DELEUZIAN CONCEPTIONS OF TRUTH

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“Everything is subjective,” you say; but even this is interpretation. The “subject” is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is.— Finally, is it necessary to posit an interpreter behind the interpretation? Even this is invention, hypothesis.

In so far as the word “knowledge” has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is interpretable otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings.—

“Perspectivism.”

--Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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by
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In this analysis I intend to explicate in a critical manner the concept of “truth” as formulated within the philosophic framework of Gilles Deleuze. The main text I will focus on in coming to understand Deleuze’s “truth” is his *Proust and Signs*. This work, while being devoted towards understanding Proust’s *A la Recherche du temps perdu*, is not just an explication of Proust’s own thought but is rather Deleuze’s own thinking within the Proustian “world.” Deleuze will argue that Proust’s Search is a search for truth, which is derived entirely from the multiplicity of signs and their relationship to the different lines of time. In order to further understand what Deleuze’s conception consists of, I will look to Alain Badiou’s criticism of Deleuzian thought as presented in his *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*. I hope to show that Badiou’s characterization of Deleuze as a Neoplatonist is a misreading. In order to do this I will investigate into the greater Deleuzian canon, as well as contemporary commentators and critics, in order to show that the conception of truth is intimately related to the multiplicity of signs, and the “essence” of which they are a product of. I will show that contrary to what some commentators and critics argue, truth is not only important for Deleuze’s ontology, but absolutely fundamental.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: A QUESTION OF PRODUCTION

This investigation aims to understand a way in which *it* is indeed at work everywhere functioning at all times.¹ What do I mean by “*it*” in this instance? For the present purposes, *it* shall be approached through an understanding of the conceptualizing of truth. But what exactly is such a concept as the “truth?” Is the actual aim of philosophy and philosophic inquiry “truly” aimed at discovering and appropriating the truth in order to accumulate knowledge? Or is philosophy now being directed with a different pursuit, with an entirely new series of questions and methods of inquiry? Perhaps there has never been an age in which such questions carried as much weight as they did as at the end of the twentieth century. With philosophy having seemingly exhausted its ability to work within the traditional realm of questions, as Martin Heidegger famously declared, it was being asked as to whether philosophy had reached its end. One thinker who refused to accept such a conclusion was Gilles Deleuze. In an attempt to revitalize the “wonder” and power behind the creation of concepts, Deleuze wrote to make philosophy dangerous once again. It is the attempt of this paper to come to a clearer understanding of what Deleuze was creating while conceptualizing notions of truth, and understand the further consequences that such a

¹ This is, of course, an allusion to the infamous opening lines of *Anti-Oedipus* “It is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times it fits and starts.” Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 1.
conceptualization implies for philosophy and thought.

In order to understand more fully Deleuze’s conception of truth I shall be using various writings the philosopher produced. The main text of which Deleuze himself was the “sole” author and which will provide much of my conceptual explication towards understanding truth will be his *Proust and Signs*. In this work Deleuze writes that the “Search” of Proust is one that is oriented towards the truth. But such an orientation will be shown not to be one of appropriation or that of knowledge as such. This orientation will instead be understood through our ability to conceptualize, and thus our relationship with “truth” will not be understood as relating to some pure “entity” existing independently of our ability to conceptualize it. Throughout the analysis it will become more evident how truth in Proust’s Search, and likewise throughout all of Deleuze’s writings, cannot be understood in terms of something corresponding towards accurately representing states of affairs in the world. The truth that occurs throughout the Search and that which is fundamental to Deleuze’s conceptual “framework” is instead some “thing” active in its power of differentiation. This “thing” that is active in its power to differentiate is the ontologic

2 Throughout this investigation there will be numerous occasions for certain words to be framed by “scare quotes.” In most instances, all I mean by using such scare quotes is to call attention to the different ways such words can be used. For instance, in coming sentences knowledge has definite ties to what is normally understood as truth. And I have not removed the possibility of knowledge from the Deleuzian framework. So there does seem some relationship between the conceptualization of truth that will be developed and knowledge/accuracy. However, I will argue against the necessity of this claim throughout the paper, and thus do not want to allow the reader to find too much familiarity with the traditional relationship between truth and knowledge/accuracy.

3 It is important to note that for Deleuze, we are never simply a sole “ego” that is purely responsible for our actions or productions. Rather, we exist as multiplicities; we embody a multiplicity of forces that give rise to the “image” of a stable author. We shall investigate this concept in due time.

4 While never explicitly explaining as to why Deleuze capitalizes the “Search” of Proust, I suspect such a capitalization is due to the encompassing project that Proust’s work embodies; for Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu* is not merely a plot driven novel seeking to understand one narrator’s love life. As Deleuze reads the work, Proust’s Search is instead an investigation that is oriented towards the productive power of truth, and all of the effects of such a production.
“ground” that permeates throughout all of Deleuze’s writings. This “ground” is not “Being” as the philosophic tradition has usually attempted to approach the problem of truth. Instead, for Deleuze, that which is truth is that which is pure becoming and constantly displaced in its ability to “found” the world.

Now we must not begin by misunderstanding what such a “thing” can be. The truth is no thing as such. It is not localizable or definite within the world. Similarly, it is not dependent upon any conscious being being able “accurately” to relate, understand, or “know” the world of which she is a part. I shall, in due time, come to demonstrate that Deleuze’s world of constant flux and becoming will not allow us to locate the truth with any utter certainty within any specific entity or corresponding relationships within the world. Rather, I shall show, that truth is that active differentiating power which gives rise to all entities, signs, and relationships within the world. And it is these signs, as we shall hopefully soon see, which have a unique location within Deleuze’s ontology by expressing and thus revealing the fundamental ontologic power of active difference that the truth is. Some of these signs will be privileged in more “accurately” conveying truth as difference, but all of necessity partake in the productive power that is fundamentally grounded upon an ontology of difference.

But it is not enough to merely state that truth within one of Deleuze’s works carries this weight or productive power. By looking into Deleuze’s co-authored work with Felix Guattari, What is Philosophy?, I shall show truth to have a fundamental importance in that it is what produces and creates thought. A central component to my analysis will be addressing the question of how it is possible to understand such a productive power, which not only produces signs which are indicative of truth as pure difference, but also how thought and the
creation of concepts occurs. This being said, it is a constant difficulty while interrogating Deleuzian concepts to limit the investigation to one sole concept or term. As Claire Colebrook writes with respect to Deleuze, “No term in his work is capable of being defined in itself; any single term only makes sense in its relation to the whole which it helps create.”

