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Deleuze, The Dark Precursor

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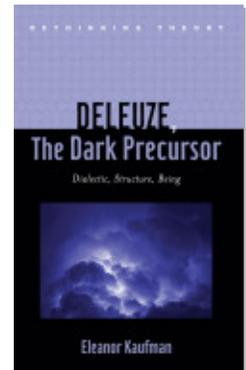
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Klossowski and Orthodoxy

IN A FASHION NOT UNLIKE what we have seen with the mind-body disjunction, Klossowski's oeuvre is also a preeminent illustration of what divides univocity and equivocality, and in this fashion serves as one of the twentieth century's most instructive models for thinking the complexity of the dialectic. As discussed in the introduction, univocity and equivocality are significant both in their roots in Scholastic philosophy, as the idea that being is expressed in either one or several senses, and as belonging to a long-standing framework that helps demarcate the differences, nuanced yet significant, among members of the extraordinary generation of French intellectuals of which Klossowski and Deleuze were a part. These terms, apart from their theological and philosophical import, serve as a heuristic for renarrating points of filiation and divergence between Bataille, Klossowski, and Deleuze, above all with respect to dialectical thought. They also bring us back to Sartre and forward to Badiou to frame the series. I approach this in segmented fashion, first opposing Bataille's dialectic of transgression to Klossowski's more univocal method of disjunctive synthesis before returning to Deleuze.

When juxtaposed with Deleuze's Spinozist affirmation of univocity, however, Klossowski would seem to be more on the side of the equivocal. Whereas Deleuze criticizes the realm between the univocal and the equivocal as the lukewarm space of the analogical, my contention is that this middle realm allows for a space of movement and reversal that escapes the pitfalls Deleuze locates in the dialectic, and it does so without a strict adherence to Spinozist univocity. Whereas Bataille and Deleuze remain closer to Klossowski in the tenor of their thought, I nonetheless suggest in conclusion that Sartre and Badiou are actually closer to Klossowski on a formal level, in that each poses a similarly analogical challenge to the thought of the dialectic.

For many reasons Bataille and Klossowski can be paired together. They

were contemporaries, both born around the turn of the twentieth century, both writing in a variety of literary and philosophical genres, including pornographic or semipornographic fiction, and working outside the academy. Both wrote studies of Nietzsche and Sade, and both developed radical economic treatises. They were friends and fellow members in the late 1930s of the College of Sociology, which was modeled after a secret society, the members taking great interest in such topics as sacrifice and headlessness. Bataille and Klossowski wrote about each other. Both were at different points obsessed with Roman Catholicism, both at different points prepared to enter monastic orders, both in different fashions fell away. As might easily be imagined, their fiction is an outrageous mixture of the sacred and the profane, including sexual encounters and other desecrations staged at church alters and the like. Both work in that realm where pornography and theology come together. Yet while the more familiar Bataille uses pornography toward transgressive aims, the lesser-known Klossowski uses a more nuanced and interesting mechanism of boredom to elaborate an intrinsically disjunctive structure.

Even boredom, for Bataille, partakes of the transgressive. In his novella *The Story of the Eye*, the narrator describes offhandedly how he and his companion Simone have just found their friend Marcelle's body. She has hung herself. The narrator and Simone take the body down and have sex for the first time next to it. Then the narrator describes the boredom that ensues even in the face of death:

We were perfectly calm, all three of us, and that was the most hopeless part of it. Any boredom in the world is linked, for me, to that moment and, above all, to an obstacle as ridiculous as death. But that won't prevent me from thinking back to that time with no revulsion and even with a sense of complicity. Basically, the lack of excitement made everything far more absurd, and thus Marcelle was closer to me dead than in her lifetime, inasmuch as absurd existence, so I imagine, has all the prerogatives.¹

This is actually an unusually meditative moment in Bataille's story of murder, priests, bullfights, and constant sex.² Here his narrator links boredom to death, and to a reflection on the absurd boundary between life and death. But by commenting on boredom in this specific situation, that of two young people discovering their friend's dead body, the text enacts anything but boredom. Whether one finds it shocking or humorous, the

disjunction between the situation and the understated commentary produces a strong effect of something jarring, of something that must be noticed, of something flagrantly perverse. I would categorize this type of jarring dynamic, where the commentary is an understatement of the event, as a transgressive disjunction: the two aspects—the event and its narration—do not go together.

