316] DR, p. 260.
[317] DR, p. 260.

Deleuze takes and develops this idea in his essay on Tournier's novel, accounting for the other not in terms of the look, but as the expression of a possible world.[318] All possibility is a function of the structure of others. Therefore, for Deleuze, the structure Other conditions all possibility, and, in agreement with Sartre, possibility defines desire:

> Even desire, whether it be desire for the object or desire for Others, depends on this structure. I desire an object only as expressed by the Other in the mode of the possible; I desire in the Other only the possible worlds the Other expresses. The Other appears as that which organizes Elements into Earth, and earth into bodies, bodies into objects, and which regulates and measures object, perception, and desire all at once.[319]

This makes both the connection and the difference between Sartre and Deleuze clear: Sartre separates desire and possibility from the Other, whilst Deleuze equates them. As I argued above, it is with the formation of general rules that there is a proliferation of possible worlds, and these possible worlds resonate with respect to other singularities and to other events, and these singularities and events are expressed and enveloped in these other possible worlds. One of the consequences of this move by Deleuze is that my future self is an other; the subjective incorporation of events transforms the subject, literally, into an other. This is more extreme than the Sartrean for-itself as being both not what it is, and what it is not, as the for-itself is always distinct from the other. Taking the look as the primary and irreducible aspect of the

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[318] LS, p. 308.
[319] LS, p. 318.

other, irreducible to either the subject or object, was, for Deleuze, Sartre's innovation.[320] But it fails to recognize the a priori structure of the Other, Deleuze sees Sartre's look as an example of a 'moment at which *someone* happens to fill the structure', it is only ever the 'actualization of a structure that must nonetheless be independently defined'.[321]

Deleuze illustrates the necessity of the structure of the Other through Tournier's novel. On the desert island, where there are no others, the structure Other still operates. To begin with Robinson experiences this absence of others as despair, reacting through a withdrawal from action, but this awareness of the absence of specific others is only possible due to the continued presence of the Other structure.[322] This leads to the second phase of Robinson's island existence, just because there are no people to actualize the structure of possibility, does not mean that possibility can no longer be thought, or that something other than people may be able to act as an other, as an actualizing instance of possibility. At this stage Robinson populates the island with substitutes, creating an order of human vestiges.[323]

Moira Gatens, in her article 'Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference and Power' pays particular attention to the sexual libidinous dimension to this process of substitution, noting how Robinson seeks a parallel in the symbiotic relation that certain flowers have with insects, by mimicking the female form of the insect that pollinates it.[324] This marks a major shift in Robinson's psyche, such that he becomes

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[320] LS, p. 366 n.12.
[321] LS, p. 366 n.12.
[322] LS, p. 313.
[323] LS, pp. 314, 315.
[324] Gatens, Moira, 'Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference and Power' in Deleuze: A Critical Reader, ed. Paul Patton, (Blackwell, 1996), pp. 172 – 173.

incapable of going backwards, returning to a 'normal' social existence; it is the beginning of the dissolution of the Other structure. Gatens, concentrating on Tournier's novel, points to the transformation in Robinson's sexuality as key to understanding this dissolution. In the initial stage Robinson treated the island as his lover, and sought to relate to it in a human way, copulating with a fallen tree that resembled the body of a woman, but later his libidinal desire shifts away from any such human act of sex, onto a different elemental plane.[325] Gatens sees this shift to the elemental level of desire not as something to aspire to but as cartographic mapping of possibilities and capacities on a body removed from its usual context.[326] Whilst I agree that it would not be 'normal' for a subject to pursue this path to dissolution, I do think that it is precisely Deleuze's intention to push the subject in this direction. For Deleuze, this abnormal behaviour of the subject is its perversion. Gatens misses the crucial difference between potential and possibility in Deleuze, when she states:

> Robinson's changed conditions of existence do not *cause* his metamorphosis, rather they *comprise* the extensive and intensive axes of his transformation. The absence of an appropriately socialized 'other' opens Robinson's habituated human world - his molar identity - to other possible worlds.[327]

For Deleuze, the radical transformation that befalls Robinson, is the 'world of the pervert, a world without Others, and thus a world without the possible'.[328] This world without Others is the end of possibility in favour of a new conception of necessity.[329] The subject, as I have argued above, is, by its very nature, the movement between

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[325] Ibid. p. 173.
[326] Ibid. p. 174.
[327] Ibid. p. 175.
[328] LS, p. 320.
[329] LS, p. 230.

possible worlds. The subject is that which transforms and incorporates the interruption of an event as a possible development and extension of itself. The subject is the unifying commonality between possible worlds, and it reduces the full potential of an event to a mere possibility, more or less successfully realized. From this point of view Robinson is already open to other possible worlds.

The other possible worlds that swarm around the reality of Robinson's current actual world are used as the measure of the new possible world that emerges as a result of the new event. The subject Robinson, and this new actual world as his world, allow for a measurement of success between the projected possible world and this new world. The subject Robinson remains as the condition under which two worlds are brought into relation, whilst effacing the event that is the real point of communication between these worlds. Under this condition the movement and transformation of worlds is always directed by a subject, the disjunctive synthesis of the 'and' linking one world to another is not in itself a free movement, but is the free movement of the subject. This is true even if the subject fails to maintain any constant centre, or identity. Take the abstract example of the study of polynomial equations, such as quadratic and cubic equations, and the study of the general solutions to these types of equation. In the late C19th Galois formulated a proof that the quintic, and all higher order polynomial equations, had no general solution. The method he developed to achieve this gave birth to the subject of abstract algebra. The early study of polynomial equations has now become a peripheral part of the wider study of algebra. The subject is no longer polynomial equations, but abstract algebra, and the previous intensive study of these polynomials becomes an embryonic stage in the *history* of the

subject of abstract algebra. The centre may change and be displaced, but so long as there is a history there is also a subject seemingly directing this history.

In order to free events from the movement of a subject Deleuze wants to emphasize a difference between the Event, where a pure notion of chance and potential dominate, allowing for the truly unconditioned selection of singularities by each event, and the subject, which reduces chance to the probable and potential to possibility. This is what Deleuze calls the real dualism, between a world with others and a world without others.[330] Each world with others forms a basic dualism, between the actual world and the singularities that condition it, eventually giving rise to the swarm of possibilities that begin to upset its equilibrium. This set up is of a process of principles on a given material, and the initial deterministic process gives us a certain *necessity* under *conditions*, and gives rise to the full range of other *possible* worlds. There is, then, this dualism of conditioned necessity and possibility. At the level of the Event, we have an *unconditioned* instant, the necessity here is that the Event must express itself, there must be an event, selecting and distributing singularities, but the Event is indifferent to this specific selection. This is an unconditioned necessity, and its counterpart is the event, rather than the possible. To affirm a series of events is to affirm the pure chance of their concatenation, rather than to affirm them as the choices and developments of a subject/system, within the confines of the possible. The subject is not indifferent to their choices, as can be seen by the constant disappointment of the subject in the deviation of their choices from their expectation.

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[330] LS, p. 308.

For Deleuze, there is no system powerful enough to allow for the presentation of the unconditioned, or able to cope with it. Freedom as the affirmation of unconditioned chance cannot be experienced within a conditioned system. Badiou, on the other hand, agrees with Deleuze that freedom is the affirmation of chance, but for him there is a system capable of presenting the unconditioned as unconditioned, there is no covering over of its intensity, and the affirmation is carried out by a radically new type of subject. It is toward this new type of subject and its limitations that I will now turn.

4: The Limits of The Subject in Badiou's *Being and Event*

4.0 Introduction

Badiou's systematic work of philosophy *Being and Event*, published in 1988, constitutes the heart of his philosophical project. It is the foundation of his mature position, bringing together and modifying his earlier work, such as the mathematical model theoretic sketch presented in *The Concept of the Model* (1968), and the strongly political and dialectical *Theory of the Subject* (1982).[331] In 2006 Badiou published *Logics of Worlds*, this work develops a phenomenology/logic, to complement the ontology/mathematics, and as such builds on, rather than rejects, *Being and Event*, as is evident from the subtitle of *Logics of Worlds*, which states that it is volume two of *Being and Event*. The purpose of developing this supplement to *Being and Event* was to counteract certain criticisms raised against the abstract nature of Badiou's ontology, especially its capacity to describe the everyday nature of ontological situations, and to justify the claim that events are rare.[332]

The reception of Badiou's work over the past half-decade can be roughly split into two groups: those who focus on *Being and Event* as Badiou's central text, such as Peter Hallward, and those who tend to favour either his earlier *Theory of the Subject*

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[331] Hallward, Peter, <u>Badiou: A Subject to Truth</u>, (Minnesota University Press, 2003), p. 79.

[332] Ibid. p. 291. Also, see Hallward's review of Logics of Worlds, 'Order and Event' in *The New Left Review* No. 53 September-October 2008.

or later *Logics of Worlds*. The latter position favours a more Lacanian reading of Badiou, such as Bruno Bosteels', who in the introduction to his translation of *Theory of the Subject* strongly affirms Badiou's Lacanian heritage and the link between *Theory of the Subject* and *Logic of Worlds*.[333] The former group is under represented partly due to the difficult engagement with the technical aspects of set theory, necessary to fully understand Badiou's use of Cantor's positive infinite. Work that probes into Badiou's use of set theory is limited, as Oliver Feltham recognizes.[334] Notable exceptions include the work of Tzuchien Tho, Zachary Luke Fraser and Beau Mount Madison who have produced a number of articles on Badiou's use of set theory, mathematics and logic.[335] My aim in this chapter, along with the stated aim of examining the limits of Badiou's conception of the subject, is to explore the significance of set theory and the positive infinite, concentrating on the Axiom of Choice, an aspect that has received little attention.

Despite the significance of Badiou's other works I choose to focus my attention in this chapter, and the rest of the thesis on *Being and Event*. The questions that I raise, concerning Badiou's philosophy arise in *Being and Event*, and are not adequately answered by *Logics of Worlds*, the main point being the use of the Axiom of Choice and Badiou's restriction of forcing to the particular method used to prove the independence of the Axiom of Choice. This chapter works toward presenting this question, which then forms the basis for Chapter Five. Another, more minor point

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[333] TS, pp. xxiv – xxx. Oliver Feltham also favours this reading, as is evident from chapter two of his book on *Theory of the subject* in <u>Alain Badiou: Live Theory</u>, (Continuum, 2008).

[334] Feltham, Oliver, <u>Alain Badiou: Live Theory</u>, (Continuum, 2008), pp. 90, 148 n.8.

[335] Tzuchien Tho's 'The consistency of inconsistency: Alain Badiou and the limits of mathematical ontology', in *Symposium: Canadian journal for continental philosophy*, no. 12. Zachary Luke Fraser's 'The Law of the Subject: Alain Badiou, Luitsen Brouwer and the Kripkean Analyses of Forcing and the Heytin Calculus', in <u>The Praxis of Alain Badiou</u>, (Re: Press, 2006). Beau Mount Madison's 'The Cantorian Revolution: Alain Badiou and the Philosophy of Set Theory', in *Polygraph* no. 17 2005.

would be Badiou's definition of philosophy as the task of making the truths of his four genres compossible, and the very separation of thought into four strict genres. *Logics of Worlds* passes over this last question with a typically Sartrean sounding response:

> [T]he fact that it is from 'our' point of view that (in philosophy) the theory of truths and subjective figures is formulated comes at a price: we cannot know if the types of truths that we experience are the only possible ones. Either other species, unknown to us, or even our own species, in another phase of its history (for instance, as transformed by genetic engineering), could perhaps have access to types of truths of which we have no idea, and not even an image.[336]

Badiou does nothing to address this problem of the four genres of truth: science, art, politics and love. And the recourse to asserting that it is a contingent fact of our human situation calls for further analysis. Finally, my analysis in the next chapter will point to a potentially phenomenological aspect in the ontology of *Being and Event*, undermining Badiou's phenomenology/logic of *Logics of Worlds*. This will be the argument that it is not sufficient to simply produce generic sets, but an account must also be given of how they are made to *appear*.

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[336] LoW, p. 71.

4.1 The Task of *Being and Event*

Badiou's philosophical claim that mathematics *is* ontology forms the central thesis of *Being and Event*.[337] One of the main figures that motivate this approach is Heidegger and his critique of Western Metaphysics, examined in Chapter One. Like Heidegger, Badiou believes that philosophy can only be revitalised through a new examination of the ontological question, but he does not agree with Heidegger's retreat into poetics.[338]

Badiou's response to Heidegger is twofold: to separate philosophy from ontology and to propose a systematic ontology not based on the one. This last point gives rise to what he calls his ontological wager: 'the one *is not*'.[339] There is no pure presentation of being, not even the poetic active *presencing* of Heidegger, instead being is radically subtracted from all presentation.[340] The problem with the history of philosophy has not been its attempt to present being in a *consistent* and *systematic* way, but its attempt to present being as a *one*. For Badiou, if being is not a one, then it can only be thought of as a pure multiple: being *is*, but it is not one, therefore it must be multiple. Here we have the two key conditions for ontology: being *is* multiple and the one *is not*. Ontology must be the consistent presentation of the pure multiple of being; the problem is that consistent presentation involves the one, or oneness. [341] Badiou avoids conceding a point of being to the one by conceiving it as a pure operation, the operation of the count-as-one.[342] The operation of counting-as-one has no being in its own right, and in order to function must find some material to work on:

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337 BE, p. 4.
338 BE, pp. 2, 9 – 10.
339 BE, p. 23.
340 BE, p. 10.
341 BE, pp. 23 – 24.
342 BE, p. 24.

the being of the pure multiple. Hence oneness is presented as the result of the operation of the count-as-one on the pure multiplicity of being, as Badiou states: 'What will have been counted as one, on the basis of not having been one, turns out to be multiple'.[343] This move enables Badiou to make a decisive distinction, that between *consistent* and *inconsistent* multiplicity.[344] These distinctions apply to the pure multiplicity of being as it is split apart by the operation of the count-for-one, into a retroactively designated prior *inconsistency* and a *consistent* result as a presented one.

Before examining in some detail the appeal that Badiou makes to set theoretical mathematics in order to realise this ontology, it is worth considering what he hopes to achieve by adopting such an approach. Badiou is trying to move philosophy beyond its obsession with foundations, origins and beginnings. Philosophy should not only give up its search for foundations, but also its post-modern lament on the impossibility of such origins. For Badiou, the creation of novelty, in the form of a truth produced by subjective endeavour, does not find its source in the impossibility of presenting being, an impossibility whose trace resides in all presentation, the subtraction of *the* Event, but in fidelity to events.[345] The subject affirms that something has happened and is prepared to bare the consequences, whether the event actually occurred may be undecidable but the *situation* provides the subject with the necessary material to not only distinguish different events, but also recognise the problem posed by the event as different from the problem of foundation.

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[343] BE, p. 24.
[344] BE, p. 25.
[345] BE, p. 27.

This marks the fundamental difference between Deleuze and Badiou that I have been developing. Whereas Deleuze seeks an intimate relation between the Event and events, explored in the previous chapter, Badiou's declaration that the one is not, along with his use of set theory is central to his separation of the Event, as the presentation of Being, from events, which have the potential to radically transform a situation.

Badiou's aim is to establish two fundamentally different concepts of non-relation that he feels have been confused in philosophy. The first is the type of non-relation described above: there must be no relation between being and the one. This is the unilateral subtraction of being from presentation: the inconsistent multiple is never presented, only ever a consistent presentation of it. This type of non-relation is a *no-relation*, ontology is a situation that presents a structure, but being has *no* structure.[346] The relations, or functions, that structure ontological situations remain consistent, even if their degree of determinateness varies, such as between the constructible and the non-constructible, they never attain the radical subtractive non-relation that Being has with consistent presentation.[347] This radical subtraction can be seen by Badiou's desire to have done with the (Heideggerian) question of Being, which he deals with emphatically in the introduction and first meditation of *Being and Event*. It should be noted that Badiou does not call this radical subtraction the question of the Event, in opposition to his theory of events, but his treatment supports my claim that he enacts a separation between the question of Being, answering it and evacuating it of its mystery through his set theoretical ontology, and the question of radical transformation, triggered by events.

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[346] BE, pp. 26 – 27.
[347] BE, Appendix 2.

The second type of non-relation is more of a non-determinate relation. Consistent multiples within Badiou's ontology can usually be subject to two different kinds of presentation, an *extensive* presentation, associated with a multiplicity's *cardinal* magnitude, and an *intensive* presentation, associated with its *ordinal* order. These two types of presentation form two separate number systems: the cardinal and ordinal numbers. At the finite level these two systems coincide and behave identically, but at the infinite level the two systems diverge and their relation to each other becomes indeterminate. A space is opened up at the infinite level whereby a multiplicity of possible relations can be maintained between the two systems. More importantly, for Badiou, is the possibility under certain restricted situations for multiples to exist which have no intensive presentation, only an extensive one: these multiples are called non-constructible. Such non-constructible multiples provide the material that a subject requires in order to transform a situation. What is important about this type of multiple is that it is a form of *unordered* consistent presentation. Consistent presentation is not dependent on order, or satisfying some well defined property; it is not constrained to what can be constructed, but can encompass the *minimal* structure of unordered, or disordered, multiplicity. This lack of structured order is not to be confused with a lack of consistency: the disordered *is not* inconsistent. This marks Badiou's affirmation and use of the set theoretical conception of the infinite in the form of trans-finite numbers. Only at the infinite level is it possible to affirm the indeterminate yet consistent notion of non-constructible sets.

For Badiou, ontology must be able to make this distinction between indeterminacy, in terms of disorder, and inconsistency. His recourse to set theory must therefore

achieve three things: first, it must establish that an ontology based on the pure multiple is possible; second, that there is within this system of ontology indeterminate, or indiscernible, material and, third, that this material can be accessed and utilized by a subject. The event itself, which motivates a subject, is always outside and excluded from ontology.[348] The next section will concentrate on the first two points: axiomatic set theory as a possible ontology of the pure multiple, and the significance of the infinite within set theory for introducing the concept of the non-constructible set and the indiscernible.

4.2 Set Theoretical Foundations

Badiou's philosophy stands or falls on whether set theory actually provides an ontology of the pure multiple that avoids the pitfalls of the one. Only after this possible use of set theory has been accepted can we begin to look at how Badiou uses it in his theory of the subject. The first few meditations of *Being and Event*, which introduce set theory, are motivated only by the desire to demonstrate that such an ontology is possible.

It is not clear how set theory can provide a theory of the pure multiple, which avoids attributing being to the one. Even if we accept that the count-for-one, as an operation, avoids making presentation into a one, an idea that is not without its critics, this still leaves us with an empty theory.[349] Badiou thinks that the formal axiom system of

[348] BE, pp. 189 – 190.
[349] Desanti, Jean-Toussaint, 'Some Remarks on the Intrinsic Ontology of Alain Badiou', in <u>Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy</u>, ed. Peter Hallward, (Continuum Press, 2004).

Zermelo-Fraenkel set theory (ZF) avoids making the operation of the count-for-one into *a* being by excluding any formal definition of a set. [350] What *a* set *is* cannot be defined; being is never attributed to the *concept* of a set. Subsequently the majority of the axioms of ZF dictate rules for the formal manipulation of sets, but they do not guarantee the actual existence of any set.[351] If an axiom cannot be given that either discerns or generates sets then, to prevent the system from being empty, it is necessary for axioms to explicitly state the existence of certain sets.

Here the danger of reintroducing the one can occur, depending on what type of sets are claimed to exist. There are many different ways of introducing sets axiomatically, but they do not all provide a pure theory of the multiple. It is not sufficient to simply use a formal axiomatic system, it is also important that the right axioms are chosen. There are many theories of set theory that introduce atomic *individuals* at the axiomatic level, which, in Badiou's eyes, would clearly constitute the presentation of being as a one.[352] The axioms that do not conform to simple rules of manipulation are the two explicitly existential axioms of the Empty Set and Infinity.[353] The Axiom of the Empty Set finally allows Badiou to claim that set theory is a theory of the pure multiple. In order to understand the significance of this axiom it will be necessary to introduce some set theoretical terminology.

Badiou's initial introduction of the concept of the pure *presented* multiple, as the result of the operation of the count-as-one is very close to Georg Cantor's original naïve description of a set: 'By a set we are to understand any collection into a whole

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[350] BE, p. 30.
[351] BE, p. 62.
[352] Potter, Michael, <u>Set Theory and its Philosophy</u>, (Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 72 – 75, 291.
[353] BE, p. 62.

M of definite and separate objects *m*'.[354] Such a set M is written: M = {*m*}, or if M

has more than one element, M = {m_1, m_2, m_3, … m_n}. A set is therefore a collection of

separate elements, which are said to *belong* to a set. This relation of belonging is the

fundamental non-logical relation that structures all sets, and is written '∈'. In the set

M above, for example, all the elements that appear within the brackets belong to M:

m_1∈M, m_2∈M, and so on. For Badiou, the set is the consistent presentation of its

elements. The term element can be somewhat misleading, as it seems to suggest that

the elements themselves are ones, thus introducing oneness into set theory. Badiou

avoids calling elements 'elements' and prefers to call them presented terms. I will

continue to call them elements as this is the name that most commonly appears in

texts on set theory. The construction of the elements of sets will make it clear that

they are not atomic individuals, but rather pure multiples, which are each multiple in

their own right.

The initial set, asserted to exist axiomatically, cannot have any members; nothing can

belong to it. If it did, the set's members could legitimately be held to be atomic

individuals. This would guarantee that the one *is*, contradicting the wager that the one

is not. Therefore, to begin with, the only set that can be asserted to exist, without

contradicting the above wager, is an empty set. Unsurprisingly, the Axiom of the

Empty Set asserts that just such a set exists. Badiou's technical formulation of this

axiom is: (∃β)¬(∃α)(α∈β), which reads 'there exists a β such that there does not exist

any α which belongs to it'.[355] The set β is void, or empty. In his formulation Badiou

chooses to use the existential quantifier, ∃, 'there exists', twice rather than the more

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[354] Cantor, Georg, <u>Contributions to the Founding of the Theory of Transfinite Numbers</u>, trans. Philip Jourdain, (Dover Publications Inc., 1915), p. 85.
[355] BE, p. 68.

usual use of the universal quantifier, ∀, 'for all'. The more usual formulation of this axiom is: $(\exists\beta)(\forall\alpha)\neg(\alpha\in\beta)$.[356] This would read: there exists a set β such that, for all α, no α belongs to β. The double existential form is important for Badiou: there *exists* β such that there *does not exist* α. There is the *presentation* of something that is *not* presented, for Badiou this is pure inconsistent multiplicity.[357]

With this axiom, the final requirements of a theory of the pure multiple, a form of consistent presentation without a one, is achieved. The metaontological significance of this axiom is that 'the unpresentable is presented, as a subtractive term of the presentation of presentation'.[358] As Badiou further elaborates:

> If there cannot be *a* presentation *of* being because being occurs in every presentation—and this is why it does not present *itself*—then there is one solution left for us: that the ontological situation be *the presentation of presentation.*[359]

The Axiom of the Empty Set guarantees the existence of at least one set, from which other sets can then be generated, but this set presents nothing more than presentation itself. The empty set, written ∅, can be thought of as simply an empty pair of brackets: ∅ = {}. If a set is the formal operation of presenting its elements, then if a set has no elements all it presents is this formal operation itself: the empty set, ∅, presents nothing but presentation itself.

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[356] Tiles, Mary, The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), p. 121.
[357] BE, p. 67.
[358] BE, p. 67.
[359] BE, p. 27.

This *consistent* presentation is often assumed to be paradoxical, or a slight of hand: the assertion that $\varnothing$ exists means that the theory is not empty, only that the *content* of this theory *is* empty. Here we can see how the two alternative phrasings 'the one *is not*' and 'being *is* multiple' are both satisfied by this axiom. Every result of a count-as-one, a set, is formed from the empty set, so that although the presentation is not empty, there is a presentation of structure, *nothing*, that is no *being*, is presented: the one *is not*. Being is therefore subtracted from all presentation of it as a one, the empty set perfectly expresses this by presenting nothing, no one, and if being is not one then it is multiple.

The final point to be made on this is that the empty set's uniqueness means that it acts as a proper name, the proper name of being. The empty set, $\varnothing$, is not the presentation of being itself, but only its proper name. The uniqueness of $\varnothing$ is immediate as *nothing* differentiates it; the uniqueness of the empty set is based on its in-difference.[360] The empty set, or void set as Badiou often calls it, is in-different *not* indiscernible. It is not that we cannot discern what is presented in the empty set, but rather that there is *nothing* to discern. This point is of vital importance when indiscernible sets are introduced as being central to a theory of the subject.

To conclude this section, the empty set, $\varnothing$, makes it possible for set theory to be an ontology of the pure multiple.

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[360] BE, p. 68.

4.3 The Infinite as the Space of Novelty

Having established that such a form of ontology is *possible*, it is now necessary to show that it is not sterile. The space opened by set theory must not be foreclosed against novelty. The fear is that set theory will present such a formal system that it will be structurally determined and closed. Although this is true at the finite level, at the infinite level there is no absolute structure. For Badiou, the notion of the infinite does not go hand in hand with the themes of transcendence and totalization, rather, it is that which makes the indeterminate and the undecidable possible. In this section I will explore how the concept of the infinite frees ontology from any single structure, and allows for the appearance of the indiscernible, or non-constructible set.

In order to make these aims clear it will be necessary to introduce more of the technical terminology of set theory and *Being and Event*.

Cantor's initial aim with his theory of sets was to introduce the most abstract mathematical objects possible: at base they should be pure multiples abstracted from both their *content* and their *order* of appearance.[361] Free from these two *intrinsic* qualities a set was presented as a pure *extrinsic* multiple. This idea remains in modern ZF set theory in the form of the Axiom of Extension, which defines the identity of a set solely in terms of its elements.

[361] Cantor, Georg, <u>Contributions to the Founding of the Theory of Transfinite Numbers</u>, trans. Philip Jourdain, (Dover Publications Inc., 1915), p. 86.

A set is nothing more than the collection of the elements that it brings together, regardless of how these elements have been collected or arranged. The axiom states:

$$(\forall\gamma)\ ((\gamma\in\alpha) \leftrightarrow (\gamma\in\beta)) \rightarrow (\alpha=\beta)$$

This reads: a set α is the same as a set β if, and only if, every element of α is also an element of β, and vice versa. This extensional, or combinatorial, concept of a set is vital for Badiou; a set is a pure multiple defined by nothing more than the multiples that it presents.

Cantor called this abstract extensional presentation of a set its *power* or its *cardinal* number, but it is also possible to think of a set in terms of its *intrinsic order*, thus defining the set's *ordinal* type. If a set is *well ordered*, the ordinal type of the set becomes its ordinal number. A set exhibits a total partial order if each element can be thought to 'have a place' relative to the other elements. For every m_1 and m_2 belonging to a set M, and $m_1\neq m_2$, it must be the case that either $m_1< m_2$ or $m_2< m_1$. This equates with our general understanding of the natural, rational and even the real numbers. Well ordering is a slightly more strict form of order that restricts well ordering to the type of discrete order found only in the natural numbers, each number always has a direct successor with no number appearing between the original number and its successor.

Two sets α and β have the same cardinal number if there is a one-to-one relation between them; each element of α maps onto a unique element of β and vice versa.

Two sets α and β have the same ordinal number if a similar one-to-one relation exists, but the relation must also preserve the order of the sets.

It is this distinction between a set's cardinal and ordinal character, and the relation between these two relations, that lies at the heart of both Cantor's life long obsession with the Continuum Hypothesis, and Badiou's interest in set theory and the infinite.

The difference between cardinal and ordinal numbers is simple to understand, but the significance of this distinction does not become obvious until infinite sets are considered. Cardinality measures the magnitude of a set, while ordinality is a measure of degree, based on order. Take for example the set $\alpha = \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$, this set has a cardinal power of four and an ordinal degree of four. It has a cardinal power of four, as it clearly has four elements. It has an ordinal degree of four, as the highest ranked element, according to its ordering, is four. If a set has a clear order then we need only look for its highest ranked element in order to know its ordinal number.

At the finite level every set can be well ordered, also this ordering is unique: you cannot change the ordinal value of a finite set by rearranging its elements. Every finite set can only be associated with one ordinal number. This ordinal number is also identical to its cardinal power; in the above example the set α had both the ordinal and cardinal number four.

