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Deleuze, The Dark Precursor

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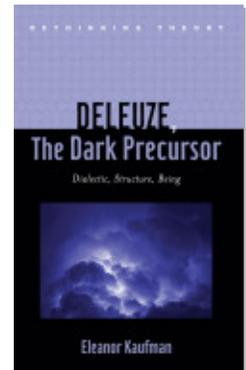
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Deleuze's Scholasticism

A GAINST THE TENDENCY to privilege the joint works of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and questions of becoming and flux, nomadism, deterritorialization, lines of flight, and movements of all sorts so often associated with the name Deleuze, I offer this small study. At its most basic, this study argues for Deleuze as a powerful — perhaps the French twentieth century's most powerful because most unrealized — thinker of *stasis* (which in Greek indicates both a standing still and an internal revolution or disturbance). But beyond that it claims this thought of stasis to be an outgrowth of ontological commitments, often downplayed in the critical literature and arguably by Deleuze himself, that are presented as a question of the genesis of structures, and what is beyond or outside the given structure, yet for that all the more crucial to its operation — essentially the zero or empty point of the structure, to draw on a structuralist vocabulary that Deleuze helps refine. It is the ongoing and implicitly generative role of the empty static point (the third synthesis of time) that this study seeks to consider in all its implications.

It must be emphasized that this is not a project that Deleuze himself takes up in any systematic fashion. Indeed, it is only with hindsight that one perceives a latent systematicity with the force of an epiphany, and chapter 7 on sadism and the world without others is this study's late epiphany, so it might be advised as a starting point for the more thematically or methodologically oriented reader. The other chapters in their fashion engage the implications of this Deleuzian dialectical-ontological stasis structure in other domains or in juxtaposition with other thinkers. In this sense, though I couldn't be more opposed in principle to the idea of "applying Deleuze" (and perpetually caution students, with little success, against such an endeavor), this study, if not exactly an application, might be considered an implication of Deleuze's structural ontology, an implication being that internal domain where the point at which the structure is

observable can in no way resemble its larval core, yet is only really perceptible with that framework in mind. This larval core, which is a static and timeless one, is in some sense entirely transcendent, as my discussion of creation in the final section of this introduction outlines, but in another sense it is entirely immanent if not empirical, in a more properly Deleuzian spirit. Yet the terms “immanence” and “transcendence” do not appear with great frequency in this study simply because it seems to me that something else is at stake. The introduction argues against a vitalist reading of Deleuze, insofar as life itself is ultimately a formal — and bifurcated — structure, and it further suggests that much of Deleuze’s thought falls into this pattern where the formal structure exists alongside yet distinct from the *topos* (e.g., life) that is in question. Hence the opposition of immanent and transcendent does not fully capture this structural adjacency. Insistence on absolute immanence cannot fail to call up the specter of a transcendent ontological remainder, and from within the transcendent perspective the field can only be populated with immanent examples, as it is in Scholastic thought, and it is more on this latter side of the equation that I would provocatively locate Deleuze.

The term “Scholasticism” might understandably raise eyebrows — perhaps even more than the terms “dialectic,” “structure,” and “being” — when associated with the name Deleuze. To be sure, Deleuze is not committed to a transcendental theology in any straightforward sense, nor is he grappling with Aristotle or engaging in disputations. Yet insofar as Deleuze is one of the philosophers in the twentieth-century French tradition most explicitly engaged with ontological questions whose stakes are enormous, and uses a method of strong distinction to outline a rigorous set of concepts, his approach and general topic are in no way diametrically opposed to Scholastic thought. Beyond this general framework, the latter part of this introduction pushes transcendentalizing criticisms of Deleuze made by Slavoj Žižek, Alain Badiou, and Peter Hallward even further, to the point that Deleuze is in fact productively juxtaposed alongside one of his seeming enemies, Aquinas, in a fashion that perhaps exposes a new side to the unsettling radicality, rigor, and potential of his thought. But before getting into these more speculative considerations, I first give a general overview of this book’s organization and the way in which it brings the terms in question to bear on one another.

This book is organized around three seemingly non-Deleuzian themes that critically overlap: dialectic, structure, and being. It argues that Deleuze's work is deeply concerned with these questions, even when he advocates for the seemingly opposite poles of univocity, nonsense, and becoming. By reading somewhat against the grain to see a Deleuze who gives new resonance to these themes, especially as they are thought in combination, I hope to reveal the mechanism behind Deleuze's celebrated introduction of new conceptual building blocks to a series of domains that extend beyond philosophy, specifically here feminist theory, film, American studies, anthropology, and architecture. The readings that follow dwell in similar fashion on that term that the field in question would seem to have critically transcended: the mind, the still or *tableau vivant*, a strain of American literature fundamentally concerned with thought and stasis, the notion of structure itself, and baroque space. Moreover, this book positions Deleuze's work in relation to other French philosophers of his generation such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Pierre Klossowski, Georges Bataille, Alain Badiou, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Maurice Blanchot. It follows Žižek's *Organs without Bodies: Deleuze and Consequences* in that it situates Deleuze's "early" work, above all *The Logic of Sense* from 1969, but also *Difference and Repetition* from 1968, at the heart of his oeuvre.¹ And it seeks, somewhat more than Žižek, to link this work to the slightly later collaboration with Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, though ultimately it shares the standpoint that there is a fundamental difference between the single-authored and the joint works in terms of the ontological questions they propose, and especially the way they are posed. This is not to say that the joint works don't pursue the same concerns by other means, and indeed some of my examples will take this up; nonetheless, there is a fierce if not disturbing structural-ontological persistence that permeates the earlier single-authored work, and my use of Deleuze's relatively undeveloped term "dark precursor" is meant to designate this. Deleuze is not simply the positive friend of philosophy and of the concept (though he is also those things, as they are presented in the late *What Is Philosophy?*), but he is unsparing to the point of perversity in terms of thinking the quasi-sadistic force of structures and forms. In this regard, as I will suggest in chapter 7, Deleuze is not far from the Lacan of "Kant with Sade" and seminar 7, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, and it is not surprising that Lacan was so drawn to *The Logic of Sense*. Not only did Deleuze make a choice

not to affiliate with Lacan, but he also chose to let this darker and more exacting side of his thought transform into the no less exacting and perverse (but less explicitly ontological) *Anti-Oedipus*. Of course, May '68 intervened, with its attendant libidinal economic syntheses of Freud and Marx, *Anti-Oedipus* along with Jean-François Lyotard's *Libidinal Economy* being foundational texts.

