

Deleuze and the Concept of Intensity in Philosophy

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0 INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT STATEMENT

The goal of this dissertation is to explain the concept of intensity in the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and argue for the innovative effect this concept, and Deleuze's philosophy in general, could have on contemporary thought. Even for the well-informed philosophical reader, the jargon that Deleuze employs throughout his *oeuvre* makes his thought complicated and obscure. While I do think that understanding Deleuze's jargon is necessary for fully understanding the non-intuitive and difficult things that he says about reality, and that reducing his terminology to everyday language eliminates the precision of his thought, his reliance on a technical vocabulary, in addition to his reliance on a large number of figures throughout the history of philosophy, does present difficulties for the short presentation that is called for in a dissertation proposal.

Since much of Deleuze's terminology can be mystifying, especially related to the concept of intensity, I will begin this proposal with a general, non-technical overview of Deleuze's philosophy, in addition to a brief description of the word intensity in his thought that does not rely on any kind of jargon. One reason that Deleuze's philosophy is counterintuitive is because he continuously attempts to go beyond, and in many ways invert, our commonsense understanding of reality and the basic metaphysical categories of western philosophy. He aims to give an account of difference that is not parasitic upon (but is in fact the source of) identity; an account of temporality that is not parasitic upon (but is in fact the source of) spatiality; an account of being that is not parasitic upon (but is in fact the source of) individuation; and an account of intensive magnitude that is not parasitic upon (but is in fact the source of) extensive magnitude. For Deleuze, the priority that has been given to identity (for example, self-identical forms, or laws), space (time

is dependent upon motion, and motion occurs in a given space), individuated beings (hylomorphic substances, atoms, etc.), and extensive magnitudes (meters, masses, but also time insofar as it is quantified, for example, in a Cartesian coordinate system) leads to a mistaken view of reality. The universe is in the first instance a becoming, a system that undergoes continuous variation within itself, and all identities, spatial configurations, and individuated beings are the effect of this variation, but they are not the variation itself.

Regarding intensity, we do commonly think of intensity and intensive magnitudes as being parasitic upon prior extensive magnitudes, or we think of intensities as filling something that is given beforehand: for example, temperatures that are dependent upon independent bodies, or the motion of particles. Deleuze, however, wants to argue that the quantification of intensive magnitude, while helpful for scientific purposes, eliminates the radical temporality that exists in the universe. For Deleuze, there is a sense in which intensity is prior to extensity, or space, and that intensive magnitudes, such as temperatures and speeds, but also emotions, create the spatial characteristics of reality that we perceive. Intensity is what Deleuze calls the basic non-spatial field that is present throughout the universe, within which there emerges specific, individuated spatial and temporal actualities (possessing specific extensive and intensive magnitudes) that we know within experience, where such experiencable actualities are capable of interacting with and merging into one another precisely because they are modifications or "foldings" within the primordial field or plenum which Deleuze calls a *spatium*.

My dissertation will cover Deleuze's *oeuvre*, with a focus on his early metaphysical treatise, *Difference and Repetition*, and his later work, written with Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*. I shall argue that intensity is a primitive term – ontologically and ethically – in Deleuze's philosophy of becoming. By primitive, I mean first, or among the first, in the order of explanation. For example, in *Difference and Repetition*, I shall defend the view that the term intensity is primitive in the following senses:

I. Intensity is equated with being in-itself.¹ [metaphysics]

II. Intensity is implicated with what Deleuze calls the third, and most primitive, synthesis of time.² [metaphysics]

¹ See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, translated by Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 39-51.

² See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 243.

III. Intensive quantities are the sufficient reason for all phenomena in experience, and intensity is the principle of ontic individuation.³ [physics]

IV. Intensity is the site of a fundamental encounter that opens thought up to what Deleuze calls the ontological domain of the virtual.⁴ [ethics]

I shall go into more detail below regarding the different roles that the concept of intensity plays in Deleuze's metaphysics; I only list them here in order to display the importance that I believe this term plays in Deleuze's philosophy. Indeed, most Deleuze scholars would not deny the importance – to various degrees – or omnipresence of the term intensity throughout Deleuze's writings. For example, Clisby even claims that "[intensity] is perhaps the most crucial notion for understanding this work [*Difference and Repetition*]."⁵ Nevertheless, there is currently widespread confusion and disagreement in regards to the term's importance, meaning, and role in Deleuze's work. For example, in a recent journal dedicated to the role of intensity in Deleuze's philosophy, the editors make the following remark: "When we examine the literature, however, we find a surprising lack of consensus regarding the sense of his [Deleuze's] core concepts and the relations between them – even those as central as the virtual, the actual and the intensive."⁶

I think that there are two reasons for the current confusion in the secondary literature. The first is that the concept of intensity has not been approached in terms of the problems that motivate Deleuze's philosophy. Without understanding these problems, Deleuze's discussion of intensity is abstract and perplexing. The first chapter of this dissertation, then, will lay out the main problems of Deleuze's philosophy and explain to the reader how the concept of intensity is involved with these problems. The second cause of confusion is that intensity is one of the most counterintuitive concepts in what is already a counterintuitive and complicated philosophy, and there simply has not yet been an adequate interpretation of this pivotal concept in Deleuze's thought.

The manner in which I see preceding interpretations of the concept of intensity as inadequate is mainly in terms of the completeness of the interpretation. Commentators have neither situated intensity within Deleuze's larger metaphysical framework, nor have they parsed the

³ See Ibid., 222.

⁴ See Ibid., 144.

⁵ Dale Clisby, "Intensity in Context: Thermodynamics and Transcendental Philosophy," in *Deleuze Studies* 11 (2017), 240.

⁶ Sean Bowden and Dale Clisby, "Introduction: The Virtual, the Actual and the Intensive: Contentions, Reflections, and Interpretations," in *Deleuze Studies* 11 (2017), 153.

diverse meanings that Deleuze attributes to this term throughout his *oeuvre*. I think that Deleuze himself is at fault for the confusion surrounding this term insofar as he rarely explicitly states why he thinks the concept of intensity is so crucial for his philosophy and he rarely distinguishes the different senses that he attributes to the term. According to my interpretation, which I shall defend throughout this dissertation, there are four different meanings that Deleuze often implicitly attributes to the concept of intensity, certainly related, but identical:

1. Intensity is Nature: the immediately real content of the absolute (pure form of time). This is a precise term that will require a detailed explication in the dissertation. In this sense, intensity operates as a transcendental principle, called in different places by Deleuze the following: Intensity; depth; pure *implex*; space as a whole; space as an intensive quantity; energy; the theater of all metamorphosis or difference in itself which envelops all its degrees in the production of each.
2. Domain-specific intensive quantities. These are magnitudes that exist as temporal, continuous gradients rather than extensive, discrete points. They include: temperatures, speeds, emotions and moods, *et al.* These quantities cannot change without changing their nature.
3. Intensity is a general term that Deleuze uses to discuss the durational nature of reality. Intensive quantities affirm real duration. As Bergson puts it: "If I want to mix a glass of sugar and water, I must [...] wait until the sugar melts."⁷
4. An intensity, especially when used in an ethical context by Deleuze, is a degree of power and a mode of individuation.⁸ Corresponding to these intensities are affects, which are exercised in accordance with different degrees of intensity that are only quantifiable in terms of the more or the less.

Many of Deleuze's arguments depend on his use of the concept of intensity, and so long as the sense of this term remains obscure, so too does Deleuze's philosophy as a whole. This is one reason, then, why I think that this dissertation is a worthwhile project. I believe that Deleuze's philosophy

⁷ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, translated by Arthur Mitchell (New York: Modern Library, 1911), 12.