The concept of an infinite ordinal can only be reached through an extension of the method that generates finite ordinals. This is the seemingly simple notion of adding one. Badiou's approach to the construction of the ordinals begins with his distinction

between belonging and inclusion. Badiou claims that this distinction provides the source of the originality of *Being and Event*.[362]

Given a set α = {a, b, c, d}, the elements that *belong* to it are: a, b, c and d. But what about sets that share coincident elements, such as β = {a, b} for example? Such a set is said to be *included* in α, or to be a *subset* of α, and is written: $\beta \subset \alpha$. If all the elements of a set β are also elements of α, then β is a subset of α. The Power Set Axiom then states that if a set α exists then so does the set of all α's subsets. Taking the example γ = {a, b, c}, the power set of α is: $\wp(\alpha)$ = {{a}, {b}, {c}, {a, b}, {a, c}, {b, c}, {a, b, c}, $\varnothing$}. The new set, $\wp(\alpha)$, has eight, or 2^3, elements. Perhaps the only two surprising inclusions are the empty set and the set γ itself. Given the definition of a subset above, their inclusion becomes clear. Although the original set cannot belong to itself, on pain of paradox and inconsistency, it can include itself as it obviously shares all its elements.[363] The empty set, $\varnothing$, has the unique property of being universally included in all sets; there is *no* element belonging to $\varnothing$, which is not also an element of any other set, as $\varnothing$ has no elements.

Before continuing, it is worth noting how important the Power Set Axiom is for Badiou. If sets *present* their elements, they *represent* their subsets. The full representation of a set is equivalent to its power set, and Badiou calls this the State of a situation.[364] The State represents the situation, and the minimal relation between an infinite set/situation and its power set/State will be the source of all true novelty.

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[362] BE, p. 81.
[363] Such paradoxes include Russell's paradox etc.
[364] BE, p. 95.

Badiou's set theoretical universe is, to begin with, sparse; only the empty set exists. The first new set he produces is $\wp(\varnothing) = \{\varnothing\}$, a set with one element, a singleton.[365] This is not too surprising either, if the general rule is that the number of elements of a power set are 2^n, where n is the original number of elements, if $n = 0$ then $2^0 = 1$. From this Badiou derives the rule that given any set α, then its singleton, $\{\alpha\}$, also exists.[366]

We are now in a position to consider the construction of the finite ordinals. The void, or empty set $\varnothing$ can be considered as the first natural ordinal 0, with its singleton $\{\varnothing\}$ corresponding to the ordinal 1. The successor of these two ordinals is the union of these two: $\varnothing \cup \{\varnothing\} = \{\varnothing, \{\varnothing\}\}$, the ordinal 2. The process of succession is to form the unity between the current ordinal and the singleton of this current ordinal. The construction of the ordinal 3 is accomplished as follows: the union of $\{\varnothing, \{\varnothing\}\}$ with its singleton $\{\{\varnothing, \{\varnothing\}\}\}$: $\{\varnothing, \{\varnothing\}\} \cup \{\{\varnothing, \{\varnothing\}\}\} = \{\varnothing, \{\varnothing\}, \{\varnothing, \{\varnothing\}\}\}$. In general if a is an ordinal the successor of a is $a \cup \{a\}$, this is equivalent to the idea of adding one. The interesting feature of this construction of the ordinals is that all the previous stages of the construction appear within the current level as elements. Every element of an ordinal is itself an ordinal, it is this feature of nesting and homogeneity that qualifies a set as *transitive*:

$$\forall \alpha \forall \beta \; (\alpha \in \gamma \; \& \; \beta \in \alpha) \rightarrow \beta \in \gamma$$

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[365] BE, p. 91.

[366] BE, p. 91. Badiou suggests this as an application of the Axiom of Replacement, where the element of the singleton $\{\varnothing\}$ is replaced by an arbitrary set α, to form the singleton $\{\alpha\}$. It also follows from the Power Set Axiom, where the singleton can be thought of as the power set of α, minus everything that is not α. For example, if $\alpha = \{a, b\}$, then $\wp(\alpha) = \{\{a\}, \{b\}, \{a, b\}, \varnothing\}$, if we remove the subsets $\{a\}, \{b\}$ and $\varnothing$ we are left with $\{\{a, b\}\} = \{\alpha\}$, the singleton of α.

This reads, if α belongs to γ and β belongs to α, then β belongs to γ.[367] Badiou calls such transitive sets *normal* and recognises them as the hallmark of natural situations.[368] Every ordinal number is a *transitive* set, well ordered by the relation of belonging.

This method can then be used to generate any finite number of ordinals. But it cannot be used to create an infinite set, one greater than all the finite ordinals. The nature of ordinal numbers means that an ordinal greater than all the finite ordinals would include all these ordinals as elements. It would be the set of all ordinals that could be produced using the method of simple succession, the limit of this productive procedure. This *limit* ordinal is called ω, and can only be introduced via a second existential declaration.[369] The Axiom of Infinity states: there exists a set ω, such that for any finite ordinal *a*, both *a* and the successor of *a*, $a \cup \{a\}$, belong to ω. Although there is a first infinite ordinal, there is no last finite ordinal.[370]

There are now two types of ordinal numbers, the finite ordinals produced by means of *succession*, and the infinite ordinal ω, stated to exist as the *limit* of the process of succession. Hence we have successor and limit ordinals. It is now possible to examine the profound differences between an ordinal and cardinal conception of number.

Ordinal succession can be reintroduced, without modification, at the infinite level. There is the *next* ordinal after ω, which is $\omega \cup \{\omega\}$, or ω+1. Again, an infinite number

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[367] Potter, Michael, <u>Set Theory and its Philosophy</u>, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 134.
[368] BE, pp. 132 – 134.
[369] BE, p. 156.
[370] BE, p. 159.

of new ordinal numbers can be created, their structure being defined by the number of times the above two modes of generation are used. For example, the set of all the even numbers followed by the set of all the odd numbers, {2, 4, 6, 8… ; 1, 3, 5, 9…}, uses in its *intrinsic* structure the rule of the limit of the process of succession twice, its ordinal number is therefore $\omega \cdot 2$. Cardinality, on the other hand, takes no notice of the intrinsic ordering of a set and measures the pure magnitude in terms of the number of elements. The cardinality of one set is said to be equal to that of another if a simple one-to-one relation is possible between them. This is trivial for the above example, 1 would map to 1, and 2 to 2 and so one. Therefore the cardinality of the set of even numbers followed by the set of odd numbers is equivalent to the cardinality of the set of natural numbers. It is no longer the case that every ordinal set can be associated with a unique cardinal number. An infinite number of infinite ordinals share the same cardinality, all of them equivalent to ω. The cardinal number associated with ω is $\aleph_0$, aleph null, and all ordinal sets using the first two methods of construction share the same cardinality.[371]

After the rather benign and simple relation between cardinal and ordinal numbers at the finite level, their divergence at the infinite level is quite fascinating. The question now arises: what is the relationship between an ordinal set's intrinsic ordinal number and its extensive cardinality?

In order to make the ordinal number system a closed and coherent system Cantor added a third rule of ordinal generation, to add to the two rules of succession and

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[371] This leads to the familiar proofs that the set of even numbers is equinumerous with the set of odd numbers, and that the natural numbers are equinumerous with the rationals.

taking the limit of a succession.[372] The first rule generates all the finite numbers, and these constitute the first class of ordinal numbers (I), the combination of the first rule with the second produces all the infinite ordinals with a cardinality of $\aleph_0$, and constitutes the second class of ordinal numbers (II). The third rule of generation, called the Principle of Limitation, states that a new class of ordinal numbers (III) can be generated by taking the aggregate of all the ordinals that can be produced using the first two rules. This new ordinal, ω_1, has a cardinality that exceeds $\aleph_0$, and is thought of as the next cardinal after $\aleph_0$ called $\aleph_1$.[373] An important feature of the ordinal ω_1 is that because it cannot be put into a one-to-one correspondence with the denumerable natural numbers, it is non-denumerable, or uncountable.

This method can be used to generate an indefinite series of ordinal number classes; the ordinals of each class have the same cardinality as the aggregate of all the ordinals in the class below. The first ordinal of each class is known as a limit ordinal and corresponds to a cardinal number: Limit Ordinals: (ω, ω_1, ω_2…), corresponding Cardinals: ($\aleph_0$, $\aleph_1$, $\aleph_2$…). Although this method also produces new cardinals, it does not produce them directly, they are the result of an ordinal construction. For the two systems to be considered as complete number systems it was necessary to find a direct method for producing infinite cardinal numbers, without reference to methods of ordinal generation.

The method that Cantor introduced to directly generate new infinite cardinal numbers is via the use of the power set function. To recall, if α is a set with β elements then $\wp(\alpha)$ will be a set with 2^β elements, and $2^\beta > \beta$. Here we have a direct method of

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[372] Potter, Michael, <u>Set Theory and its Philosophy</u>, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 106.
[373] Ibid. pp. 106 – 107.

producing new cardinal numbers. It can be shown that this holds for infinite cardinal numbers, so $\wp(\aleph_0) = 2^{\aleph_0} > \aleph_0$. In general, if $\aleph_\alpha$ is an infinite cardinal number, then $\wp(\aleph_\alpha) = 2^{\aleph_\alpha} > \aleph_\alpha$.[374] Having established this separate method, the question as to the relation between these two number systems can be addressed.

The obvious choice would be to make the two systems completely commensurate with each other. This could be achieved if $\wp(\aleph_0) = \aleph_1$, a formulation of Cantor's Continuum Hypothesis, or generally if $\wp(\aleph_\alpha) = \aleph_{\alpha+1}$. But it turns out that the only thing that can be conclusively decided about $\wp(\aleph_0)$ is that it is has a cardinality greater than $\aleph_0$. This *minimal* determination can consistently be strengthened, both the Continuum Hypothesis and its generalization can be asserted, but so can almost any other value for $\wp(\aleph_0)$. Whereas Cantor saw this as a problem within the system of set theory, the failure of set theory to form a closed system conditioned by a single set of rules, Badiou sees it as its saving grace. This realm of undecidability opens up an immanent space within set theory for the appearance of novelty, and for the subject to act on this novelty. It is Cohen's theory of forcing, proving that the Continuum Hypothesis is independent, which directly confirms this possibility.

 If the Continuum Hypothesis holds, then $\wp(\aleph_0)$, the set of all possible subsets of countable, natural, numbers is exhausted by the ordered methods of construction deployed by ordinal generation: $\wp(\aleph_0) = \aleph_1$, or $\wp(\omega) = \omega_1$. The question posed by this hypothesis is: what would it mean to think of infinite subsets of the natural numbers that were not *constructed* according to the ordinal rules of generation? The intuitive response would be that such sets would, in someway, be unconditioned.

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[374] Ibid. p. 262.

One possible argument would be that the existence of such sets is irrelevant, as they could in no way be effective. The only way that our finite minds can cope with infinite sets is that they *do* embody some order that can be codified in a *finite* way. We can only know such *infinite* sets through their *finite* structure; their members satisfy some property. This idea recalls the common philosophical theme of duality; a set has its intrinsic ordinal structure, and its purely extrinsic cardinal magnitude: an intensive form and an extensive content. At the finite level these two aspects are indistinguishable and identical, but at the infinite level things change. The Continuum Hypothesis states that the formal aspect takes precedence at the infinite level; we can only discern infinite sets that embody some constructible order. The extensive cardinal magnitude is only accessible through this structured order. If we assert that a non-constructible set can exist, for example if there exists infinite subsets of ω which do not belong to the second ordinal number class (II), how can we have access to them without recourse to some constructive property?

In order to exploit the potential of non-constructible sets a formal approach to sets that lack such structure must be developed. The Axiom of Choice provides such an approach, by developing a concept of free choice that is independent of any criteria of choice. This axiom affirms freedom and chance, it does not necessarily posit non-constructible sets, but it allows for our manipulation and use of them should they exist.

In this section I have tried to show how Badiou's approach to ontology in *Being and Event* attempts to answer how an ontology based on the 'one is not' is not sterile, it

has the potential for real novelty. Novelty can be generated immanently within a situation, due to the minimal relation between a set and its power set, or between a situation and its state representation. All that can be known is that state representation is greater than the original situation, the extent of this excess can never be *known*. But in order to fully exploit the excess of non-constructible sets, which constitute this undecidable excess of the state, they must be accessible to a subject. The subject must be capable of deploying the consequences of affirming the existence of a certain number of non-constructible sets, without subjecting them to a complete construction or discernment.

In the next section I will introduce Badiou's idea of the event, as something that occurs *outside* mathematical ontology. However, the consequences of this event can be expressed as something novel within an ontological situation by a *subject*, this subject depends on the productive *free* affirmation of non-constructible sets. The Axiom of Choice is essential to understanding this free affirmation.

4.4 Intervention and the Time of the Subject

The central role that the Axiom of Choice plays in the subjective realisation of an event's consequences depends on Badiou's separation of situations into two fundamental categories: Natural situations, introduced above, and Historical situations.[375] Natural situations are *normal*, this normality is provided by their

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[375] BE, p. 174. These are not the only types of possible situation, Badiou mentions *neutral* situations, 'in which it is neither a question of life (nature) nor action (history)', p. 177.

transitive nature. Here the relation between a set's extensional, cardinal, existence and its intentional, ordinal, construction share an absolute minimal relation: everything that exists is constructible according to the rules of ordinal generation. Here the Continuum Hypothesis holds, if ω is the presentation of a natural situation, then $\wp(\omega) = \omega_1$ is its state representation. Here every subset, or state representation, is equivalent to a formal production. The state restrictions in a natural situation do not allow anything to 'just happen'. Historical situations, on the other hand, are abnormal; they represent something *subtracted* from the state representation of a situation.[376] They present a *singularity*, something that is presented, but not represented, something that does 'just happen'.

A singular term, for Badiou, is one that is presented in a situation but not represented.[377] The subject of an event will always be a finite portion of an infinite procedure that attempts to represent a singular term; this production is the production of a truth. So a singular term is not strictly a presented term that is not represented, it has a *temporal* quality with reference to a subject. It is a term that is *not yet* represented, or one that *will have been* represented.

This is a recurrent theme in *Being and Event*: Badiou makes significant philosophical distinctions by dissecting mathematical proofs and procedures, which are taken mathematically to occur all at once, and imposing a temporal structure on them.[378]

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[376] BE, p. 174.
[377] BE, p. 99.
[378] BE, p. 410.

This temporalization is important for Badiou's discussion of foundation, which is key to his distinction between Natural and Historical situations. Foundation is a question of origin, in a natural situation the answer is simple and unique: natural situations are founded on the empty set, $\varnothing$. From this set all the others are explicitly generated in a strict order, this order can always be traced back to its foundation. This foundation is, of course, axiomatic. The axiom itself does not justify the empty set's existence it merely asserts it. A situation's foundational element is the one that shares nothing in common with any of its other elements. This indicates its generative function, being the element from which all others are generated. This idea is stated in an axiom, the Axiom of Foundation:

$$\forall \alpha \exists \beta \, (\alpha \neq \varnothing) \rightarrow (\beta \in \alpha \, \& \, \beta \cap \alpha = \varnothing)$$

To every non-empty multiple there belongs *at least* one element that shares nothing in common with the multiple itself; this is a foundational set. An historical situation is one with at least one non-empty foundational set. Badiou calls such a non-empty foundational set the *site* of an event.[379] Clearly such a set shares much in common with the empty set, both are foundational and both are subtracted from the situation, in that they share nothing in common with it. It is these properties that lead Badiou to state that such evental sites are *on the edge of the void*.[380] Although they share common properties with the void, or empty set, they are distinguishable from it, if only because they are non-empty. An event is concerned with something other than the proper name of being; it is concerned with the singular specific happening of the event itself.

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[379] BE, p. 175.
[380] BE, p. 175.

Badiou readily admits that it is with historical situations that the gap between ontology and thought first opens up.[381] Strictly speaking, historical situations can only appear within the set theoretical ontology if these situations are given a temporal dimension. In Cohen's theory of forcing the set that is chosen to extend the standard model of set theory is a set whose elements are non-constructible sets.[382] Here, if the initial situation is thought of as ω, and its state representation as all the sets constructible from it, then if α is a non-constructible subset of ω: $\alpha \cap \omega = \varnothing$. At this moment, the only subsets of ω are constructible subsets, so a non-constructible subset is invisible in this situation. This gives α the appearance of a foundational set, but we must remember that $\alpha \notin \omega$, and is therefore not foundational. The next move is typical of the kind of temporality that Badiou is introducing. This *potential* site does not belong to the initial situation, but it *could* be added to it. The new initial situation would be $\omega \cup \alpha$, it is clear now that $\alpha \in \omega \cup \alpha$, but equally clear is that $\alpha \cap \omega \cup \alpha = \alpha$. So *before* α is added to the situation it satisfies one aspect of foundation, the intersection between α and the situation is empty, and after its addition the new situation, which now includes α, only satisfies the other condition, namely that α belongs to the situation. Only taken as a temporal entity, not solely as a timeless mathematical entity, can the non-constructible set constitute a site, that is, act as a quasi-foundation.

The decision as to whether this site belongs, or not, is undecidable. To affirm its belonging depends only on the event actually having happened, and the *intervention* of a subject to begin the process of making it belong. The augmented situation does not, therefore, have a site; it is only marked by the trace of a decision. Cohen's theory

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[381] BE, p. 188.

[382] Cohen, Paul, Set Theory and the Continuum Hypothesis, (W. A. Benjamin, 1966), p. 110.

of forcing produces new situations, which are extensions of the old, but these new situations are natural; they are standard *transitive* models of set theory.[383] To maintain a situation as historical is to keep a process of forcing continually open by focusing on the immanent subject within the situation.

Here the temporal aspect is emphasised again. After a subjective intervention, a decision on the undecidable belonging of a site to a situation, the state of this situation is still that of the old situation *prior* to this intervention. It is the work of the subject to play out the consequences of their intervention through a constant *fidelity* to their conviction that the event occurred. The post-evental state is never fully completed, as the infinite task of the finite subject to extend the state of the situation can never be completed.

The entire theory of the event rests fundamentally on this situated and temporal appropriation of set theory. This is Badiou's philosophical use of ontology, the concepts of the individual inhabitant of a situation, and therefore the subject, are *not* mathematical/ontological concepts.[384] Cohen's theory of forcing is developed 'in the absence of any temporality, thus of any future anterior, … [to] establish the ontological *schema* of the relation between the indiscernible and the undecidable'.[385]

This helps to explain Badiou's peculiar matheme of the event. The matheme of the event is also *not* an ontological statement; it explicitly covets inconsistency. Badiou calls the event the ultra-one and formalises it in the following way:

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[383] Ibid. p. 130.
[384] BE, p. 411.
[385] BE, p. 410 my italics.

$$e_x = \{x \in X, e_x\}$$

Here, e_x is the event occurring at the site X and it presents not only all its elements, $x \in X$, but also itself. Badiou's use of the Axiom of Foundation makes such a set impossible within consistent mathematical ontology; it is being's prohibition of the event. [386] Self-belonging is forbidden within a system of set theory that adopts the Axiom of Foundation. The matheme acts as an inconsistent supplement outside of ontology that lets the subject know that its task is never complete. The task of the subject is to make the truth of the event consist within a situation, to build the relation between the indiscernible and the undecidable. [387] In set theoretical terms, the generic extension of a situation, which utilises non-constructible sets, can decide previously undecidable statements. The key example is the proof of the independence of the Continuum Hypothesis, by demonstrating that there is a consistent situation in which this hypothesis leads to a contradiction. For Badiou, this process is experienced immanently from within the situation, a subject whose endless task is motivated and supported by this external supplement.

Central to the philosophical understanding of an individual or subject's experience within a situation is the Axiom of Choice. It provides not only the potential of an individual to become a subject through an *intervention*, but also the means to maintain subjectivity indefinitely, through the continued *fidelity* to an event.

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[386] BE, p. 190.
[387] BE, p. 428.

4.5 The Axiom of Choice

Intervention is the *illegal* naming of an event, the wager and declaration that something, the event, *has* happened.[388] The *choice* of this name is not recognised by the current situation, it is a non-choice for the state.[389] The current state restrictions do not encompass the name of the event; this means that the presentation of the name is not constructible according to the current state laws. The name does not conform to any state law of representation. By declaring that an event has occurred, and thus naming it the state apparatus is interrupted and a subject is born.

The potential subjects of a situation are the individual inhabitants who occupy it. This potential for subjectivity is what elevates man, as rational, above the merely animal.[390] It is dependant on their use of mathematics, especially the Axiom of Choice, which makes them capable of intervention. This capacity is hard to define and it seems to involve the coincidence of many classical ideas: rationality, freedom, order and chance. What is interesting is that this capacity can be exercised, to the detriment of the individual, in an autonomous fashion, but it only transforms an individual into a subject when supplemented by an event.[391] I shall return to this point in the following chapters.

In the previous section it was the declaration that the site belonged to the current situation, which made it a foundational set, albeit only in a temporal sense. This is the

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[388] BE, p. 205.
[389] BE, p. 205.
[390] E, pp. 58 – 59, 132.
[391] BE, pp. 230 – 231.

decision of intervention that marks the beginning of the historical transformation of a situation. The subject chooses to affirm the event, and names its site. [392] Before the intervention the event occurs, later the subject affirms this event by naming its site: thus only together, an event coupled with a subjective intervention, can a foundation be established. Initially the event is undecidable, it is unpresented in the site, and after its nomination it is illegal at the level of the state representation. It will be the labour of the subject to make this illegal choice legal, to make the truth of the event consist.

The very term illegal states something outside the law, here in an ontological situation that corresponds to rules of construction. An illegal presentation would be the presentation of something not controlled or constructed according to some clear rule. This idea was introduced above with the idea of non-constructible sets. All constructible sets are at base pure extensive multiples, but they all also posses an intrinsic definition, a condition which all its members satisfy. A non-constructible set is one that cannot be given such an intrinsic definition, it can only be considered extensively. In some sense the *laws* governing constructible sets are seen as necessary if any manipulation of infinite sets is to be meaningful. They are the conceptual means by which infinite sets can be accessed and manipulated. No such tools are available for non-constructible sets, so either they are not intelligible entities, or they are inaccessible, or there is another way in which they can be accessed. The Axiom of Choice provides this access via a non-conceptual means of *choosing* and manipulating non-constructible sets. If the laws of constructible sets *govern* and *dictate* the choice of elements in a set, then the Axiom of Choice states that it is

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[392] BE, p. 205.

possible to choose in an *unrestricted* way: the choice can be unrestricted, free and arbitrary.[393]

The theory of set theoretical forcing works by selecting a set of non-constructible sets to add to a given situation, to expand the number of possible sets constructible within the situation. [394] This initial selection corresponds to the subject's nominative intervention. After this addition the number of possible sets constructible from this new, extended, situation increases. The state representation of the situation is now capable of deciding things which were previously undecidable.[395] This extension of the state representation, based on the newly chosen and affirmed addition to the situation, does not occur all at once, nor is it ever fully completed. Mathematically it does happen all at once, based simply on it being possible, but within Badiou's philosophy the procedure of extending a situation occurs slowly. The subject is both what produces this slow extension, and the extension itself; the subject is a finite portion of a truth procedure.

This temporal extension of the mathematical procedure is sustained by the subject's fidelity to the event. The impetus to carry on the slow and laborious procedure is given by the meta-ontological matheme of the event: $e_x = \{x \in X, e_x\}$. The matheme has two terms, the elements of its site and its name. These two terms drive subjective fidelity: a fidelity to the subject's *choice* of affirming the site inclusion, and a fidelity to the name of the event.

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[393] Tiles, Mary, <u>The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise</u>, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), pp.190 – 191.
[394] Ibid. pp.186-187
[395] BE, pp. 416 – 417.

The formal definition of the Axiom of Choice states that if a set exists it is possible to construct a new set by selecting a single *arbitrary* element from each of the elements of the original set.[396] To give an example, take a set whose elements are pairs of elements: $\alpha = \{\{a, b\}, \{c, d\}, \{e, f\}\}$, then the axiom of choice states that there exists a new set β such that $\beta = \{b, c, f\}$. This is not the only possible set resulting from the application of a choice function on the initial set α, there are, in this case, eight such possible sets. Problems arise when this idea is extended to the infinite; it is the unintuitive idea of being able to make an infinite number of arbitrary choices that made the Axiom of Choice appear controversial.[397] If set theory is restricted to constructible sets then a choice function can be selected that does not make arbitrary choices, as any such set will satisfy a condition. As an example Jech selects a set whose elements are pairs of real numbers, the choice function can then be defined as selecting the smaller number from each pair.[398] The Axiom of Choice asserts the existence of such a set without giving any criteria on conditions of how to construct/select the elements that compose it, even if such criteria can be found later. But if we allow non-constructible sets then it is possible that no such criteria/conditions exist.

We can see that the Axiom of Choice is trying to create, or name, *new* subsets. If only constructible infinite sets are allowed then the limitation on choice extends to the infinite level. A supposed 'choice' function would coincide with a constructible set; freedom would be subordinate to the law.

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[396] Tiles, Mary, The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), p. 123.

[397] Ibid. pp. 132 – 133. Jech, Thomas, The Axiom of Choice, (Dover Publications, Inc., 2008), p. 2.

[398] Jech, Thomas, The Axiom of Choice, (Dover Publications, Inc., 2008), p. 1.

The power set function marks the excess between a situation and its state representation. If this excess is legally conditioned by the restrictions of construction then it forecloses the individual inhabitants of a situation against novelty. In order to interrupt this legal conditioning an illegal declaration must be made, one which affirms freedom, accesses the novelty of the non-constructible and deploys the consequences by extending the given situation. But the Axiom of Choice does not arbitrarily affirm the existence of *all* non-constructible subsets; it affirms the existence only of those that it chooses. It allows for a certain *controlled* anarchy, although it affirms and introduces chance it does so in a selective and *ordered* way.

A consequence of this ordered introduction of chaos is that the axiom has a number of significant consequences. For example, the Axiom of Choice is equivalent to stating that every set can be well ordered.[399] This means that every set can be put into a one-to-one relation with an ordinal number, which means that it can be constructed. This might seem to contradict the fact that the axiom seems to introduce non-constructible sets, but what has to be noted is that constructability and non-constructability are *relative* to a situation. This is due, partly, to the fact that the ordinal numbers do not in their totality form a set: there is no set of *all* ordinal numbers.[400] This, for Badiou, means that although there are natural situations, there is no such thing as Nature in its totality; Nature does not exist.[401] There is no ultimate level that could either absolutely affirm or deny the non-constructible. Where non-constructible sets are affirmed to exist they represent a symptom of the situation's limits. The question is whether this is a desirable symptom; is it a symptom of disease? Should the non-

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[399] Potter, Michael, <u>Set Theory and its Philosophy</u>, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 224.
[400] Ibid. p. 181.
[401] BE, pp. 140 – 141.

constructible be viewed as deficient and lacking, or should it be affirmed and incorporated?

The limit ordinals code, in their structure, a certain degree of complexity by defining all the possible sets constructible from a certain number of rules. Every situation is conditioned by a limit ordinal, which restricts the degree of constructed complexity.[402] If only constructible sets can appear within a situation there is no problem, but the Axiom of Choice can force sets to appear in a situation that present a greater degree of complexity than the current situation can condition. Therefore, in this situation the construction of these sets cannot be known and they appear random and non-constructible. A further ordinal external to the situation could provide a rule for construction, but it is not immanently available to an inhabitant of the current situation.[403]

The Axiom of Choice also greatly simplifies cardinal arithmetic, and also dictates that every infinite cardinal number is an aleph.[404] If we recall, the rules of ordinal generation produce a limitless succession of ordinal numbers, each limit ordinal being the first number to be associated with a new cardinal number, and these cardinal numbers are called alephs. What the above idea suggests is that there *is* a minimal relation between ordinal and cardinal number production; it might not be the strict relation of the General Continuum Hypothesis: $\wp(\aleph_\alpha) = \aleph_{\alpha+1}$. But there is, nevertheless a relation, the freedom of the Axiom of Choice still chooses within limits. Every cardinal is always equivalent to some ordinal.

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[402] Tiles, Mary, <u>The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise</u>, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), p. 187.
[403] Ibid. p. 180.
[404] Potter, Michael, <u>Set Theory and its Philosophy</u>, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 266.

In this section I have explored three different uses of the Axiom of Choice. First, choice is subordinate to the current law of the situation. Anything that appears to be a free choice in fact coincides with a constructible and legal part of the current situation: nothing new is produced. Second, a subjective intervention claims that certain freely chosen non-constructible sets belong to the situation. They *extend* the current situation through the novel constructions they allow. Third, freely chosen non-constructible sets are accepted as non-constructible and novel within the current situation, but a *new* situation is posited in which they are constructible. Only the second scenario, the subjective scenario, allows the illegal sets to retain their non-constructible status. Although, during the course of a truth procedure, the *names* of the non-constructible sets *become* legal, their non-constructible nature remains. The constructible and non-constructible co-exist. In the first case non-constructability is denied, and in the third case it is a *problem* solved through the introduction of a *new* situation with *new* rules of construction.