Despite this difficulty though, I shall attempt to limit this analysis to those concepts and terms which are only most immediately applicable to understanding “truth” as Deleuze writes of it. Nevertheless, this analysis will not be able to offer a fully comprehensive understanding of all of Deleuze’s conceptual framework, despite the interrelatedness of all the constitutive elements.

Once I have been able to demonstrate how conceptualizing truth as an ontologically productive differentiating “agent” that produces the world of constant flux and becoming is central to Deleuze’s writings, we can hopefully see how others have attempted to understand such concepts. But we should never lose track of the conceptual basis we have established: that truth is no longer equivalent to “accuracy,” “correspondence,” or “representation.” The only way in which truth can be thought quantifiable in any way is only by virtue of the different ways in which truth is expressed through the different signs. But I should be careful here not to create much of a hierarchy within Deleuze’s philosophy. I shall find within Deleuze an immediate refusal to acknowledge a sole location, entity, or sign in which truth is most immediately or purely conveyed. Seemingly truth is locatable everywhere and at all times, in that it is what has produced the current state of affairs throughout the world. All signs, and thus all expressions of truth, intersect in their ability to convey “meaning.”

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Likewise, the temporal relationships that we normally tend to think of (past, present, future) will begin to conjoin and intersect throughout the different signs. All of this complexity will ultimately result in an understanding of truth that is one of constant and active differentiation, in which seemingly all power converges -- not into a stable singularity, but rather into pure difference itself. It is important to understand that what such a “pure difference” entails is not mere relational differences, or formal differences, but something much closer to the ontologic “ground” from which beings come.

It is this understanding of truth which has been called into question by other readers of Deleuze. Alain Badiou has attempted to understand Deleuze to be a Platonic philosopher of the One; seemingly placing Deleuze within a conceptual framework that finds stability and truth as identifiable “behind” the different signs throughout the world. This investigation will ultimately come to agree with some of the interpretation that Badiou offers with respect to his understanding of Deleuze’s truth, but I shall ultimately disagree with the One that Badiou argues Deleuze is a proponent of. Interestingly though, understanding Deleuze to be a philosopher of the One is not entirely controversial. Deleuze himself will use language of “the One” throughout his writings. And considering the fact that Deleuze takes the Nietzschean challenge of the reversal of Platonism quite seriously, it is not altogether improper to find traces of Plato’s thought within Deleuze. In fact, I will suggest that Plato’s Parmenides can be one way of approaching the pure difference that is a fundamental power in creating the world. But to attempt to Platonize Deleuze in such a way that makes him a philosopher of immobility will hopefully be demonstrated to be a misreading. I shall instead argue that Deleuze is quite literally a philosopher of immutable mobility. There is of course a
difficulty in giving an exhaustive account of what terms such as “pure difference” mean. I hope though that by the end of this paper, it will be clear that Deleuze has been reacting against the traditional foundation of “identity” by undermining it with discussions of difference which are more ontologically fundamental than principles of identity. This is of course not difference understood as the negation between identities, but rather something much more positive in its ability to found relationships.

In helping my explication and defense of Deleuze against Badiou’s reading I shall be using more contemporary literature from Claire Colebrook, Jean Jacques-Lecercle, Brian Massumi, and Todd May. All of these thinkers are attempting to offer a clearer understanding of what Deleuze is saying throughout his writings, and as such their works will prove quite helpful in providing support for the reading offered in this analysis. Most importantly will be the clarification of the sign and meaning offered by Lecercle in his *Deleuze and Language*. We shall find that the pure power of difference, which shall be denoted by different terms throughout Deleuze’s own writings, and which we shall come to denote by “truth,” operates throughout all levels of Being. As previously noted, this is a difficulty in writing on Deleuze in that the different terms and concepts necessarily relate and are never “stand-alone” concepts. This is most strikingly evident in language, in that the semiotic relationship between the signifier and signified will always be displaced by the active power of difference that never allows the signified to be locatable by the signifier. There will always be a resistance by the signified that has been produced by the pure differentiating “agent,” in that it cannot possibly be contained within a signifier. All of this shall hopefully be demonstrated throughout the analysis, while using these secondary sources to our advantage.
Finally, I shall turn to other philosophers and critics that attempt to understand further the implications and writings related to the truth as conceptualized by Deleuze. I shall find some merit within these analyses, but ultimately I shall be hesitant to regard all of the questions related to Deleuze’s truth as being of value. Some, it shall appear, are more properly related to an understanding of truth that Deleuze does not accept and that is more traditional in approach.
CHAPTER 2

IMAGE OF THOUGHT

In the preparatory remarks I acknowledged that truth is not only what gives rise to the entities and signs within the world that we encounter, but also thought itself. How thought has taken shape throughout not only the history of philosophy but throughout all of thinking is denoted by the different “images of thought”.\(^6\) In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari address the concept of the “image of thought” explicitly with regards to truth and what thought is. They attempt to separate themselves from the traditional notion of truth, which is not just one of representation and correspondence, but of a will to truth:

The relationship of thought to truth in the ambiguities of infinite movement has never been a simple, let alone constant matter. This is why it is pointless to rely on such a relationship to define philosophy. The first characteristic of the modern image of thought is, perhaps, the complete renunciation of this relationship so as to regard truth as solely the creation of thought [...] As Nietzsche succeeded in making us understand, thought is creation, not will to truth.\(^7\)

It is not altogether clear what truth’s relationship to thought is from this quotation. In fact in a certain respect Deleuze and Guattari seem to be attempting to distance their understanding of thought from truth altogether. However, if we keep in mind what Deleuze and Guattari are rejecting it may be easier to interpret. Truth, as the philosophic tradition understands it, is

\(^6\) I shall explain more explicitly in later sections of this investigation what is meant by “images of thought”; For now it is enough to understand “images of thought” by the different ways in which thinking understands and attempts to conceptualize the world.

what Deleuze (in borrowing from Nietzsche) denotes by the “will to truth.” Such a “will to truth” is what philosophers have always sought to “uncover” by constructing complex systems of thought and approaches. It is this “simple” relationship of thought to truth that must be renounced. Deleuze and Guattari are making a clear remark with regard to what they understand truth to be: creation of thought. And this relationship between thought and truth is not one directional, for as we see above thought is likewise creative and not merely a will towards “truth.” I shall keep this rejection of the traditional notions of thought and the will to truth in mind throughout the investigation, for the conceptualization of truth that shall be advocated is radically different from that pertaining to the “tradition.” Such an understanding of truth seems to address one of the opening questions of this investigation with respect to the task of philosophy. It no longer seems appropriate to regard philosophy, as creative thought, to be motivated towards “uncovering” the truth.

