

DRAFT VERSION***The Politics of Critique: Refractions of Difference in Deleuze and Adorno***

"The foundation can never resemble what it founds. It does not suffice to say of the foundation that it is another matter -- it is also another geography, without being another world"

- Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*¹

"The task of aesthetics is not to comprehend artworks as hermeneutical objects: in the contemporary situation, it is their incomprehensibility that needs to be comprehended."

- Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*²

What is called Critique?: The Philosophy of Difference and Social Ontology

What is the meaning of Critique today? In the time since the 1970 posthumous publication of Theodor Adorno's masterwork, *Aesthetic Theory*, the meaning of *Critique*, once synonymous with the method of *immanent critique*, has been subjected to a formidable challenge by the philosophy of difference. Already, in 1968, Gilles Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* remonstrated against any conception of critique immanent to the social while at the same time it appropriated to the philosophy of difference the honorific 'critique'.³ Deleuze writes, "*The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself.*"⁴ One finds a similar orientation toward the 'old' critical tradition in Rancière, who argues that "their current usage witnesses a complete reversal of their orientation and supposed ends. We must therefore take account of the persistence of a model of interpretation and the inversion of its sense, if we wish to engage in a genuine *critique of critique*."⁵ Not content with their apparent supersession of critical theory, these challenges exacerbate the latter's indignity by revealing the logic of its aims of "emancipation" to have themselves been a contribution to an anti-political current. Throughout his entire oeuvre one can read Deleuze's thought as seeking to demonstrate the necessity of shifting the locus of critique from an analysis immanent to social and ideological structures (what I will call *social ontology*), from the social labour of the concept, to an ontological conception of immanence that goes beyond any empirical or conditioned basis and establishes itself upon an non-transcendent unconditioned difference-in-itself (what I will call the *philosophy of difference*). Situated alongside other post-foundationalist challenges to earlier projects of 'critical' social emancipation or political action, such as Rancière's repudiation of Althusser⁶, or Jean-Luc Nancy's expostulation of Arendt⁷, we are invited to countenance the

narrative that the move towards a more sustained, unconditioned thought of difference, and the attendant extirpation of all that was merely empirical or conditioned in the foundation of a critical position, is concomitant with the sharpening of critical thought. We would be remiss to ignore these challenges or to fall prey to the nostalgia of hoping to returning to our earlier, more grounded critical theory⁸. At the same time, however, there are rumblings, even from within post-foundationalist thought⁹, against the move to draw an *equivalence of structure* between the *event of the ontological genesis of difference* and the critical account of politics, or the *political event*, in short, to treat the division between becoming and history as the very stakes of the political. In anchoring the source of revolutionary power upon a univocal ontology of becoming, Deleuze's politics come under criticism for their inability, resistance or refusal to account for political antagonisms at the level of the social or symbolic¹⁰. Though in a different key, the Adornonian rejoinder to the philosophy of difference¹¹ too points to the problematic diremption (read non-mediated relation) introduced between history and difference, which would reduce any politics of difference to an empty and obscure formalism indifferent to, and unreflexive of its own necessarily historical conditions of production. As Nick Nesbitt argues:

With no mediation constructed between singularity and the univocity of being (i.e. a social world), the world in which individuals are (internally differentiated, non-relational) singularities reverts in its absolutism into a logic of absolute identity. In contrast to Adorno, who maintained that there is no freedom for the individual in a context of unfreedom, Deleuzian ethics locates freedom in the putatively efficient internal cause: the individual's goal remains self-centered and culinary ('to discover, to invent new possibilities of life').¹²

For any Deleuzian these criticisms cannot help but startle for their almost pathological resistance to read, and take seriously¹³, Deleuze on his own terms. In this situation, where one side insists on a logic of difference that the other side takes, as a presupposition, of what is to be overcome, any possibility of mutual understanding or integration of perspectives is forgone – yet this is precisely what I will argue the thinking of critique requires today. It is imperative that we find the means, without assenting to these critiques of Deleuze, to nonetheless register, in some way, the persistent thought they bear: that something integral to politics extends beyond or escapes his univocal philosophy of difference. *I will argue that between Adorno's critical theory, on the one hand, and the 'critique of critique', on the other, consists a relation of pure mutual incompatibility which precludes any straightforward mediation between the two perspectives.* That one side misreads or reduces the thought of the other must not then be interpreted as

hermeneutical error, but rather can only be conceived as a *necessary* distortion or displacement. Rather than simply choosing one side and discarding the other, or oscillating endlessly between the two mutually incompatible planes of thought, the task of this paper is to conceptualize the nature of the displacement between social ontology and the philosophy of difference, and how this might impact an account of politics. The challenge in thinking this displacement is to avoid any straightforward synthesis that would compromise the singularity of either side. As Nietzsche writes in the *Gay Science*, "He who wants to mediate between two resolute thinkers shows that he is mediocre: he has no eye for what is unique; seeing things as similar and making things the same is the sign of weak eyes."¹⁴ This method of analysis, therefore, will attempt to *interleave*¹⁵ the thought of Deleuze and Adorno without softening the contours that give their respective thinking its incisive, jarring quality. This operation, therefore, cannot be understood to be one of combination, but more like placing two artworks alongside one another in which "each one aims uncompromisingly to express the whole of beauty, claims in its singularity, and can never admit its dispersal without annulling itself."¹⁶ The effects we seek to understand, then, will not consist of comparison, but the effects that arise *between* the two: the pity and suffering of Soutine's rotting meat placed alongside the rhythm and affirmation of Bacon's carcasses.¹⁷

So what is the kernel of thought that I hope to preserve on both sides? On the one hand, I aver the core thesis of Deleuze and Rancière's 'critique of critique': social ontology necessarily fails to provide a compelling account of political transformation. This is because the theoretical commitments presupposed by critique in its task of documenting the social mechanisms of domination (namely, the universality of untruth) simultaneously renders it blind to the thought of difference (what Deleuze calls the 'Outside') that would be necessary for their overturning. *What I take from Deleuze, then, is that the force of political transformation necessarily relies on the power of the internal difference subtending all external, representative, or social processes of 'domination'*. Note that I merely derive the 'force' of politics from Deleuzian difference – the thought of which I will argue is a necessary but insufficient component of a critical politics. In drawing on Deleuze, therefore, my critical synthesis must not give way on his essential idea that, in contrast to the negative, "pluralism is a more enticing and dangerous thought: fragmentation implies overturning. The discovery in any domain of a plurality of coexisting oppositions is inseparable from a more profound discovery, that of difference, which *denounces the negative and opposition itself as no more than appearances* in relation to the problematic field of a

positive multiplicity."¹⁸ Where I differ from Deleuze is in gauging the power of these 'appearances' as an obstacle to the effectuation of the political event, in short, that the Deleuzian philosophy of difference necessarily underestimates the political (rather than ontological) significance of what he calls the bare or material "repetition of the Same" ('negative appearances').¹⁹ Consequently, we can, indeed we are obliged, to return to Adorno's social ontology, not for an account of politics, but as an occasion to *rethink* the meaning of its most essential thought: that modern society has a negative 'virtuality' or dynamism of its own in its power to subordinate and organize complex systems according to the *nomos* of instrumental rationality and identity-thinking (a concept that perhaps now demands a more social nuanced articulation, as for example Bourdieu's conception of social 'fields' has done, which differentiates the logic of rationalization according to the relational and historical specificity of a field's place in social space²⁰). The attempt to open up a ground for a Utopian 'otherwise' from amidst such a state of affairs necessarily appears impossible. Only from the perspective of the social, what was for Deleuze mere 'appearances,' is it possible to comprehend the specific inflections of social experience effectuated by the gravitational pull of the 'wrong state of things.' *What I take from Adorno, then, is the gravity or suffering of the social experience of modern society; the dynamism of negativity in the form of modern social Systems; and the exigency of critique to, from a position immanent to despondency of these conditions, offer a fragment of hope (Utopia).*

In order to effectuate the synthesis or interleaving of these two aspects of critique without recourse to any direct mediation between them, this paper undertakes a methodology akin to Kantian critique – a critique of the political ontology of difference. This methodology, of course, cannot hope to pursue the idea of critique that solves a theoretical antinomy between two positions through the discovery of a third dimension that in fact turns out to be the conditioning ground of both (as Kant did to empiricism and rationalism with the discovery of the *synthetic a priori*), as the very idea of 'conditioning' itself has been subjected to critique by neo-Kantians important to both Deleuze (Maimon) and Adorno (Hegel). As Deleuze perspicuously notes of Kant, the significance of his Copernican revolution consisted in "replacing essence with sense," in that the move to make the finite self the transcendental ground of analysis was made possible by the discovery of an internal logic of sense (the 'fracture' between the transcendental and empirical sides of the subject, and the unification of the latter according to the 'empty' time of

former) which upset the previously dominant approach of substance philosophy whose concern was with the extrinsic essence-accident relation.²¹ The relation between Adorno and Deleuze must, therefore, be conceived as an *internal relation*. The problem confronting this synthesis is not unlike Kant's third antinomy in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, in which not only are both sides mutually incompatible (the phenomenal principle of cause-cause relations and the noumenal principle of an originary cause), but they are also simultaneously *necessary*. In this sense, my argument will begin from the position that despite the heterogeneity and seemingly mutual incompatibility between a philosophy of difference and social ontology, that a critical political ontology requires both, and moreover, they must apply simultaneously and to the same processes. Our question, then, is to conceive how this is possible. Unlike Kant, we will not allow ourselves recourse to the architectonic division between a theoretical and practical realm to solve our problem, but will be forced to forge ahead on the basis of something quite meagre: *that there is a logic to the refraction of difference across these irreducibly heterogeneous geographies (ontology of difference and social ontology – which are also heterogeneous temporalities) that is itself precisely the point of (non)encounter between them*. Between the geography of the folds and implexions of unconditioned difference on the way to their exhaustion in actualization and the social history of these actualizations which have instantiated the domination of non-identity Adorno refers to as 'universal untruth,' is a pure heterogeneity that cannot be grasped from either side. Neither the heterogeneity that Deleuze sees between the virtual-actual, nor the difference Adorno finds between the rationalization of the *ratio* and the non-communicative expression of non-identity is sufficient to think this pure heterogeneity or refraction of difference.