The random aleatory character of non-constructible sets are not considered a deficiency by the subject, their chance nature is affirmed. This idea that the subject *extends* a situation rather than creating a *new* situation is important to Badiou.[405] A new situation suggests that the subject performs a transcendent role. In such a transformation the subject gains access to an ordinal number outside and beyond the current situation in order to solve the *problem* of a multiple's non-constructability. This new ordinal is of sufficient complexity to define the construction of the previously non-constructible multiple. With Badiou's theory the subject remains

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[405] BE, p. 417.

firmly within the current situation and transforms it immanently. His only appeal to a meta-mathematical concept is to the matheme of the event. The matheme does not provide a transcendent multiple necessary for the transformation, but opens a temporal space in which the subject operates.

Although the full theory of set theoretical forcing is necessary to appreciate Badiou's subject, I believe that it is with this concept of freedom, motivated by the Axiom of Choice, that Badiou makes his most significant ethical distinctions. The three distinctions, made above, all reappear in Badiou's book on ethics. The misuses of freedom in being subordinate to the law, or attempting to transcend a given situation correspond to Badiou's categories of Terror, Betrayal and Disaster. The good is entirely defined by a correct subjective operation. But what if a correct subjective operation undermines the freedom of the subject/individual itself, what kind of subject would that be?

4.6 Ethical Categories

Badiou's theory of ethics focuses entirely on a clear distinction between Good and Evil, with Evil only being possible on the basis of the Good.[406] The Good is defined as that which results from a correct subjective response to an event. This involves the occurrence of an event, and the production of novelty/truth within the situation, as the result of an initial subjective intervention and their subsequent faithful labour. Evil occurs only when some aspect of this complex arrangement goes wrong. [407] Here, the presupposition that I find difficult to accept is that all events, and subjective responses

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[406] E, p. 16.
[407] E, p. 60.

are fundamentally Good. This might not seem problematic, affirming the creative free expression of a subject, who extends the possibilities of a situation through the production of truth, but these common themes of subjectivity, freedom and truth are completely transformed in Badiou's system. They no longer have their everyday appeal. Rather, the distinction between Good and Evil is too convenient, and seems *derived* from the system of *Being and Event* rather than expressing something true. The theory of ethics developed by Badiou is designed to be *consistent* with his systematic philosophy rather than with experience.

For me, Badiou's ethics are based too strongly on the notion that the theory of forcing, borrowed from Cohen, is essentially a liberating operation. In providing the final proof of an axiom's independence from the standard axiom system, set theory is liberated, or emancipated, from a constraint imposed on it. Badiou presupposes two things: emancipation from a given axiom liberates the formal system from a constraint, the system becomes more open as a result, while the *potential* of a future subject remains intact after a process of forcing.[408] It is this second idea that I want to particularly concentrate on. As I have demonstrated during the course of this chapter, the Axiom of Choice is essential if a subjective response is to be possible within a situation. One of the aims of developing the theory of forcing was to prove the independence of the Axiom of Choice, that is, to force a situation in which it fails.[409] Badiou calls the future anterior situation when a truth *will have been* forced, the post-evental situation. This is an almost Kantian 'as if' projection, to consider a situation *as if* the truth had been completely forced.[410] What is the post-evental situation if the

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[408] BE, p. 416.
[409] Cohen, Paul, <u>Set Theory and the Continuum Hypothesis</u>, (W. A. Benjamin, 1966), pp. 136 – 142.
[410] 'Truth: Forcing and the Unnameable' in TW, p. 127.

Axiom of Choice has been forced to fail by a subject adhering to the strictures of set theoretical forcing in strict fidelity to an event? This situation will be one in which it is impossible for a new subject to arise, the individual will be stripped of their freedom. The Axiom of Choice won't be in a dormant state subordinate to the law, as it is in the restrictive constructivist's situation. The Axiom of Choice, and therefore the individual's freedom will have been an inconsistent principle.

In order to explore this idea more fully, I will begin here by examining the ethical categories of Terror, Betrayal and Disaster in order to show that none of these covers the possibility I have suggested. The forcing of the failure of the Axiom of Choice is a positive example of an undesirable event and a subsequent, fully legitimate, undesirable subject. This possibility will be developed over the next two chapters.

Badiou states that the *simulacrum* of an event is the most dangerous form of evil due to its formal similarity to a true event.[411] The simulacrum deploys its pseudo-subjectivity in the form of terror, the terror unleashed by privileging one identifiable section of society over all others. The simulacrum is potentially the most complex form of evil as it allows for degrees of terror. The concept rests firmly on the Axiom of Choice and intervention, here though, the intervention is the intervention of an individual, rather than a subject. What the individual names as the site of the event, is only what superficially appears to be the site. Thus the individual remains an individual, and does not become a subject. Rather than name a site that is universal, the simulacrum names an already existing and recognizable subset of the situation,

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[411] E, p. 72.

Badiou's example is the idea of German racial purity in Nazi Germany. This privileging of a particular group ruins the truth of the event, which must be universal.

Betrayal is possibly the simplest category of Evil; it is a renunciation of one's participation in a truth procedure, and therefore a renunciation of one's subjectivity. This renunciation cannot be in the form renouncing one's *interest* in a certain cause, but must reject the very cause itself as having ever been significant.[412] The Axiom of Choice, again, plays a central role. Here, with respect to the truth that I used to believe in, I claim that its novelty and uniqueness were merely derivative. I affirm in my renunciation that the site, which I took to be composed of non-constructible multiples, was in fact wholly constructible. The individual accepts that their freedom is only ever apparently free from their own perspective; in actuality it is subordinate to the law. Their freedom, embodied in the Axiom of Choice, is actually nothing more than a theorem entailed by a universe restricted to constructible multiples: the Axiom of Choice looses its vital axiomatic status.[413]

Finally, the Disaster is what Badiou calls an attempt to name the unnameable. Here the full power of the Axiom of Choice is deployed, in an attempt to eradicate the singularity of the event in favour of the pure autonomy of the individual's freedom. There are two ways for the Axiom of Choice to deal with the possible appearance of non-constructible sets. The first, forcing, is the method chosen by the subject, where the non-constructible aspect of an event's site are made to consist in a situation. The second uses the fact that the Axiom of Choice allows all sets to be well ordered. The ordinal required to well order the non-constructible sets is not available within the

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[412] E, p. 73.
[413] B, pp. 305 – 307.

limitations of the current situation. This ordinal is an unnameable for the situation, and a disaster for truth is when the individual appeals to his freedom, in the form of the Axiom of Choice, in order to name this unnameable. As Badiou claims: 'Rigid and dogmatic (or 'blinded'), the subject-language would claim the power, based on its own axioms, to name the whole of the real, and thus to change the world'.[414]

The random and chance character of the event, which the subject requires in order to affect an intervention, is abandoned. The individual's free choice is exercised in an isolated and autonomous fashion, which characterises the event as a problem to be solved. In the new situation nothing of the event is left, or preserved. This is a disaster for truth, rather than affirming the truth of a situation the individuals seek confirmation of their own autonomy and power in an appeal to a transcendent realm. In the mind of God there is no confusion, there is nothing that cannot be constructed, the individual need only make an appeal to this totalised transcendent realm in order to find a solution to the problem of the event.

All of these forms of Evil rely, in one way or another, on the 'misuse' of an individual's capacity for free choice. The individual's inability to correctly deploy the Axiom of Choice, in the face of an event prevents them from making a subjective intervention. But the proof of the independence of the Axiom of Choice clearly falls into the 'correct' use of the Axiom of Choice; it inaugurates a subject through an intervention. It is somewhat bizarre, though not inconsistent, that the Axiom of

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[414] E, p. 83.

Choice is a necessary axiom in the forcing of its own failure, but this does not stop it from being a valid instance of set theoretical forcing.[415]

Badiou's argument that his theory of the subject, modelled by set theoretical forcing, brings a new rationalism to the study of the subject is undermined at this point. This rationalism is based on the subject's ability to cope with events and deploy the consequences. The faith, or fidelity, of the subject depends on the Axiom of Choice as it allows, in the model of forcing the independence of the Continuum Hypothesis, the differentiation of the non-constructible sets from any given constructible or non-constructible set on the basis of a finite amount of information. The *finite* subject's faith is *justified* on the grounds that it can differentiate sets on a *finite* amount of information, regardless of whether it achieves a specific differentiation within its own lifetime. This faith is undermined if such a differentiation is not finitely possible, as is the case in the method of forcing employed to prove the independence of the Axiom of Choice.

The question that must now be raised is: what are the consequences of such a subject for Badiou's philosophy? A self destructive subject intent on affirming something beyond reason's control could be seen as an unwelcome return of the irrational, no longer considered as inconsistent but as exceeding the power of choice, or as a reintroduction of the sublime and the Other, something which Badiou specifically wants to avoid.[416] But this subject is not the product of a misuse of the Axiom of Choice, but one formed according to the model outlined in *Being and Event*.

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[415] Tiles, Mary, <u>The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise,</u> (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), p. 190.
[416] E, Chapter 2.

Therefore, to preserve Badiou's ethics this subject must be either denied, it is not a subject, and might possibly constitute a new category of Evil, or it is a subject and its activity is to be affirmed as Good. Both options do not sit comfortably within Badiou's systematic framework as it stands.

In conclusion, Badiou's use of set theory, in his conceptualization of the subject, allows him to take a truly original approach to both ontology and philosophy. The mathematical approach gives him the ability to add great clarity and distinction to otherwise similar concepts, such as the name of the void, in general, in the form of the empty set, and those entities on the edge of the void that constitute evental sites. Here Badiou's philosophy is at its strongest, rejecting the problems of systematic philosophy and ontology as an endless problem of grounding by adopting the axiomatic method, and thus explicitly nullifying the problem. The problem of the ground, or the Axiom of the Empty Set, does not recur in ontology, what occurs, instead, are events. Badiou succeeds in building an effective ontology on the foundation of Cantor's legacy of the positive infinite, and through his particular reading of set theory lays down a radical separation between the Event, as the subtraction of inconsistent multiplicity from all presentation, and events as the incorporation of a non-constructible site, via the process of the subject.

5: Freedom, Subjectivity and the Event: Deleuze and Badiou

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter I want to examine the possible consequences for Badiou's philosophy of a subject who follows the *style* of forcing associated with the proof of the independence of the Axiom of Choice. I will show that key features of Deleuze's philosophy can be identified within the structure and nature of this proof. This will be sufficient to begin a critical dialogue between the work of Badiou and Deleuze that moves beyond a simple exclusion or subordination of one in favour of the other. This extension, or modification, of Badiou's set theoretical ontology, as a systematic framework capable of incorporating both Badiou and Deleuze, will provide the basis for the clarification of the three key terms of this thesis: event, freedom and subjectivity. This chapter will deal with the first two terms, freedom and the event, whilst the next chapter will concentrate on the third, subjectivity.

It will also shed light on the debate between Deleuze and Badiou, by providing a shared systematic framework, making it possible to take a fresh look at some of the polemical claims and counter claims made by those who support either a Deleuzian or Badiouian account of the event and subjectivity. By attempting to move beyond a position where they are seen as mutually exclusive, I will claim that both miss the real aim of philosophical thought. Philosophy is neither the creation of concepts, as put

forward by Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?*: philosophy always pursues a specific goal; it is not simply creation for creation's sake. Nor does it fulfil the shepherding, or mediating role attributed to it by Badiou. Philosophy is a far more disruptive practice, siding with Deleuze, I see philosophy as undermining the homogenizing 'good sense' inherent in any such pastoral role. Philosophy's sole concern is with the limits of freedom, explored throughout this chapter in terms of contingency and the tension between a *capacity* to choose and that which *exceeds* such a capacity.

As such, Deleuze's project can be seen as producing at least one new genre of truth, a *fifth* genre that pushes freedom beyond the limits of a subjective capacity to choose. With this new genre philosophy can be seen as a *productive*, rather than merely regulatory, activity. This is a direct challenge to Badiou's strict restriction to the four genres of science, politics, art and love. The genres are no longer conditions for philosophy, but its products. But this is a position that is also critical of Deleuze and his focus on freedom beyond the limits of a subjective capacity to choose, as this position neglects the value of the subject's conscious commitment. Philosophy is not limited to Deleuze's specific problem: forcing thought beyond its subjective limits, through the creation and proliferation of new concepts. This creative overproduction is simply Deleuze's specific technique, which is applicable to his specific question. It does not apply to philosophy in general, and it is not good in itself.

5.1 Freedom

The central term in establishing this movement between Badiou and Deleuze is freedom. To begin with I will present a characterization of their respective positions in terms of two definitions, this will provide a useful guiding thread through the complex steps of the chapter.

Definition of Freedom One: Badiou

Freedom is the *capacity* to affirm an event. This affirmation occurs in a *subjectively consistent* situation.

Definition of Freedom Two: Deleuze

Freedom is the affirmation of an event. This affirmation occurs in a *subjectively inconsistent* situation.[417]

The important distinction between these two definitions is the difference between an event and its affirmation. In the first definition there is a distinct *separation*, or gap, between the event and its affirmation, whilst in the second definition the difference is indiscernible; the event and its affirmation become *inseparable*. For Badiou, a subject affirms, or, more precisely, a subject is the process of the affirmation of, an event.

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[417] It is possible to claim that Deleuze wants this affirmation to occur outside of *any* situation, by this I mean a consistent framework or structure, not just a subjectively consistent one. I am aware that this particular definition is my own reading of Deleuze; the reasons for adopting it at the outset will become clear throughout the chapter. It will be especially useful in reference to Deleuze's later preoccupation with the axiomatic nature of capitalism, explored in his works with Felix Guattari and examined in the next chapter.

While, for Deleuze, an event is its own affirmation; if the event and its affirmation are separated, the original intensity of the event is lost and covered over, especially if it is taken up by a subject. Whenever Deleuze mentions freedom it is always exercised immanently by an event, idea, concept, or some other familiar Deleuzian term, whilst the subject is always explicitly rejected or overcome.[418] In the eternal return, or event, neither the agent nor the condition returns.[419]

For Deleuze, and the second definition of freedom, the subject is not capable of affirming the event, such that the immanent affirmation of the event always, finally, appears as inconsistent and paradoxical *to* a subject.[420] In affirming this paradoxical moment subjectivity is dissolved, allowing the event to express itself. The situation in which the event expresses and affirms itself is only ever paradoxical *relative* to a subject, in itself this situation has its own consistency, it is never pure inconsistency or chaos:

> If chaos does not exist, it is because it is merely the bottom side of the great screen, and because the latter composes infinite series of wholes and parts, which appear chaotic to us (as aleatory developments) only because we are incapable of following them, or because of the insufficiency of our own screens.[421]

This structure, or plane, which is inconsistent relative to a subject, but not inconsistent in itself, is something that Deleuze constantly refers to throughout his works:

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[418] DR, pp. 94, 268, 277, 287, 293. LS, pp. 73, 152, 178.
[419] DR, pp. 90-91.
[420] Fold, p. 77.
[421] Fold, p. 77.

> The plane of consistency, or planomenon, is in no way an undifferentiated aggregate of unformed matters, but neither is it a chaos of formed matters of every kind.[422]

And again, in his final work with Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*:

> Chaos is an infinite speed of birth and disappearance. Now philosophy wants to know how to retain infinite speeds while gaining consistency, by *giving the virtual a consistency specific to it*. The philosophical sieve, as plane of immanence that cuts through the chaos, selects infinite movements of thought and is filled with concepts formed like consistent particles going as fast as thought.[423]

The great screen, the plane of consistency or immanence, these are all so many terms for the situation in which pure events occur and express themselves. For Deleuze, the subject can only be engaged in an *authentic* project if it seeks to push thought beyond the boundaries of consistent *subjective* thought. It is debatable whether the term authentic is appropriate here; it suggests that the subject is aware of this project, an awareness that colours the subject's action with a certain nihilistic self-destructive fervour. What is problematic is not that subjects are willing to sacrifice themself for the cause, but that this sacrifice is necessary. I shall return to this point in depth in the next chapter. Only in such a situation, beyond the limits of a subject, can thinking, in the affirmation of the event, reach its full *free* potential to express itself. But, if the subject claims freedom as a faculty or capacity, then the full intensity of the event, idea or concept remains covered over and restricted, subordinated to the intention of the free subject. This is the Heideggerian legacy at the heart of Deleuze's work; the

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[422] ATP, p. 70.
[423] WP, p. 118.

subject is always something radically *finite*, in the manner of Heidegger's Dasein, whilst the pure event itself is *infinite*. Though, for Deleuze, it is only subjectivity that is limited by finitude, thought itself can be infinite. It will be on this point, the possibility of an authentic, or faithful, finite subjective commitment to an infinite idea, that Badiou will constantly challenge Deleuze.

We are left with two ways of interpreting this movement beyond subjectivity: one, from the perspective of the subject this project seems to embody Sartrean 'bad faith'. The subject uses their capacity of free choice to undermine and undo this very capacity. The subject attempts to choose not to be free, as pure freedom is something incompatible with such a subjective capacity of free choice. The novelty here being that such a project is achievable, and can therefore be an authentic project, albeit a counterintuitive one. Two, from the perspective of the event itself, pure freedom, in the form of a thought that adequately expresses the intensity of the event, seeks to free itself from subjectivity. Here the negative connotations of 'bad faith' are lost in favour of an ethics that promotes a maximally creative and novel thinking, one freed from the constraints of the subject. This maximizing of creative production is necessary to overcome the subjective capacity of free choice, which would otherwise capture and subordinate this created novelty to its own posited conscious project.

For Badiou, and the first definition of freedom, the idea of *authentic* subjective action is more straightforward. The subject's affirmation of the event does not cover over its singularity. The event is a paradoxical moment for both Badiou and Deleuze, but, for Badiou, the site, or trace, of this event directly presents a singularity within a

situation.[424]   It is the individual's capacity to make free and totally unconditioned choices, formally expressed in the Axiom of Choice, which allows the individual to begin the process of incorporating this singularity into an extended consistent situation.   This incorporated singularity is a truth and the individual becomes a subject.

It is the *unconditioned* nature of the event that means that its appearance in a situation is indiscernible, but making it appear, or consist, does not necessarily involve it in a becoming conditioned. This avoidance of becoming conditioned is only possible if there is a capacity to freely affirm and select unconditionally. Without such a capacity the paradoxical moment is inseparable from the indiscernible trace; the differences distributed by the event remain, for a subject, indiscernible from each other on a plane of pure differences in themselves. This is Deleuzian immanence, where only the singularities can differentiate themselves from each other. It will be necessary to show that Deleuze cannot assume that such a capacity of free choice does *not* exist, or rather, he cannot assume that such a capacity cannot make a real difference, or create something new. But also, supporting Deleuze against Badiou, it will be shown that when pushed beyond its limit this capacity can produce just such a plane of pure difference in itself. The production of this plane, where the capacity of unconditional free choice fails and becomes inconsistent, whilst the plane, in itself retains its own non-subjective consistency, is one amongst many possible *creative* uses of freedom and subjectivity. There are many others, specifically those that retain a consistent subjective model, such as Badiou's, that create real novelty, and respect the singularity of the event.

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[424] BE, pp. 99, 178 – 179. LdM, pp. 386 – 389.

At this stage, in order to bridge the gap between Badiou and Deleuze we can posit the difference in terms of this unconditional moment. For Deleuze, the unconditional trace, or singularity, of an event is *always* subjectively inconsistent, and subjectively inseparable from the event itself. For Badiou, the unconditional trace is *always* subjectively consistent and separable from the event itself. What is required is a model where the event can be *either* subjectively consistent or inconsistent. This would be to introduce the idea that there are two different degrees of a singularity's unconditioned nature: a first degree, whereby a subject can *consistently* affirm the unconditional event, and a second degree that would surpass the subject's capacity of affirmation, ungrounding the subject in a situation where its affirmation would make it *inconsistent*. This distinction will only be possible through an analysis of the event as a contingent or chance occurrence. Only by focusing on what is meant by chance or contingency in the works of Badiou and Deleuze will it be possible to offer a model that bridges the above gap.

One of the aims of developing this position is to try to give an answer to Sartre's problem of counter-finality, mentioned in chapters two and three. Here Sartre struggled with the problem of fidelity to an event, in the light of the unintended consequences of that fidelity. The framework I am introducing here allows us to see how an event can both encompass the rejection of counter-finality in an absolute subjective fidelity, in Badiou, and the possibility that the unintended consequence can become the important consequence of an event, undermining the subject, in Deleuze. The problem of counter-finality becomes a problematic undecidable question within this framework. Individually, for Deleuze and Badiou, counter-finality is not

problematic, as for Deleuze *every* event leads to a counter-finality; the stated conscious aim is never the real aim. And for Badiou, *nothing* can lead to a counter-finality; any change to the project is a betrayal.

This analysis will emphasize an interesting subjective aspect in Deleuze's thought, an aspect that counters some of the criticisms levelled at his work, most notably by Badiou and Peter Hallward.[425] These criticisms rest on Deleuze's supposed uncritical affirmation of creation for creation's sake, and that this is the sole aim of all thought, thus returning a figure of totality, or the One, to the heart of philosophy. The claim is that Deleuze's work harbours a hidden prescription behind its seemingly neutral descriptive character. This hidden prescription encourages the production and creation of the new, or novelty as good in itself, and the greater and more excessive this production the better. If we change the emphasis in Deleuze's project then this overproduction of novelty will be *for* a specific purpose. This purpose is the philosophical engagement with the question of the limits of freedom and subjectivity. Subjectivity is not overcome because it restricts the unlimited creation of novelty, which is assumed to be good in itself, but rather this overproduction is the means of achieving the very specific subjective project of overcoming subjectivity. This project is the counterintuitive *authentic* pursuit of bad faith, the overproduction is necessary in order to overwhelm the consistency of a pure unconditioned capacity of choice: freedom, according to my first definition. The overproduction is not good in itself, but is merely the necessary means to a specific end, which has the consequence of overturning my first definition of freedom in favour of the second. The two

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[425] CoB. LoW, pp. 381-87. Hallward, Peter, <u>Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation: Out of This World</u>, (Verso, 2006), and also 'Gilles Deleuze and the Redemption from Interest' in *Radical Philosophy* No. 81, Jan. 1997.

definitions do not exist in isolation from each other; they can be linked via a specific event, and the subsequent subjective process faithful to this event. As I commented earlier, this engagement with the limits of freedom is, perhaps, the sole task of philosophy. The use of the style of forcing associated with the independence of the Axiom of Choice not only suggests a specific question, the limits of freedom and subjectivity, but also a structurally unique subjective form, in terms of Badiou's philosophy. This situation, in which the Axiom of Choice is forced to fail, is separated from the other genres of truth that Badiou puts forward, as it would prohibit the possibility of any future event being taken up by a subject. Philosophy's engagement with the limits of freedom can, therefore, be seen as producing at least a *fifth* genre of truth, to supplement Badiou's four other genres of science, politics, art and love.

Badiou's claim that there are four genres of truth, and that philosophy somehow mediates between them cannot be accepted. Although radical creative thought separates itself from philosophy and is engaged in a variety of projects within their respective genres, these projects are never solely concerned with the philosophical contemplation of the nature of freedom itself. Instead, these four genres presuppose a concept of freedom in the form of the Axiom of Choice. Their unity is a consequence of this presupposition, and belies a lack of direct engagement with the question of freedom itself. Philosophy holds these genres together to the extent that it does not question freedom itself, simply deploying it as an axiom of free choice and relying on it as a condition for the possibility of any subjective intervention.

Taking this alternative style of forcing, specifically in relation to the independence of the Axiom of Choice, as potentially a new, fifth, genre of truth, it will be possible to cast Deleuze as an ideal subject of this fifth genre. Deleuze shows how a non-subjective freedom is possible by pushing a subject beyond the limits of their own freedom. I will argue that this fifth genre is the product of philosophy, demonstrating philosophy's own power to create, rather than being a passive practice that maintains a unity between the other four genres.[426] Philosophy is then not dependent on these four genres as conditions for philosophy's own practice, but rather, that which it questions, freedom, is already implicitly and uncritically at work in these four other genres.[427] Hence philosophy's ubiquitous presence amongst the other genres of truth. The Axiom of Choice, or a capacity of unconditional free choice, is necessary for subjective intervention and fidelity in all of Badiou's standard genres of truth. If this position is sustainable it will provide the ground for a powerful critique of Badiou, targeting both his conception of philosophy and continuing the critique against his ethics introduced in the previous chapter.

To give a full and thorough exposition of the points outlined above, I will split the chapter into three separate sections.

Section one will examine the form of the proof of the independence of the Axiom of Choice, in order to highlight why it might prove problematic for Badiou. Also, the connection between Deleuze's philosophy and this proof will have to be established in some detail. The final point of the section will be to emphasize how Badiou cannot dismiss Deleuze's philosophy, it cannot be rejected on the grounds of some error that

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[426] MP, 'Definition of Philosophy', pp. 141-44. LoW, pp. 518 – 522.
[427] BE, Meditation 22.

Badiou himself does not make. Rather, there is a blind spot in Badiou's own system of thought, one that Deleuze can occupy, and in so doing problematize the whole system.

Section two, will stage a Deleuzian critique of Badiou, focusing on the implicit operation of aspects of good and common sense in Badiou's work.

Section three concludes the chapter with an examination of chance, I will argue that Deleuze must concede a point to Badiou, and reject the univocity of being. This will prepare the ground for the final chapter.

5.2 Independence of the Axiom of Choice

The examination of the proof of the independence of the Axiom of Choice will provide the first conceptual bridge between Badiou and Deleuze. The focus will be on the use of generic sets *as if* they were indiscernible atoms or individuals.[428] This will allow me to differentiate between two forms of *contingency*. These two linked forms of contingency will then provide the basis for two definitions of the event, which will complement the two definitions of freedom given above.

Badiou's use of forcing as a model of subjective endeavour is limited to the standard model put forward by Paul Cohen, used to prove the independence of the Continuum

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[428] Cohen, Paul, Set Theory and the Continuum Hypothesis, (W. A. Benjamin, 1966), p. 136. Jech, Thomas, Set Theory, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), pp. 197 – 98. Jech, Thomas, The Axiom of Choice, (Dover Publications, Inc., 2008), pp. 44, 64, 85.

Hypothesis. As Badiou states in *The Clamour of Being*: 'the *form* of all events is the same'.[429] This takes the form, examined in the previous chapter, of taking a ground model of set theory, **M**, and producing a generic extension, **M**[G], by adding the generic sets G, such that G are non-constructible sets and G∉**M**, via the method of forcing.[430] The Continuum Hypothesis fails *in* this new model; in the ground model extended by the addition of the generic sets G. A model fails if it is possible to deduce a contradiction from the adopted axioms. In the standard case of forcing, there is a contradiction that can be deduced in the extension that cannot be deduced in the ground model. For Badiou's example of the Continuum Hypothesis, a sufficient number of generic sets are added to the ground model such that the total number of sets constructible in this model, using the power set axiom, exceeds $\aleph_1$, contradicting the claim that $2^{\aleph_0} = \aleph_1$.[431] The Badiouian subject has as its *finality*, or *project*, the construction of this generic extension where the presupposed condition fails. Badiou defines truth as these generic sets, and a subject as the localised process of making these sets consist in the extended situation.[432] The extended situation is, for Badiou, a space in which new knowledge is possible, on the basis that things that were *undecidable* become *decidable* due to the supplementation of a truth.[433] As Badiou states:

> Thought in its novelty, the situation to-come presents everything that the current situation presents, but in addition, it presents a truth. By consequence, it presents innumerable new multiples.[434]

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[429] CB, pp. 75 – 76. My italics.
[430] Thomas, <u>Set Theory</u>, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 137.
[431] The full details of this discussion are covered in the previous chapter.
[432] LoW, p. 6. BE, p. 406.
[433] BE, p. 408.
[434] BE, p. 408.

The subject, as finite and localized, is focused on the generic extension as a new situation, a situation to come. But truth, in the form of these generic sets, only has value to the extent that new thoughts, knowledge, or multiples, are made accessible and decidable in this situation to come. This happens in the extension for the standard approach because the condition, or hypothesis, whose independence is sought, fails *in* the extension. The presentation of the generic sets in the generic extension makes the Continuum Hypothesis fail.