The will to truth must be regarded as a conceptual error for Deleuze. A will to truth attempts to establish methods for interrogating thought. This is, of course, the approach of the tradition: to establish methods by which we will attempt to establish questions (and discover answers) that are appropriate for thought to think. But as Deleuze and Guatarri continue, “If thought searches, it is less in the manner of someone who possesses a method than that of a dog that seems to be making uncoordinated leaps.”8 The metaphor of the dog here is to call our attention to the idea that thought does not systematically approach the world through a preconceived schematization, but rather appears to wander in much the same way as a dog does while sniffing throughout a room. This is not to say that the will to truth is

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8 Ibid., 55.
an illusion. The will to truth is real insofar as it has been employed throughout the tradition of philosophy. But acknowledging its historical presence is not the same as guaranteeing its “accuracy” of relating to, or capturing, the truth of becoming or production.\(^9\) And in another sense, there is always a “will” \textit{towards} truth occurring within thought, insofar as it is involved in the productive power of thought that is also the productive power of truth. The problem with the “will to truth,” however, seems to lie in the tradition’s tendency to allocate this will to one sole thinker, and this thinker’s ability to discover the “hidden” objective truths of the world. As Colebrook writes with regard to Deleuze’s understanding of thinking, “Thinking is not something that ‘we’ do; thinking happens to us, from without. There is a necessity to thinking, for the event of thought lies beyond the autonomy of choice.”\(^10\) In discussing the link between Foucault and Nietzsche, Deleuze himself writes:

\begin{quote}
There is a criticism of truth, framed by asking what “will” to truth is implied by a “true” discourse, a will the discourse can only conceal. Truth, in other words, doesn’t imply some method for discerning it but procedure, proceedings, and processes for willing it.\(^{11}\)
\end{quote}

In a way, this coheres with the investigation into the numerous signs that compel us towards the truth (events) that Colebrook is discussing. Each sign implies a different process by which the pure difference makes itself known. Of course, there is a proliferation of different signs that produce the different wills we may “adopt” in order to establish methods. But acknowledging a will to truth is not the same as advocating its ability to “capture” the truth

\(^9\) How this is so is admittedly not altogether clear at this point in the investigation. It is my hope that by the end of this paper, I will have made clearer how thought as creative production is truth as Deleuze conceptualizes it. Briefly, the main complaint against the will to truth is the attempt to set truth into a stable structure in which we can seemingly relate and know it “objectively,” which is not active in its power of production and flux.

\(^{10}\) Colebrook, \textit{Gilles}, 38.

as “infinite movement.” This shall become clearer when I turn the investigation explicitly towards the sign itself. However, it is evident that a “will to truth” as the philosophic tradition has attempted to approach the world is not what Deleuze is conceptualizing. Such a traditional approach is too enwrapped with thoughts of “transcendence.” Deleuze’s approach and his conceptualizing of truth, are entirely against transcendental notions of reality. There is no traditional Truth that exists outside of the world that we can relate to through our intellect or reason. The “will to truth” that attempts to transcend out of the world to some higher “realm” of Being is exactly what we must avoid when attempting to think along with Deleuze.

But what of the encounter that produces an “image of thought?” How is such an image of thought to become present to us in compelling us towards the search for truth? As Deleuze and Guatarri themselves ask, “What violence must be exerted on thought for us to become capable of thinking; what violence of an infinite movement that, at the same time, takes from us our power to say ‘I’?” The violent encounter is a central theme towards the conceptualizing of not only thought, but of conceptualizing truth as well. I will return to this violence in the investigation dedicated to the Search of Proust, but it is important to note here that the encounter has an extra emphasis of the “infinite movement.” And it is seemingly through this infinite movement of thought that we arrive at an “incapacity” of thought,

…which remains at its (thought’s) core even after it has acquired the capacity determinable as creation, then a set of ambiguous signs arise, which become diagrammatic features or infinite movements and which take on a value by right, whereas in the other images of thought they were simple, derisory facts excluded from selection.¹³

¹² Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 55.

¹³ Ibid., 55.
From our investigation related to the Search of Proust, I shall come to show how such “ambiguous signs” can be understood as artistic signs. Of course this is not to say that these are the only signs available to Deleuze, but I shall demonstrate that we are justified in the privileging of the artistic signs in my reading. And to establish my understanding of the Search within the rest of the Deleuzian canon, what else could this infinite movement within thought be but the differentiating element within language, or the individuating essence?

While I have acknowledged that there is most certainly an established relationship between thought, creation, and truth, I have not fully related what is meant by the “image of thought.” I shall now attempt to clarify what Deleuze means by such a concept, while relying on the interrelatedness and clarifications of everything that has thus far been discussed. An image of thought seems to be not only the approach, but the method by which “thinking” attempts to relate to the world. As John Marks writes in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, in studying images of thought Deleuze is doing an investigation that is “different from a history of thought, in that it does not subscribe to the notion that there is a narrative development in thought.” Images of thought, on the other hand, are the ways by which thought has come about through its creative ability to conceptualize and relate to the world. In discussing thought this way, we must keep in mind what has been already discussed thus far. Thought is not something that a person “does” by some autonomous “will” or purposeful decision. As previously discussed, “thinking happens to us, from without.” It is through concepts that thinking is able to relate itself to us, as thinkers. Colebrook is once again helpful in clarifying this conceptualization. She writes, “The concept is an impersonal creation precisely because

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it is not the expression of what ‘I think’; it is an attempt to create thought beyond any already given ‘I’ or ‘subject’.”15 It is of course the task of philosophers to create such concepts, and thus images of thought, that “embody” this creative flux that is thinking. It appears that those thinkers that are better able to understand pure difference, and the constant becoming of the world, are those that have developed more effective images of thought than those that have attempted to create transcendental images which extend beyond the immanent world into some realm which is only apparently “real.” Of course there are not only traditional transcendental images of thought that are problematic for Deleuze, but repressive images of thought (Freud), and all others that could be said to be “fascist” in their operations. Deleuze advocates the conceptualizing and creation of thought that is “fluid” or active in its ability to create and push “to the limits.” But why should one accept such a conclusion regarding the effectiveness of such conceptualizations?