In my conclusion I will show that the political event takes place *between* these two logics, when they become jammed, and fail to maintain their heterogeneous, yet parallel relation. I will argue that Rancière's conception of dissensus articulates the political logic in which the parallelism is short-circuited, by showing how his aesthetic conception of the 'distribution of the sensible' is able to resist these twin ontological lures precisely by carving out *an impossible space between them*.

The Refraction of Difference: Radicalizing Parallelism

The first temptation to be avoided is to criticize either Adorno or Deleuze for not adequately apprehending the logic of the other side. It is precisely their fidelity to their method – that Deleuze goes as far as possible in his *affirmation* of difference in itself, and likewise Adorno goes to the limit in conceptualizing the *suffering* condition of late modernity for which his dialectics have been conceived as the "ontology of the wrong state of things"²² – that is the condition of their being able to draw out the full range of implications of their discoveries. Echoing Heidegger, we might claim that the respective *transcendental moods* of affirmation and suffering are essential to grasping the full force of their thought. The challenge of a critique of political ontology of difference will be to bring the philosophy of difference to an encounter with concrete social critique *without giving way on the fundamental idea of either side*.

The imperative that compels us to think how Deleuze's and Adorno's critical thought could apply simultaneously precludes us from conceiving them as strict alternatives and necessitates the thought of their *parallelism*. Deleuze's univocal philosophy already advances an account of parallelism, which he establishes in the thinking of the immanent, yet heterogeneous relation between the virtual and the actual. In *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, Deleuze gives his most sustained account of parallelism (a term deriving from Leibniz²³), in which the explicit problem is to bring together two seemingly opposed principles: a non-transcendent, immanent relation between corporeal causes (*Natura Naturata*) incorporeal effects (*Natura Naturans*), and on the other hand, to prevent this from collapsing into a relation of identity or correspondence by maintaining the irreducibility of the unconditioned or transcendental role of incorporeal causes (or 'effects') from efficient material causality. The stakes of Deleuze's transcendental empiricism are to avoid any thought of (idealist) transcendence without returning to a vulgar empiricism, such as found in the compatibalism ("liberty and necessity are consistent"²⁴) of Hobbes, where, for example, corporeal matter is made to constitute the exhaustive account of reality. He does so by introducing heterogeneity into the heart of his account of immanence (or "noncausal correspondence"), so that between corporeal causes and incorporeal effects, there is at once a complete and irreducible heterogeneity as well as total correspondence. Within the *intensive* problematic field of the virtual arise 'singularities,' which through the process of individuation organize the field of differential relations in a process that contracts and narrows until resolved in the actualization of an extensive body or determinate signification. In such a way Deleuze's method of serialization (connection, convergence,

disjunction) can be understood as a radicalization of dialectics transposed onto the infinite mobility of the virtual (at the same time as it criticizes dialectics as a practice rooted on (non)identity): not contra-diction but "vice-diction". Consequently, he insists on the fundamental distinction between the *expression* (sense) and the expressed (signification).²⁵ As Deleuze writes, "One may indeed call 'parallel' two things or two series of things which bear to each other a constant relation, such that there is nothing in one which corresponds to nothing in the other, while all real causality between them is excluded."²⁶ Likewise, in *The Logic of Sense* Deleuze presents parallelism through Stoic philosophy's thought of the heterogeneous relation between 'cause' and 'effect,' whereby a causes only relates to other causes (corresponding to the Deleuzian actual), and effects to other effects (corresponding to the Deleuzian virtual), though the latter are 'expressed' in causes as their 'excess' or 'quasi-cause' rather than as their efficient material cause.²⁷

In this sense, Deleuzian parallelism is itself a direct response to Kant's Third antinomy – precisely the same problem we are now claiming holds between Adorno and Deleuze – which asked how the “causality of appearances” (nature), which presupposes a temporal chain in which every effect has a prior cause, is *simultaneously reconcilable* with the *causality* of freedom, of “beginning a state from itself”?²⁸ Deleuze, Adorno and Kant all converge around the question of how to think the space of freedom (as an originary, irreducible cause) in its simultaneously and necessarily interconnected relation with the structures of the phenomenal or corporeal world. It is on this point that Deleuze and Adorno are ramified along opposed trajectories from their mutual starting point in Kant. Deleuze, whose strategy here bears a faint affinity to Heidegger's reading of Kant²⁹ – the same Heidegger who was ruthlessly criticized, if not misinterpreted by Adorno in the *Jargon of Authenticity* – draws on a diverse philosophical cast in arguing for his conception of *transcendental empiricism*, most notably Stoic philosophy (particular Epictetus) and Kant's contemporary, Solomon Maimon. Maimon criticized Kantian schematism for failing to provide a satisfactory answer to how the heterogeneous relation between the categories and sensibility is to be overcome in synthesis. In particular, he found fault with Kant's choice to locate the transcendental unity of apperception in the static a priori categories, which are supposed to exercise a power of determination over the sensible representations of the imagination, which are, by definition, beyond its power. Maimon's problematizing of Kant in

this way prefigures the central task of Deleuze's thought: to give to transcendentalism an aesthetic power of comprehension.

Deleuze admires Kant for his discovery of the third transcendental dimension, which overcomes substance philosophy's extrinsic essence-accident orientation and institutes a new program for philosophy: thinking those structures (forms of the determinable: space-time and the categories) that are both internal, and yet most remote or unthinkable in themselves. However, he derides Kant for having compromised his transcendental "discovery of difference" by founding these internal and remote forms upon the vulgarly empirical 'common sense' presupposition of the unity of the subject (Kant's 'transcendental unity of apperception'). By doing so, Kant's thought elevates the most unthinking empirical presupposition to the status of a transcendental ground. The consequence is that the very originality of Kant's thought is coterminous with constriction and delineation³⁰. The very formulation of the "conditions of possibility," signals an inability to go beyond the thought of conditioning. Deleuze's transcendental empiricism seeks, like Kant, to account for those internal and remote structures that constitute the forms of *real* (not merely possible) determinability, and to do so without drawing on the given or presupposed. These forms of determinability which constitute the transcendental ground must be both immanent, yet *unconditioned* with respect to what they ground. In order to satisfy this paradoxical set of imperative, the ground is, for Deleuze, inseparable from the operation of a "universal ungrounding" (*effondement*); a zone of self-differing 'problems' whose current of "nonorganic vitality" propels the genesis that is made to appear only in its resolution. In such a way Deleuze uproots Critique's longstanding domicile within the 'given', and so throws into question the very basis for an ontology of the 'wrong state of things.'

Conversely, Adorno will too be influenced by that other important neo-Kantian who was also known for his attempt to salvage the structure of Kant's transcendental thought by rethinking his static apriorism: Hegel. If Deleuze's procedure is to reconceive Kant's transcendental *conditions of possibility* as the transcendental *unconditioned genesis of the real* by repudiating what remains presupposed, 'given' or merely empirical within such a foundation, then Adorno's procedure runs in the exact opposite direction. Rather than repudiating the givenness or empiricism of the *conditioning* function of the transcendental, Adorno, following Hegel, radicalizes it by throwing Kant's notion of possibility into doubt. As Hegel shows in the