The most immediate difference in the proof of the independence of the Axiom of Choice is that the axiom does not fail in the generic extension. In Thomas Jech's classic textbook, *Set Theory*, we find the following clear description:

> If the ground model satisfies the axiom of choice, then so does the generic extension. However, we can still use the method of forcing to construct a model in which AC fails; namely, we find a suitable submodel of the generic model, a model **N** such that **M**⊆**N**⊆**M**[G].[435]

The first point to note is that the mere presentation of these generic sets is not sufficient to make the Axiom of Choice fail. It is important *how* and *where* these generic sets are presented. The 'suitable submodel', that Jech posits, utilizes the generic sets of the extension but extracts them from the extension to present them in a distilled or concentrated manner in the submodel.[436] The model in which the Axiom of Choice fails is *between* the ground model and the extension, it does not fail in the

[435] Jech, Thomas, <u>Set Theory</u>, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 183.
[436] Jech, Thomas, <u>The Axiom of Choice</u>, (Dover Publications, Inc., 2008), p. 64.

extension. This is a point that Badiou overlooks in *Being and Event*, in questioning the validity of the axioms of Zermelo Frankel set theory (ZF, or ZFC including the Axiom of Choice) he remains fixated on the generic extension: 'They [the axioms of set theory] are… veridical in *any* generic extension'.[437] But the Axiom of Choice does not fail in the extension; rather it fails in a submodel between this extension and the ground model.

Even this small structural change raises two important questions with regards to Badiou's philosophy. One, are generic sets truths in essence, or are they only truths when their presentation makes some axiom or hypothesis of the ground model fail? Two, how does this approach to forcing change the *intention* of the subject? Is the subjective finality directed toward the situation to come, of the generic extension, or is it directed toward this submodel that is between the extension and the ground model, where the Axiom of Choice actually fails? Or could we see a division between an *unconscious* drive, and desire, toward the submodel, in opposition to the proclaimed *conscious* subjective intention, directed toward the generic extension?

This appearance of a *middle* as the place where free *subjective* choice fails also brings to mind the work of Deleuze, for whom the middle, or *milieu*, is a continuous theme throughout his entire body of work. We find that events, creativity and novelty always spring from the space or surface in the middle of *two* series, levels, or planes.[438] To emphasize this link, let us look at one brief example from the *Logic of Sense*, the 'Eighteenth Series of the Three Images of Philosophers'.[439] In this short

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[437] BE, p. 416.
[438] DR, p.117. LS, p. 50. ATP, p. 42. WP, p. 38.
[439] LS, pp. 127 – 133.

chapter Deleuze sketches the image of three related philosophical positions: the *heights* of Platonic philosophy; the *depths* of the Pre-Socratics and the *middle*, or *surface* created between the two, of the Stoics and the Cynics. The purifying heights of conscious and rational thought are subverted by the revelation of our true, determined material basis, but, for Deleuze, this opposition between Plato and the Pre-Socratics is an opposition that remains too pure. Thinking can never fully adopt either of these *clear* positions, and is always already engaged in a *confused* and impure mixture between the two. Both positions are *perverted* in the mixtures created at their point of contact or surface.[440] The surface, with its mixtures, is never a *mediating* term between the heights and the depths, but always a problematizing or corrupting milieu. Relating this back to the proof of the independence of the Axiom of Choice we can identify many similarities. If we take a standard constructible model of set theory, one with no non-constructible sets, as our ground model we will recall, from the previous chapter, that the Axiom of Choice is reducible to a provable theorem. In the forced generic extension the Axiom of Choice is necessary in order to incorporate the non-constructible generic sets, and is not reducible to a provable theorem. The possible reduction to a theorem in the ground model could be seen as a *subversion* of its *pure* use, as a necessary axiom, in the generic extension. The 'suitable submodel' is only possible *between* these two models, only *after* the generic extension has been created; it cannot be posited as an intermediary step, or mediating stage. This submodel does nothing to link the ground model to the generic extension, this point of contact between the two presents only a surface on which the Axiom of Choice is *corrupted* and *perverted* into failing through its own excessive use.

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[440] LS, p. 133.

In order to give this comparison a more substantial basis, I will show how it is not merely the general structure of this proof that reflects strong Deleuzian themes, but also its content.

5.3 The 'Suitable Sub-model'

It is not necessary to enter into the full technical details of the proof of the independence of the Axiom of Choice, it will be sufficient to understand what the proof intends to demonstrate and the role that the generic sets are made to play. The Axiom of Choice is a powerful tool that allows a selection to be made, without that selection satisfying any condition of choice; the choice is completely free. The Axiom of Choice is possible due to the purely extensional nature of sets in ZF set theory.

An extensive definition of a set describes the set only in terms of its members, hence the set {a, b} is just the set with the two elements 'a' and 'b'. An intensive definition, by contrast, describes the elements of the set as satisfying some *condition*, such as the set {a, b} being the set containing the first two letters of the alphabet. At the finite level this is trivial, and every set can be described in an intensive or extensive manner, as an intensive description only requires that there are a *finite* number of conditions conditioning set membership. For any finite set the members themselves can be used as the criteria, to return to the simple example above, we could say that the set {a, b} is the set that satisfies the conditions of having only 'a' and 'b' as members. The problems begin when the sets are infinite, due to our finite understanding most infinite

sets we deal with are defined intensively, think for example of the set of all odd numbers; if a number is odd then it satisfies the condition, and belongs. Here the intensive definition allows us to define an infinite set in terms of a finite set of conditions. What is more problematic is to think of a totally random infinite set, one whose elements are completely *contingent*; such a set could only have an extensional definition. Within mathematics the existence of such sets is debatable, but Badiou fully endorses them. The reason why their existence is debatable is that they seem strange in the sense that we can never define their content but simply assert their existence, but mathematically they are conceptually consistent. These are the non-constructible sets, since there are no criteria or conditions that could be used to construct them. Therefore, for Badiou, we could have a consistent, non-paradoxical, encounter with the indiscernible, understood as the unconditioned, within a situation.

In order for the Axiom of Choice to fail it will be necessary to produce a situation in which this free choice is unable to sustain and maintain the choices that it makes. Its capacity to make a difference is dependant on it being able to distinguish between the absolutely free choices that it makes.[441] But, if there are a sufficient number of generic, non-constructible, sets in the generic extension, and these are distilled and concentrated into a submodel, they overwhelm and make inconsistent the claims of this capacity of free choice.

One of the key features of the method of forcing, that Badiou finds appealing for his theory of subjectivity, is the fact that despite the forcing procedure as a whole being an *infinite* task, the generic sets can be distinguished from those already in the

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[441] Tiles, Mary, The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), p. 190.

situation, and each other, by a *finite* amount of information.[442]   These generic sets, on

the basis of a finite amount of information, really add something new to the situation,

producing a real extension to the ground model.[443]   This allows Badiou to claim that

although finite and temporal the subject is a clearly defined and significant part of the

overall process: the finite subject makes a difference.   The idea of setting up a model

in which the Axiom of Choice fails is to produce a model with 'too many' generic

sets, such that with only finite information they become indiscernible from each other,

in relation to a subject; the subject in this case being a process of free choice.[444]

5.4 ZFA, Atoms and Generic Sets as Atoms/Elements/Monads

Prior to the invention of set theoretical forcing, models of set theory in which the

Axiom of Choice fails had to make an appeal to set theoretical atoms, or

individuals.[445]   Most standard approaches to set theory assume that there are no atoms

or individuals.[446]   This includes ZFC, the variety of set theory chosen by Badiou for

his ontology. The initial level of ZFC is posited as empty by the Empty Set Axiom,

something I looked at in some detail in the previous chapter.   The empty set is the

only set that is initially posited as existing, but, as the name suggests, it is also empty;

it is literally an empty pair of brackets, {}, and is generally represented by the symbol

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[442] Ibid. p. 189.

[443] BE, pp. 337-38.

[444] Cohen, Paul, Set Theory and the Continuum Hypothesis, (W. A. Benjamin, 1966), p. 136. Tiles, Mary, The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), p. 190.

[445] Potter, Michael, Set Theory and its Philosophy, (Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 50-51. Cohen, Paul, Set Theory and the Continuum Hypothesis, (W. A. Benjamin, 1966), p. 136. Jech, Thomas, Set Theory, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), pp. 197-98. Jech, Thomas, The Axiom of Choice, (Dover Publications, Inc., 2008), p. 44.

[446] Potter, Michael, Set Theory and its Philosophy, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 50.

$\varnothing$. All the other common objects of mathematics, such as the natural and real numbers, can then be constructed using the empty set and the other axioms of set theory, most notably the Power Set Axiom. Badiou can therefore state that there is no original positing of *a* being, only the presentation of the *operation* of gathering, or counting-as-one.[447]

Atoms, or individuals, are, on the other hand, original objects that are different from each other only on the immanent grounds of simply being posited as different. For Badiou this approach would go against his wager that 'the one *is not*', as the ground level of atoms clearly posits the existence of a multiplicity of ones.[448] In standard ZFC the difference between sets is conditioned by the Axiom of Extension, this axiom reinforces the purely *extensive* notion of a set. The axiom states that two sets are the same if and only if they share exactly the same elements.[449] If our ground level is composed of atoms, rather than being empty, it is clear that these atoms do not have parts/elements, hence their name: atoms. Then, if the Axiom of Extension were our only guide to differentiating set theoretical objects, all atoms would appear the same, and they would be indiscernible from the empty set; they all share exactly the same elements: i.e. none. Their difference can only be maintained as something purely internal or *intensive*; they simply appear as different from each other. It is precisely this difficulty to differentiate between atoms, which suggests their use in undermining the power of free choice.[450] If there are enough of these atoms and they are distributed in a certain way, then a contradiction can be obtained if we assume the power of free choice given by the Axiom of Choice. The difference between atoms

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[447] EE, p. 67.
[448] BE, p. 23.
[449] Jech, Thomas, <u>Set Theory</u>, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 1.
[450] Cohen, Paul, <u>Set Theory and the Continuum Hypothesis</u>, (W. A. Benjamin, 1966), p. 136.

will remain as pure individuated difference in itself, but *we* cannot consistently differentiate between them. These *mixed* forms of set theory, that incorporate atoms as well as *pure* sets, pure sets being formed through iterations of the power set function on the empty set, are somewhat cumbersome and unwieldy. They only retained an interest for mathematicians working in set theory because they allowed for the construction of these independence proofs of the Axiom of Choice, after Paul Cohen developed his theory of forcing, proving the independence of the Axiom of Choice in the pure set theory of ZF, little further work was devoted to mixed theories.[451]

In his introduction to the forcing proof of the independence of the Axiom of Choice, Cohen explicitly states: 'In our models generic sets will play a role similar to these atoms'.[452] Jech makes similar comments when he introduces the general form of the proof; here the general form used in ZF is prefaced by a discussion of the historical method of using atoms, in ZFA, ZF with atoms, also called permutation models.[453]

In distilling and distributing the generic sets from the generic extension into the symmetric sub-model, the generic sets are made to act like atoms by becoming indiscernible from each other on the basis of only a *finite* amount of information.[454] Although the Axiom of Choice allows for *unconditioned* choices, its usefulness and consistency rests in being able to distinguish between its free choices on the basis of only a finite amount of information, and this aspect is a fundamental part of Badiou's theory of subjectivity. Without this ability the free choices presupposed by the Axiom

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[451] Potter, Michael, <u>Set Theory and its Philosophy</u>, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 51.

[452] Cohen, Paul, <u>Set Theory and the Continuum Hypothesis</u>, (W. A. Benjamin, 1966), p. 136.

[453] Jech, Thomas, <u>Set Theory</u>, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), pp. 198-201. Jech, Thomas, <u>The Axiom of Choice</u>, (Dover Publications, Inc., 2008), Chapter 4.

[454] Jech, Thomas, <u>Set Theory</u>, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 198.

of Choice cannot consistently be made to 'make a difference'. The use of forcing allows atom-like sets to become visible through the process of forcing, rather than being invoked *ex nihilo*. As such, they retain something of their original structure, being composed of real numbers, emphasizing, again, how these objects are not plucked from an undifferentiated chaos.[455]

Now, with respect to the proof of the independence of the Continuum Hypothesis, we can see how forcing and the use of the Axiom of Choice corresponds to Deleuze's notion of an orgiastic, or infinite, representation discussed in *Difference and Repetition*. For Deleuze, orgiastic representation is the moment when representation discovers the infinite within itself, a discovery that demonstrates the limits of the organized, revealing restlessness and passion underneath the apparent calm.[456] This is an important concept as it expresses the limits of rational systematic thought, embodied in the systems of Leibniz and Hegel. To fully understand the significance of Badiou's system of philosophy, put forward in *Being and Event* and *Logics of Worlds*, it will be necessary to see how it escapes from Deleuze's conception of orgiastic or infinite representation.

The truly excessive nature of the infinite, in set theory, is only really opened up once the Continuum Hypothesis has been shown to be independent. There is no longer a strict correspondence between cardinal and ordinal numbers, as there are multiple possible cardinal hierarchies. Deleuze states that: 'Orgiastic representation can discover the infinite within itself only by allowing finite determination to subsist'.[457]

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[455] Jech, Thomas, The Axiom of Choice, (Dover Publications, Inc., 2008), p. 85.
[456] DR, p. 42.
[457] DR, p. 43.

The finitude at the heart of forcing, as a method, is precisely what allows for the discovery of the excessive, or orgiastic, nature of the infinity of the continuum. For Deleuze, though, infinite orgiastic representation still fails to fully express difference in itself:

> The fact is that infinite representation is indissociable from a *law* which renders it possible: the form of the concept as a form of identity which constitutes on the one hand the in-itself of the represented (A is A) and on the other the for-itself of the representant (Self = Self).[458]

The extent to which the Axiom of Choice can be considered a *law* of representation will be the main focus of the next section. The aim will be to defend the Axiom of Choice and its use of non-constructible sets from the charge of being a law of identity or representation. As Badiou states, to deploy the consequences of the event is 'to legislate without law'.[459] For Badiou, a law of identity would always assume a constructivist conception of set theory, in which every set is constructible, its elements satisfying some given finite condition. The Axiom of Choice, on the other hand, explicitly posits the existence of unconditioned non-constructible sets.

Within set theory, rather than Deleuze's preferred example of the differential calculus, it is the Axiom of Choice that continues to subordinate the pure unconditioned generic sets to a principle of identity. For Deleuze: 'The point is that in the last resort *infinite representation does not free itself from the principle of identity as a presupposition of*

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[458] DR, p. 56, my italics.
[459] BE, p. 198.

representation'.[460] In set theory we cannot subjectively manipulate non-constructible

sets, in the form of generic sets, unless we have a principle (of identity) that allows us

to do so. The Axiom of Choice is the axiom, or presupposition, that allows for the

subjective manipulation of the unconditioned infinite.

The example of the proof of the independence of the Axiom of Choice provides a

clear example of how we can think of difference in-itself, as a distribution of

singularities. The symmetric submodel presents the generic sets as *free* differences in

themselves distributed within the model; they are freed even from the unconditional

choice of the Axiom of Choice. To follow Deleuze, we need to find something that

precedes the subjective position, and that the subjective can only perceive as

contradiction at the limits of its power:

> Our claim is not only that difference in itself is not 'already' contradiction, but that it
>
> cannot be reduced or traced back to contradiction, since the latter is not more but less
>
> profound than difference.[461]

This is the idea of the non-constructible in general. The Axiom of Choice and,

subsequently, Badiou's model of subjectivity presupposes the existence of non-

constructible sets. But the non-constructible can exceed the power of the Axiom of

Choice; it is even in excess of free choice. The symmetric submodel, where the

Axiom of Choice fails, presents just such a Deleuzian 'swarm of differences, a

pluralism of free, wild or untamed differences'.[462] The different generic sets become

pure intensities, differentiating themselves from each other immanently, without

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[460] DR, p. 49.
[461] DR, p. 51.
[462] DR, p. 50.

appeal to a rule or law of difference external to them. Their unity is no longer guaranteed by a *finite* discernment of unconditional subjective choice, but by an *infinite* speed or power. This idea of an infinite survey, or infinite speed, as opposed to the finite, is found frequently throughout Deleuze, such as the idea of the infinite power of survey of the concept in *What is Philosophy?* or the infinite speed of absolute deterritorialization in *A Thousand Plateaus*.[463]

Turning to the an explicit example in Deleuze's work, we can look at the impersonal and pre-individual transcendental field, discussed in *The Logic of Sense*, 'Series Fifteen, On Singularities'.[464] In opposition to a field unified by a conscious law, even that of freedom in the form of the Axiom of Choice, or Sartre's notion of a freely chosen existential project, we find:

> What is neither individual nor personal are… emissions of singularities insofar as they occur on an unconscious surface and possess a mobile, immanent principle of auto-unification through a *nomadic distribution*, radically distinct from fixed and sedentary distributions as conditions of the syntheses of consciousness.[465]

My main purpose here is to link the ideas of real change, and creation, with immanence. This immanent impersonal transcendental field is, for Deleuze, the pure potential of all creation and change. Once these singularities are taken up, and unified by consciousness or subjectivity their intensity and immanence is obscured and covered over by laws of identity and resemblance, see my discussion in Chapter Three. The epiphenomenon that is consciousness, or subjectivity, claims to be the

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[463] WP, pp. 20, 42. ATP, pp. 142, 255.
[464] LS, p. 102.
[465] LS, p. 102.

generating power, or ground, subordinating the transcendental *event* of the singularity

to a mere reflection of the subject itself.[466] But, for Deleuze:

> [S]ingularities preside over the genesis of individuals and persons; they are distributed
> in a "potential" which admits neither Self nor I, but which produces them by
> actualizing or realizing itself, although the figures of this actualization do not at all
> resemble the realized potential.[467]

Badiou's conception of the event and subjectivity seeks to find a way of taking up

these singularities that does not obscure them, or subordinate them to the power of

representation. By so doing, he will be able to give an account of real change and

creation dependent on subjectivity and, initially, appearing unconnected to, and

excluding, Deleuze's position.

From the arguments above, concerning the independence of the Axiom of Choice, we

can see how these generic sets, when concentrated in the symmetric submodel can act

as this unconscious, or pre-individual, surface. The distributions of the generic sets,

acting as atoms, are such that they exceed not only every possible condition but also

the power of free choice. We can also see how Badiou's explicit use of generic sets,

in his model of subjectivity, can be read through this Deleuzian lens. In Badiou's

truth procedure these generic sets, or singularities, are in the process of being

actualized. The important point to recognize here is that Badiou's use of forcing

respects the unconditional nature of the generic sets; the Axiom of Choice is powerful

enough to present the unconditional. The unifying power of Badiou's subject, faithful

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[466] DR, p. 52. LS, p. 103.
[467] LS, p. 103.

to deploying the consequences of an event, does not cover over the initial intensity of the singularity. Badiou also wants to claim that the subject is engaged in a process of real and creative change.

This common framework of set theory, along with the two different styles of forcing, allows us to present both Badiou and Deleuze's philosophy within a common context. Most importantly, we can see how the event differs for Badiou and Deleuze. This common framework is in opposition to many commentators, who see the positions of Badiou and Deleuze as mutually exclusive. Ray Brassier, for example, succinctly summarizes the two positions:

> So we seem to be confronted with an insuperable conflict of philosophical interest: the event as subjective destitution versus the event as subjective constitution; the event as auto-affirmation of the One-All versus the event as puncturing subtraction from the One and dissemination of the All; a manifold of actual chances coinciding in the sovereign necessity of Chance as a virtual whole versus a plurality of separate and incommensurable chances subtended by the hazard of an infinitely empty void.[468]

This mutual exclusion is something that Badiou himself claims, through the characterization of Deleuze as a philosopher of the One. But this characterization is dependant on an over emphasis on Deleuze's early work, and a complete exclusion of his collaborative works with Guattari. In the closing pages of his critical work on Deleuze, *The Clamour of Being*, Badiou claims that Deleuze always lapses back into a philosophy of the one because he lacks a sufficient formal system capable of resisting

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[468] Brassier, Ray, 'Stellar Void or Cosmic Animal, Deleuze and Badiou', *Pli* Vol. 10, p. 216.

this collapse.[469] This is not strictly true, when we look to the collaborative works with Guattari, we find that the question is always left open sometimes a single plane of consistency/immanence is affirmed, sometimes multiple planes.[470] I will return to some of these problems in the third section of this chapter.

If we adopt this common framework, outlined above, we can answer the question of whether there are *multiple* planes of immanence or only *the* plane of immanence in favour of the former multiple planes. Each such plane of immanence is the specific symmetric submodel, which unconsciously corrupts and overturns the power of free choice and the subject. This plane always appears *between* the heights of the conscious rational project of the generic extension, and the non-conscious depths of the deterministic materialism of the ground model. Due to it being a subjectively inconsistent plane, or model, subjectivity can never differentiate between its multiple and different manifestations. But, as we have seen above, this plane is not undifferentiated and without structure, it merely exhibits a structure that exceeds, or is in excess of, every deterministic or subjective model. They are different from each other, but in such a way that they can only assert this difference immanently; their difference cannot be determined by some external, subjective or objective, position of survey.

We are now in a position to give a definition of two types of contingency, as two types of unconditional happening, or events. These definitions side closely with the philosophers that I ascribed to my two initial definitions of freedom. But, it should be noted that the first definition is a modification of Badiou's position, one that I feel is

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[469] CB, p. 99.
[470] ATP, p. 69. WP, p. 50.

necessary in order bring the greatest clarity and contrast between the two positions. For Badiou an event is a meta-ontological happening, its site, or trace, is something ontological and appears as one of these unconditioned generic sets. For Deleuze events are always ontological occurrences, they are occurrences that exceed any power of conscious rational structuring. For the sake of my two definitions of the event, I restrict the event in the first definition to what Badiou would strictly call the site, or trace, of an event. This keeps both definitions of the event as ontological occurrences, within the extended model of set theoretical ontology that I have presented above.

Definition of the Event One: Modified Badiouian

An event is an unconditional *contingent* happening that is capable of being affirmed by a free power of choice.

Definition of the Event Two: Deleuze

An event is an unconditional *contingent* happening that exceeds the free power of choice.

The common framework of set theory and the independence of the Axiom of Choice allow us to recognize this difference. It might seem strange to talk about *degrees* of unconditional contingency, but an appeal to an historical analogy may prove useful at this point. Cantor's initial conception of the trans-finite as a realm of infinites of different size also initially seems baffling, but from a mathematical point of view,

proves to be a totally consistent idea. It seems self-contradictory to talk about different degrees of unconditioned contingency, as, if one thing is more contingent than another it suggests that there is some condition that restricts the less contingent thing, whilst the other is freed from this constraint. But, in the case of set theory, we can state what we mean by contingency: the contingent is a set that is purely extensional, non-constructible and, therefore, unconditioned. Taking the Axiom of Choice, as an axiom, cannot be viewed as a condition, as it guarantees the possibility of a *subjective* manipulation of the unconditioned. But this manipulation can fully respect the unconditioned nature of non-constructible sets, and cannot be viewed as a principle.

5.5 Critique of Badiou

We are now in a position to see how this interpretation of Deleuze, within the confines of set theory, leads to a characteristically Deleuzian critique of Badiou. The restriction of set theoretical forcing to the style of forcing associated with the independence of the Continuum Hypothesis, leads to a charge of *good sense*. And Badiou's claim that the role of philosophy is to shepherd and mediate the unity of the four genres of truth, which in turn act as philosophy's conditions, falls foul of a charge of *common sense*. These are two clear symptoms of a dogmatic image of thought at work in Badiou's philosophy. But this inclusion of Deleuze, within the framework of set theory, means that Badiou's philosophy is extended and transformed, rather than simply rejected.

Taking the case of good sense first, in *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze states:

'It cannot be regarded as a *fact* that thinking is the natural exercise of a faculty, and that this faculty is possessed of a good nature and a good will'.[471] In this chapter I have tried to show how Badiou's use of the Axiom of Choice, as a capacity that can affirm the contingent happening of an event, is a restriction to just such a faculty. When the intervention of free choice operates correctly, at the limit of the power of the Axiom of Choice in the subjective process of forcing, it is, for Badiou, unquestionably good and true. This is a critical point that I raised at the end of the last chapter, in his book *Ethics* Badiou explicitly defines the good as anything that conforms to the formal structure of a faithful subject, whilst evil is defined negatively, as anything that blocks, hinders or denies the event and its consequences: the true and the good are equivalent.[472] It does not matter what a faithful subject does, as its actions are defined as good solely on the basis of its structure, this uncritical uprightness of thought conforms to Deleuze's notion of good sense.[473] Although Badiou refines and develops this position in *Logics of Worlds*, such that the figures of evil become necessary subjective figures of the event, along with, but against, the faithful subject.[474] As Badiou states: '[T]here are truths, and there must be an active and identifiable form of their production (But also of what hinders or annuls this production). The name of this form is *subject*'.[475] Badiou calls these subjects, which hinder the production of a truth, the *reactive* and *obscure* subjects. This further development of the knot of subjects associated with an event is one of two major innovations in *Logics of Worlds*, the other being Badiou's development of a phenomenology.

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[471] DR, p. 132.
[472] E, p. 16.
[473] DR, pp. 131, 133 – 34.
[474] LoW, pp. 69 – 76. MP2, p. 112.
[475] LoW, p. 50.

The problem is that these new subjective figures simply reinforce the aspect of good sense embodied by the faithful subject. It will be useful to quickly summarise these two new forms of subjectivity, in order to see how they fail to touch on the key critical point of this chapter. This point was how the *faithful* production of generic sets is not necessarily the production of a truth, as the presentation of the generic sets in the generic extension of a situation is not always sufficient to produce a new truth, in the form of the negation of an axiom.

First, the reactive subject *denies* that the event has taken place. This subject tries to take account of the novelty produced by the activity of the post-evental faithful subject in terms of the situation as it is already given. This is a conservative response, one of *indifference* that refuses to see anything radically new in the post-evental situation. This form of subjectivity seeks to minimize the novelty produced by the faithful subject, and its mantra is reform rather than revolution. There is novelty, something new does emerge, but it is always seen as a progression and reform of the old order, rather than in terms of a radical break.[476]

Second, the obscure subject wants to *erase* all trace of the event; none of the novelty produced by the faithful subject can be retained, everything must be destroyed. The obscure subject is not indifferent, but *hostile* to the event. There is no effort to try and reconcile, subdue and placate the revolutionary fervour of the faithful subject, or to incorporate any of its novelty into the situation. The obscure subject desires the complete destruction and eradication of the faithful subject and the event. Whereas

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[476] LoW, pp. 54, 58.

the reactive subject might admit that something has happened, but nothing so monumental as a radical and revolutionary break, the obscure subject will deny that anything at all has happened.

Although this is an interesting development of Badiou's theory of the subject, it fails to tackle the criticism that I have put forward in this chapter. The faithful subject, due to its formal invariability as conforming to a particular application of the method of set theoretical forcing, remains unquestionably good, engaged in the production of a new body of truth. This idea of the body of a truth corresponds directly to the idea that it is the mere presentation of the generic sets in the generic extension of a situation, or world, that accounts for the novelty. As I have shown, in the case of the Axiom of Choice, the method of forcing does not achieve its aim in the generic extension. The Axiom of Choice holds in the generic extension, as it does in the original ground model. The subject conforming to this type of forcing procedure is not producing a body of truth, or the true; it is simply repeating the status quo of the original situation. The formal structure of the subject is not sufficient to guarantee that the body that it is engaged in producing is a new truth, or a novel extension. This problematizes the subject in an interesting way, raising the stakes of their commitment and putting their fidelity into constant question. The faithful subject is not simply tested by external factors, such as the subjects of reaction and obscurantism, but internally. The activity of the faithful subject might well be formally correct, but it could still be leading to nothing. Their commitment is more problematic than just resisting the temptation or coercion of reactive or obscurantist forces. This is why the 'good sense' that Badiou implies in the formalism of a faithful subject is open to criticism. Not just because it conforms neatly to a Deleuzian

critique, but that it also fails to do full justice to the risk involved in being a faithful subject. The 'good sense' of the form of forcing is not sufficient to guarantee the worth of the faithful subject's endeavour.