⁸ "A degree, an intensity, is an individual, a *Haecceity* that enters into composition with other degrees, other intensities, to form another individual." (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 253) Also: "We call the *latitude* of a body the affects of which it is capable at a given degree of power, or rather within the limits of that degree. *Latitude is made up of intensive parts falling under a capacity, and longitude of extensive parts falling under a relation.*" (Ibid., 256)

is a groundbreaking achievement that opens up a breathtaking view of the universe, that the concept of intensity is crucial for understanding many of Deleuze's arguments, and that Deleuze himself is very rarely explicit on what he means by this term or how he sees it fulfilling specific functions in his arguments.

In terms of current Deleuze scholarship, I think that there are two additional reasons that this project is worthwhile. There are two fundamental areas of dispute in the current secondary literature devoted to Deleuze, and both of them concern the meaning and role of intensity in Deleuze's philosophy. The first area of dispute deals with the ontological relation between what Deleuze calls the realm of virtual and the realm of the actual. There are three prevalent positions in this first area of dispute: some commentators, such as Hallward and Williams, argue that intensity belongs to the realm of what Deleuze calls the virtual,⁹ some argue, such as Roffe, that intensity belongs to the realm of what Deleuze calls the actual,¹⁰ and some argue, including DeLanda and Protevi, that intensity is independent of both the virtual and the actual.¹¹ The second area of dispute is whether or not Deleuze's concept of intensity is a scientific or a properly philosophical concept.¹² While my thinking on the former dispute is still undecided, I will argue in chapters three and four of this dissertation that intensity is a transcendental and thus philosophical concept in Deleuze's philosophy, with one of its various empirical manifestations occurring in the domain of science. In the domain of science, intensive processes, with their corresponding magnitudes, are primarily thermodynamic, but Deleuze also discusses intensive processes in the biological domain, which include embryogenesis, in the perceptual domain, and in the mathematical domain, where, for Deleuze, intensive processes account for the generation of numbers.¹³

Before ending this introduction, I would like to make a brief remark on Deleuze's relationship to the history of philosophy and the many philosophers that he uses as he constructs his own philosophical position. Deleuze is very idiosyncratic in his interpretation and

⁹ See, for example, Peter Hallward, *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (Verso, 2006), 28; James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 7–8, 14, 184.

¹⁰ See Jon Roffe, *Badiou's Deleuze* (McGill University Press, 2012), 142–3, 150.

¹¹ See Manuel DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* (Continuum Press, 2005), 86; John Protevi, "Adding Deleuze to the Mix," in *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 9 (2010), 421–2.

¹² DeLanda and Protevi focus on a scientific interpretation, whereas Williams and, more recently, Mader, have both argued, unconvincingly, for its properly philosophical status.

¹³ See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 232.

appropriation of several themes from other thinkers, such as the notion of Idea from Plato and Kant and the notion of intensity from Kant and Maimon. Due to the space constraints of this proposal, I cannot go into any detail in regards to the difference between the term intensity in Kant and Deleuze, or whether or not Deleuze has a faithful interpretation of Kant. In fact, a complete explanation of both of these questions would require a different dissertation, focused on Deleuze's relation to Kant. This is not to say that I am unaware that Deleuze's interpretations are departures from the standard interpretations of figures such as Leibniz and Kant, or even figures such as Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Bergson; Rather, I just think that what is relevant for what I am trying to accomplish in this project is the recognition that Deleuze takes concepts from different philosophers, changes them in some way, and places them in a very different context from the one in which they originated. Even if it complicates matters, it is beneficial and often necessary to trace the meaning of the term from its origin, and see how it is modified in Deleuze's system. While I do intend on working through this type of historical analysis in the dissertation, it is, however, beyond the scope of this proposal.

Regarding the overall form of the dissertation, my plan is to present Deleuze's philosophy, following Spinoza, *sub specie aeternitatis*. For Deleuze, however, this is rather *sub specie de absoluta*, because the absolute in Deleuze is not eternal in any usual sense of the term. This method of presentation is the best way, I contend, to avoid the confusion of interpreting intensive quantities in terms of seemingly prior extensive quantities. Whereas Spinoza begins with an ontological argument to the absolute, I will present Deleuze's argument to the absolute, in chapter two of this dissertation, in terms of Kant's transcendental method. The rest of the dissertation will follow a general movement from being *qua* being to being *qua* individuated, and finally, in chapter five, to the ethical implications of this metaphysics. I shall say more about the structure of chapters two through five at the end of my outline for chapter one.

1 DELEUZE'S PHILOSOPHICAL PROJECT

To what philosophical problems in general does Deleuze's philosophy address? In light of these problems, why does Deleuze need to create the concept of intensity? The lack of insight into these questions is one reason that the concept of intensity remains obscure in Deleuze's philosophy. In this first chapter, then, I will provide a framework for reading Deleuze by situating his philosophy in relation to the questions that motivate his thinking. The goal of this chapter is

threefold: First, lay out the historical origin of the three basic problems that operate in Deleuze's philosophy; second, show how these problems are present in, and motivate, Deleuze's philosophy; and third, indicate, in general, how Deleuze will address these questions with the concept of intensity. The main texts that will be relevant include Deleuze's historical monographs, in addition to *Difference and Repetition*, *A Thousand Plateaus*, and *What is Philosophy?*

As I mention above, the confusion and disagreement that surrounds the term intensity occurs in three registers: in terms of its importance, its meaning, and its role, *vis-à-vis* other concepts, in Deleuze's system. In order to demonstrate the importance of this term in Deleuze's philosophy, one thesis of this chapter is that the questions that motivate Deleuze's thought as a whole overlap in fundamental ways, and in some cases are identical, with the questions that motivate Deleuze's creation of the concept of intensity. I think that there are three basic problems that motivate Deleuze's philosophy – one on the ethical plane, one on the metaphysical plane, one on the physical¹⁴ plane:

Ethical

1. From Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, *et al.*, how does one construct a philosophy that affirms life, change, and this world? How does one construct a joyful wisdom (*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*), and avoid a philosophy that is grounded in a hatred for life?

Metaphysical

1. From Bergson, *et al.*: What are the conditions under which something novel, or new, is produced in reality?¹⁵

1.1 From Bergson, Heidegger, *et al.*: how does one think in terms of time, process, or event? In what sense is this a temporal monism?

1.2 From Nietzsche, how does one create a concept of difference that is not subordinate to a concept of identity? Or, what is the same: How does one create a philosophy in which becoming is primary in relation to being?

1.3 From Spinoza, how does one construct an immanent metaphysics?

¹⁴ As in φυσικά, the 'natural things,' or *natura naturata* in Spinoza. In other words, Being insofar as it is individuated, ideally, materially, organically, culturally, or in any other manner.

¹⁵ "[Bergson] transformed philosophy by posing the question of the 'new' instead of that of eternity (how are the production and appearance of something new possible)." (Deleuze, *Cinema I*, 3).

1.31 From John Duns Scotus, Spinoza, and Nietzsche, how does one construct an ontology whose basic proposition is the univocity of being?