Phenomenology of Spirit in the transition from Reason to Spirit, the emptiness of the Kantian diremption between freedom and phenomenal reality (which Hegel conceives of as the mere contingency of 'law testing') is revealed in the abstract formalism with which it insists that practical reason's possibilities be carried out. Unlike with Deleuze, for Hegel it is the a priori itself (the categories for theoretical reason, the form of the law for practical reason, and the abstract structure of the *sensus communis* for taste) that is most problematically 'given.' This is overcome only by reconciling freedom the necessity and concrete, that is to say, with the 'given' or a posteriori (the precise opposite of the Deleuzian unconditioned).³¹ For Hegel and for Adorno, Kant's thought of freedom lacks what is most vital – it lacks the 'it is.' In this way, Adorno follows Hegel's historicization and concretization of the structures that composed Kant's thought of the transcendental conditions of possibility, as well as the overcoming of their internal splitting between theoretical and practical domains. At the same time, as will be seen below, Adorno also turns Hegel against himself (or, one might argue, Kant against Hegel), by thinking the insuperable persistence of mediation (and hence non-completeness between the whole and its part) that characterizes the dialectical method against Hegel's pretension to the whole or Absolute. Adorno's and Horkheimer's *Dialectical of Enlightenment* can thus be read as enacting the same genealogy of reason upon Hegel, that Hegel had done to Kant (under the heading of the 'causality of fate'). If the rationalization of modernity is the manifestation or completion of the subjective side of Hegel's thought of the rational Concept, then the aim of Negative Dialectics is to enact an 'axial turn' in experience towards the object, which Hegel (as *the* thinker of the concrete) ought to have done, but failed to. The thought of Deleuze and Adorno ramifies from the same problem, posed by Kant in his third antinomy, which accounts for the strangeness of their relation: at once uncanny in the aspect of their mutual commitment to think the non-conceptual, yet diametrically opposed in their method of doing so. *My intervention is to re-think the relevance of social ontology to the philosophy of difference not through any straightforward synthesis* (which I claim is impossible without imparting a reductive reading on one side) *but by adsorbing the former to the side of the actual or of the 'causes' of Deleuze's parallelist philosophy while radicalizing the heterogeneity of the relation between virtual-actual or cause-effect through the development of the concept of the refraction of difference.* The method of my critique of the political ontology of difference is to radicalize the estrangement of Deleuzian parallelism, here nicely summarized by Boudans: “The real suffers from a limitation: it cannot be

without the possible. The virtual suffers from an incompleteness: it seeks its completeness in its actualization."³²

If the logic of refraction goes beyond the heterogeneity of the virtual-actual, it does bear some affinity to the relation Deleuze describes as holding between philosophy and science, which despite being two sides of a single ontological coin, nevertheless maintain their own irreducible relation to chaos (extraction and reference), :

The two lines are therefore inseparable but independent, each complete in itself: it is like the envelope of two very different planes. *Philosophy can speak of science only by allusion, and science can speak of philosophy only as of a cloud.*³³

Adorno's social ontology, while certainly not a science, bears an affinity to it in the account above in the respect that the relation to difference is filtered through the logic of its own *native medium*: what Deleuze here calls the plane of reference (which corresponds to the 'givenness' of Adorno's account of society). The implication is not that such forms are irremediably cut off from one another. Rather, more like the difference of a light's wave-particle duality, their logic's are refracted differently depending on the logic of the medium from which they are thought: *the plane of social critique can grasp the dynamism of representative relationality, but at the price of reducing (ontological) difference to a moving structure of indeterminate unity, while the philosophical plane can give a genetic account of difference at the price of covering over the political effects redounding from the dynamism specific to the 'repetition of the Same'.*

What Deleuze has failed to consider is that it is not only difference that is differentially refracted across this divide, but the Same as well. Consider briefly the paradox at the core of their opposed logics of expression. They both propose that expression centers on a fundamental paradox: that inhering in the expressed (representation) is an irreducible expression (sense) whose existence consists of an intensive potentiality and is thereby cancelled with each attempt to identify it. They diverge, however, in their respective explanations of this logic: Deleuze gives a positive and determinate account of the 'sense' that eludes correspondence to the very representation that it is nevertheless immanent to: "what is expressed is sense: deeper than the relation of causality, deeper than the relation to representation."³⁴ Contra Descartes, the virtual ideas of Deleuzian sense are distinct and obscure. By obscure, Deleuze means non-actual; by distinct he means that the a difference that is not at all fuzzy, ambiguous, or indeterminate (as with dialectics), but is itself a precise and determinate system of differential relations. While

Deleuze conceives of the virtual by drawing on topographical language, it would be a mistake to interpret this type of difference as consisting in the variable, and mutually-determining relations between points in a determinate structure. Rather, the very elements of the virtual system are themselves intensive differences—resonances, intensities, rhythms – not points or substances, consequently their method of mutual interaction ("reciprocal determination") is not causal, but proceeds itself through difference. If the Deleuzian virtual can be conceived as relational, it would be a type of *absolute* (rather than relative) relationality, in which a "finite number of heterogeneous components are traversed by a point of absolute survey at an infinite speed."³⁵ Hence the Deleuzian 'serial method', which rejects the relations of contradiction or opposition as negative forms of difference that presuppose the more powerful subterranean logic of serial connections, complex convergences, and finally, the disjunctive synthesis (eternal return of difference or the 'dark precursor'). The stakes of philosophy, as well as politics, will consist in the extraction of this imperceptible sense from its representative husk, precisely because, for Deleuze, it is the power of the former that gives rise to the very existence of the latter. And so philosophy's task is to think this unthought internal to thought, and likewise for politics, to extract the internal power of becoming (counteractualize) because "it is only by becoming (becoming-stone, becoming-animal, or becoming-women) that the combatants can lash out 'against' his enemy."³⁶

Adorno's philosophy remains with the native realm of social ontology, and consequently he approaches the paradox of expression through the lens of the lack (of difference) at the core of identity thinking or communication. The dialectical method of mediation, which conceives even the concept of immediacy as always-already mediated (see Hegel's account of sense-certainty in the *Phenomenology*; and on the other hand, there is just as much an 'immediacy' to mediation itself), is set in motion by the extrinsic (representative) relation it presupposes between an object and its sense. The problem of expression is thereby set into perpetual motion, as each attempt to capture the expression of an object simultaneously displaces this expression by necessarily supplementing it, and so displacing it, in the very act of its presentation. "The substance of Hegel's philosophy is process, and it wants to express itself as process, in permanent *status nascendi*,"³⁷ an aim that is inhibited by its very pursuit. In this way, through the aporia of expression and communication, Adorno, following Hegel, also offers a critique of Descartes call for the "clear and distinct." The challenge, which will require both the resources of philosophy

and art for Adorno, is to communicate the particularity that is elided by the very universality of communicative language, by attaining a non-appropriative "mimetic" relation to the parts (a relation whereby they retain their singularity as 'parts' without being subsumed under the identitarian logic of the universal concept (art), yet is capable of being intelligibly expressed (philosophy)). Adorno's genealogy of reason demonstrates that, far from continually opening up new spaces of resistance, the systems function or *processual* nature of society, whose organizing nomos (rationalization) inflects even the most recalcitrant social dynamics (art), has led to the progressive diminution of the capacity to express non-identity, so that even "suffering [non-identity] remains foreign to knowledge."³⁸ However, because we have already relieved Adorno's social critique from the burden of providing a positive account of politics we are able to re-interpret the political pertinence of his important observation concerning the disappearance of difference or "non-identity" from social experience. That the central category of social ontology is suffering (upon which even the concept of Utopia is founded), caused by the very ubiquity of the identity-thinking that suppresses its expression, does require that politics consists in the critique of the untruth of society's subjection of experience to equivalence, but merely that suffering is the social symptom of the progressive entrenchment of its alienation from life-giving, affirmative difference. *Social ontology refracts difference-in-itself less as the excessive "non-identity" that inheres in but resists communication, than in the symptom that, qua subjects of social experience, one suffers from an alienated relation to difference.* The response of the 'critique of critique' has been to point out the tautology this logic: it is not that new spaces of resistance do not exist, but it is the perspective of social ontology that covers them over. This is doubtlessly true, but it does little to alter such a state of affairs. Social ontology and the philosophy of difference are not separate external perspectives that differ in their view of the same object or process that we might freely choose between, but are themselves two simultaneous, interleaved modalities of the same reality. Deleuze, ever critical of the extrinsic mode of philosophizing, comes close to lapsing into this mode of thought in characterizing the important political relation between affirmation and suffering. He writes, "There are those for whom the whole of differentiated social existence is *tied to false problems* which enable them to *live*, and others for whom social existence is *entirely contained in the false problems* of which they occupy the fraudulent positions, and from which they *suffer*."³⁹ I would argue that Deleuze perfectly captures the relation between affirmation and suffering, but he has failed to fully

internalize it as a political relation: this distinction does not correspond to two separate ways of living, but to the diremption that runs through a single life. The political problematic is *intra-liminal*. We move too quickly if, by singing the political song in the key of affirmation, we think the problem solved.⁴⁰

Critique as Local Problematization

This method of tracing the refraction of difference across these divergent theoretical geographies will offer the potential of localized problematization. Firstly, we examine how Deleuze's philosophy *necessarily* overlooks the *difference of the Same*, which the consequence that he underestimates the severity of the political obstacles posed by the Same to counter-actualization, and so argue for *adsorbing* Adorno's critique of social ontology to the 'actual' side of Deleuze's parallelist philosophy. Secondly, we re-examine the role Adorno's critique could play in a theory of politics predicated upon a philosophy of difference. Rather than arguing that such thought necessarily contributes to an anti-political current, as the 'critique of critique' has over hastily done, this paper suggests that social ontology might support a politics of difference through its 'retreating' function, by *sounding a call to effectuate the difference that it itself cannot think*. In doing so, the critique of social ontology would contribute to something essential, and often lacking in a politics of difference: a concrete impetus from within the present.