Klossowski, on the other hand, employs another form of disjunction, one that Deleuze refers to as “the disjunctive synthesis.” In this form of disjunction, the two terms in question are not restrictive, exclusive, or at odds with each other—a sort of noncontradictory contradiction as it were. Such is the fashion in which Klossowski combines a pornographic narrative and a theological discourse in his trilogy *The Laws of Hospitality*. In the first volume, *Roberte Ce Soir*, the central character, Roberte (modeled very strikingly after Klossowski’s wife, Denise Marie Roberte Morin-Sinclair), is a staunch atheist and inspectress of censorship. She is agitating to have the works of her husband, Octave, banned. Octave, an aging professor of Scholastic philosophy, is an ardent Catholic and author of erotic fiction based on the works of the Marquis de Sade. When Roberte finds herself thinking about the pornographic writings in question, her thoughts materialize and accost her. Their aim is to replace the disjunction of impure thoughts and a pure body with the preferable disjunction of pure thoughts and an impure body. While accosting Roberte, a fantastical Hunchback gives the following speech (mixed with a description of his physical actions):

“Whether it is conceived in itself or not, there is no being rid of it, it returns constantly of its own accord, and if there is something that determines that existence be existence, in that something you have its essence.” (*Words which, coming from inside her skirt, Roberte only confusedly makes out, for to dodge the blow that landed on his neck, the Hunchback has burrowed his face between Roberte’s thighs and it is with his nose pressed to the Inspectress’ underpanties he continues*): “But from the moment it is this which allows or does not allow existence, which allows or does not allow naming, would one have the right to name it censorship as if there had always been censorship? For the fact one can no longer name it God can hardly be otherwise explained than by something in existence which henceforth forbids that it

be named God.” . . . Roberte strikes a second blow, which is deadened by her own skirt which she raises to discover him again: it is with a strange smile that the Hunchback gazes at her, her arm lifted high, fingers shining on the leather handle of the crop brandished above the rich braids of hair that frame a face gone scarlet, dilated nostrils fluttering from indignation, when, upon the point of striking a third time, Roberte feels her wrist seized.³

What we see in this passage is an oddly verbose and idiosyncratic description of Roberte’s attack by the Hunchback, itself interwoven with a convoluted speech that ranges from a brief discussion of existence and essence in Scholastic philosophy to the question of censorship and finally to the question of God’s existence. Arguing that both the thing censored and God must exist in order for their existence to be then so fervently denied, the Hunchback simultaneously speaks from underneath Roberte’s skirt. As with much of Klossowski’s fiction, characters refer to questions in Scholastic thought (here the disjunction between essence and existence, and the question of divine names, the latter being the rubric under which discussions of univocity, equivocity, and analogy are often presented) at the same time as they perform unusual erotic acts. While we see the disjunction between sex and philosophy as in Bataille, here it is not bound up with death so as to render it transgressive, but rather bound up with God so as to render it erudite, or even boring. In this case, boring is not so much the uninteresting as it is the smoothing over, the making uniform and non-shocking of an otherwise flagrant disjunction. Boring is here the marker of a constancy of form and content, of descriptive language and what it describes, though this does not mean, as is addressed in what follows, that the disjunct terms are collapsed or entirely integrated. Whereas for Bataille there is disjunction between the description and the thing described, Klossowski makes the pornographic of a piece with Scholastic philosophy, detailing both in a florid and arcane language that in its overbearing quality serves to undermine even further any distinction of pornographic content and philosophic form.

It is to describe this nontransgressive linking of pornography and theology that Deleuze, in “Klossowski or Bodies-Language,” coins the term “pornology,” in conjunction with an elaboration of the concept of “disjunctive synthesis.” I quote at length:

Theology is now the science of nonexistent entities, the manner in which these entities, divine or anti-divine, Christ or Antichrist, animate language and make for it this glorious body which is divided into disjunctions. Nietzsche's prediction about the link between God and grammar has been realized; but this time it is a recognized link, willed, acted out, mimed, "hesitated," developed in all the senses of disjunction, and placed in the service of the Antichrist, Dionysus crucified. If perversion is the force proper to the body, equivocity is that of theology; they are reflected in one another. If one is the pantomime par excellence, the other is reasoning par excellence. . . . It is this that accounts for the astonishing character of Klossowski's oeuvre: the unity of theology and pornography in this very particular sense. It must be called a superior pornology. It is his own way of going beyond metaphysics: mimetic argumentation and syllogistic pantomime, dilemma in the body and disjunction in the syllogism. The rapes of Roberte punctuate reasoning and alternatives; inversely, syllogism and dilemmas are reflected in the postures and the ambiguities of the body.⁴

There are two movements at work in Deleuze's presentation of Klossowski. The first and predominant one is the emphasis on disjunction, even dualism, that informs nearly every sentence in the passage above: Christ and Antichrist, God and grammar, equivocity and perversion, theology and pornography. Indeed, it is more nearly a series of dualisms, for if equivocity and later "the ambiguities of the body" fall each to its own side of the disjunction in question, they redouble this division by in turn serving as markers for an ongoing dualism. For example, Klossowski returns repeatedly to the question of the ambiguities of the body, to what he denotes as "solecism." This is a term that Klossowski links to Quintillian's *Institutio Oratoria* and glosses as follows: "[S]ome think there is solecism in gesture too, whenever by a nod of the head or a movement of the hand one utters the opposite of what the voice is saying."⁵ Thus, we might find a small gesture of beckoning that occurs alongside an otherwise hostile stance. In Klossowski's fiction, this gesture is always made with the hands, which are the primary erotic locus (as opposed to the genitalia in Bataille). Klossowskian perversion is the disjunction between the positioning of the hands and the stance of the rest of the body, often envisioned in the form of *tableaux vivants*, the subject of the next chapter. This is dramatized in his

description in *The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes* of the imaginary painter Tonnerre's *Belle Versaillaise*, where "with one of her sparkling hands, the palm pressed against this leech's face, she is still fending off but provoking his attempts to fasten on by giving him a foretaste of her satiny skin; meanwhile, leaning an elbow on the arm of the easy chair, she lets her right hand hang, idle."⁶ Thus, if solecism refers to the body working in two directions that oppose each other, then equivocity, insofar as it marks the seemingly more disembodied realm of reasoning, refers to the Scholastic debates about the question of "being" being said in one or more than one sense, as in the perceived split outlined in the introduction between Aquinas's model of analogy and Scotus's more univocal propensities. Like the solecism, equivocity signals that there is more than one thing going on, often exactly two things, even within a body — or a philosophical construct such as being — that might generally be counted as one. Deleuze clearly emphasizes this dualism in his reading of Klossowski and does so in a strikingly favorable fashion that would seem to align his thought quite seamlessly with Klossowski's.⁷

Yet Deleuze's own work, his proper thought, if it can be called that, simultaneously shuns the dualistic and the dialectic in favor of a more Spinozist notion of the One. This is the second movement barely discernible in the passage above, and one that I will elaborate in what follows. Despite Deleuze's impressive catalog of the disjunctions in Klossowski's work, his strongest pronouncement comes at the moment he departs from the list of dualisms in order to emphasize the underlying univocity: "It is this that accounts for the astonishing character of Klossowski's oeuvre: the unity of theology and pornography in this very particular sense. It must be called a superior pornology." What for Deleuze is astonishing in Klossowski is not the disjunctions per se but their particular unity, a unity marked by the neologism "pornology" and the laudatory term "superior." It is not difficult, then, to demarcate the differential between Bataille's transgressive disjunction, which remains on the side of the dialectic, and Deleuze's nondialectical disjunction, which favors univocity. What is more challenging is situating Klossowski's position, which falls in between; it is at once explicitly preoccupied with the set of Bataillean dualisms circulating around the discrepancy between the sacred and the profane, yet flattens them in a nonjarring, neutral fashion that gives them an ultimate unity and would seem quite proximate to Deleuzian univocity.