One of the goals of this study is thus to develop the implications of this "dark ontology" that Deleuze himself chose not to undertake. Although it may at times appear this way, it is not the case such a development simply dwells on a negative or diabolical underside to Deleuze's earlier work. Quite the contrary. Instead it alights on those states — stuckness, disembodiment, isolation, the world as perceived by the immobile underclass — that we would generally rather not dwell on and argues that looking at these things in an unflinching fashion may in fact allow the discernment of more positive and in any case less pathologizing modes of perception. In a strange way this project would align itself with certain strands of utopian Marxism, which are in no small way its inspiration. However, its focus is perhaps arrested at an early stage in such a panoramic undertaking. That is, rather than looking to a beyond, it tries to examine why certain situations of extreme exploitation, illness, and alienation may not be as uniformly negative as they may appear from the outside. And that is because these states approach pure being, if one might call it that, in a less mediated way than is normally the case. This is the perception that Deleuze's work helps facilitate. Though he and Guattari took this elsewhere in the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* volumes, it seems that a dwelling on these difficult states is also to a certain extent a residence outside of capital (even while existing otherwise in the heart of it), and there is no small utopian potential in mining any portion of that. A distinguished scholar once remarked upon reading an earlier version of chapter 8 on American literature that "this is nothing but an apology for the contemplative life." Such a pronouncement is in many ways correct, because it seems that those facing the most difficult circumstances are in fact forced to engage the toughest ontological questions in unmediated fashion. This work is an exploration of the form such questions take in Deleuze and elsewhere.

This unorthodox reading at once puts Deleuze in dialogue with important contemporaries and extends his thought beyond the three categories it is

usually grouped around (the philosophical Deleuze, the Deleuze of the art and cinema books, and the collaborative writings with Guattari). Part 1 gives careful consideration to Deleuze's repeated defense of univocity, or the idea that being is said in only one sense. It claims, above all in conjunction with Deleuze's long-standing engagement with the philosopher, novelist, and painter Klossowski, that there is often a dualism or hidden dialectic that escapes from the univocity under consideration. I begin in the first chapter by going back to Sartre and arguing that Deleuze and Sartre share a Platonic model of absolute separation, of difference of kind rather than degree. The next chapter extends these questions into that of the mind-body dualism and looks at productive possibilities within feminist thought for separating mind and body and not renouncing mind as retrograde and masculinist. The third chapter situates Deleuze with respect to Klossowski and Bataille, locating Klossowski's work between Bataille's model of transgressive dualism and Deleuzian univocity. I thereby map the work of these three thinkers onto the Scholastic terms of univocity (Deleuze), equivocity (Bataille), and analogy (Klossowski), but I also suggest that there is more proximity between Deleuze's univocity and Klossowski's analogy than Deleuze might concede. Chapter 4 explores the differences between Deleuzian and Klossowskian models of disjunction in the cinematic register, above all in Raúl Ruiz's film adaptations of Klossowski's fiction. I explore the importance of immobility for Klossowski and conclude that the immobilized poses — or *tableaux vivants* — that Klossowski frequently depicts allow Deleuze's meditations on movement and immobility to be thought in a new register.

Part 2 extends the case for an underlying Deleuzian dialectic by linking the thought of the dialectic to a certain formalism or, more precisely, to an interest in "structure," in his work from the 1960s. Chapter 5 considers the controversial monographs on Deleuze by Žižek and Badiou, which both assert after a fashion that there is an underlying dualism in Deleuze's work. Rather than arguing that Deleuze resorts to a notion of quasi-Hegelian mediation (Žižek) or a false notion of the One (Badiou), I locate a compatibility between a Spinozist Deleuze and a structure-oriented Deleuze by focusing on Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense, Difference and Repetition*, and some of his essays from the same period. Chapter 6 takes up Deleuze's discussion of Lévi-Strauss in "How Do We Recognize Structuralism?," arguably one of the most important theorizations of struc-

turalism ever written. Whereas Lévi-Strauss is always hesitant to isolate form from content, Deleuze insists there is a joy in the recognition of the form, or structure, apart from its content. I suggest that this emphasis or nonemphasis on the joy inherent in abstraction is one of the few discernible markers of the break between structuralism and poststructuralism. Thus I argue for a reconsideration of the way this break is narrated in light of Deleuze's surprisingly positive discussions of Lévi-Strauss and also of Sartrean seriality.

Chapter 7 examines a series of striking convergences in a number of disparate texts Deleuze wrote or published around 1967. It seeks to map out a structure that traverses "Coldness and Cruelty," "Michael Tournier and the World without Others" (subsequently published as an appendix to *The Logic of Sense*), and parts of *Difference and Repetition*. This structure is essentially the realm Deleuze describes in his analysis of Tournier's rewriting of *Robinson Crusoe*, a state that Robinson enters into on the desert island, which is an elemental state beyond the "structure-Other," one that has no need for a human other. Thus Deleuze uses structure to go beyond structure, and in this fashion, and in his ecstatic description of Robinson's blending with the island in order to "consecrate" it, Deleuze comes closer than in virtually any other of his writings to describing a state of pure being. Yet I argue that this state is structurally similar not only to Deleuze's discussion of sadism (in contradistinction to masochism) in "Coldness and Cruelty" but also to what Deleuze culls from his more positive reading of Freud's death drive in *Difference and Repetition*, and furthermore to the notion of the "third synthesis of time" as it is outlined in the same work and to which concept I return later in this introduction.

Chapter 7 thereby articulates the logical argument of this book at its most explicit. It attempts to delineate a structure that inheres in Deleuze's magisterial work from the late 1960s and serves as the hidden kernel of his ontology. This structure is simultaneously that of sadism (not masochism), the world without others (not the structure-Other), the Freudian death instinct (not the Freudian unconscious), and the third synthesis of time (not the Aion of *The Logic of Sense*). These works share a dark and anethical vision and a high formalism that might appear anathema to the reception of Deleuze, inflected through the joint work with Guattari, as a purely positive thinker. However, part 3 of this study focuses on the forms such a dark ontology might actually take and suggests they might in fact

hold out another sort of positivity, one that is not dissociable from the so-called negative states at issue in the concluding section's examples.

If parts 1 and 2 outline the workings of a particular Deleuzian valence of dialectic and of structure, then part 3 attempts to situate the way these valences *appear*, or perhaps one could say, using Deleuzian terminology, actualize. If the movement from the virtual to the actual would fall for Deleuze under the domain of "static genesis," then in part 3 by contrast I examine how dialectic and structure serve as points of genesis for something at once static and full of ontological plenitude because of that very stasis. In this fashion, part 3 explores extreme states of stasis that, not unlike the one Tournier's Robinson inhabits, would seem to be overwhelmingly negative yet in fact allow being to emerge in a fashion that escapes the mediation of the tyrannical Other.