If philosophy is the creation of concepts, and the proper question for philosophy is not “what does it mean?” but rather “how does it work?”, then we are already engaged in an understanding of production.16 I will be granting Deleuze the assumption that the proper question for philosophy is an investigation of how concepts are working, but I have some reason for allowing this assumption. Insofar as we continue to ask questions of purpose, or origin, we are seemingly “trapped” within a traditional notion of thought and power. The Deleuzian schema does not permit us to search for origins as such. For as I shall hopefully come to more fully demonstrate, the origin is not some “thing” about which we can have a definite or “truthful” conviction. But even without coming to agree with Deleuze on his

15 Colebrook, Gilles, 26.

16 Deleuze, Negotiations, 8.
ontological conceptualization of truth, there is a greater reason for understanding truth in terms of production. For the production “of” truth is a production of forces. And I should be careful to note here that the truths “of” production are not some locatable objects within the world, corresponding to some grander Truth from which the production came. But rather, says Deleuze, the productive forces themselves, as constant differentiating fluxes of force, are themselves truth.

The hesitation to pursue questions of the purpose of concepts with regards to philosophy is not an explicit rejection of meaning as such. However, there seems to be a strong resistance to pursue questions of purpose when the apparently fundamental ontological question seems to be how the concept under investigation came to be in the first place. Asking why a concept is believed to be the case now begins to take a different form: How is it that such a concept came to be believed in the first place? This “historical” account of the fluctuations of thought, and power, is perhaps the greatest point of agreement between Deleuze’s ontologic writings and Foucault’s genealogical method. This is of course not to say that Deleuze and Foucault completely agree with their metaphysical or epistemological conceptualizations of the world. But Deleuze does call to our attention the ways in which force operates within Foucault’s philosophic conceptualizations with regards to truth, and specifically the relationship between the categories of power and the categories of knowledge.

Now it is not my intention here to attempt an understanding of Foucault and where he agrees or disagrees with Deleuze, but there is a point of interest that I should note before moving on. Both of these categories (of knowledge and power) and the fluctuations of force
between them are ways in which institutions come to integrate power-relations. However, what is most interesting for the present investigation is understanding that it is the fluctuation of force between these two categories that “makes truth a problem.”17 For if truth were not force, and were not a process of production but rather some “thing” that can be properly known and understood, it would seemingly be only a matter of time before we could come to relate to the truth as something appropriated and “known.” And perhaps there is an ontological framework that can grant us the ability to “know” Truths within the world. But this is an entirely non-Deleuzian conceptualization of the world. This is not to say that knowledge has been trivialized or become utter skepticism; rather the knowledge claims we have seeming justification for believing must likewise be understood in terms of production. Here is where we get the seeming problem of truth: How is it possible that conceptualizations of the world come to be, and how are such concepts operating between the different categories of power? And it is this problematizing of truth which is most important for the beginning of my analysis: How does truth become a problem?

Assuming that we can at least understand the motivation for understanding Deleuze’s conceptualization of truth in terms of production, we need not entirely disregard the philosophic tradition. When it comes to a traditional philosophic question pertaining to truth, we too must ask how any such notion of truth is produced. If we look for the meaning “behind” claims of truth, we have begun to work within the traditional confines of philosophic investigation (transcendence). But of course the first question in coming to investigate into the production of truth pertains to what causes us to pursue such a question.

It is therefore the current task to investigate what this encounter is an encounter with: the sign.

Why the sign is of such fundamental importance to the production of truth will be explored later and given its own proper inquiry. But first I should attempt to clarify what Deleuze means by the concept of “sign”, and perhaps I shall begin to show why it is so fundamental. For within Deleuze’s understanding of the world, we cannot help but encounter signs constantly and at all times. And this is useful for helping begin to understand the conceptualization of truth I understand Deleuze to be formulating: one of production. Now this may strike one as conceptually obtuse or absurd, but perhaps it is not too radical of a thesis. If truth is the ontological production of differentiation, “present” for interpretation “within” the multiple signs throughout the world, it begins to appear that all instances of production or any such “situation” is an instantiation of truth.

I shall claim that this conceptualization as not only the main thesis of my investigation given an ontology of difference that Deleuze is attempting to put forth, but one that is actually evident throughout the world. Insofar as a situation has come to be, there is a certain “truthfulness” to the situation. This is not to say that the truth of the situation is understood in terms of “accurately” capturing the situation at hand. Rather, the truth of the situation should be understood as the very fact that it has come to be, through a process of radical becoming, based upon a “ground” of difference that is largely ineffable. But the importance of the sign by means of which this process is interpreted is to be found in the type of sign we encounter. For, as I shall soon show, some types of signs relate the ontological power of differentiation (truth) “better” than others. Now perhaps we can anticipate some
tension in this interpretation of truth, in that I am seemingly beginning to construct a
hierarchy of signs in terms of “capturing” the truth. On this point I, and seemingly Deleuze as
well, must concede that there is a hierarchy by which the pure power of difference is
expressed in better ways than others. This is not to say that truth as pure difference will not
be found in each and every one of the different signs, but rather some signs will express what
such a conceptualization is in a “clearer” and more immediate manner.
CHAPTER 3

WHICH DELEUZE?