In the spirit of situating Klossowskian disjunction midway between that of Bataille and that of Deleuze, I turn to one of Deleuze's course lectures from 1973–74, which performs a similar overview and mapping of Scholastic philosophy, situating the analogical as the middle term between the equivocal and the univocal. Deleuze begins the seminar — part of a larger rubric focused on some of the material informing his capitalism and schizophrenia project with Guattari and thus not specifically on Scholasticism — with the injunction “I must pass by a kind of terminological detour.” He then goes on to devote the rest of the session to delineating the differences between the equivocal, the univocal, and the analogical, and I dwell at length on his mapping of Scholastic thought. Deleuze defines equivocity as follows:

Those who were called the partisans of equivocity, no matter who they were, argued a very simple thing: that the different senses of the word “being” were without common measure and that, in all rigor — and what is interesting in theology are always the limit points at which heresy peeks out. . . . Well then, the heretical point of equivocity is that those who said that being is said in several senses, and that these different senses have no common measure, understood that at the limit they would have preferred to say: “God is not,” rather than to say “He is” to the extent that “He is” was a utterance which was said of the table or the chair. Or else He is in such an equivocal manner, such a different manner, without common measure with the being of the chair, with the being of man, etc . . . that, all things considered, it's much better to say: He is not, which means: He is superior to being. But if they had a sense of wordplay this became very dangerous, it sufficed that they insist only a little on “God is not.” If they were discreet they said “God is superior to being,” but if they said “God is not,” that could turn out badly. Broadly speaking they were partisans of what is called the equivocity of being.⁸

On the one hand, this passage captures the jarring aspect in the examples from Bataille presented at the outset: in Bataille's fiction, the event and its narration are quite strikingly “without common measure”; to the contrary, in Klossowski's fiction the pornographic content and the philosophical discussion are, in true Sadean fashion, of the commonest measure. In this regard, Klossowski might seem at some remove from Deleuze's sense

of equivocity. On the other hand, if we turn to one of Klossowski's lesser-known and more impenetrable works, *La Monnaie vivante* (Living currency), this question of being without common measure turns out to be at the heart of the matter at hand.

Klossowski's essay-length book *La Monnaie vivante* is one in a series of works in the wake of May '68 that articulate a theory of libidinal economy through a synthesis of key Freudian and Marxian themes. In this work from 1970, which coincides with Lacan's seminar 17 *L'Envers de la psychanalyse* (*The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*) and anticipates Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* and Lyotard's *Libidinal Economy*, Klossowski postulates that industrial production is in no way distinct from the voluptuous pulsions of bodies.⁹ In presenting this claim, the details of which I will leave aside,¹⁰ Klossowski distinguishes between the phantasm and the simulacrum. While the simulacrum serves as an approximation or mode of equivalence in an exchange economy, the phantasm is that which is outside equivalence: "In order for there to be simulacra, there must be an irreversible ground, this reality being inseparable from the phantasm that dictates the reality of perverse behavior. Sade affirms that the phantasm acting in the organism and its reflexes remains ineradicable; Fourier contests this: the phantasm is reproducible inasmuch as it is a simulacrum."¹¹ The split that Klossowski situates between Sade and Fourier is precisely the fracture that lies at the heart of his own oeuvre. On the one hand, *La Monnaie vivante* falls more to the side of Sade in its affirmation that the phantasm is fundamentally outside a system of equivalences (and similarly, in the language of equivocity — which is not that of equivalence — the phantasm and the simulacrum are not said in the same sense). Yet, on the other hand, there is also the sense, following Fourier, in which the simulacrum is indistinguishable from the phantasm. This would amount to the idea, generally contested in Klossowski's version of libidinal economy, that, inasmuch as the simulacrum serves to express Platonic original form, and this simulacral quest for the original or the individual — which is also the hidden drive of the mercantile economy — is itself inseparable from that original, the counting as the thing cannot be demarcated from the thing. This later formulation, postulated but never entirely affirmed by Klossowski, would fall more squarely in the camp of the univocal than the equivocal.