There is unquestionably a tension in Deleuze's work between a repeated celebration of movement and a gesture to something else, the latter sometimes articulated as the recognition that movement can happen "*sur place*" (on the spot). This gesture is most pronounced in Deleuze's writings on American literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which is my focus in chapters 8 and 9. Chapter 8 explores the dialectic of movement and stasis in "road trip" novels by Jack Kerouac, Vladimir Nabokov, and Paul Auster. I suggest that these literary works broach the vexed possibility of whether thought and movement can coexist insofar as they squarely pose the question—one that Deleuze at points comes close to articulating—of whether being and stasis can similarly coexist. In this fashion, Deleuze's fascination for American literature exposes an orientation toward an even more profound state of inertia than Deleuze explicitly embraces. Chapter 9 addresses the singular text that formulates these questions in the strongest possible fashion, not only for Deleuze but for many of his French and European contemporaries. This is Herman Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener," and the chapter examines Deleuze's essay "Bartleby; or, The Formula" and responses to this essay by Jacques Rancière and Giorgio Agamben. The repetitive passion for the dialectic of the "or" in all of these essays is taken as a symptom of an impasse between a glorification of American movement and an attraction to theories of *désœuvrement*, or unworking. Chapter 11 makes the most pointed claim for the force of *désœuvrement*, which is here discussed through close readings of Blanchot's fiction. It calls for an ontology of inertia above and

beyond Deleuze's more overt emphasis on movement and becoming and looks at the parallels and divergences between his work and that of Blanchot. While Blanchot sometimes heralds the elusiveness of temporality, that things are always just past or forever to come, there are other moments in which Blanchot imagines a more weighty state of being stuck in the present. I contend that the former logic of a past-future temporality is an essentially Deleuzian one but that the later realm of radical stuckness overturns and revalues Deleuze's seeming rejection of being and presentness. The short chapter that precedes the discussion of Blanchot, chapter 10, is an interlude that attempts to translate this latent Deleuzian ontology into the perception of space, specifically small-town midwestern space. The concluding chapter is a meditation on what the ontology of inertia would look like and takes as its guiding example that of a child who imagines that the ceilings of a cluttered house are vast open floor spaces. Alongside Deleuze's analyses of baroque architecture in his book on Leibniz, I draw on the French phenomenological tradition to propose a virtual space of perception that favors a dwelling in being over a movement of becoming.

In this fashion, I show how three terms that are generally considered antithetical to Deleuze's philosophy — dialectic, structure, and being — open up a secret underside to Deleuze's oeuvre, all the more so when read in the context of Deleuze's contemporaries who employ these terms more openly and favorably. Each part opens with a short preface that goes into more detail about its chapters than is provided in this brief overview, and I refer the reader to those prefaces for a more detailed outline of this book's contents.

For the remainder of this introduction, perhaps in the fashion of Deleuze's appendixes to *The Logic of Sense* that overlap significantly with the thirty-four short series contained in the body of the text yet also go into uncharted domains, I would like to put forward in far stronger terms, and in dialogue with some of the key texts in the staggering critical literature on Deleuze, the argument that Deleuze not only has certain affinities with Scholasticism but that his affinities with Aquinas in particular touch on some of the critical claims, made by other means, of this study as a whole.

It is of course often noted, by Deleuze himself and by commentators, the importance of John Duns Scotus (1265/66–1308) for Deleuze's thought,

above all for Deleuze's admittedly idiosyncratic deployment of the concepts of *univocity* (the idea that being is said in one sense) and *haecceity* (thisness, individuating difference as opposed to *differentia* or specific difference). How this reading of Scotus came about and in what circumstances is not entirely clear.² As has often been noted with respect to Deleuze (and not generally as a criticism, which it is also not intended to be here), his "borrowings" often so little resemble the original that they tell us more about Deleuze's own system than the thinker he is explicating. Such a claim is particularly resonant in the case of Scotus, for Deleuze takes "univocity" from Scotus without situating this term within the "logic" (the grounding in Aristotle's *Categories*, Porphyry's commentaries, the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, etc.) that were a foundation for Medieval thought, or in Scholastic debates about nominalism and universalism, or in discussions of God and the persons of the trinity, with only slight mention of the question of divine names.³ Deleuze's Scotus is virtually unrecognizable as that portrayed by major contemporary Scotus commentators such as Richard Cross and Giorgio Pini, or even as that of Étienne Gilson, who might properly have influenced Deleuze.⁴ Again, this is not said by way of critique but simply to buttress my reading of Deleuze alongside Aquinas in what follows. If Deleuze himself engages Scotus somewhat fleetingly⁵ and from a somewhat eccentric perspective, then the mere fact that Deleuze engages Aquinas even less and in a couple of instances is expressly hostile to Aquinas⁶ is in no way a sufficient ground for considering the juxtaposition of Deleuze and Aquinas as some kind of outlandish enterprise. While Scotus's work represents a significant break with Aquinas, if not more precisely Henry of Ghent, on questions of logic, it is not altogether clear that such a hard and fast break takes place in the realm of metaphysics.

Most of the extant commentaries on Deleuze's relation to the philosophical tradition tend, understandably, to focus on those thinkers that Deleuze explicitly cites as having influence on him, and it should be noted that such a method of being attentive to what a thinker actually says he is doing has recently been given brilliant psychoanalytically inflected approbation by Adrian Johnston in his work on Žižek.⁷ Nevertheless, I will risk incurring the disapprobation of Deleuze's more faithful readers and commentators by suggesting that in certain respects Deleuze may have important affinities with Aquinas that perhaps help open his work to a different framework of dialectic, structure, and being.⁸

What is at stake in linking Deleuze to a notoriously methodological, theological, and seemingly doctrinaire thinker such as Aquinas? Apart from the idea that both oeuvres mark exceptionally creative moments in the history of philosophy (this claim has certainly been made repeatedly for Deleuze, and it is also something of a truism that Aquinas himself invents some of the best objections to his propositions, per the format of the *Summa Theologica*, whereby each question begins with an objection to it that in the end is refuted—clearly different from Deleuze’s style but not unlike his insistence on emphasizing problems and the way a question is posed), and apart from the specific topoi—creation, genesis, and eternity—that I turn to at the end of this introduction, another reason for thinking Deleuze alongside Aquinas is the high realism of both bodies of work.

There has for years been somewhat of a polarized tendency in studies of Deleuze to focus either on the joint works with Guattari or on Deleuze’s earlier, more strictly philosophical single-authored work, or alternatively on the works on cinema and painting. As is taken up in chapter 5, Žižek and Badiou both express a strong adherence to the “philosophical” early Deleuze at the expense of the more generally popular Deleuze as coauthor with Guattari of *Anti-Oedipus*; *A Thousand Plateaus*; *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*; and *What Is Philosophy?*⁹ Badiou claims that all of Deleuze’s work can be reduced to a few oft-repeated concepts that are entirely present in Deleuze’s work from the 1960s (including *Nietzsche and Philosophy*; *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*; *Bergsonism*; *Difference and Repetition*; and *The Logic of Sense*, but not *Anti-Oedipus* from 1972 and *A Thousand Plateaus* from 1980, the latter both coauthored with Guattari). Žižek specifically states that Deleuze’s major work is *The Logic of Sense* and the work that must be bracketed is *Anti-Oedipus*, in that the latter gives itself over to the pernicious anything-goes model of Deleuzian commentary that favors flux, forces, movement, radicality, and speed—but with no underlying order.¹⁰ While I am following Badiou and Žižek in also attending to the more strictly philosophical part of Deleuze’s corpus, I do give some consideration to the jointly written works, the cinema books, and works such as the book on Leibniz and the writings of Melville that came later. It is undeniable that questions of dialectic, structure, and being are less explicit in the joint-authored and later works, but it is not clear that these questions are therefore less relevant to the reader of those works, even if they were, perhaps at that time of writing, to those works’ authors.