The Curving of Difference

By reading Adorno's critical account of social ontology, not as an alternative or opposed account of difference, but as opening onto the blind-spot of the Deleuzian account of the life of (post)actualization, as what I refer to as the 'afterimage of difference' in the form of *system*, it becomes possible to trace what is *necessarily* missing in Deleuze's conception of the Same: that there is a *difference of the Same* (negative difference) that is itself a parasitical product of difference-in-itself (rather than a rival conception of genesis) that can in turn redound upon the latter in the form of constriction (admittedly, Deleuze is already fully aware that the greatest danger to difference does not come from Chaos but from Order⁴¹ – it is my thesis that Deleuze *necessarily* underestimates the capacity of Order to draw upon a disorderly or dynamic process of ordering in order to stifle political counter-actualization). By consequence of tracing how

difference necessarily manifests in refracted form upon the terrain of the heterogeneous theoretical geography of social ontology, we see that there is in fact a *dynamism of the Same*, whose power is not genesis, but precisely the (necessarily limited) resistance of it. The image of politics engendered by the philosophy of difference will remain problematically stolid and impassive as long as it is predicated upon a conception of representation as purely parasitic to difference. What is most urgently required is not a return to representation but *to think difference not only in its genetic development of, but also through the social system of representation* – not simply to reveal difference as the imperceptible ground of representation – but to discern the ways in which the movement of expression is curved by the unique valences of that which it passes through, inheres or subsists upon (of what which generates what Adorno terms "suffering"). Social systems do not mediate difference (as in a form-content relation). They do, however, exert another, more limited, but politically important effect. In order to understand this effect it is important to emphasize the stringency of Deleuze's conception of immanence through which he maintains his parallelism. He writes, "when someone asks what *more* is found in the real, there is nothing to point out except "the same" thing as posited outside representation."⁴² It is important to avoid both substantializing the Deleuzian conception of incorporeal difference, a task that is made more difficult given the repeated emphasis on its motility ("reciprocal determination") and its determinancy ("singularities" or remarkable points), as well as resisting the temptation to read the virtual as a form of possibility (virtual is real, not possible). The 'same' difference that exists in the virtual corresponds directly to its actual, though "in a totally different manner" (in the same moment, but belonging to different temporalities). This is key. Difference in its virtual form harbors the power of creativity or what Deleuze calls "potentiality" (as distinct from 'possibility – as the virtual inheres directly in actuality), in whose actualization consists the anti-climactic culmination of a process that ends with the exhaustion of this potentiality. If, as Deleuze insists "differentiation or actualization is always creative with respect to what it actualizes, whereas realization is always reproductive or limiting,"⁴³ then the *question arises (for politics, at least), how are we to make sense of those social processes and institutions that prove so successful (though never completely successful) in resisting, absorbing or co-opting attempts to disturb their reproduction?* This question appears only to social ontology, in its "perpetual lateness."⁴⁴ The price of this perspective, as we have seen, is that social critique is now forced to bear the stigmata of an anti-politics. The paradox

that social ontology's account of social domination can only serve to perpetuate this domination is at the basis of the 'critique of critique'. Nevertheless, I argue that this price might be redeemed through a re-reading of critique's role, not in its capacity to account for politics, but in *deriving from the anti-political dynamic, namely from what Adorno calls "suffering," the impetus to break free of the entanglements of social ontology*. The *desire* (not the capacity) to transgress the boundaries of the empirically existing must derive from *within* this existence, if the crossing of the Rubicon (counter-actualization) is to retain its specific political sense. Otherwise, if the desire to counter-actualize is thought to derive from virtual itself, then the stakes of this transformation are reduced the status of ontological fact.

This problem does not arise for Deleuze, because he insists that even the most assiduously oppressive social systems, being themselves nothing other than the product or 'realization' of virtual differentiation and therefore lacking the capacity to definitively constrict genesis, cannot but continually offer up numerous spaces for resistance, transmutation or revolution.⁴⁵ Holding true to my earlier promise not to give way on Deleuze's thought of difference, I assent to the thesis that the disguised repetition (repetition of difference) is at the basis of every repetition of the same. However, I dispute the subsequent thesis Deleuze draws from this initial one: that the elements of social systems (representation, conceptual identity) that comprise the repetition of the Same have no role to play in explaining their own reproduction – that they do not 'curve' the instantiation of this difference. Deleuze in insisting that "repetition is never explained by the form of identity in the concept, nor by the similar in representation,"⁴⁶ tilts the field in his favor by raising the burden of evidence to 'explanation,' whereby the only 'effect' that the elements of social ontology exert, I argue, is to *curve* the process of the actualization of difference.

How do we understand this curvature of virtual difference effected by social systems? The argument rests on the thesis that the genetic power of the virtual does not preclude it from giving rise to systems of representation that channel it into repetitive loops or systems (it is in this way that the paper re-thinks the account of the social ontology's structuring of the 'conditions of possibility'). These systems, though functioning according to the logic of identity, nevertheless exert an acephalous and complex ordering of social reality, which curves (rather than suppresses) the virtual distribution of contingency. Adorno shows that modern society's identitarian logic does not exert its dominating effects through the direct or straightforward

closure or suturing of the space of difference. Rather, it effects its domination through perpetual movement: that 'meaning' is realized only through its indexical relation to the system of valuation, which itself can only refer its own value upon its capacity to continually reproduce value. It is precisely this restlessness that Adorno refers to as the "irrationality" of modern rationality, in which the "curse of irresistible progress is irresistible regression."⁴⁷ Likewise, Stuart Kauffman and others at the Santa Fe Institute have shown, *complex adaptive systems* (a pattern more relevant to social systems predicated on symbolic communication, rather than physical systems, whose methods of interaction lead such processes to tend more towards chaos) can emerge from even the most simplistic and reductionist logics of interaction (i.e. Boolean logic)⁴⁸. If the virtual harbors the power of incorporeal *chaos*, whose minimal excess of reality inheres in all actuality and, in rising to the surface, distributes the sense of the aleatory event (quasi-cause) across material bodies and throughout language, and so disrupts their conceptual capture, then social systems, which form in the afterimage of difference, perform a similar function, though with attenuated force, in the opposite direction. They do so by setting into motion a wave of relationally determined actions, coordinated only by the minimalist set of conditions that define the rules of their interaction (principles of exchange), and so effectuate order on the basis of complexity. Contemporary society's permissibility and unpredictability converges with, rather than contradicts, the universal inflection of social reality through the logic of exchange. The social conditions in which, ostensibly, 'anything can happen' are strictly coterminous with the permeation of rationalization into all aspects of social life.

Systems accomplish the curvature of difference not through diffraction (acting as an obstacle to difference), but through refraction, that is, by actively engendering a ubiquitous and dynamic social order, and so altering the very actuality that virtual difference is immanent to. This is important, because, as Deleuze insists, "the quasi-cause does not create, it 'operates' and wills only that which comes to pass."⁴⁹ In other words, Deleuze's account of genesis, the distribution of the eventual quasi-cause at the surface of bodies and language, must not be confused with efficient or material causality. The virtual is genetic only in an indirect sense. It does not directly give rise to the *existence* of actual states of affairs (being itself heterogeneous to them), but of the incorporeal, impassible *expression* that inheres in and doubles these states of affairs through a relation of "noncausal correspondence" (parallelism). However, this virtual potentiality, which endows actuality with the creative fecundity of what eludes the present (the

self-differing power of the problem)⁵⁰, lies at the remote basis of all actual genesis. It is the mask of the surface. It cannot be identified (only affirmed) because there is nothing behind it, its function consisting entirely in traversing the actual and distributing its genetic power of expression.

Returning to our central argument, social ontology's *curving function*, though indirect, as social ontology always remains entirely heterogeneous to virtual difference, consists not in the suppression of difference (an impossibility), but through the *systematic aggrandization of contemporary society's anti-political symptom: a lack of "resistance to the present."*⁵¹ The systemization of the social in no way precludes the disruptive effects of difference, rather, it is the incessant movement of the 'return of the same' that reinforces the remoteness or 'disguised' nature of the political form of difference excessive to its historical circumstances (which nevertheless remains immanent). The expressive difference or 'sense' upon which politics relies, ever remote, is not suppressed but bombarded or engulfed by the omnipresence of a regime of meaning whereby nothing is missing from its place precisely because the spectrum of expressive possibility (not in reality, but through rote repetition) of social experience reaches its apogee in the ceaseless movements and deferrals of identitarian exchange. The perpetual return of the *new* threatens to engulf *difference*.⁵² Contemporary social experience ceaselessly and systematically redistributes an ever-new present, 140 characters at a time.