Deleuze’s concern with signs and the ways in which they work, and with the paths of understanding that they compel us towards run throughout the entirety of his writings. But there are differences in his concern depending on which Deleuze we are attempting to investigate. Deleuze the “philosopher” is not concerned with the same conception of signs as the Deleuze/Guattari philosopher. It will be to our benefit then to understand which Deleuze and which conception of the sign I am attempting to investigate when coming to look at the production of truth.\textsuperscript{18}

In time I will explain the various signs that Deleuze finds apparent within the world. But first some comments from the philosopher himself will serve to begin the discussion. In discussing his views on cinema, Deleuze begins to describe signs as concepts. He notes that, “It’s signs that realize Ideas. Images, in cinema, are signs. Signs are images seen from the viewpoint of their composition and generation. I’ve always been interested in the notion of a sign.”\textsuperscript{19} Now I will not focus this investigation on Deleuze’s cinematic concepts as such (although it is my hope that in coming to investigate signs I will of course be able to apply this analysis to further clarify Deleuze’s cinema), but perhaps already we see the tendency to

\textsuperscript{18} In this investigation I will be mostly concerned with Deleuze the “philosopher”; this is not to say that I shall ignore the “war machine” co-author - quite the contrary. But the language I shall be using throughout this investigation shall not always offer itself to both “Deleuzes.” See below, in particular the discussion related to “interpretation.”

\textsuperscript{19} Deleuze, \textit{Negotiations}, 65.
regard signs as intimately involved in a process of production: as viewpoints of the “composition and generation” of images. And as Colebrook writes, further defending the claim that signs as a “product” are related to this differentiating power, “Any actual language or system of signs -- say, modern English -- is only possible because of a prior problem.”20 It is this “a prior problem” that I argue is what we must come to understand the truth to be within a Deleuzian framework.

It is not yet entirely clear how signs are involved in a production of truth. We have merely received a quotation that indicates their presence within the production. Perhaps I ought to turn to the writings with Guattari to get an even more comprehensive understanding of what a sign is. The “war machine” writes, “The sign is a position of desire; but the first signs are the territorial signs that plant their flags in bodies. And if one wants to call this inscription in naked flesh ‘writing,’ then it must be said that speech in fact presupposes writing, and that it is this cruel system of inscribed signs that renders man capable of language, and gives him a memory of the spoken word.”21 This description of what a sign is does not work against what I will come to understand Deleuze to mean in his own “private” writings regarding the sign. But I should note that this excerpt from <i>Anti-Oedipus</i> is working against what Deleuze/Guattari find the “common” understanding of sign to be. We are beginning to trace an understanding of the sign as something that is a “position of desire,” which is derivative of the power of desire itself producing the sign (truth). And of course we should not concern ourselves solely with the “sign” as a written signifier/signified. As Jean-Jacques Lecercle writes regarding Deleuze/Guattari’s understanding of the sign, this is “the

20 Colebrook, Gilles, 20.
21 Deleuze and Guattari, <i>Anti-Oedipus</i>, 145.
sign as they mean the term in ethology, the natural sign that inscribes itself on the body as symptom, or the elementary non-natural sign that marks a territory.” In time I shall attempt to clarify how a sign “inscribes itself on the body,” but I should note that I am not dealing with a concept of the sign as the linguist might. Deleuze/Guattari are very weary of the “tyranny of the signifier” and want to avoid understanding the sign to be something derivative of the signifier/signified relationship.

Keeping in mind this notion of the sign, we can begin to make sense of another instance in which Deleuze describes the “vitality” within writing. The written sign is only one type of sign, but again it may be beneficial to attempt as many different approaches to the concept as possible before I refine and limit the investigation. Deleuze writes that, “Signs imply ways of living, possibilities of existence, they’re the symptoms of life gushing forth or drawing away. You don’t write your ego, your memory, and your illness.” If we refrain from interpreting such a quotation in a literal manner, ignoring the literal usage of the word “imply”, we can further our understanding of the sign as something which points towards life itself. Signs are symptoms of life. These are not merely linguistic “tools” that are used to designate objects or concepts “within” the world. Signs, like images of thought, are “products” that come from “without” by means of the differentiating power that is truth itself.

But why should we entertain such an understanding of truth as one of production? Why not endorse the traditional notion of truth which is one of correspondence between propositions and their accuracy of capturing the world? Have I not unjustly disregarded the

23 Deleuze, Negotiations, 143.
history of philosophy’s conceptualizing of truth? Is not interrogating the truth of a statement with regards to the meaning of which it conveys the appropriate method?

The reason for Deleuze’s apparent disregard for questions of meaning is complex and related to his overall understanding of language as such. It is my task then to investigate Deleuze’s theory of language in order more fully to understand why truth as production is justified. As can be expected, the usage of terms such as “truth,” “meaning,” and “sense” will not always coincide with what will later be meant by such terms. But in time we should be able to trace the different turns throughout Deleuze’s philosophy in order to come to a clearer understanding of how all such concepts are related.

The first open hostility Deleuze seems to have is against attempting to understand logic as the structuring of language. Lecercle understands Deleuze’s hostility coming from an understanding that the term “logic” is not to be understood metaphorically as meaning something like “a systemic construction of the concept of meaning” but as pointing to a process of substitution: what we call logic, “the logic of truth” concerns, if not the relationships between propositions and things (what Deleuze calls “designation”), at least the relationships which hold between propositions (what Deleuze calls “signification”). His concern is not with these two dimensions, but with another, outside the realm of the “logic of truth”: sense.24

Now despite Lecercle’s reading of Deleuze being more concerned with sense than with the sign, I shall not reject this reading outright. For I intend to show that there are direct conceptual connections between what Deleuze seems concerned with in denoting the term “sense” and what we shall be investigating as the original power of essential difference.

24 Jean-Jacques Lecercle, Philosophy Through the Looking-Glass (London: Open Court, 1985), 92.
Deleuze is most certainly concerned with sense, and this comes at no exclusion to the importance of the sign. Sense is related to that which will later be understood as essence, although it is not stated explicitly as such here. It is both what gives rise to sense and the sign, that will make such concepts intimately related. As Colebrook writes, “a word gives order to a sense which pre-exists it.”\(^{25}\) What is most important here in agreeing with Lecercle’s reading of Deleuze is the fact that Deleuze is distancing himself from any conception of truth as one of correspondence between propositions or propositions and things. In a very Heideggerian way, Deleuze is concerned with the ontological basis that gives rise to any possibility of something like the “logic of truth” between propositions.