This critique creates further problems for Badiou's project, in *Logics of Worlds*, to separate ontology and phenomenology into the two realms of the mathematical ontology, of *Being and Event*, and the logical phenomenology, of *Logics of Worlds*. There is now a phenomenological problem at the heart of Badiou's ontology, if we restrict phenomenology to the basic claim that it is important *how* something appears rather than the fact that it does appear. The proof of the independence of the Axiom of Choice has shown that it is not sufficient to just present the generic sets in the generic extension, it is important *how* these sets are presented when they are distilled and concentrated in the symmetric submodel that sits between the ground model and the generic extension. The ontological realm is not indifferent to how its multiples are presented. Badiou tries to keep these two realms separate, mathematical ontology and logical phenomenology, allowing them to meet only in the *paradoxical* being that forms the site of an event.[477] Whereas my focus on the type of forcing associated with the independence of the Axiom of Choice, the two realms are thoroughly conflated in the formation of the symmetric submodel, the generic sets are presented *in such a way*, different from their presentation in the generic extension, that they make a difference. Badiou realizes the danger of such a conflation to his theory, recognizing in his essay 'One, Multiple, Multiplicities' that this is precisely Deleuze's approach:

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[477] LoW, p. 360.

[F]or Deleuze, singularity oscillates between a classificatory *phenomenology* of modes of actualization (and virtualization), on the one hand, and an *ontology* of the virtual, on the other.[478]

This oscillation leads Deleuze into producing an excess of analogical models.[479] For Badiou, this swarming excess detracts from and confuses the formal purity and separation of the ontological from the phenomenological. This formal separation, in the *consistent* functioning of the ontological and the phenomenological realms, is a necessary condition for the proper functioning of the good sense at the heart of the faithful subject.

Turning now to the question of common sense and the operations of philosophy itself. For Badiou this commonality resides in the contingency of our *human* perspective, I have already commented on this aspect, which Badiou shares with Sartre, in Chapter Two. Badiou deploys the common sense argument of 'that's the way it is' to justify his four genres of truth:

> The fact is that today – and on this point things haven't budged since Plato – we only know four types of truths: science (mathematics and physics), love, politics and the arts. We can compare this situation to Spinoza's statement about the attributes of substance (the 'expressions' of God): without doubt, Spinoza says, there is an infinity of attributes, but we humans know only two, thought and extension. For our part, we will say that there are perhaps an infinity of types of truths but we humans only know four.[480]

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[478] TW, p. 79, my italics.
[479] TW, p.79
[480] LoW, p. 71.

And this common unity is maintained by philosophy, as the activity that has these four genres as its conditions, and which maintains their unity.[481] Philosophy holds together these otherwise incompossible realms. This harmony between the genres, maintained by philosophy, is equivalent to the type of common sense that Deleuze criticizes in Kant's harmony between the faculties. For Badiou, this classification into four genres is not, and cannot be problematic, either in terms of their generation, continuation or separation from each other.

Philosophy becomes the practice of holding together this space, of the four genres, in order to be able to affirm that there are *truths*. This is a commitment that is consistent throughout Badiou's work from *Being and Event* onwards.[482] What I have shown throughout this chapter is that perhaps it is a commitment to the question of freedom that motivates philosophy, and though Badiou's project is worthy, giving us a new approach to the subject and truth, it condemns philosophy to a limited pastoral role. By making philosophy into to an act of seizing truths, and thereby constructing an operational category of Truth, philosophy becomes the activity of recognizing the *common* ground between the genres of truth. Furthermore, Badiou does not seek to problematize this ground, he only tries to affirm, maintain and preserve it. Throughout this chapter I have concentrated on just such a common aspect shared between the different genres of truth: the use of the full power of the Axiom of Choice deployed in the generic forcing procedure.

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[481] MP1, pp. 105, 141.
[482] MP1, p. 141. LoW, p. 4. MP2, p. 138.

By reading Deleuze within the set theoretical ontology of Badiou, I have demonstrated how philosophy, as concerned with the limits of freedom, is directly concerned with problematizing the relation between the four genres of truth. Philosophy is concerned with all four genres of truth, but as a disruptive force that threatens to collapse their differences, and in the production of a fifth genre, utilizing a different style of forcing, presents a situation, or world, in which no future subjective intervention would be possible. In the context of this chapter, Deleuze makes a problem of Badiou's conception of philosophy by producing a fifth genre, which concentrates on that which is necessary and unquestioned in all the other genres of truth, the Axiom of Choice, this then becomes a non-subjective or, perhaps, a post-subjective truth.

Having looked at this criticism of Badiou, from the perspective Deleuze, it is time to conclude this chapter with a criticism of Deleuze. Just as Badiou is single minded in placing philosophy solely within the hands of the subject, Deleuze seems guilty of the opposite. For Deleuze thinking can only really happen beyond the subject, such that philosophy would become *only* this new fifth genre, philosophy would be limited to an endless pursuit of the overcoming of subjectivity. This is because Deleuze sees something fundamentally unique about the space, or plane, in which this escape occurs, for him it is an escape from formalism. In the closing part of this chapter I want to problematize this idea of Deleuze's, before turning to a thorough critique in the final chapter of this thesis, where I will concentrate on the role of subjectivity.

5.6 Chance: One or Multiple Planes? A Critique of Deleuze

I will begin by returning to Badiou's own distinction between his position and Deleuze's in terms of the key concept of the dice throw. The motif of the dice throw highlights the difference between their conceptions of contingency and chance, which I will link to the two types of absolute contingency introduced above. The aim will be to prepare for the next chapter where I will demonstrate how Deleuze misappropriates important aspects of the axiomatic conception of set theory and model theory, which he uses to understand Capitalism, but that these errors are not fatal, and his critique can be rehabilitated within the extended framework that I have been examining throughout this chapter. The consequences of this rehabilitation will be that Deleuze's conception of revolutionary thought, revolution and utopia does not, and cannot, escape an axiomatic capture.[483]

5.7 Mallarmé and The Dice Throw: Chance

Deleuze's use of the dice throw as a metaphor for the affirmation of chance is used consistently throughout his work, to take one example from his late book, *The Fold*:

> Nietzsche and Mallarmé have rewarded us with the revelation of a Thought-world that throws dice. But for them the world lacks principle, has lost its principles. That

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[483] ATP, p. 437. WP, pp. 99, 106.

is why the roll of the dice is the power of affirming Chance, or thinking chance in sum, which is above all not a principle, but the absence of all principle.[484]

Badiou's main criticism to this conception of Chance, the affirmation of all of chance at once, is made clear in his essay on *The Fold*: 'Chance is not the *absence* of any principle, but the "the *negation* of any principle" and this "nuance" separates Mallarmé from Deleuze'.[485] For Badiou, Deleuze cannot evoke *both* Nietzsche and Mallarmé, rather it is a choice: *either* Nietzsche or Mallarmé.[486] The affirmation of all of Chance at once is the Nietzschean-Deleuzian conception of the eternal return. While the closing lines of Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés*: 'All Thought emits a Throw of the Dice', is a clear indication, for Badiou, that chance is 'the predicate of the contingency of *each* event'.[487] There is not one unique throw, but a multiplicity of throws. The uniqueness of each throw, or event, is precisely played out in the subjective endeavour to affirm chance step-by-step, rather than all-at-once, or in sum. For Badiou, the process of forcing gains its universal character in two ways: first, *every* set must be questioned as to whether it belongs to the site of the event, as no criteria can be given for this belonging, and, second, the set constituting the site of the event partially satisfies *every* conditioned, or constructible, set. This second point highlights Badiou's notion that chance negates every principle, rather than being without principle. The set is generic because it shares something with every conditioned set, but it never fully falls under any specific condition, and therefore

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[484] Fold, p. 67.

[485] Badiou, Alain, 'The Fold' in <u>Giles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy</u>, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, (Routledge 1994) , p. 66.

[486] CoB, pp. 75-76.

[487] CoB, p. 76. Mallarmé, Stéphane, <u>The meaning of Mallarmé : a bilingual edition of his Poésies and Un coup de dés</u>, trans. Charles Chadwick, (Scottish Cultural Press, 1996), p. 144.

negates every conditioned set. In this infinite task we see Badiou's fixation on the generic extension as the place where change happens.

For Badiou, Mallarmé's late experimental poem *Un coup de dés* acts as the central point of divergence between his and Deleuze's understanding of chance, especially in the form of the dice throw. The poem charts a shipwreck in a storm, and it is the figure of the captain of the ship, who clenches a set of dice in his hand as the ship sinks, that is the focus of Badiou's reading. It is the captain's refusal to cast the dice that leads to the climax of the poem, distilled in the following two capitalized lines:

NOTHING WILL HAVE TAKEN PLACE BUT THE PLACE

EXCEPT PERHAPS A CONSTELLATION [488]

Badiou thinks that Deleuze's emphasis falls on the first line, subjectivity, in the form of the captain, is swallowed up in the event of the storm:

Across the abolished significations and the lost denotations, the void is the site of sense or of the event which harmonizes with its own nonsense, in *the place where the place only takes place*.[489]

Deleuze's originality comes in reading this abolition of the human, or subjectivity, as something positive and achievable. Thinking, as a dice throw, is a creative moment that affirms chance, or the outside, in sum, and goes beyond subjectivity.[490] The self-destruction of both man and poetry in Mallarmé's work is not a tragic suicide, or its

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[488] Ibid. pp. 142, 144.
[489] LS, p. 137. My italics.
[490] Deleuze, Giles, Foucault, trans. Seán Hand, (Minnesota University Press, 1988), p. 117.

ironic impossibility, but a moment of pure creation.[491] This is the Deleuzian event that emits a non-subjective selection of singularities that are dispersed on a pre-subjective surface. This is the symmetric submodel composed of the generic sets acting as elements, or stars, composing a space in which the Axiom of Choice fails. Here we can see that this non-subjective plane is not *reduced* to determinism, but rather *exceeds* a subjective affirmation of contingency in the form of a self-affirmation of the whole of chance.

This interpretation undermines a key point of Deleuze's own formulation of the dice throw, that there is only ever one unique throw of the dice.[492] By extending Badiou's set theoretical framework to incorporate Deleuze, it becomes clear that there must be multiple throws, as there is not one unique submodel of set theory in which the Axiom of Choice fails, but many. From a subjective point of view all the 'throws' can be made to appear indistinguishable. This is possible as anything can be deduced from a contradiction, in this case using the *inconsistent* submodel that includes the Axiom of Choice. But the *consistent* submodel, excluding the Axiom of Choice, is clearly distinguishable from another such submodel produced relative to a different ground model and generic extension. This is due to the way that contingency/chance has been defined, in terms of the pure extensionality of non-constructible sets. Each submodel, relative to its ground model and generic extension, presents more than enough structure to consistently differentiate between them. The single throw, or the

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[491] For this tragic/ironic interpretation see Sartre's unfinished study of Mallarmé, <u>Mallarmé, or the Poet of Nothingness</u>, trans. Ernest Sturm, (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991): 'Since the poem is both the suicide of man and of Poetry… Being must ultimately reabsorb this death; the moment of Poetry's fulfilment must correspond to the moment of its annihilation. Thus, the truth these poems have come to embody is Nothingness', p. 142.

[492] LS, p. 180.

univocity of Being, is only ever a subjective claim, often perceived as nihilism. The ideal game is indeed without a player, but it is not unique, there are many such games.

5.8 Radical Reworking of the Axiomatic in Deleuze

This model is both a radical and critical interpretation of Deleuze and not an attempt at a faithful reading. Some of the consequences of this modification do not sit comfortably with many of Deleuze's key claims. For example, it is clear that there is no single Event, in which all events communicate; there is simply a multiplicity of events. The theory of the Univocity of being must be rejected, that is, it can no longer be taken to be the unstructured *non-situation* in which events make their selection. The site of an event must be strictly *in* a situation. Even though Deleuze explicitly rejects this solution, borrowed from Badiou, as a reintroduction of transcendence into an immanent philosophy.[493] This sacrifice of immanence is a charge that Badiou would accept, *if it were necessary*, for the sake of the event and subjectivity.[494] But this difference between these two thinkers rests on two points of contention: the first is that the event occurs within a situation, a point that I argue Deleuze must concede to Badiou. The second, is that there are only four genres of truth with philosophy acting as a mediating practice that relies on the four genres as its conditions, here I agree with Deleuze and Guattari's critical point that 'philosophy thus seems to float in an empty transcendence, as the unconditioned concept that finds the totality of its generic conditions in the functions (science, poetry, politics, and love)'.[495]

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[493] WP, pp. 151 – 52.
[494] CoB, pp. 91 – 92.
[495] WP, p. 152.

In the model outlined above, the shared aspect of a basic set theoretical ontology means that this Deleuzian position must treat the Event, or Being, in the same way that Badiou does, that is, to call it *inconsistent* multiplicity, and radically subtract it from all ontological discourse.[496] The subordination of Deleuze to this *law* of the multiple, though alien, does not reduce Deleuze's position to Badiou's, as the above discussions have shown.[497] Rather it opens a path of communication between the two. Though this "Deleuzian" position is still anti-subjective it can no longer uphold the double claim made in *Difference and Repetition* concerning the eternal return that: 'it causes neither the *condition* nor the *agent* to return'.[498] Although the subject, or agent, is set upon a path of self-annihilation in pursuing a course of action that will lead to the failure of the Axiom of Choice, the majority of the conditions remain, such as the set theoretical ontology and the specific ground model and generic extension relative to the submodel. Against Badiou's own claim, this Deleuzian form of the event, which prompts the formation of a pathological subject, does occur *in* a situation, and its final destination is another modified situation; no longer the world-to-come of the generic extension but that of the symmetric submodel.[499]

This modification allows us to move beyond the 'insuperable conflict of philosophical interest' that Brassier identified. To return to the question as to whether the generic sets are themselves truths, or whether the truth is *revealed* only in the model where the problematic, or questioned, axiom fails. Badiou's narrow use of one style of forcing, the style first used to prove the independence of the Continuum Hypothesis, leads him to conflate the original integration and presentation of the generic sets with

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[496] BE, p. 25 and Meditation Five.
[497] BE, p. 25.
[498] DR, p. 90.
[499] CoB, p. 75.

the truth itself; the truth here being understood as that which is truly novel or new. In these cases the truth is the failure of a given axiom. Recalling that, for Badiou, this process of integration and presentation is the infinite process called a truth procedure, while the subject is a finite portion of this process. But, as we have seen, the style of forcing associated with the independence of the Axiom of Choice produces a generic extension where this axiom also holds. This model of forcing undermines the criticism that Badiou makes against Deleuze's claim for the indiscerniblity of truths. Badiou states:

> [I]f a truth is indiscernible, it is not at all so with respect to other truths (from which it is, on the contrary, doubly discernible: by the situation in which it is inscribed, and by the event that initiates it), but with respect to the resources of discernment proper to the situation in which it originates.[500]

With the style of forcing that proves the independence of the Axiom of Choice, the truth, in this case the independence of the axiom, remains as indiscernible in 'the situation in which it is inscribed' (the generic extension) as it does in the original situation (the ground model). The truth only becomes apparent in the symmetric submodel, which appears between the ground model and the generic extension, a middle that can only appear *after* the generic extension has been posited. In Badiou's own philosophy, this presents an impossible situation, because the truth procedure is infinite and it can never end. If it could end, if it could complete itself then the subject would also end, being only a finite portion of this process. The truth, revealed in the distilled symmetric submodel, would have to be formed and posited by a

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[500] CoB, p. 75.

process other than a *subjective* process and would occur *after*, or *beyond*, any possible subject of the given truth procedure.

It is to these two types of subjectivity, Badiou's self-sustained subject, and my Deleuzian self-overcoming subject, and the non-subjective process that selects the non-subjective plane that comes after this self-overcoming subject that I now want to turn to.

6: Axiomatics in Deleuze and Badiou

6.0 Introduction

Following on from the previous chapter, after having initially associated Deleuze's philosophy with the type of set theoretical forcing used to prove the independence of the Axiom of Choice, I now want to make a more precise connection. To do this I will look at Deleuze's work with Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*. This is in order to look at their proposal for a type of thought that moves beyond the subject; a non-subjective process of selection that they call *diagrammatic* and that they associate with the *abstract machine*.[501] This examination will involve an in depth look at Deleuze and Guattari's use of axiomatics and model theory as a critique of capitalism and thought, bound within the confines of language. This analysis will lead to a critique of their approach, along the lines outlined in the previous chapter, and will situate their own account of radical change, in the form of diagrammatic thought and the abstract machine, within an axiomatic context. This will finally culminate in my proposing two types of subject, one, linked to Badiou, that achieves radical change through a *conscious* affirmation of the event, the other type of subject, linked to Deleuze and Guattari, will be surpassed, or overcome, by the event. The conscious affirmation of this second subject will be undercut by the real *unconscious* source of change, the non-subjective selection that occurs beyond the limits of the subject.

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[501] ATP, pp. 141 – 144.

A key term used by Deleuze and Guattari throughout *A Thousand Plateaus* is deterritorialization, at the outset of this discussion I want to make clear what I take this term to mean. With reference to the above discussions, I want to take deterritorialization as any process that seeks to undermine a conditioned notion of the multiple, in favour of an unconditioned multiple, and which puts this unconditioned multiple to work to create something new, to produce real change.

The controversial aspect of the following argument will be to fix the operation of the abstract machine and the diagram *within* the consistency of axiomatic set theory.[502] Deleuze and Guattari give the explicit prohibition that: 'Above all, diagrammaticism should not be confused with an operation of the axiomatic type'.[503] But, from my analysis in this chapter, I propose that although the plane of consistency, laid out by the diagram and abstract machine, is in excess of *both* the formal limitations of constructible, conditioned, sets and the Badiouian subjective operation that utilizes the Axiom of Choice on non-constructible, unconditioned, sets, it does not exceed the potential of a more general set theoretical ontology based on ZF rather than ZFC. Key to this move will be Deleuze and Guattari's extended discussion of Capitalism as an axiomatic in the chapter '7000 B.C.: Apparatus of Capture'. One of the aims of both *A Thousand Plateaus* and their final work *What is Philosophy?* is to provide examples of resistance to Capitalism through strategies of creation, as creation is a way to escape from axiomatic capture.[504] It is the power of the continuum, a technical

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[502] ATP, pp. 57, 143 – 144.
[503] ATP, p. 143.
[504] ATP, pp. 472 – 73. WP, p. 108.

phrase familiar from Badiou's work and Chapter Four of this thesis, which eludes and disrupts the axiomatic capture performed by Capitalism.[505]

To prepare for this discussion, a basic clarification of what constitutes the Capitalistic system in *A Thousand Plateaus* will be necessary. Prior to the extended discussion of Capitalism as an axiomatic, Deleuze and Guattari discuss Capitalism as a mixed semiotic, a mixture of two specific regimes of signs: the *signifying*, and the *postsignifying*, or *subjective*, regimes. These two regimes tend to define, depending on their mixture, the political structures of despotic, authoritarian or Capitalistic states.[506] Capitalism is the perfect integration, or reciprocal relation, between the despotic signifying regime and the authoritarian subjective regime.[507]

6.1 Regimes of Signs: Signifying and Postsignifying

To begin with we must understand what these two regimes are, in their pure state, if we are to understand how they come to be mixed and affect each other. It is in the chapter 'B.C.-A.D. 70: On Several Regimes of Signs' that Deleuze and Guattari define a whole range of regimes of signs. They begin by defining a regime of signs as: 'any specific *formalization* of expression'.[508] These formalized systems of expression are called strata, and the sign can function as an index, icon or symbol, depending on the specific regime in which it operates.[509]

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[505] ATP, p. 570. n. 60.
[506] ATP, pp. 144, 451, 456 – 57.
[507] ATP, p. 182.
[508] ATP, p. 111.
[509] ATP, p. 142.

The signifying regime presents a despotic regime that seeks to uproot any simplistic pre-signifying notion of correspondence between signifying sign and signified object, and subordinate this process to a centralized interpretation. Deleuze and Guattari call these two aspects of the signifying regime: signifiance and interpretosis.[510] Signifiance is the process of the deterritorialization of the sign, a process whereby the sign's reference to a signified is replaced by a signifying chain, which refers one sign to another in an indefinite or infinite chain.[511] Instead of a multiplicity of signified things corresponding to the signifiers, there comes to be only one signified. What is signified by the constant referral of one sign to another, and the chains and networks of signifiers produced by this process, is nothing other than the process itself. Signification, as the referral of one sign to another, becomes:

> [An] amorphous continuum that for the moment plays the role of the "signified", but it continually glides beneath the signifier, for which it serves only as a medium or wall: the specific forms of all contents dissolve in it.[512]

The chains of signifiers also form larger stable structures such as networks and circuits, which begin to form connections between each other. The amorphous continuum can then begin to play the role of a 'centre' for these various structures, which then form a series of circles or a spiral emanating from this centre. The resulting regime becomes arboreal, as opposed to rhizomatic. But this transformation of the amorphous continuum into a centre can only occur due to a perceived crisis within the process of deterritorialization itself.

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[510] ATP, p. 114.
[511] ATP, p. 112.
[512] ATP, p. 112.

The process of the deterritorialization of signs can be seen as a process of ever-increasing entropy, as a closed system it will eventually run out of steam as all signs become equal.[513]   The process requires new signs to incorporate into its flow, deterritorializing their connection to a simple signified, and reterritorializing on the amorphous continuum of signifiance.   Naming and designating a centre gives the signifying regime a strategy for gaining new material to fend off entropy; the strategy of expansion.[514]   The amorphous continuum can only become a centre if a privileged structure is associated with the continuum, a structure that designates both the centre and its own privileged proximity as the *closest*.   This privileged structure then orientates the hierarchy relative to itself.   The task of organizing this hierarchy becomes the role of the bureaucratic interpretive priest, who can now give a direction to this expansion, as the expansion from a centre.   The centre also changes, from an amorphous continuum into the face of the despot: 'The despot or god brandishes the solar face that is his entire body, as the body of the signifier'.[515]   The face gives the signifier substance, which is necessary to fuel the processes of interpretation/expansion.[516]   Through a process of expansion there is nothing that signifiance and interpretation cannot incorporate, nothing that cannot be deterritorialized and brought within the regime of signification.   This model of expansion guarantees new material for the regime.   The amorphous continuum as despotic face constitutes the site of reterritorialization for the deterritorialized signs, and, as such, the limit of deterritorialization.[517]   The absolute limits of this system tend to come from within, from the already decoded flows of signifiers that escape the

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[513] ATP, p. 114.
[514] ATP, p. 114.
[515] ATP, p. 115.
[516] ATP, p. 115.
[517] ATP, p. 115.

overcoding reterritorialization of the centre; not all of the deterritorialized flows are recaptured. Deterritorialization is not absolute; it is always *relative* to the figure of the despot. Deleuze and Guattari call a process of *absolute* deterritorialization a line of flight, a process that will elude capture by the signifying regime.[518] The despotic regime's response to such unruly lines of flight is to cast them out, or to block and deny them; hence the line of flight is occupied by the figure of the exile or scapegoat.[519]

These lines of flight can become *absolute positive* lines of escape *relative* to the signifying regime, but to the extent to which these lines of flight structure their own regime, their own strata, they become absolute *negative* deterritorialization in themselves.[520] The line of flight becomes a point of subjectification, the point of departure for the segmented subjective line.[521] This is the *postsignifying*, or *subjective*, regime, which, Deleuze and Guattari claims, 'operates *by linear and temporal succession of finite proceedings, rather than by the simultaneity of circles in unlimited expansion*'.[522]

The two formations that condition the subjective regime, forcing it into a finite and segmented structure, are the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement.[523] The point of subjectification is the line of flight as an absolute moment of deterritorialization, a free moment that cannot be absorbed and subordinated to a centre of significance. This line of flight is sustained, instead, by a subjective passion,

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[518] ATP, p. 116.
[519] ATP, p. 116.
[520] ATP, pp. 133 – 34.
[521] ATP, p. 127.
[522] ATP, p. 120.
[523] ATP, p. 127.

or faith, committed to this absolute deterritorialization, as an event: a radical break and new beginning. The subject, in their passionate commitment, is no doubt productive, but, due to their finitude, a *normalizing* force begins to affect its activity.[524] This gives rise to the second subject, the subject of the statement, which appears as the *reason* for the subject of enunciation's action, a reason that was *hidden* in the radical beginning of the positive deterritorialization of the line of flight. As the subject's commitment shifts from its radical *beginning*, in the line of flight, to its *end*, the normalized structure that emerges from its own activity, it posits this emergent reality as a dominant reality that was always already there. The first subject (of enunciation) recoils into the second subject (of the statement), and the mental reality of the first collapses into this second, dominant reality.[525]

Having produced and established this duality, between mental reality and a dominant reality, the subjective process of the subject of enunciation finds the source of its continued productive activity in this dominant reality, rather than in the point of subjectification of the original, problematic, line of flight. It is now assumed that the differences between the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement can be reconciled through the addition and/or modification of these normative structures. The linear process of the subject of enunciation is segmented into finite sections, or productions, through the drawing off of difference in the form of normative structures; the subject of enunciation coincides with the subject of the statement. The infinite line of flight remains ultimately blocked by the dual dynamic of the constant recoiling into each other of the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement. This process of normativity could also be called a selection of transcendental

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[524] ATP, p. 130.
[525] ATP, p. 129.

principles, and it is an idea that we find clearly expressed in *Difference and Repetition*:

> The transcendental principle does not govern any domain but gives the domain to be governed to a given empirical principle; it accounts for the subjection of a domain to a principle. The domain is created by difference of intensity [line of flight, or absolute deterritorialization], and given by this difference to an empirical principle according to which and in which the difference itself is cancelled.[526]

One of the ways that Deleuze and Guattari try to criticize Badiou's philosophy is to equate it with this model of a postsignifying regime. Badiou's model of the subject, given in *Being and Event*, is indeed a finite segment of an infinite process, but Deleuze and Guattari's belief that all such finite procedures result in normative structures that must betray the original difference or intensity of the event is unfounded. In their final book together, Deleuze and Guattari address Badiou's subject directly, only to find it limited due to its linearity: 'By starting from a neutralized base, the set, which indicates any multiplicity whatever, Badiou draws up a line that is *single*, although it may be very complex'.[527] But, Badiou's subject neither conforms to the play between the two subjective figures of the postsignifying regime, nor to the claim, put forward in *Difference and Repetition*, that intensity is covered over and difference is cancelled.

The process of forcing, especially Badiou's use of it, is a specifically anti-normative process. It is true that the process depends on normative, conditioned/constructible

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[526] DR, p. 241.
[527] WP, p. 152. My emphasis.

sets, in order to incorporate the unconditioned/non-constructible, un-normalizable, sets that form the site of the event. As was outlined above, the process works through a partial satisfaction, but ultimate negation, of every conditioned constructible set in the situation. Chance is affirmed not by the absence of principles, but through the negation of every principle.

Deleuze and Guattari's more important criticisms of Badiou relates to his use of axiomatic set theory and his own definition of philosophy. It is to the first criticism, based on the claimed implicit failure of axiomatic systems to express the true creative potential of thought that I will now turn.

6.2 Regimes of Signs: Mixtures and Transformations

Before beginning a discussion about Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of Capitalism as an axiomatic, two further issues concerning regimes of signs need to be addressed. First, how every regime of signs is always already a *mixture* of regimes, and, second, how every regime can be *transformed* into any other regime.[528] Every regime of signs exhibits both of these dimensions. The above analysis of the signifying and subjective regimes gives a clear hint of this in the way that a line of flight escaping from a signifying regime, which has its *focus* on a centre of signifiance, is no longer cancelled, excluded or blocked, but becomes its own *focus* in a post-signifying subjective regime. A

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[528] ATP, p. 136.

static snapshot of the postsignifying regime captures fragments and traces of the signifying regime from which the process of subjectification flees. And a *dynamic* appraisal can take the process of subjectification as a process of purification, one that is *transforming*, or translating, the signifying regime into the postsignifying regime. Of course, the opposite can be the case too; the postsignifying regime can take its own normative, or transcendental, productions as a fixed truth, a new centre and begin to transform itself into a signifying regime. What is more, for Deleuze and Guattari, these are not the only regimes of signs, there are, at least, pre- and counter-signifying regimes, which can also be added to the mix.