On this issue Deleuze comes to close to Heidegger, for in his failure to articulate any *political* reason why we 'lack resistance to the present,' he seems to imply something akin to a (philosophical) 'forgetting' of the meaning of *becoming*. However, Deleuze *necessarily* overlooks this possibility of a dynamic and social operation that would function to *reinforce the presence of the present*. Deleuze does not offer an account of social ontology, because he thoroughly rethinks the entire spectrum of the creation-created process. In *Difference in Repetition*, his first synthesis of the time of the present, *habit*, therefore can be read as his refracted image of a social ontology. Yet, for Deleuze following Hume, the conception of the self as a collection of habits is used to contest the notion of a (Kantian) unified subject⁵³. So already, from the very beginning, Deleuze's ontology of the present emphasizes the serializing and distributive nature of *actuality*, in its project of overturning an ontology of the subject predicated on symbolic, unifying tendencies. However, as our method of refractory parallelism suggests, these are not two external alternative accounts or perspectives, but are rather two

immanent ontological modes (despite the fact that difference is the 'ground' of social ontology). While Deleuze is right to emphasize the distributive nature of the self, this is also what necessarily blinds him to the parasitic, reified forms of the 'subject' that are presupposed or distributed at the level of social ontology (or, we might say 'history'), yet which effect a politically salient function. In other words, I argue that with the concept of the subject as a collection of habits Deleuze has already begins with an ontology that presupposes a difficult series of political achievements. That an identitarian nomos such as the capitalist logic of exchange can permeate and so organize nearly all aspect of social reality, acting a social strange attractor quite capable of re-incorporating deviations and disturbances of to its dynamic ordering (rather than exerting this function deterministically), is how social ontology, without any direct capacity to forestall the virtual difference that is at the root of its genesis, can turn the 'disguised' nature of the repetition of the difference against itself. That philosophy is a praxis (not an abstract theory), cannot allow it to fall prey to the twin danger of the philosophy of difference "lapsing into the representations of a beautiful soul." *In contrast to his previous critics, I argue that it is not Deleuze's account of virtual problems* (whose positivity and therefore efficacy we admits as vital to a critical account of pure ontology as well as politics) *which risks becoming a philosophy of beautiful souls, but his account of the Same.*

Adorno's critique of modernity, and in particular his forceful demonstration of its near extirpation of all traces of mimetic non-identity in bringing all dimensions of possible (social) experience under the sway of the dominating logic of rationalization, must not be read as an exhaustive account or replacement for a theory of difference, but as revealing the differential power of the negative, or of what Deleuze calls the repetition of the Same. This reading forces us to re-evaluate the challenge of a politics of difference without giving way on Deleuze's great contribution to modern critique: the thought of difference-in-itself.⁵⁴

The Retreat of Social Critique: Suffering, Exigency, and the Question of the Possibility

The parallelist reading also insists, in turn, that Adorno's social ontology does not offer a rival conception of genetic or productive difference in the form of negative dialectics, but in expressing difference from the perspective of its refraction through social ontology, that is to say, from the viewpoint of the social labour of the concept and its progressive rationalization of

reason in society, reveals its mode of appearance to consist solely in its non-appearance or lack, in short, in *suffering* (as evidenced by the 'negative' formulation of Adorno's conception for difference: non-identity). Like the first thesis, this too holds important implications for thinking the politics of critique. As in the first thesis, it effectuates a non-relational synthesis or *complicatio*, through the principle of refraction, that releases us from having to conceive of a theory of politics strictly at the level of Adorno's immanent critique. We are excused from the deadlock of having to choose to read in Adorno's *impossible promise of political emancipation* either a defeatist or acquiescent vision of politics (as Habermas does) or to discard it altogether on the basis of its insufficient account of active political difference (as Deleuze and Rancière do) because we are opened to the thought that social ontology expresses the 'afterimage of difference,' and so performs a vital but incomplete political function in articulating the severity of the social's resistance to difference. In addition, we can then *read the critical role Adorno's gives to modern art as the invocation to suspend identity thinking, as the negative gesture that merely reveals the necessity of escaping the suffering condition of Society in sounding the call for a difference that it cannot think (immanently to Society)*, and for which we can then turn to Deleuze.

Adorno's conception of emancipatory politics invests modern art with the paradoxical power to exhibit a Utopian promise of an 'otherwise' from amidst the universal untruth of society at the price of art's own untruth or semblance – and hence the remoteness or impossibility of this promise. Art's semblance is simultaneously the principle of its autonomy for Adorno; what separates and distinguishes it from the empirical world is precisely its 'purposelessness.' Yet it would be a mistake to treat his conception of autonomy as detachment or freedom, rather Adorno conceives the role of art in its relation to the empirical through the image of a windowless monad that reflects the external world through its own internal logic, in other words, that the principle of autonomy is redeemed by absorbing the rationalization of the external world and transmuting it into the logic of its own internal principle of expression, namely, artistic form. This folding takes advantage of the radically disparate logic of *methexis* that characterizes art's expressive capacity, in contrast to discursive rationality (of philosophy). Art internalizes the violence of rationalization in the principle of artistic autonomy, which in the history of art is exemplified in the transition from harmony of form, which expresses or rather presupposes a fitness or suitability between the principle of universality and the parts of which it is composed, to

dissonance, which reflects the demise of this suitability between the whole and the parts in the turn to ugliness, and so at once exposes the lie in artistic harmony, while simultaneously expressing through its dissonant form the promise of a non-appropriative experience of the object. In such a way Adorno arrives at his sententious formula, "Indeed, it is for the sake of the beautiful that there is no longer beauty: because it is no longer beautiful."⁵⁵ In my reading, art's expressive capacity, its ability to reflect non-identity and so to instigate a *critique of rationalized society* is interpreted as a gesture that *signals an exigency of action that is lacking in the accounts of (affirmative and performative) politics offered by the philosophy of difference.*

Deleuze, by situating the disruptive force of politics in differential genesis at once refuses a subjective or agency centered account of politics, such that difference is itself the 'unthought' of thought, or in temporal terms, the inherence in the present of what belongs to both the pure past and the futural, or the forever yet to come. Political counteractualization, Deleuze argues, consists of the paradoxical thought that the selection or affirmation of difference that is the key to attaining to the excess of being (becoming) that our condition in empirical life (social ontology) lacks, and suffers from, is only attainable on the condition of renouncing all (empirical, probabilistic) principles of selecting, in other words, that we make ourselves equivalent to the intensive rhythm and to the temporalities which inhere in, but which resist the present (that is, that we escape from our condition as 'results' to "that point at which 'powerlessness' is transmuted into power, that point which develops in the work in the form of a *problem*"⁵⁶). In other words, Deleuze conceives of politics as the event whereby we return to (or 'make ourselves worthy of') the unconditioned transcendental rhythms of difference which make up the 'real,' intensive and incorporeal, conditions underlying the very formations from which we seek to escape ("the question silences all empirical responses which purport to suppress it"⁵⁷). The arbitrary enclosure of any empirically presupposed unity, such as a subject, cannot be a starting point for politics for Deleuze because it is itself the result of differential genesis (not the cause) and is thereby the principal object of resistance to the political event – never the agent of its execution.

To speak from the perspective of the reified subject, that is, to speak on behalf of suffering, is itself, from the perspective of Deleuze's differential ontology nothing more than to entertain a 'transcendental illusion.' 'Transcendental illusion,' or the 'dialectical use of Reason,' meant for Kant a temptation at the heart of reason that compels us to employ it in its non-critical

and 'transcendent' form, leading only to illusions and insoluble antinomies⁵⁸. Deleuze's re-thinks the Kantian 'Ideas,' no longer confined to the noumenal beyond, but referring to the virtual "system of differential relations" or "subrepresentational dynamisms" immanently distributing their intensive (incorporeal) effects in the course of a dramatization (Deleuze's term to replace Kantian schematization), that is itself the real (unconditioned) condition for what is actualized (both formally, in representation, and ontologically, in being⁵⁹): Ideas are determinate, internally differentiated problems which are progressively narrowed to the point of their taking determinate form as actual 'results'. He writes: "Ideas, therefore, are related not to a Cogito which functions as ground or as a proposition of consciousness, but to the fractured I of a dissolved Cogito; *in other words to the universal ungrounding which characterizes thought as a faculty in its transcendental exercise.*"⁶⁰ If transcendental illusion refers to the temptation to employ Ideas outside the bounds of their critical exercise, and Ideas refer to objective but incomplete (unrealized) virtual differentiation, then transcendental illusion is the term Deleuze would give to social ontology's doomed attempt to initiate its search for non-identity (difference) from the precise point where difference necessarily terminates. To Adorno's aphoristic thesis that "the splinter in the eye is the best magnifying glass,"⁶¹ Deleuze would respond, the real splinter is the *unthought problematic field or 'simulacra' that proceeds* all forms of visibility, for the "eye" is itself nothing other than the solution or result left behind by the internal (virtual) integration of a light "problem."⁶² If the solution is determined by the problem, then, a fortiori, the attempt to locate the problem immanently to the solution is futile. "Though a subject is given in representation, we still know nothing. We learn only insofar as we discover the Idea operating underneath the concept."⁶³