Physical

1. From Maimon, *via* Kant, how does one formulate a transcendental and genetic principle of real experience?

Deleuze relies on a large number of figures throughout the history of philosophy as he articulates the problems that motivate his own philosophy. As a method, Deleuze takes a problem or a concept from the history of philosophy, the history of science, or the history of art, or contemporary philosophy, science, or art, and transforms it, for the sake of making his own philosophy untimely. Deleuze's method of philosophy is Nietzschean in this regard. As Deleuze says in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*: "[Nietzsche] alters both the theory and the practice of philosophy. He compares the thinker to an arrow shot by Nature that another thinker picks up where it has fallen so that he can shoot it somewhere else. According to him, the philosopher is neither eternal nor historical but "untimely", always untimely."¹⁶

According to my interpretation, these are the three basic problems of Deleuze's philosophy, and these problems, along with the concepts created to address them, are arrows that Deleuze picks up, sharpens, and launches. My aim in this first chapter will be to trace backwards the trajectory of these problems, and look forward to the manner in which Deleuze launches them anew. Above, I mention John Duns Scotus, Spinoza, Nietzsche, Kant, Maimon, Bergson, and Heidegger, among others, as the sources of Deleuze's basic philosophical problems. In this first chapter, the key historical figures will be Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, Kant and Maimon. As I mention above, I shall introduce Deleuze's philosophical project in three stages: First, lay out the historical origin of each of these three problems; second, show how these problems are present in and motivate Deleuze's philosophy; and third, indicate, in a general manner, how Deleuze addresses these questions with the concept of intensity. In this proposal, I will outline only the ethical problem and the metaphysical problem. The metaphysical thesis of absolute novelty occupies chapters two and three of the dissertation. The physical problem of individuation will occupy chapter four. And the ethical problem of freedom occupies chapter five.

¹⁶ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, ix.

The ethical and the metaphysical problem entail one another and have their origin, for Deleuze, in the *Lebensphilosophien* of Spinoza,¹⁷ Nietzsche and Bergson.¹⁸ Just like Spinoza, in Deleuze there is a convergence between ontology and ethics, the metaphysical absolute and beatitude. In Deleuze's own philosophy, I will argue, this convergence occurs in the following thesis: Being is creativity, and creativity occurs as becoming. Mechanism and teleology are both ontologically derivative explanations of change, or becoming. Both are incomplete and, worse, upside down insofar as they subordinate becoming to a being that is completed given, either in a preceding state of affairs or in an idea that governs the activity of an entity: Mechanism and teleology mistake individuated being for being in general. If mechanism or teleology is raised up to the level of the absolute, then this metaphysics is mistaken, because they eliminate the radical novelty at play in the universe. Becoming is not subordinate to being; Rather, being – insofar as it means permanence or self-identity – is an effect of an ontologically prior realm of becoming.

While Deleuze does not put it this way, I contend that the conditions of creativity constitute the first principles of all beings (metaphysics), and creativity itself – for Deleuze, becoming – is the τέλος¹⁹ of the ethical life. Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Bergson articulate this thesis in different ways. With each of these philosophers, as well as with Deleuze, there is a threefold division that unites metaphysics and ethics. This threefold division is the following:

- i. metaphysics – Articulate the metaphysical thesis that the absolute is a creative process.
- ii. understand why creativity, or life, becomes problematic for finite beings.
- iii. ethics – construct an ethics such that finite beings are able to let life, that is, the absolute, run through them.

For example, with the metaphysical thesis, Spinoza claims that God, as *natura naturans*, is creativity *par excellence*, the absolute power to exist and to act, Nietzsche claims that the eternal return is the Being of becoming, and what returns is difference and inequality in the form of will to power, and Bergson claims that duration is the non-teleological, non-mechanistic, inherent

¹⁷ Spinoza is not often viewed as a vitalist philosopher, but Deleuze reads him this way: "There is, then, a philosophy of "life" in Spinoza; it consists precisely in denouncing all that separates us from life, all these transcendent values that are turned against life, these values that are tied to the conditions and illusions of consciousness." (Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 26)

¹⁸ For Deleuze's vitalism: "It's organisms that die, not life. Any work of art points a way through for life, finds a way through the cracks. Everything I've written is vitalistic, and least I hope it is." (Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 143)

¹⁹ Understood in the sense of completing something, or giving bounds to something.

impetus of Being to repeat itself in novel ways.²⁰

While Deleuze does not put it this way, I think that Deleuze formulates the metaphysical thesis of absolute novelty in the following manner: the absolute is an asubjective and differential power – variously named by Deleuze life, time, or pure immanence – that, on account of the fundamental inequality, or difference, which constitutes its nature, generates and expresses itself as being. This is a temporal monism, in which time is, in the final instance, the sufficient reason for all of the ontological differences – actual entities, space, Ideas, etc. – in the universe. As with Spinoza, metaphysics and ethics converge in his formulation of the absolute: "A life is the immanence of immanence, absolute immanence: it is complete power, complete bliss."²¹ For Deleuze, the source of becoming – power – is the source of ethical joy – bliss. Creativity is the beatitude of Deleuze's immanent metaphysics.

Why, for Deleuze, does creativity become problematic for finite beings? I think that this question requires both an ethical and metaphysical response. Ethically, for Deleuze, drawing on Nietzsche, creativity becomes problematic because human beings flee from and avoid in various ways – all related to transcendence and Being in the sense of identity over time – the preceding affirmation of life's immanence. Deleuze's metaphysical response to this question is similar to Bergson's. For Bergson a metaphysics of becoming is problematic because finite living beings (specifically, human beings) develop the power of the intellect, which, while a valuable evolutionary adaption, naturally turns the mind towards manipulable, extended, static, spatial objects, and away from intensive (non-extended) temporal processes. Deleuze calls this tendency of the human intellect to perceive the universe in terms of static objects, and not in terms of processes, the representational image of thought. Fundamentally, the representational image of thought is connected with the inability to construct a concept of difference that is not subordinate to identity. In other words, what constitutes the representational image of thought, codified in the work of Aristotle, is the subordination of difference to identity. All differences are indexed to a primary identity; all becoming begins and ends with something that has being.

Lastly, how, for Deleuze, do we construct an ethics such that finite beings are able to let

²⁰ For an outline of how each of these three figures completes the other two divisions of a *Lebensphilosophie*, see the table on page 37.

²¹ Deleuze, "Immanence: A life," in *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, translated by Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 27.

life run through them?²² In other words, how do we change our all-too human hatred of life, which, according to my interpretation, takes at least three basic forms: postulating a transcendent existent beyond the flow of becoming (fallacy of the present), the will to dominate, that is, stop the flow of becoming, in final causes (fallacy of the future), and mechanistic explanation (fallacy of the past and retrospective reconstruction). Referring back to the subset of questions under the first metaphysical problem, for Deleuze the metaphysical response to these questions is to think in terms of time, process, and event, to create a concept of difference that is not subordinate to a concept of identity, and to construct an ontology whose basic ontological proposition is the univocity of being. The ethical response, best expressed in *A Thousand Plateaus*, is to construct a theory of action that affirms these metaphysical principles.

I shall end chapter one by formulating the thesis that the concept of intensity is a fundamental – and yet, still not understood – component of Deleuze's response to these three basic problems. The following is an outline of Deleuze's solution to each of the three problems, respectively, and how intensity is related to this solution, with textual evidence.

1. Topic: Reality is a creative process.

- Problems related to topic:

- What are the conditions under which something new is produced in reality?
- How does one create a concept of difference that is not subordinate to a concept of identity?
- Is it possible to think the univocity of Being?

- Deleuze's response: A philosophy of immanence, or temporal monism, that classifies beings in terms of intensive rhythms, processes, and degrees of power (intensities). A transcendent cause of being always eliminates novelty; There really is mechanism and teleology, but these are derivative, partial modes of explanation, and incomplete models of action.

- How intensity is related to this solution: Time, what Bergson calls real duration, is intensive. Deleuze's definition for the kind of multiplicity that characterizes intensity is the same definition that Bergson gives to qualitative, or durational, multiplicities, such as consciousness.

[...] intensity is neither divisible, like extensive quantity, nor indivisible, like quality
 [...]An intensive quantity may be divided, but not without changing its nature. In a sense, it is therefore indivisible, but only because no part exists prior to the division

²² This "letting" is not passive. In fact, the more a finite being possesses the power of activity, the more it expresses the creativity of life.

and no part retains the same nature after division.²³

- The Being of intensity is inequality, the eternal return:

When we say that the eternal return is not the return of the Same, or of the Similar or the Equal, we mean that it does not presuppose identity. On the contrary, it is said of a world without identity, without resemblance or equality. It is said of a world the very ground of which is difference, in which everything rests upon disparities, upon differences of differences which reverberate to infinity (the world of intensity).²⁴

2. Topic: Ontic individuation.

- Problems related to this topic: Given the thesis of the absolute, and the commitment to differences that are prior to identity, how does one formulate a transcendental, differential, and genetic principle of individuation? How are objects individuated in experience?