There are four traits that characterize all regimes of signs: first, a *generative* assessment of the mixture of regimes present within a given regime, a *tracing* of the regimes which make up the concrete regime, and, second, a *transformative* aspect, which examines how these regimes are being transformed into each other. [529] This second aspect is what Deleuze and Guattari call a transformational *map*, with 'map' here being used in the mathematical sense of a mapping, or transformational function.[530]

It is this transformational aspect that forms the focus of the third *diagrammatic* trait. The diagram is an attempt to sketch the *abstract machine* that is at work in the process of transforming one regime of signs into another. These processes of transformation

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[529] ATP, pp. 145-46.
[530] ATP, pp. 146.

are never complete; to the extent that one regime can be taken as being completely subordinated or reduced to another. This is clear from the mixture of regimes that are present in any given concrete regime. Even if a regime is not engaged in an active process of transformation it remains a latent *potentiality* within the current dominant regime. Deleuze and Guattari describe this survey as: 'making the *diagram* of the abstract machines that are in play in each case, either as potentialities or a as effective emergences'.[531] It is this irreducibility that makes the abstract machine real; it is not a partial or temporary structure that is only in play whilst one regime is fully transformed into another. As such the diagram, or abstract machine, is something other than a sign as it always operates *between* regimes and never fully *within* one regime. The diagram is a *particle-sign* freed from formalization.[532] It is the abstract machine that operates in this diagrammatic way; its function is to extract these particle-signs that retain 'the most deterritorialized content and the most deterritorialized expression'.[533] These particle signs are capable of conjugating regimes in processes of transformation. Therefore there is no diagrammatic regime of signs; these diagrams, or particle-signs, cannot be formalized and, therefore, they do not form strata. Instead, the abstract machine lays out a non-formalized *plane of consistency*; this plane is a smooth space, a space of pure continuity.[534] It is this notion that the plane of consistency forms a pure continuum, a continuum of intensities, events or continuous variation, which will be of most interest to us here, as it is only on the plane of consistency that *absolute positive* deterritorialization is achieved.[535]

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[531] ATP, p. 146.
[532] ATP, pp. 142, 145.
[533] ATP, p. 141.
[534] ATP, pp. 142, 509, 511.
[535] ATP, pp. 134, 507.

The final trait is the *machinic* trait that moves from the survey of the diagrammatic to effectuate the operation of abstract machines within a given concrete regime, to put into effect a *program* of transformation.[536]

To bring this back to my discussion, it is important to note how, for Deleuze and Guattari, real change only happens on a special *non-formalized* plane, the plane of consistency. And they describe the process and operation of the diagram as *machinic*, as the functioning of an abstract machine. For me, these aspects of the plane of consistency and the machinic element correspond to the special character of a set theoretical model in which the Axiom of Choice fails, and the process that produces it. If we recall from the previous chapter, the manner of proof used to prove the independence of the Axiom of Choice does not simply present generic sets in the generic extension produced by the process of forcing. A further step is required to re-deploy the generic sets in what was called a *symmetric sub-model*, which lies between the original situation and the extended situation of the generic extension. This symmetric submodel, as the space in which the Axiom of Choice fails, can only be produced *after* a Badiouian process of forcing, and the selection of the sets that composed this model came *after* a Badiouian subject. This process, which does not correspond to the *choice* of a subject, I want to call machinic, in the sense that Deleuze and Guattari give to it. This is in conflict with the presentation of the plane of consistency as a non-formalized plane. The symmetric submodel, which comes *between* the ground model and its generic extension, is clearly a *formal* system and must therefore form a stratum. In the following discussion it will be essential to reinterpret Deleuze and Guattari's description of the plane of consistency as a pure

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[536] ATP, p. 146 – 47.

continuum, or continuity, that escapes formalization in terms of a model of a formal axiomatic. The link between the symmetric submodel, in which the Axiom of Choice fails, and the plane of consistency will be made on the basis of the fate of the continuum in this submodel.

6.3 Problems of the Continuum: Well Ordering and the Non-denumerable

In order to follow through this discussion it will be necessary to recap some of the issues examined in Chapter 4 of this thesis, namely the concept of well ordering and the question concerning the power of the continuum, in the form of the Continuum Hypothesis. Only then can the significance of one of the alternative definitions of the Axiom of Choice be understood. This equivalent statement of Axiom of Choice is known as Zermelo's Well-Ordering Theorem, and it states that every set can be well ordered.[537]

To recall, from Chapter 4, the everyday understanding of well ordering is the ability to place the elements of the set in a *discrete* order, like the natural numbers. The set can be ordered in such a way that every element of the set has a discrete *successor*. This is *not* the same as making the set *denumerable*, which suggests that the *index* that is being used is either the natural numbers, or some finite number. The set of the natural numbers is simply the *first* infinite ordinal number. In order for a set to be well ordered it need only be possible to uniquely index it to *some* ordinal number.[538]

[537] Jech, Thomas, Set Theory, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 39.
[538] Ibid. p. 15.

The problem of the size, or power, of the continuum was also examined in Chapter 4.[539]   Here Cantor tried to reconcile his two methods for producing new cardinal numbers: the first, through his three principles of ordinal generation, which produced a succession of infinite limit ordinals and their corresponding infinite cardinal numbers: ω, ω_1, ω_2… (Ordinals) and $\aleph_0$, $\aleph_1$, $\aleph_2$… (Cardinals). The second method produced cardinal numbers directly, by applying the Power Set Axiom. The Continuum Hypothesis was an attempt to directly relate these two methods by proposing that: $\wp(\aleph_0) = \aleph_1$, the power, or size, of the continuum was equivalent to the second infinite cardinal. This shows that the continuum can be well ordered by at least one ordinal number: ω_1, corresponding to $\aleph_1$. Paul Cohen's subsequent proof that the Continuum Hypothesis is an independent axiom of ZFC set theory meant that ω_1 was not the only possible well ordering of the continuum. It is therefore the Axiom of Choice, in the form of the Well-Ordering principle, which guarantees that the continuum can be well ordered in any model of ZFC, as the continuum described by $\wp(\aleph_0)$ is a valid set. The continuum is not uniquely determined within the system of ZFC as a whole, but it is uniquely determined in *each* model of ZFC.

The point here is that this ability to determine and well order the continuum is equivalent to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of segmentation, which characterizes strata. Within a model of set theory the continuum is captured and subjected to a determination that renders it segmented; flattened onto a discrete and ordered ordinal number. For Deleuze and Guattari this highlights why axiomatic systems pose such a threat to the creative thought of absolute positive deterritorialization: the continuum is not captured once and for all, but multiple times in a variety of models.   The

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[539] See section 4.3.

continuum does not escape determination in the axiomatic system, as it is subject to an infinite number of determinations in its models. My criticism will be that Deleuze and Guattari wrongly target the axiomatic system in general, whereas their real target should be a specific axiom, the Axiom of Choice. This is because where the Axiom of Choice fails, the full indiscerniblity of the continuum asserts itself immanently within the model; the continuum can no longer be well ordered and subjected to a linear segmentation, or stratification.[540] The plane of consistency is not, therefore an escape from formalization, but rather a formalization that escapes from every presupposition of subjectivity, even the minimal condition of the Axiom of Choice. But, as we have seen from the method of forcing examined in the previous chapter, this procedure uses the subjective figure, Badiou's subjective figure in this case, to overcome subjectivity itself. The full significance of this will be examined below.

6.4 Axiomatics as a Threat

Deleuze and Guattari react to the ever-present threat of an axiomatic conception of deterritorialization by immediately differentiating their four-fold method of pragmatics (tracing, map, diagram and machine) from any system of the axiomatic type.

> Above all, diagrammaticism should not be confused with an operation of the axiomatic type. Far from drawing creative lines of flight and conjugating traits of

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[540] Tiles, Mary, The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), p. 191.

> positive deterritorialization, axiomatics blocks all lines, subordinates them to a punctual system…[541]

The threat that an axiomatic poses is to reduce the positive deterritorialization of the diagram to a universal conception of transformation, which would make the regimes isomorphic to one another.[542] Reducing the plane of consistency to yet another strata. The isomorphy is not the strict mathematical notion of a one-to-one order preserving function, rather it appeals to the relation between an axiomatic system and its models. This becomes clear when the regimes of signs are applied to social formations. Deleuze and Guattari state: 'To the extent that capitalism constitutes an axiomatic… all States and all social formations tend to become *isomorphic* in their capacity as models of realization'.[543] Every model is an *interpretation* of the axioms within, or by, a given structure.[544] This twofold relation between a set of axioms and its models of realization form the mixed regime of *faciality*, combining both the signifying white wall and the post-signifying, subjective, black holes:

> Our semiotic of modern White Men, the semiotic of capitalism, has attained this state of mixture in which signifiance and subjectification effectively interpenetrate. Thus it is in this semiotic that faciality, or the white wall/black hole system, assumes its full scope.[545]

The regime of faciality is to be feared as signifiance and subjectification combine together to eradicate the efficacy of all other regimes, such as the pre- and counter-

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[541] ATP, p. 143.
[542] ATP, p. 436.
[543] ATP, p. 436.
[544] Potter, Michael, <u>Set Theory and its Philosophy</u>, (Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 73 – 74.
[545] ATP, p. 182.

signifying regimes, not through an eradication of those regimes but through their incorporation.[546]   Deleuze and Guattari are serious when they claim that their axiomatic theory of capital is literal and not metaphorical.[547]   Each model of realization is simultaneously both *enslavement* to a signifying regime and a *subjection* to a post-signifying regime: a state both authoritarian and totalitarian.[548] The excesses of the two systems are coupled to, and managed by, each other, there is no space left for a fully positive line of flight.

6.5 Models of an Axiomatic System

The first point that must be dealt with is how to square the two aspects of faciality, the signifying and post-signifying regimes, with a formal axiomatic.   Taking the signifying regime first, with its dual aspects of interpretation and signifiance, the face of the despot, which forms the centre of this regime, corresponds to the general approach of forming axiomatic systems.   Here set theory will make an excellent example, it is clear that there are many different formalizations of set theory: ZF, ZFC (with choice) and ZFA (with atoms), to name but a few that have been examined in this thesis.   These are all variations of a general commitment to an axiomatic approach to set theory, coupled with the, now mainly historical, project of establishing set theory as a foundation for all mathematics. This conception remains despotic, despite the multiple interpretations, as long as the non-logical symbol of belonging $\in$ remains as a foundational presupposition for all possible theories of set

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[546] ATP, pp. 180, 459.
[547] ATP, pp. 454, 455, 461.
[548] ATP, p. 459.

theory and an axiomatic approach to its study is not questioned. This is how the *language* of set theory, embodied in the symbol of belonging, acts as a centre, or despotic face, and limits deterritorialization: the response to the problem(s) of mathematics *must* be posed in an axiomatic set theory, with more, less or different axioms. For Deleuze and Guattari, the same is true of capitalism: the response to the problem(s) of a world market *must* be posed in an axiomatic response formed in the *language* of Capitalism .[549] Each axiomatization, and the models which support and justify them, are interpretations of mathematics, or the world market. Although certain equivalent, or identical, axioms always seem to be present, there are some *minimal* conditions. For example, Deleuze and Guattari propose an axiom of *unequal exchange* as an indispensable axiom of capitalism.[550] These different axiomatic interpretations face toward the centre, the face of the despot, as various expressions of this reality.

The aspect of signifiance is performed by the different axiomatic theories of capital and their models. This is one of the main developments of Deleuze and Guattari's theory of capitalism as an axiomatic theory made between *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. In *Anti-Oedipus* the discussion is consistently of capitalism as *an* axiomatic system, in the singular, and its mode of development as a proliferation of new axioms.[551] In *A Thousand Plateaus* the comparison with the use of axiomatic theories in mathematics is taken more literally. There is no longer a single capitalist axiomatic but *multiple* axiomatic theories of capital, with individual states being models of these theories. Capitalism now drives toward a double proliferation: a

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[549] ATP, p. 436.
[550] ATP, p. 468.
[551] AE, pp. 250-253.

production of new axiomatic theories *and* the models of those theories. Here the two aspects of signifiance that were noted earlier come to light; the separate theories form a hierarchy of circles of interpretation around the face of the despot and the indeterminate number of models of each theory form the infinite signifying chains of each circle. Only as a *whole* do the theories and models of capitalism act as a signifying regime, as a whole they *represent* the reality of capitalism. This is one of the key strengths of capitalism, its ability to bring together incompossible, or mutually exclusive, systems: no matter how different states and their ideologies are, they are all reflections of a world market. Taken *individually* each theory turns towards its own models, and it is this reciprocal relation, between a theory and its model, that becomes important.

This shift of emphasis plays on the two senses that the word model can have. The first originates from the signifying pole. Here it is the axiomatic theories and their models together that provide a model *of* a naïve external reality: the reality of mathematics or of the world market. This idea that the model is a model *of* something else, either a descriptive model of a pre-given reality, or as a prescriptive model that acts as a plan for how that reality should be, always leaves the model in a duality with a reality that it tries to represent. This transcendent reality causes its model to enter into an impossible process of convergence with it; either the model must conform to reality (science), or reality must conform to its models (politics).[552] The second sense that the word model has is specific to its use in model theory, the mathematical discipline that Deleuze and Guattari are clearly referencing by describing separate

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[552] Deleuze's critique of this type of representational thought has been constant throughout his work, for example, compare the eight postulates of the dogmatic image of thought from chapter four of *Difference and Repetition* (p. 167) and the eight principles of the signifying regime in *A Thousand Plateaus* (p. 117).

states as *models of realization* of the axiomatic theories of capital. This is a distinction that Badiou also uses in his early work *The Concept of Model*.[553] And this formal use of model is carried into the heart of Badiou's theory of events and subjectivity found in *Being and Event*. It is now the model itself that is the focus of study and attention, rather than being the means through which something else is studied. The canonical claim made by model theory, and embodied in Gödel's completeness theorem, is that a theory is consistent if and only if it has at least one model.[554] A theory is no longer linked to an *external* reality beyond itself, which it tries to access through a model. It is now concerned only with its own *internal* consistency, and for this it only needs a model. This shift of focus away from a signifying centre, which the theory partially represents, onto the theory itself, and the models that affirm its consistency, is the shift of focus from the signifying to the post-signifying dimension of the mixed regime of faciality.

The post-signifying regime is also called the subjective regime, and in this shift it is possible to see some of Deleuze's deep and persistent claims about subjectivity. Up until now, the subjective figure that has featured most prominently in the last two chapters has been Badiou's processual subject; it is now time to turn toward Deleuze's own conception in order to understand his and Guattari's interest in a literal use of model theory and to draw important links between theirs and Badiou's use of the subject. In Chapter 3 of this thesis I concentrated on how the subject was the result of an emergent process, as detailed in both his early book on Hume, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*. Here the key to understanding subjectivity was the emergence of a consistent system, it was not

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[553] CM, see chapters 4 and 5.
[554] Model Theory, P. 66.

enough to state a theory, or give a set of empirical principles. This theory, or these principals, had to work on something, process some material, and a subject emerged from this process to the extent that a *consistent* system was formed. It was also important that this system avoided closure; it could not be absolutely consistent but could only strive for a maximum systematic coherence, or unity. This idea of maximum systematic unity hints toward Gödel's famous incompleteness results and the disjunction between completeness and consistency: for any axiomatic system at least as complex as Peano's arithmetic there will be true statements about the system that cannot be deduced from the systems own axioms. If more axioms are added, in an attempt to make the system complete, capable of proving every true statement, then the system itself will eventually become inconsistent, and this is a trivial result as anything can be deduced from a contradiction. So, in the absence of any contradiction being deduced from the axioms of a system it is asserted that the system is *incomplete* and *consistent*. It is this assertion, or belief, that interests me here as it has resonances with Deleuze's study of Hume. Deleuze agrees with Hume that systematic/subjective unity is possible only on the basis of belief. Subjectivity is a metastable system, sustained by a belief, which emerges from the operation of a theory on a given material. The details of this will be examined below.

A model, in the precise mathematical sense that Deleuze and Guattari use it, is formed from a theory, or set of axioms, and a structure, the material given to the theory to work on. In the language of *A Thousand Plateaus*, it is this couple that forms a process of subjectification: the structure is *subjected* to a theory. It is only in a more detailed understanding of this mathematical notion of model that a full explanation of the roles of the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement can be given.

For this reason I will introduce the basic concepts of Model Theory. Without such a formal exegesis it will not be possible to understand and offer a meaningful critique of Deleuze and Guattari's own criticism of axiomatic capitalism.[555]

6.6 Examples of Models

This explanation should in no way be taken as a formal introduction to model theory, it is simply an attempt to make the various components of model theory intelligible, in order to understand how Deleuze, Guattari and Badiou use it.[556] To avoid confusion an initial distinction must be made between a model of a *language* and a model of a *theory*. Model theory is grounded on this distinction: a formal language provides a *syntax* while a model provides a *semantic* context.[557] Prior to anything being said, a context must be given in which to make sense of any possible sentence. To begin with, the model must be the model of a language. The model is an interpretation of a formal language within a given structure. This answers the question: *how* can anything by expressed?

After this initial correspondence has been established there follows the question of *what* can be expressed by the language in the context of its model. Only when the sentences of a language are interpreted within the structure of a model can they

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[555] The extent to which Deleuze and Guattari are aware of model theory in the way that it will be presented here is debatable. The only text that they reference in *A Thousand Plateaus* is Robert Blanché's introductory monograph *L'axiomatique*, published in 1959. Model theory as a distinct area of study only became established in 1950s, making this monograph a very early introduction. The area rapidly developed over the 1960s and 1970s and the presentation I give here is from one of the first comprehensive textbooks on the subject, C. C. Chang and H. Jerome Keisler's *Model Theory*, first published in 1977. It is therefore a treatment of model theory that was available to Deleuze and Guattari at the time that they were writing *A Thousand Plateaus*.

[556] A thorough introduction to the topic of model theory can be found in: Chang, C. C., Keisler, H. Jerome, Model Theory, (Elsevier Science Publishers B. V., 1990).

[557] Ibid. p. 3.

become semantically meaningful: the sentences of the language are then *about* the specific structure in which they are interpreted. Any elementary well-formed sentence of the formal language is said to constitute an axiom, and a collection of axioms is called a theory.[558] Whether the model of the language is also a model of the axiom(s), or theory, will depend on whether these sentences and their consequences hold in the model. Within the context of the model do the sentences forming the axioms/theory hold true, or is it possible to derive a contradiction from them?

Turning now to the more formal exposition. If a model is to be a model of *both* a language and a theory of that language then it must be the consistent *interpretation* of a set of *elementary sentences* of a *language* within a *structure*. Therefore this formal approach requires four things: a language, a set of elementary sentences, a structure in which these sentences can be interpreted, and, finally, a translation of the language onto the structure.

To begin with the first part: language. Each language is composed of three distinct aspects: relational or predicative symbols, function symbols, and the constants, or 'objects' of the language. The general schema used to present such a language is as follows:

$$\mathbf{L} = \{P_0, \dots, P_n, F_0, \dots, F_m, c_0, \dots, c_r\}, \mathbf{L} = \{\text{relations, functions, constants}\}^{[559]}$$

The examples given in textbooks are generally simplified; reduced to the set of relational or functional symbols, depending on the language, and constants. As a key

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[558] Ibid. p. 12.
[559] Ibid. p. 19.

example I will look at number theory, or basic arithmetic. Peano's axioms of this theory are particularly important for the history of philosophy and logic, due to its use in Gödel's incompleteness theorems. Here the language is:

$$\mathbf{L} = \{+, \cdot, S, 0\}^{560}$$

The language consists of three function symbols: addition, multiplication, the successor function, or, intuitively, the 'plus one' function, and one constant symbol: 0. Next, we need to provide a model for the language; this will require a structure in which to interpret the language and a mapping of the language onto this structure. A model is usually written as:

$$\mathbf{M} = \langle A, T \rangle$$

The model is composed of a structure A and a translation function T. In the case of a standard model of number theory the model is as follows:

$$\mathbf{M} = \langle \omega, +, \cdot, S, 0 \rangle^{561}$$

The structure is the set ω, the first denumerable infinite number, and the translation maintains the usually understood operations of basic arithmetic. We now have a language and a model in which to interpret this language. All that is needed now are a set of axioms to form a theory. For number theory this consists of the seven standard

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560 Ibid. p. 42.
561 Ibid. p. 42.

axioms of Peano arithmetic. I will only give the first six, which have intuitively simple descriptions, to complete this example.

(1) $0 \neq Sx$

(2) $Sx = Sy \rightarrow x = y$

(3) $x + 0 = x$

(4) $x + Sy = S(x + y)$

(5) $x \cdot 0 = 0$

(6) $x \cdot S(y) = (x \cdot y) + x$[562]

The first two axioms state basic properties of the system: 0 is the first number, it has no predecessor, and if two numbers have the same successor then they are the same number. Axioms (3) and (4) define the operation of addition, first with 0 and then with any other number. Finally, axioms (5) and (6) define the operation of multiplication, fist with 0 and then with any other number.

What is important is that these axioms, and the sentences derivable from them, must be consistent, or non-contradictory, when interpreted within the given model. Only then is the theory consistent, the model of the language is *also* a model of the theory. This is a more formal restatement of Gödel's completeness theorem, which states: a theory is consistent if and only if it has a model.[563] The other mathematical theory that interests us is, of course, set theory. Taking ZFC as an example, it uses the language of sets, principally the non-logical binary relation '$\in$', to form its nine

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[562] Ibid. p. 42.
[563] Ibid. p. 33.

standard axioms. Again, notice the important difference between the language and the theory.

In order to clarify the points made above I will construct a simple model. This model, though trivially simple, will help to point out the operation and significance of the fourfold structure of model theory.

For my example I want to use four constants: *a*, *b*, *c* and *d*. And two predicate terms: P and Q. I will write P(x) to denote that x has the property P. This example, and the use I want to make of it, is simple enough so as to avoid the use of function symbols. As such my language **L** has only relational predicate symbols and constants:

$$\mathbf{L} = \{P, Q, a, b, c, d\}$$

Second, there needs to be a selection of axioms, or elementary sentences, formed from the defined language. For my axioms I want to give four simple statements: P(*a*), P(*c*), Q(*b*) and Q(*d*). Both *a* and *c* have the property P and *b* and *d* have the property Q. This collection of axioms is a theory of the language.

Now to form a consistent model of the above language and axioms we need to map the sentences formed in **L** onto a structure in which all of the axiomatic sentences are true. For example, we could choose the structure $A = \{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ and interpret the language **L** in this structure. This is an easy enough task, given the simplicity of the language: *a*, *b*, *c* and *d* correspond to the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. P corresponds to the subset $\{1, 3\}$ of *A* and can be interpreted as the property 'being an

odd number'. Likewise, Q can be interpreted as 'being an even number' and maps onto the subset {2, 4}. This mapping of **L** onto A is the translation function T. A model **M** is precisely this pairing of a structure A with a specific translation, T, of **L** onto A, therefore:

$$\mathbf{M} = <A, T>$$

Or in full:

$$\mathbf{M} = <\{1, 2, 3, 4\}, \{1, 3\}, \{2, 4\}, \{1\}, \{2\}, \{3\}, \{4\}>$$

$$\qquad\quad \uparrow \qquad \uparrow \quad \uparrow \qquad\quad \uparrow$$

$$\qquad\quad A \qquad P \quad Q \qquad a, b, c, d$$

Of course, we could take our structure to be any subset of the Natural numbers such that we have two even numbers and two odd numbers. Any such subset would satisfy the conditions and form a model, take $A' = \{5, 6, 7, 8\}$, which would give a new model: $\mathbf{M}' = \{A', T\}$. It is possible for a theory to be satisfied by many different structures or interpretations.

This is as far as an examination of the mathematical side of model theory needs to be taken. The four major components of model theory, along with their interrelation, have been introduced: language, theory, interpretation and structure. A model is a model of a language if it provides a semantic context of interpretation for the otherwise purely syntactic formal language. A model is a model of a theory if a theory formed in the formal language holds, or is consistent, in the context of the

model. A model of a theory is then, in full, the consistent interpretation of a theory, stated in a formal language, within a given structure. The necessity of this detour into formal mathematics will become clear in the context of Deleuze and Guattari's critique of capitalism. They clearly have an admiration for the power and flexibility of axiomatic and model theoretic form, but their critique depends on arguments about the finitude, or denumerable infinitude, of the formal syntactic language and its affect on the subsequent models of realization.

6.7 The Mixed Regime: Faciality/Capitalism

Before entering into this discussion the task of linking the idea of an axiomatic theory, and its models of realization, with Deleuze and Guattari's post-signifying subjective regime of signs must be completed. The main point will be to show how the focus shifts from the language/model relation onto the theory/model relation. This is the characteristic turning away from the face of the despot, in this case the despotic language, to concentrate on the internal, or private, consistency of the theory and its model. The role of the structure used by the theory/model pair is also significant. The theory/model pair forms, each time, a process of subjectification, regardless of the structure that is subjected to this process.[564] This explains capitalism's powerful flattening effect, the structure could be any of the previous social formations: primitive pre-signifying, nomadic counter-signifying, despotic signifying or feudal post-signifying. But as structures subjected to an interpretation, they merely form part of a post-signifying subjective regime:

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[564] ATP, p. 451.

> [T]he States, in capitalism, are not cancelled out but change form and take on a new meaning: models of realization for a worldwide axiomatic that exceeds them. But to exceed is not at all the same thing as doing without.[565]

Incorporated within the theory/model pair each different social formation is reduced to a component of subjectification, as a structure of the model. Capitalism is not a homogenising force; each model of capitalism retains the specific character of the structure that sustains the interpretation. It is only a homogenising force if there is a convergence between the structures, for example, the formation of a shared domestic, internal, market; Deleuze and Guattari take the European Union as their example.[566] The question of greatest interest, though, is how does this system react to the disruptive influence of the flows of positive absolute deterritorialization? The answer to this question will dictate how capitalism, and its axiomatic theories and models, respond through the addition and subtraction of axioms. It is not simply a case that capitalism always seeks to add axioms. This involves two important concepts within model theory and logic: Gödel's incompleteness theorems and the idea of a saturated model.

Each model is a *consistent* model of the axioms to the extent that no proposition can be proved within the model that would contradict the axioms. But, due to Gödel's incompleteness theorems and the complexity of most interesting theories, such as set theory, the consistency of the model cannot be proved: there are propositions that cannot be proved in the model, they can neither be evaluated as valid or invalid, and

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[565] ATP, p. 454.
[566] ATP, p. 464.

one of those propositions is the claimed consistency of the system itself. This leads to the conclusion that theories that are complex enough to be incomplete are *believed* to be consistent. The unpalatable alternative, to believe that a theory is complete but inconsistent, is clearly unacceptable for mathematics. This leaves the door open to challenge the believed consistency of the theory, an echo of the subjective passion of the post-signifying regime. A proposition that appears to be undecidable within the context of a theory and its standard models may be decidable in a new non-standard model. The consequences of this are particularly important if the newly provable proposition contradicts one of the axioms of the system. This was the case with the Continuum Hypothesis, which was consistent with standard constructible models of set theory, but could be made to fail in certain other models that used non-constructible sets. Therefore, as an axiom of set theory, the Continuum Hypothesis is seen as an independent axiom; there are models in which it is consistent and others in which it is not. One possible result of this procedure is to *subtract* the offending axiom, and continue with a reduced, or *weakened*, theory. Here the term weak is being used in a mathematical sense, and should not be thought of as a negative trait, it simply means that the weaker a theory is the wider its range; it excludes less cases. This is one way in which the axiomatic approach can cope with disruptive flows of deterritorialization, subtract an axiom from the theory in order to incorporate the disruptive flow and the model/structure in which it appears. As a theory weakens it *maximizes* the number of structures that can serve as a basis for a model of realization. Take the parallel postulate in Euclidean geometry, a well know example of an independent axiom, if it is *replaced* by a different, alternative, axiom a new non-Euclidean geometry is produced. The structures used in the models of this non-Euclidean geometry will not serve as structures for Euclidean models, and vice versa.

But, if the parallel postulate is simply removed, and not replaced, a more general theory of geometry will be formed, which can be realized in both the structures used in the models of Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometry.

There is also the opposite approach, rather than reducing things to a simpler and more general level, we could add axioms. This leads to a *maximizing* of the number of different theories. This is the process of producing maximally consistent theories, or, what Deleuze and Guattari call *saturated* systems.[567] This is a process of individuation. Each theory is individuated by the addition of new independent axioms, up to a maximum; beyond which the theory becomes inconsistent. It is a fundamental theory of model theory that it is possible to extend a consistent theory to a maximally consistent theory.[568] The idea is quite straightforward; the incompleteness of a theory tells us that there are undecidable statements that cannot be proved to be either true or false in a given model of a theory. We can then arbitrarily determine this undecidable sentence as either being true or false in the model, and add it as an extra axiom. It should then be possible to do this with every undecidable statement that appears, as long as these additions don't render the theory inconsistent in its model, thus saturating the theory with extra axioms.

To return to the example of geometry given above, we can see how a generalized geometry that excludes the parallel postulate supports a number of mutually exclusive extensions, in the form of Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometries. But, Euclidean geometry itself is a maximally consistent theory; no new independent axioms can be

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[567] ATP, p. 570. n. 54.