But why is Deleuze hostile to the “logic of truth” as such? We must continue our investigation into Deleuze’s language while simultaneously investigating his ontological framework. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze gives a strong reformulation of the Stoics’ philosophy in order to investigate into the ontological basis of sense (and thus of the production of truth). As Lecercle notes, “The Stoics, he [Deleuze] claims, discovered that sense or meaning does not reside either in designation (there is no strict correspondence between words and things), or in manifestation (the meaning of a proposition is distinct from the beliefs and desires of the utterer), or in signification (for signification is concerned with the conditions of truth and falsity of the proposition, whereas a proposition may have meaning even if it is neither true nor false).”\(^{26}\) Perhaps the rejection of “signification” should give us pause, in that truth and falsity are explicitly acknowledged. But we must also keep in mind that we are not dealing with the truth and falsity of propositions as such in attempting


\(^{26}\) Lecercle, *Philosophy Through*, 100.
to understand truth as production. Truth and falsity, as formulated above, are more concerned with what the tradition has attempted to understand through a methodological approach (will to truth). Rather, we are attempting to understand what even makes such truth and falsity of propositions possible. Where is the ontological basis for the “logic of truth” to be found? If Deleuze is correct in understanding the Stoics’ conceptualization of sense/meaning as not being solely located to that of the designation, manifestation, or signification of propositions, then where is the sense/meaning to be found?

Deleuze’s language does not become clearer as we investigate further. There is what Lecercle and others understand as “the paradoxical element” at the heart of all of language. It is what displaces meaning between propositions and things, and between propositions themselves. This paradoxical element has a fundamental position in many readings of Deleuze. As May writes: “How can there be sense? How can a proposition have sense? It can do so because the series of differences that is the world and the series of differences that is language can be brought together by a paradoxical element that makes them both converge and diverge.”27 These differences will come to ultimately be what Deleuze wants us to pay closer attention to while investigating the world, and what will ultimately be the “ground” for the production of this analysis. However, we will not attempt to clarify all aspects of what such a “paradoxical element” within language means, or where exactly it comes from as such. But if we take note of some of the implications such an element has, it may work to our advantage when later addressing the essence that gives rise to the numerous signs.

The “paradoxical element” is closely related to the “empty square” (*la case vide*) of structuralism. And how are we to understand the operation of the paradoxical element? Lecercle finds that, “Each element of the structure is defined by its differences from all the others: in so far as it has value [...] it is only an empty receptacle of differences.” Deleuze, according to Lecercle, finds that it is this paradoxical element which organizes the relationships between corporeal things and incorporeal events. I will attempt to clarify in an indirect way what can be meant by such terms as corporeal things and incorporeal events later in our analysis, but we can already anticipate the tension that is occurring within the Deleuzian ontology of meaning. Each attempt by the structural “logic of truth” or of relationships between propositions is of necessity “regulated” by a differentiating agent.

The important concept to take away from this brief analysis of Deleuze’s language is that there is a differentiating agent that gives rise to the understanding of meaning within a traditional or structuralist account of meaning. What such a differentiating “agent” is will be explored in due time. But as Lecercle notes, there are at least two consequences that occur in acknowledging the importance of the differentiating agent that is the “paradoxical element.” The first is that “the point of view of structure is one of representation (each movement of the ‘empty square’ along the structure produces a ‘state of the structure,’ an image of it); and second this representation is meant as a representation for a subject.” I will not be exploring in any great depth the problem with the second consequence as such. But in coming to investigate how signs, meaning, and truth are “produced,” we shall be able to understand Deleuze’s reservations regarding the “subject.” What is clear is that Deleuze’s language is not

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28 Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, 102.

29 Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, 173.
open to representation. As a result, we should not expect his conceptualization of truth to be one of representation either. We must always keep in mind that Deleuze is advocating an understanding of truth that is one of productive forces of desire. There is some differentiating “agent” that gives rise to the possibility of representational accounts of meaning and truth. We can trace where this “paradoxical element” comes from in coming to investigate the sense of propositions, and not necessarily their “meaning” or “truth” as the tradition would. Massumi is correct in writing that meaning is “more a meeting between forces than simply the forces behind the signs [...] meaning is the encounter of lines of force, each of which is actually a complex of other forces.”30 If we are actually pursuing truth within Deleuze’s conceptual framework, or sense as it can be understood, we’re not looking at mere meanings.

But where has the sign been throughout this investigation into Deleuze’s language? Have we not already strayed away from the very thing which we have set out to understand? Not entirely. If we once again look to Deleuze’s interpretation of Foucault, we may perhaps receive some clarification as to why force and production are so fundamental to understanding signs. Deleuze writes, “Foucault’s general principle is that every form is a compound of relations between forces. Given these forces, our first question is with what forces from the outside they enter into a relation, and then what form is created as a result.”31 Now this investigation which is oriented towards understanding the multiple signs may not be dealing with “form” explicitly as such. However, the different types of signs and the forms of the signs themselves can be interpreted in a strikingly similar manner to the understanding


31 Deleuze, *Foucault*, 102.
of Foucault that Deleuze is advocating. The “outside” that is discussed above has a very technical sense within Foucault’s conceptual framework, which does not easily fit within the Deleuzian conceptions. But this is not to say that it is completely unhelpful. The “outside” from which the forces come for Foucault could be understood in a similar way as the essential pure difference that is truth as the productive force of differentiation. Truth is “present” within the “forms” of signs insofar as we can attempt an investigation into the different forces that met and came together to produce the sign that we encounter. Not only does this understanding of truth lend itself in a way for us to keep epistemic claims regarding the world, it also allows us to understand why the different types of signs are so important to understanding the different ways that truth is expressed. For if one type of sign expresses difference in a more “clear” manner, we can seemingly attempt an investigation into the different forces that came about in producing such a sign. Again, it is important to note that the “truth of production” is not some “thing” produced that is True within the world. Rather, the truth of production is that production is truth in its ability to create, produce, and problematize truth and knowledge claims.

Although I have not explored what the multiple signs are as such, I have already begun to discuss the critical elements that give rise to the sign. Throughout this investigation we must always keep in mind that Deleuze is not advocating an understanding of the sign that can be reduced to a simple relationship between the signifier and the signified. If we attempt to work within such a dichotomy we will always fall short, and come up against the “weakness” of such an understanding of the sign. Instead, the sign should be thought of as something produced in a very similar way as meaning is. The “paradoxical element” or the
“differentiating agent” will come to be fundamentally important in attempting to clarify concepts such as Deleuze’s *essence*. As noted by Todd May previously, sense is only possible in virtue of the numerous differences throughout the world that are “regulated” by the paradoxical element. And not only will the sign as such be clarified by keeping such a conceptualization in mind, but how truth is a production involving the sign will also make itself clear.