- Deleuze's response: Following a principle of sufficient reason, ontic individuation occurs *via* the incarnation of Ideas in fields of individuation.

- How intensity is related to this solution: Intensity is the sufficient reason for every phenomena of experience:

Disparity – in other words, difference or intensity (difference of intensity) – is the sufficient reason of all phenomena, the condition of that which appears [...] The reason of the sensible, the condition of that which appears, is not space and time but the Unequal itself, *disparateness* as it is determined and comprised in difference of intensity, in intensity as difference.²⁵

- That which determines the actualization of Ideas are intensive quantities:

How is the Idea determined to incarnate itself in differentiated qualities and differentiated extensities? What determines the relations coexisting within the Idea to differentiate themselves in qualities and extensities? The answer lies precisely in the intensive quantities.²⁶

3. Topic: Becoming and joy.

- Problems related to this topic: How does one construct a philosophy that affirms life, change, and this world?

²³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 237.

²⁴ Ibid., 241.

²⁵ Ibid., 222.

²⁶ Ibid., 245.

- Deleuze's response: Same as topic one, with the introduction of two basic axiological terms: good, indicating all that affirms becoming, variation, and novelty, and bad, indicating that which is counter to the good.

- How intensity is related to this solution: All becoming is intensive:

Every voyage is intensive, and occurs in relation to thresholds of intensity between which it evolves or that it crosses. One travels by intensity; displacements and spatial figures depend on intensive thresholds of nomadic deterritorialization (and thus on differential relations) that simultaneously define complementary, sedentary reterritorializations.²⁷

The remaining four chapters of the dissertation will then defend this thesis by providing a technical defense of the meaning and role of intensity in Deleuze's solution to these problems. I will present the material in the order of metaphysics, physics, and ethics. Chapters two and three take up the question of being *qua* being, which for Deleuze is a temporal, pre-individual, differential system that harbors potential – what Deleuze often calls virtual – energy. Chapter four will then explain how this energetic system undergoes individuation. Lastly, in chapter five, I will show how change and becoming occurs at the level of individuated beings, and the role that intensity plays in this becoming.

2 TIME AND INTENSITY

The goal of this chapter will be twofold: First, introduce Deleuze's metaphysics by presenting his theory of time *via* a transcendental deduction of the absolute; and second, argue for and clarify the relationship between time and intensity in Deleuze's metaphysics. The main texts that will be relevant include Deleuze's *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, *Bergsonism*, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, *Proust and Signs*, *Difference and Repetition*, *Cinema I*, and *Cinema II*, Bergson's *Time and Free Will*, *Matter and Memory*, and *Creative Evolution*, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, and Spinoza's *Ethics*. A key interpretive point where my thinking is not clear, and where more will research will be required, are the precise distinctions between intensity and time. The argument that I will construct presupposes a familiarity with Kant's transcendental deduction in the first *Critique*, the opening propositions of Spinoza's *Ethics*, and the theories of

²⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 5.

time in Hume, Kant, Nietzsche, Bergson, and Husserl, but especially Kant, Bergson, and Nietzsche. My plan is to present this secondary, historical material only in so much as it is necessary for understanding the content of what I take to be Deleuze's argument.

At a general level, in chapter two of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze presents his theory of time within a Kantian framework: the main goal of this chapter is to ground the possibility of experience. It is a radical appropriation of Kant, however, insofar as for Deleuze, similar to the later German idealists, the grounding of experience requires a move beyond the powers of the finite subject. For example, whereas Hegel finds this ground in the absolute Idea, Deleuze, following Nietzsche, argues that time, in the form of the eternal return, grounds experience.²⁸ Another way to pose this post-Kantian move by Deleuze is in terms of Proust. Contrary to Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, Deleuze subtracts the subject from the center of experience.²⁹ There are two corollaries to this displacement of the finite subject from the center of experience: First, for Deleuze, synthesis, which is what organizes experience, does not require the activity of a subject and is not necessarily modeled on the form of judgment;³⁰ second, the subject itself is the effect of a synthesis and requires its own transcendental deduction.

Before outlining these three syntheses, and the manner in which they open up onto the rest of Deleuze's metaphysical system, some general remarks will help clarify what Deleuze sees himself to be accomplishing in this chapter. Similar to Maimon, there is a tension in Deleuze's philosophy insofar as he attempts to bring Kant and Spinoza together. Chapter two of *Difference and Repetition*, and Deleuze's philosophy of time in general, is unclear unless one understands that Deleuze is using the concept of synthesis in Kant in the service of a speculative enterprise similar to the opening propositions of Spinoza's *Ethics*. For example, the following Deleuzean claim sounds Kantian: The syntheses of time ground and organize experience. But for Deleuze, this claim is tantamount to the following other claim, which is not Kantian, but rather Spinozistic: A synthesis of time is one way in which the universe organizes itself, materially or ideally, into different structures, and the immanent cause, or being, of this organization, is the pure form of time, which Deleuze equates with the eternal return.

²⁸ For Deleuze, though, insofar as the eternal return is the return of difference, or the affirmation of difference, it is technically not a ground, but rather unground, or abyss.

²⁹ Another crucial difference between Deleuze and Kant, and the key to the former's notion of a transcendental empiricism, is that experience for Deleuze is synonymous with subject-independent reality. This is what Deleuze means when he claims to be providing the genetic conditions of real experience.

³⁰ That is, synthesis is not necessarily the subsumption of a manifold under an identity.

The first synthesis of time accounts for the conditions for the possibility of the subject. Deleuze calls this the synthesis of contraction, or habit. As he puts it in his early book on Hume: "Habit is the constitutive root of the subject, and the subject, at its root, is the synthesis of time – the synthesis of the present and the past in the light of the future."³¹ In this first synthesis, the past and the future are indexed to the living present that is constituted in a contractive synthesis. Insofar as the living present unifies a determinate past with an indeterminate future, time gains a vectorial dimension, and this makes time representable in terms of succession. There is no indifferent, absolute, Newtonian succession in the universe, rather there are coexistent living presents that contract and expand according to different temporal rhythms. Any entity that brings its past into its present, that is, that stays the same through temporal repetition, and reacts to the future in its own distinct way, is a subject.

This first synthesis of time presupposes two more temporal syntheses and thus does not sufficiently ground experience. Commentators have not adequately explained the relationship between the second and the third synthesis to the first synthesis.³² My general approach to this begins with the following claim by Deleuze: "*there must be another time in which the first synthesis of time can occur.*"³³ I think that there are two senses in which this case, one that indicates the second synthesis of time, the other the third synthesis. First, with the claim that the living present is a contraction of the past and the present, there has been no account of the past given such that one can speak of a past present that is nevertheless potentially effective in present experience, that is, a past that can actualize itself in the living present. This second synthesis has rightly been called the Bergsonian synthesis. The goal of this synthesis is to show that there is a difference in kind between the present and the past, that the past is not in itself a series of presents that have passed, but rather has its own reality, and that this reality is a virtual multiplicity that expresses time in the mode of coexistence, harboring series of potentials that are capable of actualization in the present.

The temporal individuation that occurs in the first synthesis corresponds with what Deleuze calls the ontological domain of the actual, whereas the second synthesis of time corresponds with

³¹ Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, 92-93.