In an earlier oral version of chapter 7 presented at an annual Deleuze studies conference, which outlined as indicated the striking proximity between four concepts that Deleuze elaborated around the year 1967 — the world without others, the particular characteristics of sadism (as opposed to masochism), the death drive, and the third synthesis of time — my position on this underlying “dark precursor” structure in Deleuze’s thought, especially the elevation of sadism over masochism in its relevance to the core of Deleuze’s thought, generated quite expectedly some protest and heated discussion. Less expected was the seemingly incongruous set of comments that indeed these overlapping sets of terms that I was attending to in work from the 1960s certainly extended throughout Deleuze’s entire oeuvre. I make overtures to such a claim here, and I do think there is important scholarship that moves in that direction,¹¹ but I am also agnostic about the applicability of the approach I am outlining to every dimension of Deleuze’s oeuvre. Such a totalizing idea is certainly interesting, but there is no need for the stakes of this project to be overarching in this fashion. If I can convince the perhaps skeptical reader that questions of eternity, stasis, and the work of Aquinas are even somewhat relevant to Deleuze, perhaps primarily to Deleuze’s pre-1972 thought, that will be interesting enough.

The stakes of this book are dual, and their two poles do not necessarily come out at once or in equal balance at all points. On the one hand, this study attempts to give a voice to states of being and spaces that are frequently pathologized or not considered worthy of consideration (extreme stuckness and inertia, simple objects of daily life, the child’s perspective and the hoarder’s perspective, and flat, provincial middle-American landscape — all examples from part 3) and suggests the usefulness of thinking these states alongside Deleuze, at times taking them further than he does. This rigorous and serious treatment of “minor states,”¹² or at least there is the hope it will be deemed so, is a resoundingly feminist and object-oriented approach to Deleuze, though generally not one presented in the language of those discourses. This approach is particularly resonant in part 3 (on being) and partially so in part 1 (on dialectic). I will note that chapter 10, “In the Middle of Things,” was written considerably prior to the final two chapters it prefaces (“Midnight, or the Inertia of Being” and “Living Virtually in a Cluttered House”) and contains in nascent and less developed form some of their materials. It is included because there are ontological intensities that a younger self can remember and express with far more clarity and

simplicity than an older one, and it seems that younger self captured in many ways the essence of this work's devotion to the minor, before even (I believe) having encountered some of the work of Alphonso Lingis that is roughly in this genre. This reflective interlude is also all the more poignant now in that most of the small-town midwestern sites evoked no longer exist, or exist in the same fashion, including the city of Joplin.

The other stake, which is elaborated in the rest of this introduction, is more of a provocation and more counteractive (or in good Deleuzian terminology, counteractualizing). In other words, in attempting to pin Deleuze to an underlying structural ontology that he surely would have resisted, I am not, as outlined above, necessarily claiming that this strong reading holds equally for all of Deleuze's writings. Thus I am not claiming that those studies that place Deleuze's work under the heading of a certain hermeticism, vitalism, virtuality, or negative theology are wrong tout court. There are many things about such approaches, and I will highlight a few of them below, that are particularly insightful and useful—and in many respects entirely in keeping with this study's very different logical orientation. But the countervailing terms of dialectic and structure are indeed and emphatically meant to stand in contradistinction to any notion of a mystical, otherworldly, negative Deleuze whose whole oeuvre can be reduced to a "Platonism of the virtual."¹³ In what remains, I briefly outline a salient example from each of these four headings—hermeticism, vitalism, the virtual, and negative theology—and suggest its connection to the terms of this study, but with the caveat that these headings do not go far enough toward a positive elaboration (Deleuze is, after all, an eminently positive thinker), and it is indeed toward the latter that the recourse to Scholastic thought is most valuable.

There has been an impressive strain of recent work linking Deleuze to the esoteric and hermetic traditions, as well as to a Jungian model of the unconscious. Particularly notable in this regard are journal issues of *Sub-Stance* and *Collapse* devoted to Deleuze that highlight this dimension of his work, as well as Joshua Delpech-Ramey's *The Hermetic Deleuze: Philosophy and Spiritual Ordeal* and Christian Kerslake's *Deleuze and the Unconscious*.¹⁴ The title of chapter 7 is based on Deleuze's refrain in *Difference and Repetition* of "the formless as the product of the most extreme formality."¹⁵ If these hermetically oriented studies tend to focus on the genera-

tive power of the formless as such, then this study looks at the formal logic of causation of the formless, in the hope that it will give us new insights toward its generative powers.¹⁶ It is not exactly at odds with the scholarship mentioned above but rather draws out a different part of the equation. This is perhaps best illustrated by one of Deleuze's earliest writings, one he later excised from his bibliography, which was the introduction he wrote to Johann Malfatti von Montereio's book *Mathesis; or, Studies on the Anarchy and Hierarchy of Knowledge* and is available in English in the *Collapse* volume mentioned above. It is of course tempting to speculate why Deleuze regarded this early writing unfavorably. Was it because of its latent humanism, vitalism, if not Hegelianism and strange theologizing (and written after all at a very young age, twenty-one), because it nonetheless captures some important thematics that Deleuze would later develop, such as a gesture to objects as "outside of us"?¹⁷ Or, as Robin Mackay notes in his editor's introduction, does it serve as a prolegomena to Deleuze's notion of a "phosphorescence of objects" to be developed in the 1967 essay "Michel Tournier and the World without Others" (discussed in chapter 7)?¹⁸ In short, we see a sort of object-oriented ontology (OOO) *avant la lettre*, though one might argue, as I do in chapter 1, that in fact Deleuze and Sartre share a penchant for thinking the thingness of objects,¹⁹ and his earliest writings reflect Deleuze at his most overtly, if not actually, Sartrean.

I have not made the effort here to enter into more extended dialogue with the rich domain of OOO and the umbrella category of speculative realism under which it falls, for the simple reason that most of the material in this book was drafted either before I knew of the existence of these emergent bodies of thought or before they had actually emerged. There is much work being and to be done on the intersections of the work of Deleuze, Badiou, and Quentin Meillassoux, and Ray Brassier's excellent and difficult essay on the third synthesis of time in *Nihil Unbound* is perhaps the mediating link between my treatment of this material in chapter 7 and Meillassoux's *After Finitude*.²⁰ The major difference between OOO, as it is currently instantiated in the disparate foursome of Graham Harman, Levi Bryant, Ian Bogost, and Timothy Morton, and the approach taken here — and this is exemplary of the tenor of my critiques in this whole section — is that for OOO, virtually anything can be an object: a text, an iPad, the National Organization for Women (these are actual examples used on the relevant OOO blogs),²¹ whereas to think according to the

parameters of Scholastic thought, an entity, generally a living one, must be categorized according to a Porphyrian tree of alternating branches (notably similar to Deleuze's method of Platonic dialectic discussed in chapter 1) and then according to its genus and species and specific difference or *differentia*. Now Deleuze avowedly focuses more on *haecceity*, or individuating difference (how you get from a species to an individual versus how you get from a genus to a species, *haecceity* versus *differentia*), yet he nonetheless and at times in spite of himself produces a hierarchical and divisive structuring system not unlike the Porphyrian tree. The end result may be a certain empty square, as he outlines it in his important essay "How Do We Recognize Structuralism?" discussed in chapter 6, but it matters how that square or formless entity was arrived at, for if one can outline with precision how it was generated, then the gambit is that being attuned to the at times stultifying and quasi-Scholastic method of Deleuzian structure and genesis itself opens new domains of perception.