[568] Chang, C. C., Keisler, H. Jerome, <u>Model Theory</u>, (Elsevier Science Publishers B. V., 1990), p. 26.

added without making the theory inconsistent in all its known models.[569] The meta-structure being described here, of a generalized theory branching into a multiplicity of more and more specific theories, through the addition of independent axioms, is clearly arboreal in nature. And the flows of positive deterritorialization are restricted relative to this meta-structure. The subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement are defined by this meta-structure: 'One can make subjective choices between two chains or at each point'.[570]

The subject of enunciation descends and weakens a theory, following a line of deterritorialization. But this path leads to the ever-present danger of the reterritorialization of the subject of the statement, the addition of new axioms. The stronger and more violent the passion of the subject of enunciation is, the greater the opportunity for the subject of the statement. The weaker the system the wider the scope becomes for adding new axioms. The options open to the subject of enunciation are twofold: either produce a new theory, where an axiom in the new theory is a direct negation of an axiom in the old theory, and find a model for this theory to demonstrate its consistency, or find a model in which the chosen axiom of the old theory fails, and the rest of the axioms hold. The first method already sees the subject of enunciation recoiling into the subject of the statement, a new axiom is explicitly given, then a model found to satisfy the theory; one has simply moved across from one branch to another. The second method leads to the rejection of the offending axiom, and the move to a weaker system. Absolute deterritorialization is at least momentarily witnessed in this moment of contradiction. But the simple rejection of the offending axiom already halts this line of deterritorialization. The new, weaker

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[569] Blanché, Robert, Axiomatics, trans. G. B. Keene, (New York: Free Press, 1962), p. 44.
[570] ATP, p. 179.

system is then open to new reterritorializations, or for a new subject of enunciation to again try to weaken this more general theory. As has always been the case for Deleuze, subjectivity is bound by a commitment to consistency and the system.

Recalling Deleuze's claim in *Difference and Repetition* that:

> Actualisation takes place in three series: space, time and also consciousness. Every spatio-temporal dynamism is accompanied by the emergence of an elementary consciousness which itself traces directions, doubles movements and migrations, and is born on the threshold of the condensed singularities of the body or object whose consciousness it is.[571]

The system and subject are synonymous, and driven to achieve a maximum of systematic unity, despite the fact that: 'while this procedure maximally approximates the real movement of thought, it also maximally betrays and distorts this movement'.[572] With their theory of the mixed regime of faciality/capitalism Deleuze and Guattari bring a new clarity to these repeated themes. In the language of model theory we can claim that what Deleuze means by a subject/system is precisely a consistent theory, that is, a theory coupled to a model, or, a theory that is satisfied by and in a material structure. The system, or subject, is not simply the presentation of some theory, or even some theory and an empirical reality. Their unity, or systematic quality, is based on the theory being *satisfied* by the structure, or the structure finding a satisfactory theory. This relation is established and mediated by the translation of

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[571] DR, p. 220.
[572] DR, p. 197.

the language of the theory onto the structure. We can now better understand Deleuze's notion of a transcendental principle discussed above:

> The transcendental principle does not govern any domain but gives the domain to be governed to a given empirical principle; it accounts for the subjection of a domain to a principle.[573]

The translation function (the transcendental principle) gives the structure (the domain to be governed) to the theory (the empirical principle). The theory never experiences the structure directly, as it is in-itself, but only through the mediation of the function of translation. The conditions of possibility are determined neither by an empirical reality, not even the pure givenness of phenomena, nor by a pure mental or ideal theory, but by their *correlation*. The function that co-ordinates these two aspects is the ever present, though sometimes unseen, transcendental principle. This becomes clear in the example of model theory, there are two basic approaches to the subject: fix the theory and find appropriate structures and translation functions to satisfy the theory, or, fix the structure and find out what theories it can support via an appropriate translation function. Finding a satisfactory translation, or correlation, is *necessary* for both these approaches. What is often lost in this activity of co-ordinating theories and structures is that the translation function translates the *language* onto the structure, *not* the theory. The theory is interpreted in the structure as a consequence of having been formulated in the language. This aspect is obscured, as it appears the translation is chosen *for the sake of* a correlation between a theory and a structure.

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[573] DR, p. 241.

6.8 Language Escapes Direct Critique

The language itself is never questioned, or the difference between the language and the most general theory of that language is conflated. This is the case with the difference between the language of set theory, which is not questioned, and the specific axiomatic theories formulated in this language. The parallel extends to capitalism: the language of capitalism is not itself questioned, only specific axiomatic theories of it. The more general the theory is the more likely it is that an identity is assumed between the language and the theory. The language itself cannot be questioned directly as it is tied to the theories that it can formulate. A language is only successful, useful, or interesting to the extent that it can be used to formulate successful, useful, or interesting theories. These theories are, in turn, only of value if they have a model, a structure that supports them. This mutual interdependence prevents the problem of the language being tackled directly. Is the language, in itself, a language, or is it a language only to the extent that it is used to formulate theories? From the perspective of subjectivity, a consistently modelled theory/structure pair, the language must necessarily appear as a language, the language *of* the theory. This language then dominates every subjective correlate of a theory satisfied by a structure; the subject cannot escape the language. This is the argument that Deleuze and Guattari put forward in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and which Badiou will deny. I will return to this point shortly.

To return to the example of model theory, and mathematics more generally, it is set theory and the language of set theory, principally the relation '∈', which is the dominant and unquestioned feature. The power of set theory is that it can be used to

describe nearly all areas of mathematics; therefore its language is adequate to construct the axioms of most mathematical theories. C. C. Chang and H. Jerome Keisler make this clear in their discussion of the place of set theory in model theory:

> [I]f we wish to be completely precise, we should formulate our whole treatment of model theory within an appropriate system of axiomatic set theory. Actually, we are taking the more practical approach of formulating things in an informal set theory, but it is still important that, *in principle*, we could do it all in an axiomatic set theory.[574]

Mathematics seems to present a variety of different languages, theories and models, but *in principle* it is possible to restate everything in terms of set theory. This is certainly the motivation for claiming that set theory constitutes a ground for all mathematics. Although there are a variety of different axiomatic theories of sets, most textbooks like to restrict themselves to one specific theory, usually ZF, thereby sidestepping the issue of the language of set theory in favour of one of its most general theories.

Deleuze and Guattari's subject, or the dual aspects of the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement, is trapped and circumscribed by language. If the subject of the statement prevails, then axioms are added to the axiomatic theory, and this process individuates an ever more restricted number of models of the theory. The *maximal* systematic unity is always theoretically possible, but in practice it is rarely ever reached. As the subject approaches this maximum, it begins to turn around, rather than push forward into inconsistency. Each added axiom is recognized as a

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[574] Chang, C. C., Keisler, H. Jerome, <u>Model Theory</u>, (Elsevier Science Publishers B. V., 1990), p. 43.

branch in a tree, opening up the possibility of returning to the branching point and taking a different branch, adding a different axiom. This turning around, and returning to a weaker system, is the work of the subject of enunciation, freeing itself from a given constraint. But if this path is followed to an extreme it reaches back to the most general of theories, the weakest possible. There is also a *minimal* systematic unity, beyond which the theory fails to individuate any specific models at all. In model theory this would be the level just prior to that of a set of purely logical tautologies, which are true in *all* models.[575] These two aspects work together to actualize an ever increasing number of independent and individuated theories and models.

Though each model of realization might be infinite in its scope, and the proliferation of models and theories infinite as well, their infinity is always restricted by the denumerable, countable, nature of its language. Although it is not strictly true, the majority of model theoretic work, and especially the models of set theory, are restricted to a denumerable language, as opposed to a non-denumerable, uncountable, language.[576] Deleuze and Guattari associate the non-denumerable infinite with the notion of the pure continuum, which they claim cannot be captured by the theory/model pair, due to the inherent denumerable nature of the language used to construct the theory. Every sentence is a finite linear construction, and their enumeration can only ever form, at most, a denumerable infinite set of sentences. Deleuze and Guattari believe that this limitation prevents the axiomatic approach from engaging directly with the problems of non-denumerable sets.

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[575] In set theory this level is occupied by the structure of the ordinal numbers, as well as purely logical tautologies. The universal character of the ordinals is what leads Badiou to describe them as natural.

[576] Jech, Thomas, Set Theory, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 80.

This argument is set out in the final section of the chapter '7000 B.C.: Apparatus of Capture', entitled: 'Proposition XIV. Axiomatics and the present-day situation', especially in parts six and seven, on minorities and undecidable propositions.[577] I will present their argument before putting forward my own criticism.

Their criticism of capitalism, and axiomatic systems in general, rests on an inability of these systems to cope with the excessive levels of deterritorialization that they produce. Deleuze and Guattari state: 'it is of the nature of axiomatics to come up against *so-called undecidable propositions*, to confront *necessarily higher powers* that it cannot master'.[578] Their footnote to this point makes it clear that they have the Continuum Hypothesis in mind. The fact that an axiomatic system, of a certain degree of complexity, is capable of producing undecidable propositions is one of the conclusions of Gödel's incompleteness theorems, and is not in itself surprising. Many of these propositions are undecidable due to the limited size of sets that ZFC can manipulate.[579] ZFC is limited by its axiom of infinity, which only states the existence of the first possible infinite set, equivalent to the set of all natural numbers: the ordinal ω, or the cardinal $\aleph_0$.[580] If the theory is extended, by adding axioms that posit the existence of infinite sets of cardinality greater $\aleph_0$, then many of these previously undecidable propositions become decidable.[581] The Continuum Hypothesis does not seem amenable to this approach, and has remained undecidable in all extensions of set theory that utilize large cardinal axioms, therefore, Michael Potter suggests, we might

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[577] ATP, pp. 469-473.
[578] ATP, p. 461.
[579] Potter, Michael, Set Theory and its Philosophy, (Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 211 – 212.
[580] Jech, Thomas, Set Theory, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 10.
[581] Potter, Michael, Set Theory and its Philosophy, (Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 211 – 212.

informally call the Continuum Hypothesis *strongly undecidable*.[582] The only thing that can be decided is that the cardinality of the continuum, or the real numbers, is greater than that of the natural numbers; no one-to-one correspondence can be made between the real numbers and the natural numbers. This leads to the important distinction between denumerable and non-denumerable sets, a distinction that Deleuze and Guattari make a great deal of. A denumerable set is said to be countable, and shares the same cardinality as the natural numbers. Cantor provided the famous demonstration that the rational numbers do in fact form a denumerable set; they can be put into a one-to-one correspondence with the natural numbers. A non-denumerable, or uncountable, set is one that is simply not countable; there is no one-to-one correspondence to the set of natural numbers.

Deleuze and Guattari want to play on this rupture between the continuum of the real line and the countable infinity of the natural numbers, but a critique that Badiou would surely level, and that I will return to, is that they become fixated on the simple division between denumerable and non-denumerable sets rather than on the specific question raised by the Continuum Hypothesis. The problem with the continuum is not that it forms a non-denumerable set, but rather the question: which non-denumerable set? The Continuum Hypothesis tries to tie the continuum to the first possible non-denumerable set $\aleph_1$, but the continuum can, in fact, sustain a number of different values, all of which are potentially consistent with the standard axioms of set theory.[583] The fact that the continuum is necessarily a non-denumerable set does not

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[582] Ibid. p. 272.
[583] Ibid. pp. 269 – 270.

account for its undecidability, this is a consequence of its method of generation, via the power set axiom.[584]

6.9 Majority and Minority: a Qualitative Difference?

Deleuze and Guattari try to establish a *qualitative* difference between the purely *quantitative* difference of denumerable and non-denumerable sets. This difference is established in terms of a denumerable axiomatic *majority* and a non-denumerable non-axiomatizable *minority*. It is worth quoting their introduction of these terms at length.

> A minority can be numerous, or even infinite; so can a majority. What distinguishes them is that in the case of a majority the relation internal to the number constitutes a set that may be finite or infinite, but is always denumerable, whereas the minority is defined as a non-denumerable set, however many elements it may have. What characterizes the non-denumerable is neither the set nor its elements; rather, it is the *connection*, the "and" produced between elements, between sets, and which belongs to neither, which eludes them and constitutes a line of flight. The axiomatic manipulates only denumerable sets, even infinite ones, whereas the minorities constitute "fuzzy", non-denumerable, non-axiomatizable sets, in short, "masses", multiplicities of escape and flux.[585]

With their claim that axiomatic thought, the thought of the majority, only deals with denumerable sets, Deleuze and Guattari try to establish that axiomatic thought is

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[584] Ibid. p. 274.
[585] ATP, pp. 469 – 470.

equivalent to thought bound by language. For thinking to escape this bond it must escape from axiomatic thought, and dwell within the non-denumerable mass of the minority. This escape, or destruction, of the axiomatic as the escape from a merely linguistic conception of thought runs throughout *A Thousand Plateaus*, from the appeal to the *diagrammatic* to the assertions that real politics only occurs in the dismantling of the mixed regime of faciality (capitalism), the regime that flattens everything within language.[586] To cite two examples of what this emancipatory politics would look like: 'If the face is a politics, dismantling the face is also a politics involving real becomings, an entire becoming-clandestine' and, later on: 'The minorities issue is… that of smashing capitalism, [and] of redefining socialism'.[587]

The battleground for this struggle is located at the points of potential rupture, within the dominant axiomatic thought of capital. These points of rupture are the rare undecidable propositions, such as the continuum hypothesis within set theory. Deleuze and Guattari want to identify a qualitative difference between undecidable positions that can be reincorporated through a simple weakening or strengthening of the system, through the subtraction or addition of axioms, and strongly undecidable propositions that appear to escape formalization.

> In short, the struggle around axioms is most important when it manifests, itself opens, the gap between two types of propositions, propositions of flow and propositions of axioms.

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[586] ATP, pp. 142, 148, 188, 471, 472.
[587] ATP, pp. 188, 472.

This brings us full circle to the discussion that closed the previous chapter, the discussion concerning the difference between *the* plane of consistency and the multiple planes of organization, or strata. If these strongly undecidable propositions of flow truly exist then they cut across every strata, every axiomatic, constantly escaping formal capture. These non-axiomatizable propositions of flow can only be properly posed on a non-axiomatic plane of consistency, where their relation with each other is one of resonance rather than of formal connection, an idea discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

It is not my aim to simply dismiss this argument, Deleuze and Guattari's description of multiplicities of escape and lines of flight as a "mass" or "fuzzy", and their focus on the relation between the elements, the "and", I think is of crucial importance. The problem rests on trying to locate this radical difference at the junction between the denumerable and the non-denumerable.

6.10 Contrasting the Denumerable/Non-denumerable Pair with the Constructible/Non-constructible Pair

To begin with, I want to unpack Deleuze and Guattari's claim that: 'The axiomatic only manipulates denumerable sets'.[588] Within the context of languages, axiomatic theories and models that I have been using throughout this chapter, Deleuze and Guattari's claim could be read as stating that the models of realization are always denumerable, or countable, in power. From the model theoretic point of view, this is

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[588] ATP, p. 470.

simply not true. The power of the language governing the formation of theories is always countably infinite, even if the language is finite. Take, for example, a binary language, that includes only the symbols '0' and '1', from these two symbols it is possible to construct indefinitely long linear compositions of these symbols, and an infinite, yet denumerable, number of such possible compositions. Therefore the expressive power of a language, written $||L||$, is:

$$||L|| = \omega \cup |L|^{589}$$

Which reads: the power of the possible sentences constructible from the language L is equivalent to the union of ω and the power, or cardinality, of the set composing the language L. The single set of vertical bars always refers to the cardinality, or power, of the enclosed set. Now, as long as the language itself is either finite or countably infinite, then $||L||$ will always be equal to ω, due to the nature of infinite sets.[590] And it is the usual practice to restrict L to being at most countably infinite: $|L| \leq \omega$. So, it seems that the language is restricted in its power to the level of the countable, or denumerable, infinite.

The power of the model, which satisfies a theory, is not dependant on the power of the language, but on the structure, or universe, in which the theory is interpreted.[591] To recall, from above, a model $\mathbf{M}$ is given as: $\mathbf{M} = \langle A, T \rangle$, a model $\mathbf{M}$ is composed of a structure, or universe, A, which is a set, and a translation function, mapping the language onto the structure. So the cardinal power of the model $\mathbf{M}$ is equivalent to

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[589] Chang, C. C., Keisler, H. Jerome, <u>Model Theory</u>, (Elsevier Science Publishers B. V., 1990), p. 19.
[590] See chapter 4 of this thesis for details.
[591] Chang, C. C., Keisler, H. Jerome, <u>Model Theory</u>, (Elsevier Science Publishers B. V., 1990), p. 21.

the cardinal power $|A|$, and there is no restriction on what A can be used in the model. Therefore there is nothing restricting the model to manipulating only denumerable sets, A can be denumerable or non-denumerable, equivalent to the power of the continuum or even greatly in excess of the power of the continuum.

It might be argued, in support of Deleuze and Guattari, that any consistent theory with an infinite model will also have a denumerably infinite model. This is a famous result in both set theory and model theory, known as the Löwenheim-Skolem Theorem.[592] We could then say that there is always the possibility, or threat, that a non-denumerably infinite model could be reduced to a denumerable model. But to interpret the Löwenheim-Skolem Theorem as an immanent *threat* to reduce the non-denumerable to the denumerable would be to give it a meaning that it does not have in its mathematical context. The strict and literal comparison between capitalism and axiomatics would breakdown. It might be the desire of capitalism to see everything reduced to an, at most, denumerable level, but it is not a mathematical one. Within model theory there are two formulations of this theory, a downward theory and an upward theory, which highlight this point. The Downward Löwenheim-Skolem-Tarski Theorem states: that every consistent theory in a given language has an, at most, countably infinite model.[593] This repeats the formulation of the theorem given above. The Upward Löwenheim-Skolem-Tarski Theorem, on the other hand, states: if a theory has an infinite model, then it has infinite models of any given power $\alpha \geq ||L||$.[594] Mathematically the theorem as a whole suggests both that if we descend there will be a smallest model, either finite or denumerably infinite, but if we ascend

[592] Tiles, Mary, <u>The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise</u>, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), p. 179.

[593] Chang, C. C., Keisler, H. Jerome, <u>Model Theory</u>, (Elsevier Science Publishers B. V., 1990), p. 66.

[594] Ibid. p. 67.

there is no upper limit on the size of model. Just because any given theory *can* be satisfied by a denumerably infinite model does not mean that it *should*, or even *is*, satisfied by such a model. A theory's consistency might well be demonstrated, or first discovered, in a non-denumerable model. It is on this basis that I reject Deleuze and Guattari's claim that axiomatics only ever manipulates denumerable sets.

The distinction between an axiomatic approach to mathematics and a problematic approach is, I believe, a false distinction. This opposition is founded on Deleuze and Guattari's belief that the model theoretic language, coupled with its axiomatized theory, enacts a linguistic closure on the field of problems. The difference is also too reliant on the Bergsonian distinction between the *discrete* and *continuous*, associated here with denumerable and non-denumerable infinite sets. As I have shown, whatever the value of this Bergsonian distinction, it is the imposition of these terms onto the two types of infinite set that is inappropriate. Let me be clear, Deleuze and Guattari's attempt to differentiate between a major and a minor form of mathematics, between an official State sanctioned mathematics, in effect a listing of defined problems in a *closed* field, and a revolutionary experimental mathematics, as a fluid *open* field of problems, is valid.[595] But, this distinction is itself fluid, and we cannot simply identify the major pole with axiomatics in general: the opposition of problems versus axioms is too reductive. Many commentators whilst trying to develop this distinction fail to challenge the examples that Deleuze and Guattari use. Dan Smith, in his article 'The Ontology of Mathematics', whilst outlining and developing the problematic/foundational distinction, all to readily repeats Deleuze and Guattari's

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[595] Interesting articles, which develop this theme, are: Daniel Smith's 'The Ontology of Mathematics' in <u>Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy</u>, (Continuum, 2004) and Aden Evans' 'The Surd' in <u>Virtual Mathematics: the Logic of Difference</u>, (Clinamen Press Ltd., 2004).

own examples: 'Like the continuum, capital is not masterable by an axiom; or rather, it constantly requires the creation of new axioms'.[596] Again, reducing the problematic/foundational distinction to one of problems versus axioms. The return to the continuum, and the Continuum Hypothesis within the axiomatic framework of set theory, is constantly used as a paradigmatic example of the power of the *intensive* and continuous over the *extensive* and discrete. But the continuum *is* masterable by an axiom, and it can be given as an *extensive* set, as it is perfectly possible to give a set that has a cardinality that is non-denumerable in magnitude. The discussion above suggested that the Continuum Hypothesis might be called strongly undecidable, a point that rested on the failure of a particular method, the addition of large cardinal axioms, to resolve the problem. This is not to say that the problem is irresolvable, the simplest solution is just to add the Continuum Hypothesis as an axiom, which, as Gödel demonstrated, results in an extended theory that is consistent. Also, if we add axioms restricting ourselves to using only constructible sets, then the resulting theory also entails the Continuum Hypothesis.[597] It is clear that the continuum is nothing special; it is neither intrinsically intensive nor un-masterable. What is interesting, and a point that Badiou makes much of, is that this mastery of the continuum is dependant on a restriction of the theory to *constructible* sets.[598] The problematic and undecidable nature of the Continuum Hypothesis is simply the result of allowing this more significant distinction to be made between constructible and non-constructible sets.

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[596] Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy, ed. Peter Hallward, (Continuum, 2004), p. 91.

[597] Potter, Michael, Set Theory and its Philosophy, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 274.

[598] BE, p. 296.

6.11 Badiou's Escape from Language within Axiomatic Thought

Deleuze and Guattari always play down the creative potential of axiomatic thought, even whilst affirming that axiomatics has a power of experimentation and intuition, this method is nonetheless inadequate to deal with the undecidable propositions it comes up against.[599] Badiou dismisses this critique, the axiomatic approach is more than capable of dealing with its undecidable propositions.

> The notion that thought should always establish itself beyond categorical oppositions, thereby delineating an unprecedented diagonal, is constitutive of philosophy itself. The whole question consists in knowing what value to ascribe to the operators of this diagonal trajectory, and in identifying the unknown resource to which they summon thought.[600]

Badiou here affirms the necessity to make evaluative decisions, such as the selection of axioms. To deal with a problem, such as an undecidable proposition, is to call forth a creative response: to create new axioms, subtract axioms or restrict the structure that the model uses. In an interview with Tzuchien Tho, Badiou directly comments on Deleuze and Guattari's use of axioms, noting that their understanding 'reduces the axiom to a formal making explicit'.[601] Mathematics' axiomatic 'gropings in the dark' its experiments and intuitions cannot be set apart from other creative processes, if anything, for Badiou, they are the template for all such creative thought.[602]

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[599] ATP, p. 461.
[600] TW, p. 69.
[601] TM, p. 101.
[602] ATP, p. 461.

> The decision is always taken in the very elements of the process itself so that perhaps the axiom is absolutely fundamental in every discipline of thought. It is creative, it itself is fundamentally creative. But one should not confound the explicit character of the axioms and the formalization of the axioms, which is a work of putting in order that takes place after the fact.[603]

If axiomatics can no longer be dismissed, we must look for a distinction between a positive or creative use of axioms as opposed to a static or merely procedural use. Following Badiou, and against Deleuze and Guattari, I will affirm that the *heterogeneous* Bergsonian terms of the discrete and continuous should be applied to the *homogenous* constructible/non-constructible pair. They form a homogenous pair in the sense that both the constructible and non-constructible are purely *extensive* multiplicities.[604] Deleuze and Guattari's affirmation of the need for two types of multiplicities, both an extensive discrete multiplicity and an intensive continuous multiplicity, rests on their critique of set theory as only encompassing one type of multiplicity that inadequately copes with difference-in-itself in the form of the difference between the denumerable and the non-denumerable. This is the fundamental problem that Deleuze and Guattari identify within Badiou's philosophy.[605] But, for Badiou, their criticism is misplaced; the threat of closure presented by the denumerable/non-denumerable pair is overcome by shifting the focus onto the constructible/non-constructible pair. Although this is a radical change, it is a change that still stays within the immanent homogenous field of an axiomatic theory of multiples.

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[603] TM, p. 101.
[604] TW, p. 99. WP, p. 152.
[605] WP, p.152.

Deleuze and Guattari's fear of linguistic closure is linked to the false threat of a reduction to a *denumerable* model, rather than the real threat, which is the restriction to only *constructible* models. This real threat of closure is challenged and overcome by the various processes of forcing, which explicitly make use of non-constructible sets. This continued return to the method of forcing and the distinction between constructible and non-constructible sets is the foundation of Badiou's work *Being and Event*, and has been a major topic of this thesis. For example, the only possible strategy that can prove the independence of the Continuum Hypothesis depends on creating models that are both *denumerable* and contain non-constructible sets.[606]

To begin with it should be noted that Badiou recognizes that constructivist thought, though limited to a use of constructible sets and closed under the power of language, is itself a limitation to denumerable infinity.[607] The important point here is that this is a consequence of the more significant constructible/non-constructible distinction. For Badiou, it is the ability of set theory to use non-constructible sets that allows it to exceed the limitations of language. He warns against a limitation of thought to the merely constructible, a reduction that would render all creative thought as nothing more than knowledge:

> Rather than being a distinct and aggressive agenda, constructivist thought is the latent philosophy of all human sedimentation; the cumulative strata into which the

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[606] Tiles, Mary, <u>The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise,</u> (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), p. 185.
[607] BE, p. 310.

forgetting of being is poured to the profit of language and the consensus of recognition it supports.[608]

The basis for this distinction between the constructible limitations of language, and the potential resource of the non-constructible is introduced early on in *Being and Event*, in meditation three on the 'Theory of the Pure Multiple'.[609] Here Badiou argues that it is the axiom schema of separation, within the standard ZF formalization, that prevents a linguistic closure of set theory. For Badiou: 'the multiple [or set] does not allow its being to be prescribed from the standpoint of language alone'.[610] In fact, such a linguistic closure ruins the consistency of the theory, as demonstrated by Russell's paradox. Russell's paradox uses the condition 'a set which is not a member of itself', to construct the paradoxical set defined as the set of all sets that are not members of themselves. It is possible to demonstrate the direct contradiction that this totalized set both does and does not belong to itself. A set cannot be assumed to exist on the basis of a property, or a defined condition alone; language cannot guarantee the existence of a set. Just as Russell's paradox demonstrates that language can exceed set theoretical multiplicity, Zermelo's Axiom Schema of Separation demonstrates how set theoretical multiplicity can exceed language.

Zermelo's Axiom Schema of Separation states that *given* a set, those elements of that original set that satisfy a given condition form a set, which is by definition a subset of the original set. Intuitively this can be stated:

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[608] BE, p. 294.
[609] BE, pp. 38-48.
[610] BE, p. 40.

$$y = \{z \in x: \phi(z)\}^{611}$$

The set y is formed from those elements z, which belong to a *given* set x, and that satisfy the property/formula ϕ. The reason why this is called an axiom schema, and not an axiom, is that, strictly speaking, each different property ϕ forms a separate axiom. The axiom schema gives the form of an infinite number of axioms. Badiou takes this to mean that language is limited to making distinctions and divisions within a context that has been given to it; being is always already there.[612] Set existence is not premised on having a property, but on being a subset of an *already given* set. But the subsets determined by language, the capacity that language has to separate and make distinctions within a given set, is also limited. Not every subset of the given set need satisfy a given condition; language does not necessarily exhaust the given. By preventing language from making extravagant and paradoxical claims about existence, the Axiom Schema of Separation opens the door to the existence of sets that exceed language. This is the point of separation between constructible and non-constructible sets.

The constructible universe limits the possible subsets of a given set to those that can be discerned by language, those subsets that satisfy a definable property. This claim is true for all finite sets, and for those infinite sets that can be constructed from simpler sets that satisfy a definable property. If we allow non-constructible sets, then we allow for the full power of both the Axiom Schema of Separation and the Power Set Axiom; there are distinctions and divisions within the given field of extensive

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[611] Potter, Michael, <u>Set Theory and its Philosophy</u>, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 291. Also, for more formal versions see: Jech, Thomas, <u>Set Theory</u>, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 5 and Chang, C. C., Keisler, H. Jerome, <u>Model Theory</u>, (Elsevier Science Publishers B. V., 1990), p. 592.
[612] BE, p. 47.

multiples that escape and exceed the power of language. It is a combination of axioms that allow for the existence of the non-constructible, for the possibility that the given exceeds language. A precise formulation and combination of axioms opens up, rather than closes off, the potential of this excess.

The problem of non-constructible sets, as has been mentioned before, is that of their givenness and of their utility: where do they come from and how can we use them?[613] The Axiom Schema of Separation and the Power Set Axiom account for the givenness of the non-constructible, but it is the Axiom of Choice that allows us to make use of them, to be able to pick out and discern that which is indiscernible to language.