³² The two main secondary sources for Deleuze's theory of time are James Williams' *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide* and Faulkner's *Deleuze and the Three Syntheses of Time*. Neither works out the relation between the eternal return and intensity, nor does either one provide a convincing deduction of the third synthesis of time.

³³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 79.

what Deleuze calls the ontological domain of the virtual. These two domains are, at least in *Difference and Repetition*, the two sides of the real. In the domain of the actual are bodies and states of affairs, whereas the virtual is the transcendental dimension of the actual, the ground or genetic origin of actually existent entities. One reason Deleuze claims that virtual Ideas exist in the pure past is because the Ideas that exist in the virtual are never given, are never present, in experience: They only appear as something else, namely, constituted actual entities that embody the structural content of Ideas.

More fundamentally, however, the first synthesis, in addition to the second synthesis, presupposes an original temporal flux that is ontologically prior to the contractions that constitute time in the mode of succession. This original, or absolute, temporal synthesis is what Deleuze, following Kant, calls the pure form of time. The fundamental trait of this synthesis is the eternal return of difference or inequality. The eternal return of difference, in the pure form of time, paradoxically expresses time in the mode of permanence. The eternal return of difference expresses the Being of the universe, novelty, the constant production of the new. Most of my research in this second chapter will be dedicated to this third synthesis of time, formulating a distinct presentation of each aspect of the pure form of time (its modes and how they are related to Kant's remarks at the end of the Analogies of Experience, how it is related to Kant's Schematism Chapter, its transcendental necessity, *et al.*). It seems that Deleuze poses its transcendental necessity *via* implicit reference to a well-known passage from one of Nietzsche's later notebooks:

If the world had a goal, it could not fail to have been reached by now. If it had an unintended final state, this too could not fail to have been reached. If it were capable at all of standing still and remaining frozen, of “being”, if for just one second in all its becoming it had this capacity for “being”, then in turn all becoming would long since be over and done with, and so would all thinking, all “mind”. The fact of “mind” as a becoming proves that the world has no goal and no final state and is incapable of being.³⁴

I find the reasons that Deleuze provides for the transcendental necessity of the third synthesis of time unconvincing. If I can, I would like to offer a different, or at least more detailed, argument and explication for the necessity of the eternal return as ground of experience. If this passage from Nietzsche is the best way to present the transcendental necessity of the third synthesis of time,

³⁴ Nietzsche, *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, translated by Kate Sturge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 23.

which is basically the affirmation of a creative universe, then I will argue for why it is at the least a probable metaphysical explanation of reality, while also presenting its shortcomings, such as the assumption of an infinite past and all of the ancillary commitments implied with this position.

3 IDEAS AND THE INTENSIVE *SPATIUM*

In chapters one and two my goal is to delimit the problems that motivate Deleuze's philosophy and, with his theory of time, take the reader to the absolute perspective of Deleuze's metaphysics. In this chapter, my aim is threefold: First, complete my interpretation of being *qua* being, or pre-individuated being, in Deleuze's metaphysics; second, demonstrate that Deleuze's concept of intensity is philosophic, and not scientific; and third, clarify intensity's relation *vis-à-vis* what Deleuze calls the domain of the virtual and the domain of the actual. The main texts that will be relevant include Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, *Bergsonism*, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Maimon's *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*, and Simondon's *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques* and *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique*.

At the beginning of this chapter, the reader of the dissertation will be familiar with the three fundamental temporal syntheses that the universe presupposes in its becoming, and the three basic ontological registers Deleuze employs to describe the universe: the groundless abyss, the virtual, and the actual.³⁵ Furthermore, I will indicate, either at the end of chapter two or the beginning of this chapter, two basic ontological characteristics of being *qua* being, and how they relate to the pure form of time. The first of these characteristics is intensity, the second, Ideas. The following passage is sufficient to explain, in a general sense, what Deleuze means by intensity and Ideas, and how each of these two are related to time:

"The eternal return is neither qualitative nor extensive but intensive, purely intensive. In other words, it is said of difference. This is the fundamental connection between the eternal return and the will to power. The one does not hold without the other. The will to power is the flashing world of metamorphoses, of communicating intensities, differences of differences, of breaths, insinuations and exhalations: a

³⁵ "We have continually proposed descriptive notions. These describe actual series, or virtual Ideas, or indeed the groundlessness from which everything comes [...]" (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 284)

world of intensive intentionalities, a world of simulacra or 'mysteries'. Eternal return is the being of this world, the only Same which is said of this world and excludes any prior identity therein."³⁶

While I think that Deleuze's position is in fact closer to Bergson or Spinoza than Nietzsche, the above passage does provide a helpful representation of Deleuze's metaphysical worldview: Intensities are the magnitudes that result from inequalities³⁷ produced in the eternal return, whereas Ideas are the differential elements and relations, plus the ordinary and extraordinary points, that are communicated in the natural world of intensities. For Deleuze, there is an ideal and a real content to the will to power, both of which are sustained by the pure form of time.³⁸ In other words, the absolute is the pure form of time, and it expresses itself in two fundamental terms, thought, or Ideas, and nature, or intensities. As Deleuze says in *What is Philosophy?*: "The plane of immanence has two facets as Thought and as Nature, as *Nous* and as *Phusis*."³⁹

In this chapter I will provide an account of the two main elements that are produced by this absolute form: Thought and Nature. This will complete my presentation of being *qua* being in Deleuze. Most of my research for this third chapter, building off of chapter two, will be dedicated to providing a clear and defensible interpretation of the above speculative theses. The chapter will be split into two unequal parts. The first and shorter part will be an account of Deleuze's theory of Ideas, but only so far as this is necessary for understanding all components of the concept of intensity. In the second part, I will begin the technical exposition of the concept of intensity.

Currently, my plan is to present both Ideas and intensity in terms of five registers: What it is in itself, its characteristic multiplicity, its origin, characteristic logic, and, lastly, its movement towards the *τόδε τι*, that is, in terms of its role as sufficient reason for the realm of ontologically actual entities that populate experience. As an outline, I will fill out these registers in the following manner:

1. Theory of Ideas.

- In themselves: Deleuze's notion of an Idea is technical and depends heavily not only on the Kantian notion of Ideas as being problematic, but also on the theory of calculus as it is developed

³⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 243.

³⁷ Or, these inequalities *are* magnitudes. Interpretation undecided.

³⁸ Hegelian formulation of the absolute.

³⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 38.

in Bordas-Demoulin, Maimon, Lagrange, and Wronski. Ideas are sets, or multiplicities, that contain differential elements, relations, and singularities.⁴⁰ Delving into this technical account is beyond the scope of this proposal, but, to simplify matters greatly, Ideas can be thought of as the informational matrix that produce or structure different intensive processes for different types of systems – most generally, physical, organic, and symbolic systems. In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze gives four examples of Ideas, the physical Idea, in which the differential elements are atoms, the linguistic Idea, in which the differential elements are phonemes, the biological Idea, in which the differential elements include genes, and the social Idea.

- Ontological origin: repetition.⁴¹
- Characteristic multiplicity: "Ideas are problematic or 'perplexed' virtual multiplicities, made up of relations between differential elements." (244) Utilizing Riemann's geometrical concept of a smooth manifold, Deleuze defines an Idea as "an *n*-dimensional, continuous, defined multiplicity."⁴²
- Logic: dialectic of problems.
- In accordance with the principle of sufficient reason, or towards τὸδε τι: The principle of sufficient reason connects Ideas to intensive quantities in *Difference and Repetition*, and is thus very important for this dissertation. Some of my research for this chapter will concern formulating a clear presentation of the principle of sufficient reason in Deleuze's work. For example: what, exactly, is Deleuze providing sufficient reasons for? In this proposal, I am assuming that he is providing sufficient reasons for any τὸδε τι – an actual something that, at least in principle, you can point out [thus something that has what Deleuze calls differentiated qualities and parts] – which is, for Deleuze, the final expressed in the processual expression of nature. Deleuze formulates his principle of sufficient reason in the following passage:

⁴⁰ "The reality of the virtual consists of the differential elements and relations along with the singular points which correspond to them. The reality of the virtual is structure." (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 209)

⁴¹ "We distinguished four instances: imperatives or ontological questions (the dice throw); dialectical problems or the themes which emerge from them; symbolic fields of solvability in which these problems are 'scientifically' expressed in accordance with their conditions; the solutions given in these fields when the problems are incarnated in the actuality of cases. From the outset, however, what are these fiery imperatives, these questions which are the beginning of the world? The fact is that everything has its beginning in a question, but one cannot say that the question itself begins. Might the question, along with the imperative which it expresses, have no other origin than repetition?" (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 200)

⁴² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 182.