We’ve acknowledged that the signifier/signified relationship is not fundamental to the sign as Deleuze conceptualizes it. In time I shall demonstrate why Deleuze is justified in his understanding of sense and the production of sense escaping the “representational” signifier/signified. One of the numerous plateaus from *A Thousand Plateaus* is explicitly interested in signs. The title of this plateau is “On Several Regimes of Signs,” and from the title alone we can anticipate the proliferation of signs that I will come to investigate further with regard to the production of truth. But in this plateau and throughout their entire corpus, Deleuze/Guattari are attempting to discredit the tyrannical signifier that has come to dominate philosophical discourse, as well as led to theories of structured egos within psychology. I will attempt an investigation into this criticism, although we should be aware that some of the language used between the Deleuze/Guattari authors will not retain its exact meaning with respect to the language used by Deleuze himself, even though the exact same words will be used. But if we are aware of the concepts that are being created and discussed, we should not have too great of difficulty in coming to understand how all of these writings are intimately bound together.
“We may summarily distinguish three kinds of signs: indexes (territorial signs), symbols (deterritorialized signs), and icons (signs of reterritorialization).”32 The explicit description of the different kinds of signs is not of vital importance to our current investigation. For, as we shall soon see, Deleuze will re-characterize the different kinds of signs with respect to the different projects he is undertaking. What is immediately important, though, is that there are different kinds of signs. It is through this pluralism of the different signs that the signifier/signified relationship will be undermined and removed from its “throne” of dominance. Deleuze and Guattari write, “The question here is not whether there are signs on every stratum but whether all signs are signifiers, whether all signs are endowed with signifiance, whether the semiotic of signs is necessarily linked to a semiology of the signifier.”33 Deleuze/Guattari will conclude that not all signs are “linked to a semiology of the signifier” which is to say, that not all signs necessarily signify some “thing.” Their criticism lies in that a proponent of the signifier/signified will understand the form of content to be a signified, and the form of expression as the signifier. This criticism continues: “Signifier enthusiasts take an oversimplified situation as their implicit model: word and thing. From the word they extract the signifier, and from the thing a signified in conformity with the word, and therefore subjugated to the signifier.”34 Explicitly acknowledging Foucault they write, “The form of the content is reducible not to a thing but to a complex state of things as a formation of power […] We could say that there are two constantly intersecting multiplicities, ‘discursive multiplicities’ of expression and ‘nondiscursive


33 Ibid., 65.

34 Ibid., 66.
The different multiplicities will not be explored as such, as seems to be the trend in discussing this incredibly deep conceptualization of signs, but keeping in mind the multiple powers that come to be and influence the forms of content and expression “behind” the already two “faces” to a sign should give us pause. According to Deleuze/Guattari there is no simple relationship in the sign (that which is signified by a signifier). Rather, there is an infinity of relations, not only of worldly signifiers but of time as well, that are working towards producing the signs that we investigate. It seems possible to understand this intersection of multiplicities as a fluctuation of different powers. And with such an acknowledgment we can begin to understand Deleuze’s insistence on understanding truth as a process of production. It is the mergence of these powers as they have come to be through a process of production, or a process of becoming, that is so fundamental to the conceptual formulation of truth thus far.

But from where does this power originate and how does this production come to produce the signs towards truth? It is the aim of this paper to ultimately come to a clearer understanding of where such questions lead. Perhaps though, it will be to our advantage to clarify further the immediate questions surrounding the sign.

Does the rejection of the signifier/signified relationship commit Deleuze/Guattari to claiming that such a relationship does not exist? No. As Massumi points out, “Theories of the signifier are useful to the extent that certain societies, most notably ‘modern’ ones, do indeed extract the symbolic potential of language.” We should not confuse the potentiality of language to take “form” in ways that may in fact mask its essential becoming, with a

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dogmatic claim that such a form is what is essential to language. Massumi further clarifies that “Signification is inscribed in the essence of language as one of its own potentials: the potential for becoming other than it is (flat).” As previously mentioned, signification between the signifier to the signified is only one interpretation offered by the powers influencing the different forms of the sign. Language is fundamentally change (becoming) within the Deleuzian philosophic schema. The basis for understanding this fundamental change that is essential to language is of course due to the constant displacement between the “meaning” offered by the signifier towards the signified. It is not just a failure on the part of practical relationships between signifier and signified that makes signification inadequate to understanding how language maneuvers in more fundamental ways. It is rather language itself, as expressing the constant “state” of becoming that is essential to truth, and thus to meaning or sense, that causes signification to be inadequate. The form of the sign, regardless of its “shape,” is not what is most essential or fundamental to meaning or truth. It is rather the process as fluctuations of power and constant displacement that is essential.

Massumi once again offers a useful insight here: “For Deleuze and Guattari, change (incorporeal transformation), not petrification, is the essence of language. A linguistic expression implicitly presupposes a continuum of variation between and across thresholds of meaning that are simultaneously thresholds of social functioning.” The interrelation between social functioning and of meaning are fundamental to the radicalization of Deleuze’s philosophy and a politics of activism. Granted the importance of such a “move,” it is not entirely clear yet how Deleuze’s understanding of the sign fits uniquely into the production of

37 Ibid., 44.
38 Ibid., 42.
truth. In fact, despite our attempt at clarifying what and where the sign lies within the conceptual framework of Deleuze, we have yet to provide a positive characterization of the sign and truth as such within such a framework. To this end, I shall turn to Deleuze’s most explicit positive treatment of the sign and truth as such: his investigation into the works of Marcel Proust.
CHAPTER 4

“À LA RECHERCHE”

For Deleuze, the Search in which Proust is engaged is a search for the truth. But of course the question one must ask in coming to understand the Search as being one of a recherche du temps perdu, is how to understand such a seemingly temporal relationship. The temporal importance of the search for lost time is only important in that it indicates the essential relationship that truth has to time. But before we can come to understand the relationship of truth to time, it is important to establish why truth is sought after in the first place. As discussed at some length, in traditional philosophy a notion such as truth resembles something like a “will to truth”; it is of our own volition that we come to contemplate and relate to the truth. We take concrete situations and “voluntarily” abstract out of them in order to relate to the “objective” truth that has come to determine the situation we find ourselves in. But for neither Deleuze nor Proust is the truth, or our relationship to it, to be understood in such a way.