The problem, however, with relegating the tools of social ontology (subjects, experience, social labour of the concept) to the status of a 'transcendental illusion,' is this: it forces Deleuze to either 1) consider the full spectrum of ontology (both the virtual and the actual) as engaged in a continual and unavoidable chain of virtual problematization-actualization-counter-actualization (A-B-B-A) whose complexity necessarily precludes the hypostatizations offered by social ontology, and in which case it follows that the political stakes of counter-actualization are severely undercut (if all reality is already difference, the political exigency of counter-actualization is thrown into question); 2) which leads to Deleuze to hold out the possibility that certain formations are themselves at once the product of difference and substantial obstacles to

difference. The most sustained analysis of this issue is carried out in the account of the State and "striated space" in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Here the state is conceived as functioning by creating conduits for the controlled distribution or circulation of a co-opted difference, which takes the 'arms' of the war machine and "converts them to other uses."⁶⁴ The state formation cannot, Deleuze and Guattari insist, be reduced to the negative. They write, "We do not see how the State can be explained by what it presupposes, even with recourse to dialectics."⁶⁵ On this point, as I have argued previously, I am in agreement with Deleuze: the entire realm Adorno's social ontology necessarily lacks an account of generative difference and thereby requires precisely what it is incapable of thinking. It is here, however, that one should recall Leibniz's advice that, "most sects are correct in the better part of what they put forward, though not so much in what they deny,"⁶⁶ for despite the fact that negative difference cannot 'explain' the state will not preclude it from playing an important role. It is here that we can see how the principle of heterogeneity between the virtual-actual in Deleuze is distinguished from my conception of refractory parallelism. For Deleuze, the State formation, which is heterogeneous to the Outside (pure difference), nevertheless necessarily always maintains the capacity for "conjugating" with it ("holely space"). This logic allows Deleuze and Guattari to arrive at their political critique of the state, in which "*the very conditions that make the State or World war machine possible*, in other words, constant capital (resources or equipment) and human variable capital, *continually recreate possibilities for counterattack*, unforeseen initiatives determining revolutionary, popular, minority, mutant machines."⁶⁷ My objection to Deleuze does not consist in claiming that the state formation does in fact retain the power to completely resist the 'counterattack' of difference, as Adorno's account implies. Rather, I argue that Deleuze's parallelism, unlike my refractory account, obligates him to conceptualizing the state formation from the perspective of difference, in which case he rightly emphasizes (affirmatively) the *continual possibility* of counterattack (which exists because the State is itself nothing else than co-opted and channelled difference). But notice something important here: where Deleuze is required to shift from the ontological to the political register he necessarily slips back into the subjunctive; the same modality he had earlier criticized in Kant. Deleuze fails to pose a question, which because of his perspective, never seems important: *how do we think those intervals where the possibility of counterattack is not realized? Moreover, if the mainsprings of counterattack are precisely what is most elusive* (something that must be insisted on in order to remain consistent with Deleuze's

account of transcendental empiricism) *then how can we even expect to conceive of our impoverished condition, let alone find the strength for counter-actualization?* Because Deleuze cannot answer these fundamental questions, questions that are necessary to any substantial account of politics, we need to undertake an analysis of the State from the perspective of social ontology, that is, where the co-opted difference of the State is refracted into the 'afterimage of difference' – the native realm of the Same. Deleuze's proclivity to model the conception of the political event directly upon his differential ontology leads to a confusion: he treats what is necessarily a matter of politics as a philosophical problem. That the State is itself made possible by the Outside is an ontological attribute Deleuze takes for a political one (though it certainly holds political implications). Having established the (philosophical) necessity of this possibility, he can then proceed directly to an analysis of counterattack without having given full consideration of the those structures that are just as necessarily opposed to politics (as is *de rigueur* for critical theory). It is only by engaging in an analysis immanent to those structures and their internal dynamics that first conceal the possibility of counterattack (the condition, *sine qua non* for any politics predicated on 'disruption'), that we can understand the full extent of challenge posed by the state to the politics. Through the parallax method we come to see why Deleuze's difficult account of counter-actualization, (not unlike Rancière's account of dissensus) *is by consequence obliged to remain silent on the question of the suffering* that occurs during the intervals that separate these necessarily limited moments of disruption or counter-actualization, precisely because they cannot treat them as anything other than partial or incomplete moments ('results') of a more profound process or genesis that they are ontologically incapable of resisting. By contrast, the parallax method reveals that it is through suffering that the absence of difference comes to resound as a *social* problematic and in which, as Adorno shows of modern art and literature in *Aesthetic Theory*, the call for a difference that cannot be thought becomes the object of critical politics: *it is only on this condition that the strength and impetus required for political subjectivation attains the material, not merely formal, potentiality that it has always harbored.*

Epilogue:

Rancière's Politics: Short-Circuiting Parallelism

The parallelism of Deleuze and Adorno has so far argued that difference-in-itself is both a necessary (but insufficient) aspect of all political transformation, and on the other hand, that the genetic power of the virtual does not preclude it from giving rise to the very structures that channel it into repetitive loops or systems (our re-thinking of the account of the social ontology's 'condition of possibility') which systematically promote the anti-political function of weakening our 'resistance to the present.' The critical function of social ontology, alienated from difference and so suffering, is to sound the call for a difference that it cannot think. However, we have yet to address the significant problem of how these heterogeneous logics can be thought to give rise to the political event.

I argue that Rancière's political thought, and the difficult challenge that it poses to critical theory derives from the its re-thinking of Kantian critique. Rancière's 'aesthetic distribution of the sensible,' I argue, constitutes a re-orientation of the Kantian critical gesture that renders the critical operation at once aesthetic and political: a reconception of the specifically political (rather than ontological) meaning of a third transcendental dimension. Not unlike Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, Rancière will break with Kant over on the issue of the restrictive nature of supplying the 'conditions of possibility' of (political) experience. The price of the original form of the critical gesture is too steep: it must uncritically presuppose the given or what we already know (status quo) in order to establish the critical ground upon it. In Lyotard's elliptical formulation the "a priori conditions of possibility must, by hypothesis, be unconditioned, or else they would not be a priori."⁶⁸ However, in contrast to Deleuze and Foucault (following the path of the neo-Kantian Solomon Maimon), Rancière does not then attempt to replace the restrictive Kantian conditions of possibility with the *real transcendental* conditions of (political) experience, that is to say, with the *unconditioned* differentials that give rise to experience. Rancière does something different: conceived as neither Real (as unconditioned conditioning) nor possible (as delimiting conditioning), the political power of the *equality* of the aesthetic distribution of the sensible is the pure heterogeneous synthesis of the (non)encounter between a set of conditions (possibility) and their unfolding or break-up. Consider the following argument, "Literarity is [thus] at one and the same time literature's condition of possibility and the paradoxical limit at which literature as such is no longer discernible from any other form of discourse."⁶⁹ Rancière's account of what he calls "literarity", refers to the paradoxical function of art or literature's equality in its aesthetic distribution,

wherein the apparently opposed principles of 'art for art's sake' converges with a 'realism' that instantiates political potential of art: the confusion of fiction and reality upon the flat plane of exhibition.⁷⁰ Rancière's procedure thus faintly recalls Lyotard's rethinking of Kantian critique in which the ground of (aesthetic) judgment is refers to Wittgenstenian conception of contingency: critique rests upon the contingent ground that allows one to say 'this is the case.'⁷¹ However, unlike both Deleuze and Lyotard, Rancière's thought is not nurtured in the soil of philosophy, but in the thought of the aesthetic meaning of equality implied by the rejection of political mastery. This leads Rancière to extract something from Kantian critique that goes unseen by both Lyotard and Deleuze. Their more strictly philosophical readings of Kant quite naturally lead them to privilege the thought of the sublime as a mechanism for conceiving the political power of difference. Yet, Rancière's turns to the account of beauty to draw out his conception of political dissensus, rooted in the aesthetic force of equality's power of indistinction. For Rancière, aesthetics is not a set of 'conditions' that refer to any discernible series of possibilities, it is rather the very principle by which what is possible is undone as possible: it is the thought of the pure *shift*. In other words, Rancière, like Flaubert before him, conceives of critique as the political effectuation of the 'absolute point of view,' or the *pure point of indifference between the conditions of possibility and difference, and it is only on this condition, the aesthetic condition of indifference ("aesthetic efficacy" Emancipated Spectator, pg 63), that he is able to articulate the kernel of the political encounter without tipping over into either social critique (Adorno – conditions of possibility) while simultaneously avoiding the temptation to render the political subordinate to an ontology of difference – for Rancière it is politics, not ontology, that makes the difference.*

Rancière does not speak of the ontological genesis of a 'zone of imperceptibility' as Deleuze does, but rather of a "zone of indeterminacy between thought and non-thought."⁷² The difference of politics is itself different from ontological difference (from which it nevertheless derives the 'unthought in thought'). The latter gives the genetic account of difference from difference, but the former articulates the *pure political principle of the shift*: the playing out of the encounter between two heterogeneous entities – an already-differentiated difference and an already-situated order of perceptibility. With Rancière political difference is expressed in the form of the indifference or indistinction because only such a 'perspective,' which is itself the complete loss of perspective, is capable of sustaining an encounter between two forces which

each seek to bend the other to its own immanent laws: *social critique can give a dynamic articulation of order of shifting order of representation but at the price of reducing (ontological) difference to indeterminate unity, while ontological difference can give a genetic account of difference at the price of rendering ineffectual the dynamic role of representative relationality of the repetition of the Same*. Rancière can bring these two logics to the point of encounter, to the point of their absolute indeterminacy, only by not giving way on the purity of their heterogeneity.

Having drawn out the particular novelty of Rancière's aesthetic neo-Kantianism we are now in a position to consider the *necessity of his indifference to both the social and the ontological*. This indifference is not an indictment of Rancière's thought, as Žižek argues in *The Ticklish Subject*⁷³, but the very originality and force of his aesthetic-political thought. Rather, I argue that it is precisely by eluding this temptation (as Kant argued that the dialectical use of Reason was a temptation internal to reason itself) that Rancière is able to give a purely political expression of the relation of pure difference and the constituted in the form of the paradoxical formula of a *heterogeneous synthesis*.