"The principle of a general differential philosophy must be the object of a rigorous exposition, and must in no way depend upon the infinitely small. The symbol dx appears as simultaneously undetermined, determinable, and determination. Three principles which together form a sufficient reason correspond to these three aspects: a principle of determinability corresponds to the undetermined as such (dx , dy); a principle of reciprocal determination corresponds to the really determinable (dy/dx); a principle of complete determination corresponds to the effectively determined (values of dy/dx). In short, dx is the Idea – the Platonic, Leibnizian or Kantian Idea, the 'problem' and its being."⁴³

There are three elements to the principle of sufficient reason, quantitability, qualitability, and potentiality. Quantitability corresponds to the undetermined, differential points of the Idea, qualitability corresponds to the reciprocal determination of the in-themselves undetermined values dx , dy . Ideas fulfill, for Deleuze, the first two elements of the principle of sufficient reason. The third element of the principle of reason, however, the element of potentiality, corresponds to intensive quantities:

The actual qualities and parts, species and numbers, correspond to the element of qualitability and the element of quantitability in the Idea. However, what carries out the third aspect of sufficient reason – namely, the element of potentiality in the Idea? No doubt the pre-quantitative and pre-qualitative dramatization. It is this, in effect, which determines or unleashes, which differentiates the differentiation of the actual in its correspondence with the differentiation of the Idea. Where, however, does this power of dramatization come from? Is it not, beneath the species and parts, the qualities and numbers, the most intense or most individual act? We have not yet shown what grounds dramatization, both for the actual and the Idea, as the development of the third element of sufficient reason.⁴⁴

It is intensity, Deleuze argues, that serves as the middle term between Ideas and actual things, that which brings about, through dramatization, the incarnation of Ideas in reality. It is intensity which bridges the gap between being *qua* being and individuated being, from Ideas to intuition:

Disparity – in other words, difference or intensity (difference of intensity) – is the sufficient reason of all phenomena, the condition of that which appears [...] The reason of the sensible, the condition of that which appears, is not space and time but the Unequal in itself, *disparateness* as it is determined and comprised in difference of intensity, in intensity as difference [...] Intensity is the form of difference insofar as this is the reason of the sensible.⁴⁵

⁴³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 171.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 221.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 222.

The manner in which intensities incarnate ideal relations is what Deleuze calls individuation. Prior to explaining how individuation occurs, however, Deleuze lists the positive characteristics of intensity in itself, that is, insofar as it is independent of the qualities and extensities that it produces *via* individuation. I shall follow this method of presentation in this dissertation. For the rest of this chapter, I will provide an interpretation of the pure characteristics of intensity, finishing my discussion of being *qua* being, and then the entirety of chapter four will be concerned with ontic individuation. Here is an outline of the presentation of intensity:

2. Theory of intensity.

- In itself: Intensity is the immediately real content of the absolute (eternal return), Nature. Called at different times by Deleuze: Intensity = difference in itself = depth = pure *implex* = space as a whole = space as an intensive quantity = space as pure intuition = energy = the theater of all metamorphosis or difference in itself which envelops all its degrees in the production of each = Body Without Organs⁴⁶ = intensity as a transcendental principle. A lot of the research that has gone into this proposal has been organizing the aporetic manner in which Deleuze presents the concept of intensity in his philosophy. Not only is intensity a transcendental principle, but it is also subject to a transcendental illusion. As Deleuze says: "We know intensity only as already developed within an extensity, and as covered over by qualities. Whence our tendency to consider intensive quantity as a badly grounded empirical concept, an impure mixture of a sensible quality and extensity, or even of a physical quality and an extensive quantity."⁴⁷ Deleuze offers three positive characteristics of intensity⁴⁸:

a.) Inequality: "Intensive quantity includes the unequal in itself. It represents difference in quantity, that which cannot be cancelled in difference in quantity or that which is unequalizable in quantity itself: it is therefore the quality which belongs to quantity."⁴⁹

b.) positive difference: "A second characteristic flows from the first: since it is already difference in itself and comprises inequality as such, intensity *affirms* difference."⁵⁰

c.) implicated quantity.

⁴⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 153.

⁴⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 223.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 232-238.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 232.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 234.

In terms of a third characteristic which includes the other two, intensity is an implicated, enveloped or 'embryonized' quantity. Not implicated in quality, for it is only secondarily so. Intensity is primarily implicated in itself: implicating and implicated [...] We must conceive of implication as a perfectly determined form of being. Within intensity, we call that which is really implicated and enveloping *difference*; and we call that which is really implicated or enveloped *distance*."⁵¹

- Ontological origin: Eternal return: "[...] while the laws of nature govern the surface of the world, the eternal return ceaselessly rumbles in this other dimension of the transcendental or the volcanic *spatium*."⁵²
- Characteristic multiplicity: "Intensities are implicated multiplicities, 'implexes,' made up of relations between asymmetrical elements which direct the course of the actualization of Ideas and determine the cases of solution for problems."⁵³
- Logic: Folds. The being of difference or intensity is implication. It is cancelled out through the explication of its difference that creates extensive magnitude and quality.
- Towards τóδε τι:

This provides the transition into chapter four, and is intimately related to the logic of intensive quantities. Intensity directs actualization *via* explication. The movement from the virtual to the actual follows a logic of expression, or folding. Expression, from the Latin, is an 'activity of pressing out,' and this pressing out of the virtual follows a logic of folds.

4 INTENSIVE QUANTITY AND ONTIC INDIVIDUATION

By this point of the dissertation, readers will be familiar with the structure of the absolute, its expression in Ideas and intensity, and, in a general manner, the way in which Ideas and intensive quantities are related to actual experience. In this fourth chapter, my aim is to show that the abstract nature of the preceding material allows Deleuze to describe actual phenomena with an unparalleled level of nuance. More specifically, my goal is twofold: First, provide an interpretation of Deleuze's theory of ontic individuation and the primitive role of intensity in processes of individuation; and

⁵¹ Ibid., 237. My thinking is not clear in regards to what Deleuze means when he uses the term distance in relation to intensive quantities, and this will be a point of research for this chapter.

⁵² Ibid., 241.

⁵³ Ibid., 244.

second, give two or three detailed analyses of Deleuzean individuation, one physical, one biological, and, maybe, one psychological. The main texts that will be relevant include Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, *Bergsonism*, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, and *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Maimon's *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*, Simondon's *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques* and *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique*, Ruyer's *Néofinalisme*, and Russell's *The Principles of Mathematics*.

While chapters two and three concern metaphysics, this chapter deals with physics, and deals with the being of the τόδε τι, actual existents. With his theory of individuation, Deleuze attempts to provide a completely positive account of the genesis of individuals. *Non omnis determinatio est negatio*. Or, as Deleuze puts it: "One cannot be against both the negative and intensity at once."⁵⁴ All negative modes of determination are derivative and presuppose ontologically prior positive individuations. Deleuze's entire metaphysics is expressible in his theory of individuation (and also his ethics, which I present in chapter five), and my plan is to give two or three detailed Deleuzean analyses of individuation that tie together chapters two, three, and four of this dissertation at the end of this chapter.