Deleuze writes provocatively in "Mathesis, Science, and Philosophy": "And the key notion of mathesis — not at all mystical — is that individuality never separates itself from the universal, that between the living and life one finds the same relation as between life as species, and divinity."²² If one parses the above phrase, as Deleuze does a bit later in the same essay,²³ we have "living" being related to "universal" life as the species is related to divinity. Not only does this introduce the important question of the realm of the divine (which I suggest is not unlike Deleuze's third synthesis of time, though one might also wonder if this is precisely an aspect of the "Mathesis" essay that was later unsatisfying to Deleuze), but more immediately it introduces a major crack into life itself (not unlike the workings of the crack, or "*la fêlure*," that Deleuze analyzes so beautifully in his essays on Fitzgerald, Zola, and Lowry in *The Logic of Sense*),²⁴ for life is divided between the living on the one hand and life as an ordering principle on the other, where the latter is entirely distinct from human life per se. This division is not without its affinities to Giorgio Agamben's celebrated distinctions between *zoê* and *bios*, or naked life versus life in its fullness,²⁵ but here it is more nearly a distinction between the living creature and life in its most universal sense, which is paradoxically not aliveness as such but rather a structural category. That is, one can see in this very early essay the germ of the type of structural-ontological (if not dialectical) thought that is a mark of Deleuze's work from the 1960s.

Rather than align Deleuze with an easy vitalism or engagement with the question of life — and Deleuze’s last work, “Immanence: A Life,” certainly gives an opening of sorts for such claims — it is imperative to see the way in which “life” is always cut in two, cracked, by a line of division, or an “engine of difference.”²⁶ Keith Ansell Pearson’s *Germinal Life* importantly emphasizes the strong ontological and nonorganic component to Deleuze’s concept of life. As he writes, “Although the notion of non-organic life is not found in either *Difference and Repetition* or *The Logic of Sense*, it could be argued that these books are devoted to nothing other than a thinking with and beyond the organism.”²⁷ Eugene Thacker’s *After Life* links this twofold division of creaturely life versus structural life (what he sees as the bifurcation between living and “Life”) explicitly to an Aristotelian and Scholastic lineage. He analyzes in precise detail the way in which, both for Aristotle and for the Scholastic thinkers who followed him, there is difficulty in classifying the classificatory structure as such. That is, if the Aristotelian *psuchē* (sometimes rendered as “soul,” from Aristotle’s *De Anima*) can be classified into intellectual, sensitive, and nutritive elements, which could all be said to be forms of the living, what about the *psuchē* itself and its complex tripartite (if not proto-Trinitarian) structure? Is it also living, or is it more of a logical if not ontological structure apart from the living that is nonetheless necessary for an understanding of Life? One might say, perhaps reductively, that Deleuzian univocity — following Scotus but extending the thought of the Subtle Doctor to comprehend a Spinozist realm of substance, modes, and attributes — provides a way of thinking through this problem, of locating difference within individuating difference in such a way that every entity, whether a distinct life form or a structure, falls under the same immanent rubric such that divisive or hierarchical distinctions become irrelevant.²⁸ However, it is the claim of this study, above all of part I, that a mode of nonunivocal divisive distinction is intrinsic to Deleuzian ontology and, moreover, that the formal separation discussed above between living and form-of-life resurfaces in a range of Deleuzian guises.

Instances of this structural split that is necessary for the elaboration of Deleuze’s thought include the formation of disjunctive syntheses, divergent series, the second-order incorporeal, and the difference between the name of the thing and what the name of the thing is called, just to take several important examples from *The Logic of Sense*. Jameson refers to this as a

latent dualism, and Badiou and John Milbank see it as the failure of the professed univocity at the hands of the equivocal, all of which is taken up in what follows. Unlike most Deleuze scholars, I am not fundamentally at odds with these readings. However, I would insist that Deleuze's is no ordinary dualist dualism. It is more nearly a dualist monism, because it is a structural dualism and a hierarchicizing procedure used at the service of an undermining of dualism, which debatably might then form a non-Hegelian higher unity, or univocity. Yet for my part — and this is above all at issue in the book's more meditative final section on "being" — I wish to dwell more squarely on the often static building blocks of the Deleuzian conceptual apparatus, for example the inorganic Life as an abstract entity that grounds the living, the point of immobility that grounds becoming, or the counter-intuitive static part of the genesis of the actual from the virtual — in short, a bevy of stuck, dead, eternal, dual structures that are more nearly categories rather than concepts.²⁹ It is my contention, and I attempt to illustrate this in part 3, that when seriously examined and not dismissingly passed over, these entities seemingly negative in connotation are in fact potentially positive both in terms of distinction and in terms of generative power.

I cannot here do justice to the rich work that explores this generative power by linking Deleuze's thought to intricate issues in biology and the life sciences; to mathematics, cybernetics, and neuroscience; or to thinkers such as Saint-Hilaire, Simondon, Bateson, von Uexküll, and Whitehead.³⁰ To risk a severe reduction, many of these approaches seek to level customary barriers (between organic and inorganic, and between persons as distinct from things, forces, processes of individuation, and networks), which, to be sure, Deleuze's, and especially Deleuze and Guattari's, work indeed achieves. However, it is more in the spirit of holding fast to the importance of the distinction outlined above between the living and Life, and to the structure itself of Deleuzian distinction that I proceed, for the contention is that attending to this mode of *static difference* brings us closest to a new form of minor ontology that admittedly in the end may not be entirely Deleuze's but at the very least is something Deleuze's work opens onto.