However, the very heterogeneity of Rancière's synthesis demands that we not stop where he does – at the thought of the purely political relation. If the motor of Rancière's transcendental aesthetics is the indistinct, the particular power of aesthetics is itself an excess whose function is *negation through opacity*. Rancière politics is not reducible to dialectics, but neither is it a function of pure ontological difference. The 'aspect' of difference that attains from the social in the point of aesthetic indifference is, however, indeterminacy. This indeterminacy is not between two elements of a syllogism, but between two purely heterogeneous orders: the power of appearing (*aesthesis*) and the ways of making (*poesis*); the political shift "conjoins two regimes of expression, without homogenizing them" along the "same surface"⁷⁴. If this indeterminacy between thought and the unthought (logos and pathos) – *literarity as the 'absolute point of view'* – is itself only "verified" through the *act* of political subjectivation it is because the 'act' itself is the rendering indistinct of any difference between the power of ordering and the power of difference – in an instant *political subjectivation effectuates (acts 'as if' what exists is) a self-differing order*.⁷⁵ Political subjectivation occurs when one acts 'as if' (Rancière's dramaturgy) a stage existed upon which to speak (an order), which is the very act of dissensus (self-differing) that precipitates the transmutation or 'shift' of self-difference into a (potentially)

new set of conditions of possibility. In this way the operation of an aesthetics of politics consists of the rendering opaque (indistinct) of the specific heterogeneous logics of social critique and an ontology of difference and the establishing a pure encounter between the two in the form of dissensus (where the 'part of no part' encounters the power of ordering which only encounters this same 'part' in the form of 'the part in its proper place', and through the very act of this 'non-relation' – the capacity to use political speech as the power of indistinction – the 'part of no part' effectuates its dissensus). We are now in a position to fully appreciate the necessary price of Rancière's thought: it consists in raising the concrete order of words and things to the level of complete indistinction, so that the same act that attains to this indifference might instigate a concrete disagreement. What is left necessarily unaddressed, what one might speak of as the re-emergence of the 'given' in Rancière's transcendental aesthetics, is precisely the conditions from which the 'stage' of the political act of subjectivation is drawn together, and the specific manner in which the logic of social ordering and the logic of ontological genesis might attenuate, occlude and resist change (or assist, catalyze or embolden it), in short, those forces that constitute the political (but which are necessarily rendered opaque by its process): the refractions of difference from its genetic distribution to its afterimage.

Notes

¹ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, pg 99

² Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pg 118

³ Deleuze and Guattari's "*What is Philosophy?*" marks out the importance of the distinction between a philosophy of pure immanence (philosophy of difference) and the compromise position of thinking that places itself "immanent to" something else (necessarily given). This latter position describes perfectly the methodology adopted by Adorno's immanent critique, which is "immanent to" society.

⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pg 139.

⁵ Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, pg 25, my emphasis.

⁶ See Rancière's *Althusser's Lesson*.

⁷ See Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe's *Retreating the Political*.

⁸ See Oliver Marchant, *Post-Foundational Political Thought* for a thoughtful overview of the post-foundationalist philosophy and its critique of any conception. Also helpful in his regard is, *A Leftist Ontology: Beyond Relativism and Identity Politics*, which surveys the stakes of the recent turns to linking politics to a postfoundationalist ontology.

⁹ Alain Badiou (*Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*), Slavoj Žižek (*Organs without Bodies*), Peter Hallward (*Out of this World*), and Jacques Rancière (*The Flesh of Words*), offer a diverse series of post-foundationalist critiques of Deleuze. At issue in all of them, however, is the manner in which Deleuze derives his account of politics from his *univocal* ontology, and in doing so attenuates or precludes the possibility of relational or antagonistic conflict and political re-configuration at the level beyond virtual becoming. There are undoubtedly parallels between the Lacanian Real (a point of departure for both Žižek, as well, in part, for Badiou) and the Deleuzian account of difference, particularly in the latter's discussion of the "paradoxical entity" in *The Logic of Sense* (see pg 41). For both the necessary operation of the originary displacement of a paradoxical object that "fails to observe its place" (*elle manque à sa place*), and so introduces an 'excess' of sense as a condition of expression is central to their thinking. Deleuze rebukes Lacan's account for the manner in which he thinks the genesis of this difference, referring the partial object "in the last instance" to an "element which is itself symbolic" (*Difference and Repetition*, pg 103). That the object = x is not itself is an unconditioned virtual difference, but is tied to the symbolic figure of the phallus, restricts the genetic power of this displacement so that the Lacanian Real can only think the "repetition of the same." Rancière and Hallward's critique of Deleuze, on the other hand, focuses on the "atomism" of Deleuze's politics, and by consequence his abnegation of the potential for relational or dissensual conflict in his account of (political) counter-actualization as an 'escape' from the world of the actual.

¹⁰ Žižek, *Organs without Bodies*, pg 11.

¹¹ Nick Nesbitt's "Expulsion of the Negative" and J.M. Bernstein's *The Fate of Art* both defend Adorno's conception of critique against the criticism on offer of it from a philosophy of difference.

¹² Nesbit, "The Expulsion of the Negative", pg 93.

¹³ J.M. Bernstein, one of the most perspicuous contemporary readers of Adorno, writes that "at a certain level, there is something theoretically silly in the way the real is poisted as excessive" (*Against Voluptuous Bodies*, pg 304).

¹⁴ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, pg 145

¹⁵ I draw the concept of "interleaving" from Deleuze's *What is Philosophy?* where he uses it to think the co-existence between diverse philosophical "planes of immanence," each extracting or selecting its own slice of chaos. Deleuze writes, "We can and must presuppose multiplicity of planes, since no one plane could encompass all of chaos without collapsing back into it" (pg 50).

I use this thought to think Deleuze against himself: it suggests a theoretical pluralism that requires turning itself against even the philosophy of difference.

¹⁶ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, pg 75.

¹⁷ This refers to the analysis of Soutine undertaken by J.M. Bernstein in his *Against Voluptuous Bodies*, and its contrast with Deleuze's *Francis Bacon*. Between the two artists, as well as the two respective interpretations, there is an undeniable resonance, but at the same time a profound mutual incompatibility. As Bernstein admits, in a footnote that, "I do not have an easy answer as to why I find Bacon unpersuasive. I suppose the answer would lie in the thought that the drama of skin, the drama of its failure of containment, becomes histrionic rather than compelling in Bacon's distortions; his distortions are the wrong sort of objective correlative of the phenomenon he is seeking to express" (pg 382, footnote 38).

¹⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pg 204, my emphasis.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pg 21.

²⁰ See Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*. The task of re-thinking Adorno's conception of identity-thinking by drawing on Bourdieu, would too demand its own delicate treatment. It seems one would have to take account of the price of Bourdieu's "differentiation" of the logic of rationalization, which is manifest in the relaxation of the theoretical intensity with which he treats the problem of critique (Bourdieu's theory, it seems, harbors a fragment of enlightenment optimism that the stringency of Adorno's critique necessarily expunges).

²¹ Deleuze, "Jean Hyppolite's Logic and Existence," *Desert Islands*, pg 16.

²² Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, pg 11.

²³ It is important to recognize, although often ignored, that Deleuze's account of virtuality derives as much from Leibniz's concept of the infinite, unextended *spatium* as from Spinoza's univocity. Deleuze privilege's Spinoza for his bold account of immanence, and reproaches Leibniz for his limitation of infinite ('best of all *possible* worlds', and hence the concept of impossibility) based on his desire to avoid charges of pantheism. See the conclusion to *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*.

²⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pg 137.

²⁵ In fact, beyond this distinction Deleuze's also makes an important distinction within virtuality itself, between the surface (sense) and the depths (nonsense, or, in *Difference and Repetition* what he calls the 'dark precursor' of the 'royal synthesis'); though this will not concern us in this paper, not at least until the final section where we consider the relation of Deleuze and Rancière.

²⁶ Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, pg 107.

²⁷ Deleuze's here offers an account of Stoic parallelism: "They dismember this relation, even at the risk of recreating a unity on each side. They refer causes to causes and place a bond of causes between them (destiny). They refer effects to effects and pose certain bonds of effects between them. But these two operations are not accomplished in the same manner. Incorporeal effects are never themselves causes in relation to each other; rather, they are only 'quasi-causes' following laws which perhaps express in each case the relative unity or mixture of bodies on which they depend for their real causes" (*The Logic of Sense*, pg 6).

²⁸ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A533/B561.

²⁹ Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. See especially part three. Jean Luc-Nancy, in *The Experience of Freedom* draws heavily on Heidegger in his re-reading of the Kantian problem of freedom (in particular as it is posed by Kant in the third antinomy). Unlike Deleuze, who re-interprets the Kantian Ideas (noumenon) as the internal, intensive and un-encountered difference that drives all genesis of the extrinsic, phenomenon forms it subsists within, Nancy, following Heidegger, focuses on the *factuality* of the Idea. In considering the strange status of Kant's "fact of reason," which somehow must appear (as fact), but which at the same time is necessarily heterogeneous to the phenomenal world, Nancy reads Kantian freedom as consisting in the freedom of the 'givenness' (drawing on Heidegger's '*es gibt*', or 'it gives') of existence (factuality) – "freedom arises *from nothing*" (pg 55). In this way, Nancy's account of freedom (which elsewhere he refers to as 'trans-immanence'), which is both immanent to existence, yet heterogeneous and remote, bears an affinity with Deleuze's transcendental empiricism (their differences in influences, however, clearly showing: Nancy drawing on Heidegger's existential phenomenology as well as Derrida, while Deleuze, by contrast, forthrightly espousing a 'metaphysical' mode of philosophizing).