For the purposes of this proposal, I will provide an outline of the three logical stages of individuation in Deleuze. My research plan for this chapter is to investigate the relation between the various concepts that Deleuze proposes in this theory of individuation, and also to gather the necessary scientific knowledge in order to work out my own contemporary examples of individuation.

1. Individuation begins in the intensive *spatium*. he also calls this pure intuition and an intensive quantity. Intensive in this regard is a transcendental principle and is the origin of a quadruple genesis that develops into the τόδε τι:

- i. The genesis of the *extensio* in the form of the schema.
- ii. that of *extensity* in the form of extensive magnitude.
- iii. that of *qualitas* in the form of matter occupying extensity.
- iv. that of the *quale* in the form of designation of an object.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 239.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 231.

- As Deleuze says: "While space may be irreducible to concepts, its affinity with Ideas cannot nevertheless be denied – in other words, its capacity (as intensive *spatium*) to determine in extensity the actualization of ideal connections (as differential relations contained in the Idea)."⁵⁶

2. Intensity incarnates, or, as Deleuze puts it, dramatizes, the Idea in spatio-temporal dynamisms.

- The time of the dynamism is gathered into a quality. The parts are gathered into a space.
- These spatio-temporal dynamisms are Deleuze's appropriation of what Kant calls transcendental schemata.⁵⁷ Intensive quantities introduce the pure form of time into Ideas.

3. Intensity fulfills this determinant role through its own essential process. The essential process of intensive quantities is individuation. As Deleuze says, individuation is "the act by which intensity determines differential relations to become actualized, along the lines of differentiation and within the qualities and extensities it creates."⁵⁸

5 INTENSITY, BECOMING AND LIFE

The goal of this fifth chapter will be threefold: First, and most generally, lay out the main principles and ethical commitments of a Deleuzian ethics; second, explicate the meaning of the term intensity in Deleuze's ethics and demonstrate why it operates as a primitive term in his theory of action; and third, defend Deleuze's ethics from various criticisms, while also delimiting certain parts of Deleuze's ethical theory that I find questionable. The main texts that will be relevant include Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, especially the three chapters titled "November 28, 1947: How do you Make Yourself a Body Without Organs?," "1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming Imperceptible . . . , and "1837: Of the Refrain," and Spinoza's *Ethics*. Key historical figures, besides Spinoza, will include Nietzsche, Bergson, and Jakob von Uexküll.

My contention is that there is a theory of action in *Difference and Repetition* just as much as there is a theory of action in the first two parts of Spinoza's *Ethics*, and what Spinoza works in parts III, IV, and V of the *Ethics*, Deleuze works out, with Guattari, in *A Thousand Plateaus* and

⁵⁶ Ibid., 232.

⁵⁷ See Ibid., 218.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 246.

other texts. Furthermore, the ethical propositions in Deleuze's philosophy, just like the ethical propositions in Spinoza's *Ethics*, emerge from the preceding metaphysics. As I mention in my outline of chapter one, the problem that motivates ethics, for Deleuze, is how, and in what cases, a finite being can, *qua* finite being, express the absolute power of life. Notwithstanding all of their differences, this power of expressing the absolute that Deleuze strives for in his ethics echoes Nietzsche's project of a transvaluation of values, Bergson's method of intuition, and the intellectual love of God in Spinoza.

My research for this final chapter will be directed towards the concept of becoming and what Deleuze calls the plane of immanence in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and also why Deleuze thinks that real becoming occurs at the level of intensities, rather than the level of actual entities. My thought is not as developed in regards to the content of this final chapter, and to end this proposal, I will outline, very broadly, first, Deleuze's general ethical framework, second, why intensity is a necessary condition for becoming, and third, what I take to be the two fundamental criticisms of Deleuze's ethics and my preliminary response to one of these criticisms.

1. Deleuze's general ethical framework.⁵⁹

- For Deleuze, according to my interpretation, a true ethics requires a metaphysical and physical understanding of the ethical agent. One major problem that I need to contend with in this fifth chapter is that the terminology of Deleuze's metaphysics changes throughout each of his texts. Many of the concepts and explanations that I will give in chapters two, three, and four undergo a transformation in *A Thousand Plateaus*. For example, the key concepts of the virtual and the actual in *Difference and Repetition* are, to simplify matters greatly, transformed, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, into what Deleuze calls the plane of consistency and the plane of organization, respectively. Fortunately, Deleuze's metaphysical outlook remains for the most part consistent throughout his *oeuvre*. More importantly, though, I think that my technical discussion of the metaphysics and physics of *Difference and Repetition* provides the necessary background for understanding the difficult terms of *A Thousand Plateaus*.

For the purpose of this proposal, I will highlight seven terms from *A Thousand Plateaus* – plane of immanence or consistency, multiplicity, plane of organization, haecceity, longitude,

⁵⁹ For an overview of Deleuze's ethical outlook, c.f. Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, "Spinoza and Us," pp. 122-130.

latitude, and becoming – and give a brief explanation of their meaning and the role that they play in Deleuze's theory of action. Deleuze's ethics is largely indebted to Spinoza,⁶⁰ or, at least, to Deleuze's own idiosyncratic interpretation of Spinoza. For example, the plane of immanence is Deleuze's appropriation of what for Spinoza is an absolute, immanent cause that expresses itself as *natura naturata*; multiplicities, or haecceities,⁶¹ populate the plane of immanence and are Deleuze's appropriation of what Spinoza calls modes. The key term in Deleuze's ethics is the complicated notion of multiplicity:

A multiplicity is defined not by its elements, nor by a center of unification or comprehension. It is defined by the number of dimensions it has; it is not divisible, it cannot lose or gain a dimension *without changing its nature*. Since its variations and dimensions are immanent to it, *it amounts to the same thing to say that each multiplicity is already composed of heterogeneous terms in symbiosis, and that a multiplicity is continually transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities, according to its thresholds and doors.*⁶²

The plane of immanence is Nature as the absolute, and it is populated by multiplicities, or what Deleuze calls at various times haecceities, assemblages, or intensities⁶³ that undergo continuous variation. Becoming is continuous variation: the folding of multiplicities. I need to do more research in order to understand how this definition of multiplicity is an elaboration of Deleuze's theory of Ideas and intensive quantities in *Difference and Repetition*. For the purposes of this proposal, however, I will give an example of one thing, a tick, conceived, on the one hand, insofar as it exists on the plane of immanence or consistency, and, on the other hand, insofar as it exists on the plane of organization.

The plane of organization comprehends things in terms of identities, centers of unification, final causes, qualities, and extensive parts. For example, a tick is understood as a particular kind of animal, unified, for example, by its DNA, with the purpose of self-nutrition and reproduction. According to Deleuze, in an argument that exceeds the scope of this proposal, becoming, that is, novelty, does not occur on the plane of organization: novelty is eliminated in the various

⁶⁰ "Spinoza is not among those who think that a sad passion has something good about it. Before Nietzsche, he denounces all the falsifications of life, all the values in the name of which we disparage life. We do not live, we only lead a semblance of life; we can only think of how to keep from dying, and our whole life is a death worship." (Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 26)

⁶¹ Deleuze uses the term haecceity, "this thing," in order to indicate a mode of individuation that is different from that of a subject.

⁶² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 249.

⁶³ ⁶³ "A degree, an intensity, is an individual, a *Haecceity* that enters into composition with other degrees, other intensities, to form another individual." (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 253)

quantifiable mechanisms that a tick is able to undergo, or in various limitations expressed in the final cause.