Deleuze continues his seminar with a useful distinction between the univocity and the equivocity of being:

Then there were those who were partisans of the Univocity of being. They risked even more because what does this mean, univocity, in opposition to the equivocity of being? And all the treatises of the Middle Ages are filled with long chapters on the univocity or equivocity of being, it's very interesting. But those who said that being is univocal, supposing that they had done so and were not immediately burned, what did that mean? That meant: being has only one sense and is said in one and the same sense of everything of which it is said. Here one feels that if the equivocists already had such a possible sin in themselves, the univocists were thinkers who told us: of everything which is, being is said in one and the same sense — of a chair, of an animal, of a man or of God. Yet again, I'm simplifying everything because perhaps they didn't dare go that far, perhaps there's only a single thinker who would have gone that far, perhaps none, but in the end there is this idea.¹²

This single unnamed thinker might seem to be at a far remove from the theatricality of Klossowski's disjunctions, which maintain a manic energy of oscillation, especially in the fictional works, between the mind and the body, between the simple substances and the composite ones, and between the frenetic pornographic narrative and the endlessly arcane phrasings of the philosophical disquisition. Yet one might argue that Spinoza's excessive focus on the shortcomings of the prophets in *A Theologico-Political Treatise* has its own form of hilarious mania ("as I have said, the prophets were endowed with unusually vivid imaginations, and not with unusually perfect minds")¹³ and that, when all is said and done, there are many traces of a Spinozist univocity to be found in Klossowski's oeuvre. An example of the latter is Klossowski's *Baphomet*, where the "pure breaths" — one in the form of the spirit of Saint Teresa — "insufflate" the body of a dead boy page.¹⁴ Here, the breath, the boy, and Saint Teresa, in their almost absurd inseparability, serve as a marvelously literal illustration of the Spinozist notion of the mind as an idea of the body: the simple pure breath both encompasses and is delimited by what these (dead) bodies can do.

It is the aim of these brief examples to indicate the way in which Klossowski's oeuvre falls, once again, in the middle, at times on the side of

equivocity, at times more aligned with the univocal counterpart. But it is not my point thereby to suggest that Klossowski is hard to pin down or that his work collapses the distinction between that of Bataille and Deleuze or between the equivocal and the univocal. Klossowski's vacillation is unsettling (perhaps this is why his work is on the order of an acquired taste, or so often goes unread); indeed, it maintains unfalteringly the distinction between terms, even when it would seem to fall to one side or the other. It is in this maintaining of distinction that Klossowski's work bears an orthodoxy at odds with the touted slippage and multiplicity of the poststructuralist moment, even though "slippery" and "multiple" might seem to be terms that epitomize the Klossowskian terrain.

Deleuze's seminar on Scholastic philosophy groups such orthodoxy rather disparagingly under the Thomist banner of the analogical:

And then inevitably there are those who were between the two, between the univocists and the equivocists. Those who are between the two are always those who establish what we call orthodoxy. These people said that being is not univocal because it's scandal; to claim that being is said in one and the same sense of God and of the flea is a terrible thing, we must burn people like that; and then those who say "being is said in several senses which have no common measure," we no longer know where we are with them: there is no order anymore, there's no longer anything. Thus these third people said: being is neither equivocal nor univocal, it's analogical. Here we can say the name, the one who elaborated a theory of analogy on the basis of Aristotle, Saint Thomas, and historically he won. Being which is analogical meant: yes, being is said in several senses of that of which it is said. Only these senses are not without common measure: these senses are governed by relations of analogy.¹⁵

For Deleuze, the orthodox is akin to the damned position of the lukewarm, being neither hot nor cold, univocal nor equivocal, but trying to smooth things over by having it both ways. Such is clearly the tenor of Deleuze's pronouncements in this seminar, which echo and develop similar arguments in *Difference and Repetition*. But being in the middle, at least in a geographical if not a philosophical sense, is, as we will see, something Deleuze defends with great eloquence in "On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature" or, as we have seen, extols in his meditations with

Guattari on metallurgy (a practice suspended in an oddly utopian fashion between the sedentary and the nomadic) in *A Thousand Plateaus*.¹⁶ In this regard, it is not so much the middle position of the analogical — between the equivocal and the univocal — that is at issue as much as the way it aligns with a notion of category rather than concept.