It might be objected that what I am gesturing to as the "structure itself" and as static difference is none other than what Deleuze characterizes as the virtual (the virtual being a major focus of the works cited in the note to the preceding paragraph), and this would not be wrong. The last chapter

of this study explicitly addresses the generative force of the virtual. Yet on the whole I have avoided this term, to some extent because there has already been a great deal of excellent scholarship on this topic,³¹ but more importantly because the very multidimensionality of the term and the difficulty of defining it (not unlike trying to define the body without organs, but with even greater stakes)³² lends itself, I think, to sophisticated attacks by thinkers such as Badiou, who as noted above seizes on Deleuze's "Platonism of the virtual," and by Peter Hallward, whose critique I turn to presently. Unlike many of Deleuze's staunchest defenders, I think there is merit in these critiques, and my approach is not to deny the criticisms but to push them to the next level. That is, if we really consider the Deleuzian virtual, do we not see something more akin to an Aristotelian if not Scholastic system of ontological classification and parsing? This, at least, is the claim of the first two parts, though it is acknowledged that this method is also quite Platonic. Rather than denying the objection that Deleuze erects quasi-transcendental categories that bring down his system in the end—the implication of Badiou's attack that his is a Platonism of the virtual (though Badiou of course is eminently partial to Plato, so even this assertion is not without its complications of nuance) or Hallward's criticism that Deleuze's thought is prone to these pitfalls and not grounded in the world—by contrast I am suggesting that we linger precisely on those transcendental categories and use the fully transcendentalizing theological language that Deleuze is generally evoked in the same breath with only as insult as in fact a *positive* point of reference, just as Freud purportedly turned the pejorative assertion of psychoanalysis as a Jewish science into a badge of honor.³³

Thus, instead of the virtual, I take up in the remainder of this introduction another concept from *Difference and Repetition* that is more limited in its employment but not without affinities to the seeming "otherworldly" domain of the virtual. This is the third synthesis of time, introduced in the second chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, as an outgrowth of the first synthesis of habit and the second synthesis of memory. The three syntheses of time will be discussed further in chapter 7, but at this juncture I would simply marshal the third synthesis of time and its relation to Scholastic conceptions of eternity to defend Deleuze against critiques that his project is transcendentalizing and otherworldly by actually affirming some of the claims made by way of attack on Deleuze, but taking those claims in a

different direction. Badiou calls Deleuze an aristocratic thinker, and Žižek focuses on what he calls the “sterile Sense-Event” of *The Logic of Sense* as opposed to the flux and flow of *Anti-Oedipus*, both of which are taken up in chapter 5, but here I turn to Hallward’s particularly insightful and damning critique in *Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* that elaborates on the virtual, immobilized, nonproductive aspect of Deleuze’s notion of creation, which Hallward considers in rigorous detail but in the end pejoratively. Albeit routinely dismissed and severely criticized by most Deleuze scholars, Hallward’s critical, or quasi-critical, analysis is one of the most important to have emerged in years, and one that must be engaged.³⁴ Žižek, Badiou, and Hallward each in his way recognizes cracks in Deleuzian univocity along with a certain strain of rarefied transcendentalizing that is hard to know what to do with, especially for a thinker so widely “applied” and lauded for the immanent materialism of his thought.

My claim is that this “inapplicability” of Deleuze’s thought, what Hallward critiques resoundingly as being “out of this world” and not adequate for proper political change or transformation, is precisely what makes it worth grappling with and trying to deform or transform. Such a claim accords with Hallward’s in certain points, yet it dwells more squarely and *positively* on those moments where Hallward takes most issue with Deleuze, particularly insofar as Hallward links Deleuze to a variant of negative theology. Deleuze writes in *Expressionism in Philosophy* that “it was without doubt Scotus who pursued farther than any other [Medieval philosopher] the enterprise of a positive theology,”³⁵ but I turn to Aquinas to help bolster the positive enterprise and retrieve Deleuzian univocity from an easy alignment with negative theology, in part by insisting that Deleuzian univocity, like the univocity of its Medieval predecessor, is not as pure as it appears. Hallward effectively demonstrates that if you take Deleuze’s Spinozist-Nietzschean-Bergsonian penchant for univocity (not something I would connect so squarely with Scotus all said and done, as Scotus in earlier works also advocates equivocity in logic and analogy in metaphysics)³⁶ to its limit, you get into a register that stops you in your tracks, a radical stasis outside of movement and time (hence “out of this world”). Yet Hallward in turn stops with this, without considering the seeming paradox that such a stasis might itself entail a generative dimension. In short, dwelling in a positive fashion on those places where Deleuze

gets deliberately or involuntarily stuck is the driving methodology of this study. But rather than simply enacting this methodology, I here attempt, albeit fleetingly, to account for it through recourse to Aquinas.

It is precisely on the question of univocity that Deleuze makes his brief but very stringent attacks on Aquinas. As Deleuze glosses it in a 1974 course lecture, which is cited at length in chapter 3, univocity is the idea that “being . . . is said in one and the same sense of everything of which it is said,” and a term that Deleuze will go on to link very squarely to Spinoza. Univocity is here opposed to equivocity, which is the idea of being said in different senses, for example that God is named differently from the flea; but as Deleuze points out, if you insist that God is *not* rather than that God is like a flea, then you get into a potential heresy. As he puts it rather scathingly, the term that won out historically, which is associated with Aquinas, is the damnably, for Deleuze, lukewarm idea of analogy, that the Creator and the creation are not of the same stuff but that there is an analogical relation, a divine trace as Aquinas calls it, between them.³⁷

Deleuze, then, condemns Aquinas on the grounds of a certain style of moderation or mediation, both in the course lecture on Scholastic thought and in moments cited above in *Difference and Repetition* and in *Expressionism in Philosophy*. Insofar as Thomist analogy serves as a mediating category, Deleuze is understandably dismissive of it, as he is in similar strong fashion of the Hegelian dialectic. Nevertheless, Deleuze’s repeated emphasis on difference in kind (as opposed to difference of degree) and a penchant for hierarchical dualisms of terminology in his work (virtual/actual, differentiation/differenciation, intensive/extensive, to take examples from *Difference and Repetition*) make him not incompatible with Thomist thought, which is, after all, wonderfully complex precisely in its notion of difference.

John Milbank has developed some of these links between Deleuze and Thomism, insofar as he argues, both in his earlier “The Soul of Reciprocity, Part Two” and in the more recent *Monstrosity of Christ*, that Deleuze does not really escape analogy.³⁸ Badiou makes the same point in different language in *The Clamor of Being*, that in order to think the bifurcation between the name of the thing and what name of the thing is called, there is something else — a two or a dualism — beyond univocity that creeps in. I take up these lines of argumentation in chapters 3 and 5, respectively, and while I do not disagree with them, I here focus on a problematic that is

closer to what Deleuze does in fact claim to be doing, and that regards his description of the third synthesis of time in *Difference and Repetition*. This is a concept that in chapter 7 is linked to other Deleuzian concepts from the same period such as the world without others, the death instinct, and the structural reading of sadism — not masochism — in “Coldness and Cruelty.” Insofar as I claim in that chapter and chapter 6 that these literally “empty structures” serve as a “dark precursor” and hidden kernel to Deleuze’s oeuvre (and perhaps also come to bear on concepts from the joint work such as the plane of consistency, even the body without organs, and also perhaps the crystal-image of time or the noosign of differentiation from the cinema books, though I do not develop these lines of thought), such a claim is in many ways resonant with Hallward’s detailed analysis in *Out of This World* of the way in which such concepts are at the ontological core of Deleuze’s notion of creation. In this regard, the third synthesis of time is a concept that would appear to succumb to Hallward’s attack insofar as it bears the strong mark of the atemporal and the eternal.