On the plane of consistency, however, the tick is defined in terms of its intensive dimensions. More precisely, the multiplicity that the tick expresses is defined in terms of what Deleuze calls longitude and latitude: "We call the *latitude* of a body the affects of which it is capable at a given degree of power, or rather within the limits of that degree. *Latitude is made up of intensive parts falling under a capacity, and longitude of extensive parts falling under a relation.*"⁶⁴ Ticks express a multiplicity that has three affects, or dimensions: the first deals with light, and highlights the tick's power to climb to the top of branches; the second deals with smell, in which the tick has the power to smell the butyric acid contained in animal sweat; and third, thermal, insofar as the tick is able to locate the area of the animal that contains the least amount of fur. Corresponding to these affects are degrees of intensity. For example, when we talk about the tick multiplicity, there are certain intensive points where the multiplicity will change in nature, such as when the tick takes in the blood of the animal, or when the tick is incapable of fasting any longer. Both of these points are the intensive limits of the power of the tick, and when it passes over these intensive magnitudes, the multiplicity changes in nature. Each multiplicity is connected in some way to the entire universe; the universe is connected through affects. And ethics, for Deleuze, studies the becoming of multiplicities, the limits of their transformations, and how they can connect in novel ways.

2. Why intensity is a necessary condition for becoming.

- As I will have shown in chapters two through four, a metaphysics of intensity is the manner in which Deleuze privileges change over stasis, becoming over being. To become is not to move from one being to another. Rather, being is temporarily produced from intensive processes of becoming. Adkins puts this nicely: "Discrete moments of stability are temporary accretions of an immanent process that late in his career Deleuze simply referred to as 'life.'"⁶⁵ Therefore, to put it very generally, the reason that intensity is a necessary condition for becoming is because becoming is intensive. Becoming, change, has nothing to do with being, with imitation, analogy, or

⁶⁴ Ibid., 256.

⁶⁵ Brent Adkins, *Deleuze and Guattari's A Thousand Plateaus*, 22.

manipulation of the discrete parts that we see in the actual world. Intensity is always the affirmation of life:

These Dionysiac stirrings, which, as they grow in intensity, cause subjectivity to vanish to the point of complete self-forgetting, awaken either under the influence of narcotic drink, of which all human beings and peoples who are close to the origin of things speak in their hymns, or at the approach of spring when the whole of nature is pervaded by lust for life. In the German Middle Ages, too, ever-growing throngs roamed from place to place, impelled by the same Dionysiac power, singing and dancing as they went; in these St John's and St Vitus' dancers we recognize the Bacchic choruses of the Greeks, with their pre-history in Asia Minor, extending to Babylon and the orgiastic Sacaea. There are those who, whether from lack of experience or from dullness of spirit, turn away in scorn or pity from such phenomena, regarding them as 'popular diseases' while believing in their own good health; of course, these poor creatures have not the slightest inkling of how spectral and deathly pale their 'health' seems when the glowing life of Dionysiac enthusiasts storms past them.⁶⁶

3. Two fundamental criticisms of Deleuze's ethics are the following:

i. Deleuze develops a blissfully ignorant, positive philosophy that does not account for finitude, negativity, and the determining role of history.

ii. There is no role for normative principles in an ethics that is critical of transcendent values and teleology. Given Deleuze's immanent philosophy, and what seems to be the sole ethical imperative of this philosophy, namely, to become – is it the case that all becoming is good, or are there some becomings that are bad?

• I think that Deleuze has a strong, but complicated, answer to this criticism. To put it simply, yes, all becoming is good. As Spinoza shows in the *Ethics*, a mode – or what Deleuze calls a haecceity – cannot be the adequate cause of an affect of sadness. For Deleuze, transcendent values and teleology, and universal, restrictive laws that separate entities from what they can do, have nothing at all to do with ethics, precisely because each of these operations stop the flow of becoming. Nevertheless, transcendence and teleology are what Deleuze calls necessary or transcendental illusions on the plane of immanence,⁶⁷ and the point is not to eliminate them, but rather to create them in such a way that they reflect as well as possible the flow of becoming, that is, life, that they

⁶⁶ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, translated by Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 17.

⁶⁷ See Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 49."

suppress. Deleuze brings to life the image of the philosopher who uses a diagnostic method that determines whether and to what extent human values and laws, or, more generally, ways of life, are life-affirming or life-denying. I do think that Deleuze could be more explicit when it comes to the fact that concrete ethical scenarios are more complicated than this broad dichotomy between that which affirms life and that which suppresses it. Nevertheless, however complicated the situation, this complexity only attests to the fact that each situation is singular and expresses life in its own way, requiring its own analysis and its own concept creation.

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Table: Threefold Division of *Lebensphilosophien*

	Being is a creative process	Why creativity becomes problematic	Ethical Solution for finite beings
Spinoza	<i>Natura naturans</i> , God as the immanent cause of all being, whose absolute essence is the power to exist and to act, and whose formal essence contains an infinity of attributes. In Spinoza, God, or Nature, is creativity <i>par excellence</i> , and this creativity is tantamount to the power to exist and to act.	For finite modes, creativity occurs when the mind or the body <i>increases</i> its power to exist and to act by forming new relations. Creativity becomes problematic for certain finite modes, however, because they form inadequate ideas, "ideas that are confused and mutilated, effects separated from their real causes." ⁶⁸ Without adequate ideas, the finite mode cannot actively create for itself harmonious relationships with Nature.	The ethical life is a life that affirms its immanent ontological ground. Principle: Become ⁶⁹ an active expression of God's absolute power to exist and act. Live in the active state of the intellectual love of God.
Nietzsche	The eternal return is the Being – that which stays the same – of the will to power, which is the genetic and differential element of becoming, or forces. The eternal return is the Being of becoming, and what returns is difference, inequality.	The triumph of reactive forces. The development of a morality in which <i>ressentiment</i> becomes creative and gives birth to values. ⁷⁰ The fear of change. ⁷¹	The transvaluation of values. The creation of new values that are life-affirming, where the affirmation of life is found in the act of creation itself. ⁷²
Bergson	Time, or duration, or life, is the non-teleological, non-mechanistic, inherent tendency of Being to repeat itself differently.	Certain finite living beings (specifically, human beings) develop the power of the intellect, which, while a valuable evolutionary adaption, turns the mind towards static, spatial, objects, and away from temporal processes.	The method of intuition, by which humans can return to the immanent, novel and joyful ⁷³ flow of duration.

⁶⁸ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 19.

⁶⁹ Infamously, Spinoza does not use the word 'becoming' in the *Ethics*, but even if he thinks it is ultimately an illusion, it is, I would contend, to borrow a phrase from Leibniz, a well-founded illusion.

⁷⁰ See Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 36.

⁷¹ "The wish to preserve oneself is the symptom of a condition distress, of a limitation of the really fundamental instinct of life which aims at *the expansion of power* and, wishing for that, frequently risks and even sacrifices self-preservation." (Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, aphorism 349)

⁷² Helpful comparison with Darwin: For Nietzsche, species are symptoms of distress, creative life happens in the interstices between species. Or, to put this in Bergsonian terms: "Every species is thus an arrest of movement [...]" (Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 104)

⁷³ For example: "Time is immediately given. That is sufficient for us, and until its inexistence or perversity is proved to us we shall merely register that there is effectively a flow of unforeseeable novelty. Philosophy stands to gain in finding some absolute in the moving world of phenomena. But we shall gain also in our feeling of greater joy and strength. Greater joy because the reality invented before our eyes will give each one of us, unceasingly, certain of the satisfactions which art at rare intervals procures for the privileged; it will reveal to us, beyond the fixity and monotony which our senses, hypnotized by our constant needs, at first perceived in it, ever-recurring novelty, the moving originality of all things." (Bergson, "The Possible and the Real")

General Metaphysical Representation: Order of Reasons in Deleuze's Difference and Repetition