Deleuze elaborates the distinction between categories and concepts with the example of the lion:

Why categories and not concepts? What difference is there between the concept of causality or quantity and the concept of lion? . . . [O]ne calls categories the concepts which are said of every possible object of experience. Lion is not a category because you cannot say “lion” of every possible object of experience. On the other hand, every possible object of experience has a cause and is itself cause of other things. There, that clarifies everything. The categories, thus defined, are strictly inseparable from an analogical conception; one calls categories the concepts which are said of every possible object of experience, or what amounts strictly to the same thing: the different senses of the word “being.” And the categories in Aristotle are presented as the different senses of the word “being,” exactly as in Kant the categories are defined as the concepts which are said of every possible object of experience. Therefore there’s no question of a thought proceeding by categories if it does not have, as background, the idea that being is analogical, which is to say that being is said of what is in an analogical manner.¹⁷

As opposed to concepts, categories are both too universal (said of every possible object of experience) and too differential (equivalent to being as it is said in several senses as opposed to the one sense of the Spinozist univocal, which Deleuze goes on to elaborate and champion). Lion, on the other hand, belongs to the realm of the concept in its singular specificity. It is striking, as an aside, that Barthes in “Myth Today” keeps returning to a phrase from his old Latin textbook that states, “[M]y name is lion,” and he highlights this phrase’s function of demonstrating grammatical exemplarity rather than portraying any individual lion or the singularity of lion-ness, giving Barthes’s lion an analogical aura that contrasts with Deleuze’s more conceptual lion.¹⁸

In any case, Deleuze’s problem with the analogical categories seems to be one of stasis. They are too fixed at both ends of the spectrum, in their

universality in the big picture and in their minute differences in the small one, so that each is ultimately an immobile reflection of the other; analogy is thus mired in a representational logic. Deleuze elaborates this attack on analogy in the concluding pages of *Difference and Repetition*:

In effect, the genus *in relation to its species* is univocal, while Being *in relation to the genera or categories themselves* is equivocal. The analogy of being implies both these two aspects at once: one by which being is distributed in determinable forms which necessarily distinguish and vary the sense; the other by which being so distributed is necessarily repartitioned among well-determined beings, each endowed with a unique sense. What is missed at the two extremities is the collective sense of being (*être*) and the play of individuating difference in being (*étant*).¹⁹

Once again, the analogical model is stuck in a static generality at the one end and a static specificity at the other, rather than a more uniform model of “individuating differences,” which is for Deleuze the breakthrough inaugurated with Duns Scotus and culminating in Spinoza: “This program is expounded and demonstrated with genius from the beginning of the *Ethics*: we are told that the attributes are irreducible to genera or categories because while they are formally distinct they all remain equal and ontologically one, and introduce no division into the substance which is said or expressed through them in a single and same sense.”²⁰ What this critique of analogy assumes rather contentiously is that analogy is itself static, that it can only speak or signify in a single and univocal fashion. In a footnote to his essay “The Soul of Reciprocity Part Two,” John Milbank counters Deleuze’s position against analogy on exactly these grounds, that Deleuze falsely accuses analogy of being univocal and thus partaking of the absolutizing synthesis of the (Hegelian) dialectic. Milbank cites Deleuze’s conclusion to *Difference and Repetition*: “Univocity signifies that being itself is univocal, while that of which it is said is equivocal; precisely the opposite of analogy.”²¹ Milbank retorts: “Of course, precisely not. Analogy speaks analogously of the analogical and so truly does escape dialectic. Whereas, if one says that the equivocal univocally is, then a dialectic after all ensues: being is also equivocal, differences are a veil for the same sameness.”²²

Insofar as Milbank can be categorized as a proponent of radical ortho-

doxy, and this orthodoxy translates into a model of “analogy speak[ing] analogously of the analogical,” I would like to propose that a similar structure is at the heart of Klossowski’s radical orthodoxy, which, while sharing many affinities with Deleuzian thought, differs specifically in its relation to the possibilities it affirms for the analogical above and beyond the univocal. Whether one labels this, with Milbank, an escape from dialectics or, with Deleuze, a superior dialectic (not unlike his characterization of Klossowski’s “superior pornology”), what is crucial is maintaining the possibility of “speak[ing] analogously.” This is dramatized in absolutely literal fashion by the speech of the simple substances, cited above, that attack Roberte. They might be said to be fighting against the Deleuzian assertion that “[u]nivocity signifies that being itself is univocal, while that of which it is said is equivocal” (that is, the person is univocal, while its thoughts and gestures are equivocal) by asserting that being is equivocal (the difference between simple and composite substances), while that of which it is said is univocal (these substances can materialize or change shape into their opposite but remain one substance). In short, where one would think there is one thing (one person, one form of speaking), there are in fact two, and where one would think there are two (bodies and language, that of which being is said), their boundary is dissolved and they are shown to have the potential of metamorphosis into one.