6.12 Deleuze and Guattari's Target: The Axiom of Choice

In the light of the above analysis I want to develop two points. First, if Deleuze and Guattari's critique can no longer be directed toward axiomatics in general, what exactly does their critique aim at *within* the context of axiomatics? My answer will be that their target can be interpreted as an attempt to undermine the Axiom of Choice. Second, it is the use of non-constructible sets to make a difference that constitutes revolutionary activity, radical creation or real politics. Deleuze and Guattari's specific use of non-constructible sets constitutes only one possible method; Badiou's theory of the event and subjectivity forms another. The result is two different subjective figures; both are valid and intelligible within the same axiomatic

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[613] See Chapter 4 of this thesis for a discussion of these two questions in relation to the Axiom of Choice and the Power Set Axiom.

framework. I will conclude by giving a more philosophical account of these two types of subjectivity, extracted from the formal mathematical language used so far.

There are two aspects of Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of Capitalism as an axiomatic system and its models that can be interpreted as implicit attacks on the Axiom of Choice. The first is their insistence that there is a reductive danger in the fact that an axiomatic system can always be given a denumerable model, a point embodied in the Löwenheim-Skolem Theorem. Within set theory, at least, this theorem requires the Axiom of Choice in the course of its proof.[614] The threat that the non-denumerable is always reducible to the denumerable is dependant on the Axiom of Choice. Although, on its own, this observation could appear to be incidental it adds weight and support to my second point.

The second point focuses on the descriptive language that Deleuze and Guattari employ to describe their idea of minorities as "fuzzy", "masses" and on the connection of the "and" between elements.[615] These adjectives hold better for a set that cannot be well ordered rather than a set that is simply non-denumerable. To recall the discussion above, a well ordered set is one that can be put into a strict order; they exhibit a clear and discernible internal structure. Intuitively this order relation is similar to that of a finite succession of elements, or of the infinite succession of the natural numbers, one element follows the next. Any element within the set has a direct successor, with no element appearing between these two elements, for example 2 is followed by 3, and no whole number appears between 2 and 3. Each level of the ordinal hierarchy is defined by this notion of the successor, for example, the finite

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[614] Jech, Thomas, Set Theory, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 81.
[615] ATP, p. 470.

level is defined by 0 and all of its successors: 1, 2, 3 and so on. The first ordinal that is not a successor is called a *limit ordinal*, with the first such number after 0 being ω, which is the first infinite ordinal number and has the cardinality $\aleph_0$.[616] But the ordinal hierarchy does not stop there, it extends on to an infinite number of both successor and limit ordinals, numbers with cardinalities that exceed $\aleph_0$ and are by definition uncountable, or non-denumerable. So, despite the fact that an ordinal number might be non-denumerable it can still exhibit a strict order, there will be nothing fuzzy about it, the 'and' connecting its elements will be a clear 'and' of succession, such as: 1 and 2 and 3 and so on. It is this *discrete* structure of the well-ordered set that Deleuze and Guattari seek to escape.

A set that cannot be well-ordered will exhibit characteristics of fuzziness; it will not have a structure of discrete succession. Its internal structure will appear as a mass, intuitively as a dense continuum that cannot be neatly segmented. But it will retain a structure of its own, a lack of well-ordering is not a lapse into an undifferentiated chaos. In set theory, for example, there are weaker notions of order, such as *partial* order.[617] The discrete 'and' of succession is replaced by a blurring of the boundary between elements.

The hierarchy of the ordinal numbers is absolute, it is the same for all models of set theory, and it is this fixed structure that allows the ordinals to act as a measure, or test, of whether a given set can be well ordered. There exists an isomorphism, an order preserving one-to-one relation, from every well-ordered set to a unique ordinal

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[616] Jech, Thomas, <u>Set Theory</u>, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 15.
[617] Ibid. pp. 12 – 13.

number.[618] And with the addition of the Axiom of Choice, or rather its equivalent formulation as Zermelo's Well Ordering Theorem, we have the statement that *every* set can be well ordered. In this form the Axiom of Choice greatly simplifies aspects of cardinal arithmetic, and it binds every cardinal number to an ordinal number. Although there is no one universal correspondence between the cardinals and the ordinals, as the Continuum Hypothesis tried to establish, the Axiom of Choice guarantees that there will always be *a* correspondence between the two. Each model of set theory that includes the Axiom of Choice establishes a correspondence between the ordinals and the cardinals *relative* to that model. This correspondence also means that every cardinal is comparable.[619] For any two cardinal numbers, *a* and *b*, one of the following two statements will be true: $a \geq b$, or $b \geq a$.

The Axiom of Choice always has this dual aspect, on the one hand it enables free choice, an affirmation of pure chance, or the event, but on the other hand it also allows for the strictest of restrictions: the imposition of well-ordering. This is a distinction that Badiou recognizes, and it is important for him that a faithful subject *affirms* the first aspect while *suspending* the threat of the second.[620] The faithful subject, for Badiou, is a finite portion of the infinite process of incorporating the indiscernible, non-constructible, sets into the situation without reducing their indiscernible non-constructible nature to that of discernible constructability. The process of forcing affirms the first aspect of the Axiom of Choice, whilst warding off the second. It does this by *forcing* these new non-constructible sets into the given situation without extending the upper limit of the situation itself, as it is ultimately

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[618] Ibid. p. 15.
[619] Potter, Michael, <u>Set Theory and its Philosophy</u>, (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 266.
[620] BE, pp. 230-231, 305.

this upper limit that can account for the well-ordering, and therefore constructability, of the sets that appear in the model. In the case of the independence of the Continuum Hypothesis, the ground model of set theory uses ω as its structure, the upper bound of this model is then the collection of all the subsets of ω, the power set of ω, $\wp(\omega)$ the power of the continuum. The only thing that is known about $\wp(\omega)$ is that its cardinality is strictly greater than $\aleph_0$: $|\wp(\omega)| > \aleph_0$. Gödel's proof of the consistency of The Continuum Hypothesis, in a universe restricted to constructible sets, asserts that: $|\wp(\omega)| = \aleph_1$. But Cohen, using his method of forcing, can show that if a set G is added, whose elements are all generic non-constructible sets, then the relation $|\wp(\omega \cup G)| = \aleph_2$ can be asserted. For this to be a significant result there needs to be an additional step to shows that: $|\wp(\omega)| = |\wp(\omega \cup G)|$. This equality suggests that not every non-constructible set is a *generic* non-constructible set; the selection must be very specific in order to preserve this relation.[621] This additional equality also shows how non-constructible sets are an implicit and indiscernible part of a given situation, in order for them to make a difference they need to be explicitly posited, selected and decided upon.

These generic sets are determined as non-constructible relative to the model in which they are used. Their non-constructability rests on the fact that *every* element of ω must be interrogated as to whether it belongs to a given generic set. The determination of a non-constructible generic set then depends on an *infinite* set of conditions, the infinite individual interrogations of the elements of ω. A constructible set, on the other hand, is one that can be given according to a *finite* set of conditions. The relative non-constructability of generic sets depends on the upper bound of the

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[621] Tiles, Mary, The Philosophy of Set Theory: An Historical Introduction to Cantor's Paradise, (Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989), p. 187.

model in which it appears. Generic sets remain non-constructible so long as there are no sets given in the model that could be used to *code*, or well-order, them, thus reducing their infinite list of conditions to a finite list conditions. This can occur if a *new* model with a greater cardinality is posited, here new sets exhibiting structures that were inaccessible to the old model become available. The Axiom of Choice, in the form of the Well Ordering Theorem, also guarantees that there is such a model in which any previously non-constructible set will become constructible, as every set can be well ordered.

For Badiou, this is the importance of the generic *extension* of a ground model; it is not a new model, but a specific extension that preserves the upper bound of the model allowing for the immanent and effective deployment of non-constructible generic sets. This, for Badiou, is how the Axiom of Choice is used to its full force; affirming the pure contingency the event, whilst warding off the totalitarian aspect of the Axiom of Choice, found in the formation of a new more comprehensive model. The axiom's positive aspect is affirmed, whilst its negative side is suspended. One of the standard ways in which a new model, of a higher cardinality, is formed and used is through the addition of new large cardinal axioms, mentioned above. Badiou identifies this treatment of the immanent appearance of non-constructible sets as problematic, and their overcoming, or evaporation, in a new model of higher cardinality as a source of evil. In his book *Ethics* this evil, or wrong, is called a disaster, the naming of the unnameable, whilst in *Logics of Worlds* this is the position of the *obscure* subject, who claims, through the real change of new legislation (the addition of axioms), that no event ever took place.[622] In both cases what looked like something

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[622] E, pp. 80 – 84.

undeterminable, was judged to be not-yet determinable, with the addition of new laws this undecidability could be dispelled.

6.13 Two Types of Subjectivity

Returning to Deleuze and Guattari, we can now see how this dual aspect of the Axiom of Choice restricts the deterritorialization of the subject to a positive, yet *relative* form. Although Badiou's subject, as a specific form of the subject of enunciation, might well deploy the indiscernible resource of non-constructible sets within a situation to truly expand that situation, this transformation remains relative to the model. There is always the possibility of a lapse into a model of a higher power, where a subject of the statement defines and determines what had previously been undecidable and indiscernible. The power that makes both these aspects possible is the power of free choice, or the Axiom of Choice. The difference between Badiou and Deleuze and Guattari, is that for Badiou this collapse, failure or betrayal is not inevitable: it is possible to maintain a subject of enunciation uncoupled from a subject of the statement. For Badiou the question 'What love is not betrayed?' is a real question demanding a faithful subject of true love, rather than the rhetorical statement that it is for Deleuze and Guattari.[623] For them the subject of enunciation's betrayal at the hands of a subject of the statement is an inevitable and determined relation, the fate of the first lies in its collapse into the second:

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[623] ATP, p. 131.

A point of subjectification constituting the point of departure of the line… a subject of enunciation issuing from the point of subjectification and a subject of the statement in a determinable relation to this first subject.[624]

For Deleuze and Guattari, the suspension of the threat of betrayal in the immanent operation of the subject of enunciation is a limited and unreliable form of innovative creation, or production. It limits thought to the finitude of the subject of enunciation, which, in a statement incredibly close to Badiou, operates by a '*linear and temporal succession of finite proceedings*'.[625] It is clear that the type of absolute positive deterritorialization that Deleuze and Guattari pursue must be an overcoming of this entire structure: an overcoming of the finitude of subjective thought, an end to the threat of betrayal, and freedom from free choice. All this amounts to an overcoming of the Axiom of Choice.

Within set theory, the overcoming of the Axiom of Choice breaks the connection between the ordinal and cardinal hierarchies. Not all sets can be well ordered, so there are some sets that might well have a cardinal magnitude but do not have any possible correlation with an ordinal magnitude.   Certain sets that exhibit the intuitive qualities of an intensive density, that resists well ordering, and that resists comparability can no longer be reduced to a well ordered comparable set through an appeal to new axioms, if the Axiom of Choice is rejected. The continuum, or real number line, is, again, the canonical example; in order for it to be internally well ordered and externally comparable the Axiom of Choice must be present.[626] So, in models, or situations, where the Axiom of Choice is rejected, and the model is not

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[624] ATP, p. 127.
[625] ATP, p. 120.
[626] Jech, Thomas, <u>Set Theory</u>, (Academic Press, Inc., 1978), p. 39.

restricted to the merely constructible, these minorities, these dense, massive and internally fuzzy sets are free from any future threat. These aspects of denseness, fuzziness and mass are positive intrinsic qualities, rather than being negative qualities that mark a lack, or as something to be resolved, through the addition of new axioms or by appealing to higher more comprehensive models. Their negativity was always underwritten by the power of the Axiom of Choice, by the idea of a capacity to choose arbitrarily. Only *after* this axiom has been rejected and overturned can these minorities appear in a positive light, without the threat of extermination or exile, similar to a restriction to the constructible, and the equally repressive threat of integration or assimilation, mirrored by the widening of the model or addition of axioms.

One of the main aims of the above analysis has been to show how Deleuze and Guattari's aims can be understood as an attack on a specific axiom, as opposed to a rejection of the general use of axioms and an axiomatic approach. As a result, the inability to well-order the continuum becomes just one example among many, in a framework that rejects the capacity of free choice. The retention of a reduced, or perhaps minimal, axiomatic framework allows us to differentiate between processes that reach beyond the power of arbitrary choice. Therefore these processes lead toward, and allow for, *different* unstructured planes. There is no single plane of consistency, or immanence, no one destratified smooth space, but rather many such planes. The major consequence of this move is that it removes the special privilege that *the* plane of consistency enjoyed, being different in kind and operating according to different processes meant that it could lay claim to being the site of all truly creative and novel production. This truly creative production is absolute positive

deterritorialization, a process that is not betrayed through the presupposed relativization and negativity of the axiomatic framework, falsely thought of as a domain dominated by language. The machinic and the diagrammatic now become operations, selections and processes that exceed the power of a capacity of free choice, but which remain conceivable within an axiomatic framework. What both Badiou and this interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari share, is that their processes of radical transformation and change rely on the use of non-constructible sets. It is only the constructible realm, the domain truly dominated by language, that refuses to utilize the potential of the non-constructible.

It is the potential of the non-constructible as something invisible and indiscernible yet *immanent* to a situation, plane, or strata that provides the resource for radical change and transformation. This change is possible in both the case when an axiomatic capacity of free choice is preserved, as is the case in Badiou's conception of subjectivity and human rationality, or if this capacity is overcome, as in the case of Deleuze and Guattari. The commonality between the two is the use of the non-constructible and the presence of a subjective figure, a subject that is fulfilled in Badiou and overcome in Deleuze and Guattari. In the simplest sense we have two different projects produced by similar methods and techniques working on the same material.

In an attempt to move away from the formal mathematical language used so far, I want to give a general definition of subjectivity. This definition will complement the definitions of freedom and events given in the previous chapter. Here, I will be using the term subject as a subject of *radical change* engaged in the production and creation

of novelty. This is in order to avoid Deleuze's much wider use of the term subject, which includes the partial and larval subjects of *Difference and Repetition* along with the notion, outlined above, that a subject is a system: a theory satisfied by a model.

To give a general description, the subject is a finite portion of a process that affirms the event, where the event is a contingent happening, occurring within a consistent situation.

The aspect that will set Deleuze's position apart from Badiou's is not so much this conception of the subject, but rather the idea of the *truth* of an event. This is, again, a very Badiouian term, and one that does not sit well with Deleuze and Guattari, but I think that the analysis that I have provided makes it an intelligible concept. The truth of an event is the radical change, or created novelty, that results from the event's happening and its subsequent incorporation into the situation, via the subjective process. From the analysis over the last two chapters we can see that this radical change takes the form of an actual negation, or making inconsistent, of a specific axiom, within a set theoretical framework. Using the theory of forcing as our model, this actual negation occurs in two different ways, either in the generic extension of the ground model, or in the symmetric sub-model, between the ground model and generic extension. This leads me to differentiate how subjectivity works in the two philosophical frameworks that I have identified with Badiou and Deleuze. Although they both share the common point of utilizing the same untapped, invisible or indiscernible resource immanent within a situation, in the form of non-constructible sets, they differ in the way that the subject relates to the event.

For Badiou, the truth of an event is a truth *for* the subject. The subject's intention, or consciously posited project, coincides with the truth of the event. There is eventually a coincidence as the subject is nothing other than a finite portion of the whole generic procedure of forcing. Although this final aim, or project, cannot be given a determinate conditioned form, it is, nonetheless, the backbone of Badiou's notion of fidelity and the faithful subject.[627] In embarking on a process of radical transformation the subject must affirm the event and unfold its consequences. This commitment to a cause is a conscious affirmation. The full truth of the event is simply the *limit* of all these subjective procedures. For Badiou, the presentation of the generic sets, associated with the site of the event, *is* the truth of the event; the truth is *present* in the generic extension of the model.

For Deleuze and Guattari, according to the analysis above, the truth of the event is not realized in the generic extension of the model, and therefore cannot coincide with the conscious intention of the subject. The truth of the event is realized by a non-subjective selection that establishes a situation, or plane, beyond the limits of the subject and their militant experimentation, a situation in which the Axiom of Choice is no longer a consistent axiom. Here, the truth of an event cannot be a truth for a subject because, at a fundamental level, this truth makes every subject inconsistent. But, if we take from Badiou the idea that the consciously posited aim of the subject is the production of the generic extension of the model, then this project is still valid. The point now is that no truth, in the form of a radical change that would negate a fundamental axiom, is realized in this extension. Formally the subject is the same for both Deleuze and Badiou, it is the process of incorporating generic sets and forcing a

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[627] LoW, pp. 173 – 174. BE, pp. 251 – 250.

generic extension, both subjects are consciously invested and committed to producing this extension. The difference is in the belief that this process will make a difference. For Badiou, the subject's activity is directly involved in making a difference, whereas, for Deleuze and Guattari, this activity does not directly make a difference, something else is required. So, in the former case we have an *authentic* subject, and in the latter a *deluded* subject. The second subject is deluded either in the belief that their conscious effort will lead to radical change, or in the belief that this change, this truth, is *for* the subject. The radical change of the truth of the event will overcome the subject, in the space, opened by the subject itself, between the world to come of the subject's goal and the original situation. The truth of the event will be *for* this unconscious non-subjective process, which establishes a new situation in this between space; the event affirms itself in its overcoming of the subject.

To put this as succinctly as possible, I offer the following two definitions of the subject.

Definition of the Subject One: Badiou

The subject is a finite process of incorporating the infinite indiscernible resources of a situation, revealed by an event. This incorporation is *sufficient* to realize a radical change, or production of novelty. As such, the subject is conscious of the change that they are engendering. The truth of the event is the *limit* of the subjective processes.

Definition of the Subject Two: Deleuze and Guattari

The subject is a finite process of incorporating the infinite indiscernible resources of a situation, revealed by an event. This incorporation is *insufficient* to realize a radical change, or production of novelty. As such, the subject is *not* conscious of the change that they are engendering. The truth of the event is *beyond* the limit of the subjective processes.

6.14 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has now been accomplished. The aim was to examine further the connection between the style of forcing associated with the proof of the independence of the Axiom of Choice and the philosophy of Deleuze, especially in his collaborative work with Guattari. This was in order to show how the extra step of extracting a symmetric sub-model from the generic extension could be aligned with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of a non-subjective process of selection, embodied in the abstract machine and diagrammatic thought, found in *A Thousand Plateaus*. This included an examination of their critique of the limitations of axiomatics and its equation with capitalism. The analysis also led to the completion of the review of the three main terms of this thesis, by arriving at two different definitions of the subject, to complement those of freedom and the event given in the last chapter.

The criticisms that I have developed throughout this chapter have depended on highlighting, time and again, that within the axiomatic framework the distinction

between the concept of constructible and non-constructible sets is more significant than that between denumerable and non-denumerable sets that Deleuze and Guattari focus on. The later distinction occludes the former, and makes the axiomatic framework appear as a cage, condemning thought to a confinement within the bounds of language. But it is not the axiomatic scheme that limits thought to that which is definable by language, but the adoption of specific axioms that restrict thought to the merely constructible.

It is the non-constructible, within the axiomatic framework, that provides every situation, plane or strata with its indiscernible, invisible resource. It takes an inexplicable event to reveal some aspect of this indiscernible resource, and a process of incorporation that can integrate the consequences of the event into the situation whilst still respecting its indiscernible non-constructible nature. The manner in which Badiou respects the indiscernible and non-constructible nature of the event is, via the process of forcing, to relativize it to a specific generic extension of the situation. This is because the Axiom of Choice guarantees that there is some situation in which the non-constructible set can be well ordered, and can therefore be constructed. Its non-constructible nature is only relative to a specific situation. Deleuze and Guattari argue to make this non-constructability absolute, in line with their notion of absolute positive deterritorialization. This can only be achieved if the Axiom of Choice is overcome. Badiou restricts the situation, keeping the indiscernible as indiscernible within a given situation, but Deleuze and Guattari make the indiscernible absolute. But both these processes achieve similar degrees of radical change, within set theory they both achieve powerful independence results. What is important is that they both utilize the non-constructible to produce comparable degrees of change. Neither of

these two approaches completely captures the full range of thought's power to affect radical change.

Deleuze and Guattari's project for thought to escape the confines of subjectivity, and the limits of a capacity of free choice, can no longer be seen as a general project for all thought. There are other modes of thought that can affect radical change. In my analysis, this is due to their inadequate rejection of axiomatics; their project can remain firmly within this framework. As such, they are not capable of rejecting Badiou's position, where subjectivity is capable of producing true novelty and radical change. They must live with the possibility that the subject is not always overcome, and that the subject's consciously affirmed project is sometimes sufficient to bring about radical change.

It only remains now to give an overview of the whole thesis and to examine some of the consequences and problems of this theory of two types of event and subjectivity, the one staying within the limits of a capacity of free choice, and the other exceeding it.

Thesis Conclusion

To begin this conclusion it will be useful to summarize my position on freedom, events and subjectivity, which I have developed over the last two chapters of this thesis. It will then be possible to contrast this final position with the questions that I initially raised in the introduction, before highlighting some of the problems that this thesis raises.

The last two chapters have presented a predominately Badiouian reading of the problems of events, freedom and subjectivity. The reading of Deleuze has been an aggressive incorporation of his work into a Badiouian framework, which, although it has changed this framework, remains fundamentally a Badiouian perspective. This is clear from my rejection of Deleuze's subject, which I examined in the last chapter in terms of a model (a theory satisfied by a structure), in favour of Badiou's subject of forcing, and in the retention of a set theoretical ontology.

In this thesis I have fundamentally backed Badiou's radical separation of the Event from events, as opposed to the intimate relation pursued by Deleuze. This leads to my definition of an *event* as an unconditioned contingent happening that occurs *in* a situation, where unconditioned means non-constructible in the set theoretical sense laid out over the last three chapters. The event is a significant occurrence only if it is affirmed, that is, if it is put to work in the situation to make a difference. Here, 'making a difference' means forcing a paradox, or contradiction, through an extension of the situation made possible by incorporating the event into the situation. This

paradox opens and extends the potential of a situation by rendering one of its conditions obsolete, such as the Continuum Hypothesis in set theory.

The way that the event is incorporated into a situation is determined by the two other terms, freedom and subjectivity. *Freedom* is an affirmation of the event, but this affirmation can be overcome by the event itself. Here freedom as a capacity, foundational to the possibility of a subject, can either contain or be overwhelmed by the event. This is the difference between the two styles of forcing discussed in Chapter 5, and is related to the two types of subject that I equate with Badiou and Deleuze. The two possible forms of the subject are: Badiou's conscious authentic subject and Deleuze's unconscious inauthentic subject. Badiou's subject finds its truth in the world to come of the generic extension, which it helps to build and it is capable of mastering the excess of the event through their free power of choice. The conscious project of the subject, working toward the creation of the generic extension, is the real end of the event, in the sense that radical change and novelty occurs there, in the extension: the paradox, or contradiction is produced in the generic extension. The Deleuzian subject, in my treatment, is structurally identical to Badiou's, the subject works toward the production of the generic extension. But the radical change and novelty, the potential of the event, is not deployed in this extension, but in the symmetric submodel, produced after the completion of the generic extension, and situated between the extension and the ground model. The subject is, therefore, deluded if it thinks that its actions are directly contributing to something radically new; it is inauthentic and in bad faith if it believes this to be the case. The subject must be overcome, and other, non-subjective, processes of selection must determine this submodel, bringing about the creative potential of the event.

This treatment of two types of subject allows me to navigate between a naïve existential position, that only treats the committed subject as the authentic agent of change, and an extreme anti-human, or anti-subjective, position, that always attributes real change to unconscious forces of desire, reducing the subject's conscious engagement and commitment to a delusion. It is the case that, sometimes, the conscious subject does know what they are doing, their consciously affirmed project is their true project, and it will directly bring about radical change. It is also the case that, sometimes, this subject is deluded, and their conscious action is really being directed by unconscious forces towards ends other than those posited by the subject. This position is more reminiscent of Deleuze, rather than forcing an either/or choice between subjective conscious forces *or* non-subjective unconscious forces, I can affirm a both/and position: both the conscious force of the subject *and* unconscious non-subjective forces can bring about equally radical change and novelty. My treatment also emphasises the aspect of *risk* involved in any subjective endeavour, as it is impossible from the perspective of the active subject to differentiate between a truth that will be realized in the generic extension, or in a symmetric submodel. The fundamental activity of producing the generic extension is the same, and, due to the finitude of the subject being a part of the infinite procedure, they cannot grasp the completed generic extension, and therefore cannot grasp whether it is sufficient to produce radical change.

The project that I laid out in the introduction posited that to revive Metaphysics it would be necessary to separate the question of the Event from that of events and this would only be possible through an affirmation of the actual infinite. The

developments and ideas explored over the last three chapters would not have been possible without the distinctions and structures opened by set theory. The complex nature of infinite sets, their hierarchies and structures have allowed a degree of clarity necessary to present the unconditioned as unconditioned within a situation, in the form of non-constructible sets. I think that the philosophy of Badiou, Deleuze and my work in this thesis demonstrate that the actual infinite presents a rich resource for Metaphysics that escapes from the critique of a phenomenological, or post-phenomenological, perspective burdened with a commitment to finitude and the potential infinite.

The main restriction that must be recognized in my proposed extension and modification of Badiou, is a problem shared with Badiou's own position. As events only occur in situations, Badiou's and my set theoretical ontology is restricted to the expansion and extension of *already given* situations, which are *already* categorized into one of the four genres of truth. Badiou cannot give an account of the origin of either the genres of truth, or of the interesting historical situations. Every historical situation must assume not only the event that is currently transforming the situation, through its incorporation by a subject, but a previous event: this evental recurrence assumes an unending chain of events and subjects, each founding the possibility of the next event and subject.[628] The question of how a historical situation comes into existence cannot be answered, and nor can the equally pressing question of how can a genre of truth come into existence. Badiou attempts to answer the first question in *Logics of Worlds*, where he uses his new phenomenological/logical approach to better describe potential sites for an event of a given situation, through the concept of the

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[628] BE, p. 209.

inexistent.[629] And it would be a future task to fully assess these developments. But the question of the four genres of truth and any possible probing into their origin is simply forbidden by Badiou:

> [T]hat (in philosophy) the theory of truths and subjective figures is formulated comes at a price: we cannot know if the types of truths that we experience are the only possible ones. Either other species, unknown to us, or even our own species, in another phase of its history… could perhaps have access to types of truths of which we have no idea, and not even imagine.[630]

This prohibition is no more convincing than Sartre's prohibition against thinking any situation other than the human situation governed by scarcity. Philosophy cannot accept such prohibitions against thinking, that other genres 'could perhaps' be possible is motivation enough to think about them. In Chapter 5 of this thesis I proposed a fifth genre of truth, and posited a new type of subjective figure for this genre. If I want to keep this thesis within the conservative bounds of Badiou's prohibition I would claim that there are five, rather than four genres. This new genre is the genre of philosophy and its particular concern is with the question of freedom. But I suggested that philosophy's role was wider than this, and that it was engaged in the *production* of new genres. Therefore the question of how do genres come into existence is unavoidable, and the related questions of how genres of truth affect and interact with each other also become possible.

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[629] LoW, pp. 322, 342 – 343, 361, 372.
[630] LoW, p. 71.

The separation of the Event from events depends on not asking these types of question, hence Badiou's prohibition. One way to account for the fluidity, transformation and genesis of genres of truth would be to return to an idea of the Event akin to Deleuze's; the Event would have an intimate relation with events. I explored this notion in the idea of the translation of regimes of signs in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and a similar idea is at work toward the end of *What is Philosophy?* with the interference between the irreducible planes of immanence (Philosophy), reference (science) and composition (art).[631] Therefore, although this thesis affirms Badiou's prohibition against questioning the genesis of genres of truth in order to give a decisive decision regarding the relation between the Event and events, in terms of a radical subtraction and separation, the alternative intimate relation is far from closed off.

Metaphysics, and the pursuit of systematic philosophy, is possible if the full complexity of the infinite is affirmed and grasped. These new Metaphysical projects must recognize a difference between the Event and events, but the nature of this differentiation and the relation between the Event and events is far from conclusive. But central to any such project is the recognition that there is an operation of freedom at play, one that affirms contingency and chance, drawing on the idea of the non-constructible rather than conforming to a traditional existential notion of choice. And this notion of freedom transforms the role of subjectivity.

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[631] WP, pp. 217 – 218.

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