³⁰ It is for this reason that Deleuze remarks in his lectures that Kant's philosophy, though undeniably brilliant, is also "stifling."

³¹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, paragraph 437. Hegel's fundamental objection to Kant is to argue that the only way to overcome the arbitrariness of the static apriori 'givenness' upon which Kant's transcendental philosophy is founded is to radicalize this very givenness: to insist that the conception of the transcendental conditions of possibility (theoretical, practical, aesthetic) are themselves conditional, forever mediated by their relation to actuality. Adorno, with his typically elliptical precision, states that, with Hegel, "the a priori is the a posteriori" (pg 3). However, Adorno's left-Hegelian interpretation requires that Hegel not entirely succeed in his supersession of Kant. In other words, the very insuperability of dialectics upon which Adorno founds his conception of non-identity and the unthought place of inappropriable nature into the social labour of the concept can be thought as the persistence of the Kantian diremption resisting the Hegel Absolute. Adorno writes that "The debate between Kant and Hegel, in which Hegel's devastating argument had the last word, is not over; perhaps because what was decisive, the superior power of logical stringency, is untrue in the face of Kantian discontinuities" (pg 86).

³² Boundas, "Deleuze: Serialization and Subject Formation," *Gilles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy*, pg 113.

³³ Deleuze, *What is Philosophy?*, pg 161.

³⁴ Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy*, pg 335.

³⁵ Deleuze, *What is Philosophy?*, pg 21.

³⁶ Deleuze, "To Have Done with Judgment," *Essays Critical and Clinical*, pg 132.

³⁷ Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, pg 121.

³⁸ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pg 18.

³⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pg 208

⁴⁰ Deleuze here implicitly refers to what I take to be the central political problematic: "For if it is a question of knowing 'why at this moment rather than at another,' 'why water changes its state of quality at 0 centigrade,' the question is poorly stated insofar as 0 is considered an ordinary point on the thermometer. But if it is considered, on the contrary, as a singular point, it is inseparable from the event occurring at that point, always being zero in relation to its realization on the line of ordinary points, always forthcoming and already passed" (*The Logic of Sense*, pg 80). In my reading these are not two separate perspectives, one internal and open to difference, the other extrinsic and representative. *Rather these perspectives are internal to one another.*

⁴¹ In the conclusion to *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze writes, "'It is as if the struggle against chaos does not take place without an affinity with the enemy, because another struggle develops and takes on more importance – the struggle against opinion, which claims to protect us from chaos itself'" (pg 203).

⁴² Deleuze, "The Method of Dramatization," *Desert Islands*, pg 101.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pg 101.

⁴⁴ Bernstein, *Against Voluptuous Bodies*, pg 1.

⁴⁵ See specifically the chapter "Foldings, or the Inside of Thought (Subjectivation)" in Deleuze's *Foucault*.

⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pg 220.

⁴⁷ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pg 28

⁴⁸ Marion, *The Edge of Organization: Chaos and Complexity Theories of Formal Social Systems*, pg 37.

⁴⁹ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, pg 147.

⁵⁰ Deleuze argues: "Corporeal causes ...produces the incorporeal event. But the quasi-cause *operates* by doubling the physical quality – it embodies the event in the most limited possible present which is the most precise and the most instantaneous, the pure instant grasped at the point at which it divides itself into future and past, and no longer the present of the world which would gather into itself the past and the future" (*Logic of Sense*, pg 147).

⁵¹ Deleuze, *What is Philosophy?*, pg 147.

⁵² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pg 136. Here Deleuze distinguishes between the historically new and the *terra incognita* of the Nietzschean 'creation of new values.'

⁵³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pg 73.

⁵⁴ My claim here echoes a thought advanced by Peter Hallward who writes: "Deleuze needs an account of how desires [difference] might be led to desire its own repression – an account of why people 'fight for their servitude as stubbornly as, though it were their salvation'. This remains 'the fundamental problem of political philosophy'" (*Out of This World*, pg 56).

⁵⁵ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, pg 53.

⁵⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pg 199.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pg 195.

⁵⁸ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pg A298/B354.

⁵⁹ Deleuze, "Method of Dramatization," *Desert Islands*, pg 95-98.

⁶⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pg 194, my emphasis.

⁶¹ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, pg 50.

⁶² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pg 211 . "The negative is an illusion because the form of negation appears with propositions which express the problem on which they depend only by distorting it and obscuring its real structure" (pg 202).

⁶³ Deleuze, "Method of Dramatization," *Desert Islands*, pg 103.

⁶⁴ Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pg 355.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pg 359.

⁶⁶ Cited in: Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, pg ix (Letter to Remond, 10 January 1714, G III 607, translated in L 655).

⁶⁷ Deleuze, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pg 422.

⁶⁸ Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, pg 56.

⁶⁹ Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics*, pg 87.

⁷⁰ See Rancière's reading of Flaubert in *The Politics of Literature*, chapter three, "The Putting to Death of Emma Bovary: Literature, Democracy and Medicine."

⁷¹ Lyotard, *Enthusiasm, The Kantian Critique of History*, pg 2.

⁷² Rancière, *Emancipated Spectator*, pg 108.

⁷³ In a powerful footnote in *The Ticklish Subject* Žižek offers this compelling, yet I argue ultimately misguided critique: "Rancière fetishizes the order of the police, failing to recognize how this order itself relies on the excessive gesture of the Master, which is a stand-in for the political Lack – the 'gentrification', the positivization, of the properly political excess... Or - to put it another way – politics is not a *consequence* of the (pre-political) gap in the order of Being or non-coincidence of the social subject with itself: the fact that the social subject is never complete and self-identical means that the social being is always-already *based on* a (disavowed) gesture of politicization and, as such, thoroughly political" (footnote 26, pg 187-188).

⁷⁴ Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, pg 122-131.

⁷⁵ See Rancière's *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*.

References

Adorno, Theodor W.

Hegel: Three Studies. 1993. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Aesthetic Theory. 1997. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life. 2006. New York: Verso.

Negative Dialectics. 2007. New York: Continuum.

Badiou, Alain.

Deleuze: The Clamor of Being. 2000. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Bernstein, J.M.

The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno. 1997. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Against Voluptuous Bodies: Late Modernism and the Meaning of Painting. 2006. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

"Negative Dialectic as Fate: Adorno and Hegel" *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*. 2004. Huhn, Tim (Ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boundas, Constantin V.

"Deleuze: Serialization and Subject-Formation," *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy: Critical Essays*. 1994. Boundas, Constantin V. and Dorothea Olkowski (Eds). New York: Routledge.

"Deleuze and the Problem of Freedom," *Gilles Deleuze: Image and Text*. 2009. Smith, Daniel W., Charles J. Stivale and Eugene W. Holland, (Eds). New York: Continuum.

Deleuze, Gilles

The Logic of Sense. 1990. New York: Columbia University Press.

Kant's Critical Philosophy. 1990. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza. 1992. New York: Zone Books.

Difference and Repetition. 1994. New York: Columbia University Press.

Essays Critical and Clinical. 1997. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953-1974. 2004. New York: Semiotext(e).

Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation. 2005. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Foucault. 2012. London: Continuum.

"Quatre Lecons sur Kant" <http://webdeleuze.com/sommaire.html>

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari.

What is Philosophy? 1994. New York: Columbia University Press.

A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. 2007. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Hallward, Peter.

Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation. 2006. New York: Verso.

Hobbes, Thomas.

Leviathan. 1994. Cambridge: Hackett.

Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno.

Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments. 2002. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Lacoue-Labarthe, Phillippe and Jean-Luc Nancy.

Retreating the Political. 2009. New York: Routledge.

Leibniz, G.W.

Philosophical Essays. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Eds). 1989. Cambridge: Hackett.

Lord, Beth.

"Deleuze and Kant," *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*. 2012. Smith, Daniel W., and Henry Somers-Hall (Eds). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lyotard, Jean-François.

Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime. 1994. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Enthusiasm: The Kantian Critique of History. 2009. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Marchant, Oliver.

Post-Foundational Political Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau. 2007. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Marion, Russ.

The Edge of Organization: Chaos and Complexity Theories of Formal Social Systems. 1999. Longdon: Sage.

Nancy, Jean-Luc.

The Experience of Freedom. 1993. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Nesbitt, Nick.

"The Expulsion of the Negative: Deleuze, Adorno, and the Ethics of Internal Difference," *SubStance*. 2005. # 107, Vol.34, No. 2. Pp 75-97.

Nietzsche, Friedrich.

The Gay Science. 2001. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rancière, Jacques.

Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy. 1999. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

"Is there a Deleuzian Aesthetics?" 2004. *Qui Parle*. Vol. 14, No. 2. Pp

The Flesh of Words. 2004. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

The Emancipated Spectator. 2009. New York: Verso.

Chronicles of Consensual Times. 2010. London: Continuum.

Althusser's Lesson. 2011. London: Continuum.

The Politics of Literature. 2011. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Stathausen, Carsten (Ed).

A Leftist Ontology: Beyond Relativism and Identity Politics. 2009. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Valentin, Jeremie.

“Gilles Deleuze’s Political Posture,” *Deleuze and Philosophy*. 2006. Constantin V. Boundas (Ed). Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press.

Žižek, Slavoj.

Organs without Bodies: Deleuze and Consequences. 2004. New York: Routledge.