I would contend, following Milbank, that Klossowski is not dialectical in the fashion of Bataille. But neither does he smooth over Bataillean transgression with a simple univocity; rather, he explores a mobile and chiasmic mode of analogy. Instead of the transgressive per se, in Klossowski there is always a movement of reversal at stake, where the oscillating form this reversal takes surpasses the perversion of the content. The Hunchback and Guardsman do not rape Roberte in *Roberte Ce Soir* for the transgressive potential of the act alone or with the exclusive aim of proving a philosophical point. Rather they attack her to demonstrate that she entertains a disjunction between, on the one hand, her actions on the censorship committee and, on the other, her personal fantasies, and that this disjunction is disingenuous because it affirms a unity where there is in reality a duality. But the matter does not end here at the equivocal. Instead, at issue is the fact that simple substances like the pure breaths that materialize to accost Roberte are generally disallowed such materialization, such duality, and therefore are incapable of the equivocity that

Roberte glibly passes off as univocity. In thus approximating the equivocal by materializing (the simulacrum of the phantasm), by representing the equivocal, as it were, the pure breaths initiate a movement of reversal that serves to display the hidden bifurcation of Roberte's seemingly unified actions. By mimetically reproducing a simulacrum of the equivocal, they expose the way that Roberte has all along — even before she met her husband, Octave, as we see in the “Roman Impressions” section of *The Revocation* — been miming or simulating the univocal (illustrating Milbank's assertion that “if one says that the equivocal univocally is, then a dialectic after all ensues”). The pure breaths, though they are mute, speak analogously of this simulation and thereby upend any straightforward dialectic that this series of reversals would seem to entail. In a similar fashion, the excessive play of identities between Vittorio and Binsnicht that is dramatized in *The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes* (or between K. and Théodore in *Le Souffleur*, the third book of the *Laws of Hospitality* trilogy) is not so much about locating either a dual or a singular identity as it is about the dizzying oscillation itself. In this regard, Klossowskian analogy privileges movement, even when it is movement immobilized in the *tableau vivant*, or in the photograph in *Roberte Ce Soir* in which Vittorio manages to capture the burning Roberte. Despite their differing assessments of the analogical, Klossowski and Deleuze are joined in their similar attitudes toward movement, something that will be challenged, as we shall see in part 3, in the fiction of Blanchot.

Although Bataille and Deleuze certainly share with Klossowski the same constellation of philosophical and aesthetic concerns, the mobile model of analogy outlined above is one that Klossowski arguably shares with two unlikely bedfellows, Sartre and Badiou. Though Sartre might be seen as an unfailing apologist for existentialist humanism and Badiou as a relentless proponent of what he terms the fidelity to a process of truth, and each in his fashion as expounding a model for political action — and none of these things bearing a resemblance to anything recognizably Klossowskian — it is my contention that the three thinkers nonetheless overlap in their insistence on a mode of dualism that both employs and challenges a model of dialectics aimed at synthesis.

As we have seen, Sartre envisions a two-tiered realm composed of a phantasm-like inert term (the in-itself in *Being and Nothingness*, the

practico-inert in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*) and the privileged active term that reflects the mutual embeddedness (even a sort of synthesis) of both terms (the for-itself, praxis). Insofar as the active term serves as an animating catalyst for the inert term — the way a group of people united only because they are waiting for the same bus (the practico-inert, Sartre's classic model of seriality in the *Critique*) might be transformed into something like a bus riders' union — it might seem that the two blend into one and the same thing, like the simulacrum collapsed into the phantasm. This is one of many ways in which Sartre's dualistic system would seem to aspire to a reconciliation or synthesis of its opposing terms, a utopian univocity not dissimilar to Deleuze or Spinoza. Yet, as in Klossowski's *La Monnaie vivante*, this synthesis is evoked but not properly achieved. For Sartre is ever at pains to keep his terms separate, not so much in the spirit of a multiplicity or equivocity, but rather in the inimitable fashion of carefully opposed terms that nonetheless undergo strange reversals, so that the lesser and more static term becomes suddenly animated (the stone that, seemingly out of the blue, is equated with a god).²³ Though the content of Sartre's and Klossowski's fiction and philosophy could not be more dissimilar, there exists a proximity of method — a sort of antidialectical yet mobile form of analogy — that has never to my knowledge been remarked upon. If Bataille, Klossowski, and Deleuze might all be characterized, and not unfaithfully, as reacting against Sartre, it seems somehow fitting that Klossowski's mode of reaction takes the form of a solecism: an overt nonengagement akin to rejection coupled with a shy if not perverse nod in the form of a shared method.