Chapter 7 goes into greater detail about the differences, as Deleuze outlines them in the “Repetition for Itself” chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, between the first synthesis of habit and the second synthesis of memory, but of import here is that the third synthesis is strikingly pure, empty, and static in Deleuze’s characterization: “[T]ime out of joint means demented time or time . . . freed from the events which made up its content, its relation to movement overturned; in short, time presenting itself as an empty and pure form. . . . The [third] synthesis [of time] is necessarily static, since time is no longer subordinated to movement; time is the most radical form of change, but the form of change does not change.”³⁹ At issue is a conception of time that is essentially motionless, a pure order of time, where succession from past to future is no longer operative. Yet, in Deleuze’s complex hierarchy — and his works especially from this period are full of hierarchical structures — the third synthesis of time is clearly the superior and favored one. As discussed in chapter 1 with respect to the incorporeal, it is not the first order but the last order that is almost always the favored one for Deleuze, not the first-order corporeal but the second-order incorporeal, not so much the first and second syntheses of time but rather the third.⁴⁰

When we probe what Deleuze means by the seemingly paradoxical statement that “time is the most radical form of change, but the form of

change does not change,” Aquinas’s notions of eternity and of creation are remarkably apposite, although for Aquinas these domains are exclusive to the realm of God. For Aquinas, eternity also entails an overcoming of both movement and time, which are connected. In the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas answers, in defense of Boethius:

For since succession occurs in every movement, and one part comes after another, the fact that we reckon before and after in movement, makes us apprehend time, which is nothing else but the measure of before and after in movement. Now in a thing bereft of movement, which is always the same, there is no before or after. As therefore the idea of time consists in the numbering of before and after in movement; so likewise in the apprehension of the uniformity of what is outside of movement, consists the idea of eternity. Further, those things are said to be measured by time which have a beginning and an end in time, because in everything which is moved there is a beginning, and there is an end. But as whatever is wholly immutable can have no succession, so it has no beginning, and no end.⁴¹

It would seem that Aquinas’s immutable, immobile, successionless eternity would go hand in hand with Hallward’s contention in *Out of This World*, which again is not a positive one, that Deleuze’s whole philosophy of creation rests on a fundamentally theological framework. Hallward’s detailed close reading of Deleuze essentially takes Deleuzian univocity back to its theological or quasi-theological foundation and then reapplies it to Deleuze’s oeuvre as a whole. However, that foundation is a very different one than the Thomist one I am proposing, because, in insisting with Deleuze on univocity, Hallward is on the one hand driven toward a mystical reading of Deleuze whereby God and the creature are one, and on the other toward a transcendentalizing and no less mystical reading whereby the Creator and the creation are necessarily purely separate and one cannot know God in any absolute fashion.

Such a doubleness comes out in the following passage from *Out of This World* with its recourse to the negative theology of Eckhart, and this is also where creation comes in to resolve all dilemmas:

Deleuze takes us back in this way to the central theophanic conviction — that only God is capable of affirming God, only God is capable of

thinking the idea of God, only God can think with an infinite power of thought. We express God by allowing God to work (think, create, act . . .) through us, or as Eckhart puts it, “I never see God except in that in which God sees Himself.” De-theologise the terms and the logic stays much the same: only being can affirm itself. Only affirmation itself can affirm a power of infinite affirmation.⁴²

Hallward thus presents a recursive “theophanic” model whereby the act of creation, even in its distance from God, nonetheless affirms itself through itself and thus unites with the mind of God. For Hallward, this is the way of getting around what I discuss, especially in chapter 1, as the problem of nonmediation in Deleuze’s thought. Hallward gets around this by first emphasizing the Deleuzian disavowal of relation, something that my reading also emphasizes, and then by announcing that it is the power of creation that enables such a vision of difference:

Most commentary on Deleuze has tended to assume that what he’s proposing is a relational account of being as difference. There might seem to be a fair amount of evidence for such a reading. Doesn’t he privilege multiplicity over unity? Doesn’t he denounce every recourse to a transcendent principle of individuation? Doesn’t he emphasise the way becomings take place “in the middle,” in a “between”? Doesn’t he privilege *et* [and] over *est* [is] — the serial syntheses of the “AND AND AND” over any definitive determination of what is? Doesn’t he provide an account of the generation of ideas and problems in terms of the “differential relations” modeled on the infinitesimal relations of calculus (dx/dy)?

The answer is of course yes, he does all these things — but he does them, nevertheless, in such a way as to ensure the exclusive primacy of non-relational difference, a notion of strictly intra-elemental rather than inter-elemental difference. From start to finish, Deleuze’s concern is always with a logic of difference whereby, before it differs with other anything [*sic*] external to itself, a differing “differs with itself first, immediately,” on account of the internal and self-differing power that makes it what it is. We know that what animates such a force is a power of unconditional, self-affirming creation.⁴³

I concur with Hallward’s pointed assessment of the “primacy of non-relational difference” over the various “multiplicity” readings, an assess-

ment which is for the most part also in keeping with the readings of Badiou and Žižek. Yet I part ways with Hallward when he reaches the conclusion that this bifurcation in Deleuze's thought can be explained by a recourse to creation as animating principle of this thought. What instead, to my mind, is needed is a more structural and analogical account of this seeming impasse, rather than a mystifying one, and it is such a model that Aquinas provides.

Aquinas insists on the disjunction between God and creature, on the disjunction between eternity and temporality, yet to think that disjuncture necessitates a structural or dialectical model (his term being "analogy") for perceiving it. Although such a necessity exists for Aquinas strictly within the theological sphere, the model it produces provides more of a groundwork for thinking outside the theological dimension insofar as this structural-dialectical framework—as opposed to the univocal Spinozist-Scotist model Deleuze draws on—admits more readily of the possibility of an outside and thus frees us from the interminable recursion of Hallward's vision of Deleuzian creation, which is irrevocably stuck by the very dint of its continual movement. By focusing instead on the point where the movement stops, where the absolute difference inheres, and thus regarding the disjunction structurally rather than through the lens of creation, I hope after a different fashion to suggest more properly "creative" ways of thinking ontology.

Such a structural model allows for a reversal that in turns helps distinguish Deleuze from a purely theological model of creation. Albeit presented with even greater nuance and lucidity, Aquinas's description of eternity is a nearly perfect parallel to Deleuze's third synthesis of time except for one key aspect, which is the idea of eternity's immutability. At the heart of *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* is the Nietzschean idea of the eternal return of the Same, but always with a difference. Although Deleuze does not exactly develop this implication, it seems to me that the third synthesis of time harbors a generative potential, perhaps not unlike the communication between incorporeal effects described in *The Logic of Sense*, and that will be discussed in chapter 1.