In a similar vein, Badiou has no obvious affinities with Klossowski and never engages with him explicitly. Indeed his recuperation of questions of truth and universalism are at a far remove from Klossowski's Nietzscheanism (though both share a heterodox fascination for Christianity, Badiou in his celebration of the Apostle Paul, a Judeo-Christian Baphomet if ever there was one). Yet if the force of Klossowski's disjunctions — his superior pornography — resides in the juxtaposition of the corporeal and the theological, or of bodies and languages, Badiou's unavowed and therefore perhaps even more perverse disjunction is within the world of number and numbers.²⁴ Given his explicit interest in mathematics and set theory, it is fitting that numbers take on the status of conceptual personae in Badiou's work, being not unlike the pure breaths or simple substances of Klossowski's fic-

tion. Put in Klossowskian terms, Badiou's oeuvre might be considered an elaborate choreography between the phantasmatic purity of the One and the dialectical materialism of the Two. Badiou writes in *The Century* that "the century is a figure of non-dialectical juxtaposition of the Two and the One. Is it a desire for division, for war, or is it instead a desire for fusion, for unity, for peace?"²⁵ His study of the concept of a century, itself a phantasmatic unit, hinges on readings of a series of authors that are marked by a vacillation between a dualism and a univocity (Balzac, Freud, Saint-John Perse, Celan, and Mao are just a few of the figures treated according to this rubric).

Badiou draws directly on Deleuze's notion of disjunctive synthesis yet, like Klossowski, is somewhat at odds with Deleuze's impetus toward the purely univocal. This comes out most forcefully in Badiou's pointed critique of Deleuzian univocity in his *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*. Badiou states his differences with Deleuze around what he perceives as a noncoincidence of the multiple and the One in Deleuze's thought. Whereas Badiou affirms the category of the multiple, he is suspicious that the purported univocity of the One is actually a two in disguise. As Badiou queries in a fashion entirely parallel to Milbank's defense of analogy outlined above, "Is the nomination of the univocal itself univocal?," and he goes on to gloss why the very assertion of univocity makes visible the fact that univocity also tries to encompass something apart from its nomination.²⁶ Thus there is a differential between the thing and its nomination (the phantasm and its simulacrum, or as Deleuze puts it in *The Logic of Sense*, the name of the thing and what the name of the thing is called.²⁷ Badiou maintains that

what emerges over the course of these experiments is that a single name is never sufficient, but that two are required. Why? The reason is that Being needs to be said in a single sense both from the viewpoint of the unity of its power and from the viewpoint of the multiplicity of the divergent simulacra that this power actualizes in itself. Ontologically, a real distinction is no more involved here than, in Spinoza, between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. Yet, a binary distribution of names is necessary; it is as though the univocity of being is thereby accentuated for thought through its being said, at one moment, in its immediate "matter," and, in the next, in its forms or actualizations. In short: in order to say that there is a single sense, two names are necessary.²⁸

Although Deleuze compellingly argues, especially in his work on Spinoza, that univocity is expressed as equivocity — with the caveat that the apparent equivocity is really just a function of the multiplicity of expression but does not contradict the notion of a single underlying substance, of being ultimately having just one sense — Badiou sees this “*double movement*” as falling outside a pure and simple univocity.²⁹

The attempt to name this errant movement, to pinpoint that thing that escapes from the One, but without which the One wouldn't be one, is remarkably close to the Klossowskian suspension between univocity and equivocity that is at issue here. If Badiou's unabashed espousal of truth grants him a form of orthodoxy, then his animation of numbers into characters that circulate like the pure breaths combines with this orthodoxy to confer on him a reactionary radicalism that is, at least in this respect, worthy of Klossowski's Octave.³⁰