To speak of generative potential means insisting on the important difference between creation and genesis. If creation always refers back to the Creator and does not escape the theophanic framework Hallward so meticulously affixes to Deleuze, then "genesis," in being about process or

structure more than beginning or end product, is a useful term for escaping the impasse into which Hallward places Deleuze's oeuvre. To argue that Deleuze's thought is all about creation in the loose sense of, say, philosophy being the creation of concepts, or the artist creating a work of art, is to miss the strong impersonal and non-human-oriented dimension of Deleuze's thought. Hallward certainly does not fall into this trap, but the current secular usage of the term "creation" does, and Hallward is quite right to point out that a theological and basically Scholastic notion of creation is in fact much closer to Deleuze's project. It is certainly more apposite to appeal to a theological model, according to which the process of creation does not originate in a strictly human source (which it certainly does not do for Deleuze), than to a secular model. But crucially, insofar as Deleuze embraces creation, it is bound up with his notion of both static and dynamic genesis, and it is the claim here that a rigorous investigation of the static realm with its theological counterparts allows for the subsequent possibility of bringing this divine sphere squarely into the world.⁴⁴

In other words, the highest plane for Deleuze, as with Aquinas, is linked to an intemporal form of stasis. Whereas for Aquinas, this is the realm of God as Creator and first mover, for Deleuze this is a second- or third-order realm. And this is the critical difference: Deleuze's most rarefied pronouncements may resemble a theological domain — and these are the bold stakes of Hallward's thesis — yet the directionality is different. Whereas Aquinas's model is top-down, Deleuze's is bottom-up, and it is never clear how high it can go. It is never clear what can be generated in strange and perhaps monstrous creation from the third order of time or, as discussed in part 1, from Deleuze's desubjectified incorporeal states of affairs.

In *Summa contra Gentiles*, Aquinas writes: "God's action, which is without pre-existing matter and is called creation, is neither a motion nor a change, properly speaking."⁴⁵ At the end of the chapter, he continues: "[I]f creation preceded its product, as do motion or change, then some subject would have to be prior to it; and this is contrary to the nature of creation. Creation, therefore, is neither a motion nor a change."⁴⁶ Whereas the "before" of God's creation is not only immobile but subjectless for Aquinas, it is the "after" of Deleuzian genesis that is properly desubjectified in its space of higher immobility (an example discussed in chapter 7 is the "world without others"). In Thomist creation, at issue is a type of static genesis in which something comes from nothing but not in a way that is univocal. As

Aquinas writes in chapter 19 of the same section of *Summa contra Gentiles*, “But between being and non-being, which are as it were the extremes of creation, no mean can possibly exist. Therefore, in creation there is no succession.”⁴⁷ Despite the idea of analogy so importantly linked to Thomas, we also see, in the elaboration of creation, the idea of a differential that cannot be broached, and indeed Aquinas goes on to note the way in which “substance is not susceptible of degrees.”⁴⁸ This is the nonunivocist side that Deleuze shares with Aquinas, the emphasis on difference of kind and the rejection of categories of mediation, and this will be discussed in part 1 under the rubric of dialectic (clearly a non-Hegelian variant that rejects mediation).

This process of creation has a remarkable similarity to Deleuze’s notion of static genesis, one of the types of genesis outlined in *The Logic of Sense* and *Difference and Repetition*. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze writes:

It is sufficient to understand that the genesis takes place in time not between one actual term, however small, and another actual term, but between the virtual and its actualization — in other words, it goes from the structure to its incarnation, from the conditions of a problem to the cases of solution, from the differential elements and their ideal connections to actual terms and diverse real relations which constitute at each moment the actuality of time. This is a genesis without dynamism, evolving necessarily in the element of a supra-historicity, a *static-genesis*.⁴⁹

One of the difficulties of Deleuze’s model, something that distinguishes him from Aquinas, is that the directionality of genesis is ultimately variable. On the one hand, as described in the passage above, static genesis goes from the structure to its incarnation, from the virtual to the actual. Hallward thus concludes that any form of actualization in the world is confined to these static structures outside of history that stop “real politics.”⁵⁰ Yet this only accounts for one Deleuzian directionality. Harder to grasp is the simultaneous movement from the more worldly to the otherworldly (the structure-Other to the world without others, discussed in chapter 7; the corporeal to the incorporeal, discussed in chapter 1). Is this the same movement? Or, to put it differently, is the *static genesis* the same as the seeming *arrestation in stasis* (the incorporeal, the third synthesis of

time)? My contention is that the latter actually opens onto a barely thinkable realm that may have unexplored potential. An attempt at exploring such potential is made throughout but especially in chapter 2 and all of part 3.

This book's final section, then, argues that Deleuze's notion of becoming is bound up with this second-order stasis of being (as opposed to Aquinas's first-order divine stasis). Aquinas writes in *Summa contra Gentiles* that "[God] is immobile, as we proved in Book I of this work. It therefore remains that creation is instantaneous. Thus, a thing simultaneously is being created and is created, even as a thing at the same moment is being illuminated and is illuminated."⁵¹ Or in the reply to an objection in the *Summa*, he writes: "In things which are made without movement, to become and to be already made are simultaneous."⁵² This brings us directly to *The Logic of Sense* and to Aquinas's once again remarkable proximity to the Deleuzian motif of Lewis Carroll's Alice, who is simultaneously becoming bigger and smaller. These are the opening lines of *The Logic of Sense*:

Alice and Through the Looking-Glass involve a category of very special things: events, pure events. When I say "Alice becomes larger," I mean that she becomes larger than she was. By the same token, however, she becomes smaller than she is now. Certainly, she is not bigger and smaller at the same time. She is larger now; she was smaller before. But it is at the same moment that one becomes larger than one was and smaller than one becomes. This is the simultaneity of a becoming whose characteristic is to elude the present.⁵³

This passage suggests that it is not only the third synthesis of time from *Difference and Repetition* that can be compared with the Thomist model but also the logic of being, becoming, and event from *The Logic of Sense*. Chapter 11 argues that Blanchot's fiction at once describes a temporality of the Aion, such as the one presented above using the example of Alice, and arrests that becoming so that it no longer eludes the present but resides squarely within it. In this fashion it returns becoming to being in reverse fashion from Aquinas's theological model. This is the space that Deleuze gestures to but does not quite arrive at, and this book's final section attempts to envision, alongside Blanchot and certain examples from American literature and landscape, several possibilities for thinking

such an arrival. To reiterate, I am not claiming that the parallels between Deleuze and Aquinas are perfect, or that Deleuze's model is theological through and through, but that the heuristic of such an unlikely comparison actually helps defend Deleuze against concerns that his too-close association with univocity, mysticism, vitalism, and the virtual opens his work to. Thus the theological model — the assertion of Deleuze's Scholasticism — helps to articulate more precisely the ontological import of Deleuze's project but also where his ontology departs from a theological domain. For if God is the terrain where these other forms of logic and temporality can be accessed, as is done in such extraordinary fashion in Scholastic thought, then Deleuze, contra Hallward, actually provides the structure for bringing this material down into this world, because he shows that in fact anything at all, especially something like a rock or a larval subject, may be just as capable, if not more so, of the same types of static — and even dynamic — geneses.

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