Understanding ourselves as existing within concrete situations and coming to relate to the truth is not incorrect in itself. But rather it is the notion that a voluntary “will to truth” allows us to come to understand the “objective” situation which is problematic. We are rather determined to search for the truth in terms of our concrete situations, and only when a certain

violence has occurred impelling us towards interpretation.\textsuperscript{40} The violence that occurs is always in relation to a sign that impels us towards the truth.\textsuperscript{41} As Colebrook writes regarding such encounters, “For empiricism, all of life is a flow of signs; each perception is a sign of what lies beyond, and there is no ultimate referent or ‘signified’ that lies beyond this world of signs.”\textsuperscript{42} This is, of course, in agreement with what has been discussed previously, but it will be beneficial to keep such a conceptualization of signs in mind as the analysis approaches its more refined discussion pertaining to signs and truth. This violence and force that occurs as a result of the sign is what separates “authentic” pursuits of the truth from those of a purely traditional approach in which philosophy has been engaged for centuries. Deleuze finds Proust’s implicit criticism of “philosophic” truths to be that the intelligence that gives rise to the understanding gives only a notion of possibility, and not a guarantee of the force that comes from a violent encounter. In a seemingly paradoxical way, the truth relies upon an encounter with something that provokes us to thought and to seek the truth.\textsuperscript{43} What are these things that give rise to thought and provoke the Search? Signs.

But before I continue on to explicate and interpret what Deleuze understands these signs to be, there is a crucial conceptual component that should be emphasized once again. The signs that impel and force us towards a search for truth are the first elements in a series of production. In order to understand how the sign gives us the possibility of escaping the mere “possible” truths of the philosophic tradition, it must be understood what is occurring in

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 15.

\textsuperscript{42} Colebrook, \textit{Gilles}, 86.

\textsuperscript{43} Deleuze, \textit{Proust}, 16.
the first stages of the production of truth. The production starts from the signs, in that the signs violently impress upon us the accidental “nature” of the encounter and the necessity of the effect of such an encounter. The sign gives rise to the notion of the involuntary, in that we do not willingly produce the signs that will affect us. But, of course, to presuppose that all signs give rise to the same types of impressions or affect us in the same way is to presuppose too much. I shall now attempt to understand further the different types of signs that Deleuze finds within Proust’s Search, and how they relate to the different lines of Time.

This accident of an encounter that gives rise to the necessity of our thought is an encounter with a sign. But the sign is constituted by an object. Does this relationship reduce all of our thought to the epistemology of strictly “traditional” empiricist doctrine? Not necessarily. For the object alone does not constitute all of what composes the sign. To interpret, decipher, and explicate the sign requires an understanding of the plurality of time. And to interpret, decipher, and explicate is thus to be seeking the truth. It is then necessary to distinguish the different lines of time and the different truths that each line “has.” It will be beneficial to recall the earlier discussion with regard to the content of expression that a sign “contains.” For if different lines of time are expressed throughout the different types of signs, then the content of expression is not merely empirical, and thus the production is beyond the mere “worldly.” Deleuze finds that Proust acknowledges (at least) four lines of time: passing time (time wasted), lost time, time recovered, and time regained. Now each of these lines of time will have a sign that is privileged to it, and thus has a type of truth most immediately

44 Ibid., 147.
46 Ibid., 17.
available to that given line of time. But this is not to say that each type of sign and each line of time exclusively participate in their privileged relationships. There is always the pluralism of the different kinds of signs participating in several lines of time, and vice versa.\footnote{Ibid., 17.} As Brian Massumi correctly notes in his \textit{A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia} “The presence of a sign is not an identity but an envelopment of difference, of a multiplicity of actions, materials, and levels.”\footnote{Massumi, \textit{User’s Guide}, 10.} A sign cannot simply be understood as an identity claim, but as a proliferation of forces that have come to produce not only the sign but the encounter with the sign as well. It is this proliferation of forces and their temporal nature that \textit{is} the truth.

And yet we have still not understood the different types of signs that Deleuze finds within Proust’s Search. There are also four types of signs, to correspond to the four lines of time: the worldly signs, the signs of love, the sensuous signs, and the artistic signs. And it will be helpful to keep in mind that signs are not merely phenomena, although phenomena are most certainly signs. As Deleuze himself writes, “A phenomenon is not an appearance or even an apparition but a sign, a symptom which finds its meaning in an existing force.”\footnote{Gilles Deleuze, \textit{Nietzsche and Philosophy}, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 3.} The worldly signs are thought to be vacuous and empty, in that they appear as a replacement of an action or thought, and do not refer to something else but rather “stands for it.”\footnote{Deleuze, \textit{Proust}, 6.} But these signs, in their vacuity have seemingly attempted to cover up their alteration and change.\footnote{Ibid., 18.}
is the signs of love that anticipate the alteration and annihilation of the worldly signs, and thus implicate lost time. This seems to suggest that the worldly signs are most closely related to the line of time that is passing. For worldliness is constant alteration and change and thus passing. And this alteration and change that the signs of love anticipate are most closely related to the line of time that is lost. But have we not presupposed why the signs of love are those which anticipate change and alteration? Why are these signs more privileged in their relationship to change?

This is where the study of Proust becomes most obviously important. For it is well known that Proust’s investigation concerns jealousy. But jealousy is fundamental to Deleuze’s understanding of the signs of love. For the jealous lover looks to the beloved’s actions as containing a signification beyond that which the supposed action “stands for.” The jealous lover always attempts to go beyond the mere static interpretation offered by the worldly sign. And this leads to the further interpretation and understanding of time. For the jealous lover, in attempting to interpret the signs of love from the beloved, is always betrayed by what lies beyond the reach of the lover. The signs of love thus convey a world that is not able to be captured in its totality. Each action of the beloved proliferates and is never completely attainable by the lover. Lost time is thus sought after by interpreting the signs of love.

The third types of signs that Deleuze acknowledges are the sensuous signs. These signs carry within them a sort of ambivalence capable of relating two different temporal moments. For in the sensuous signs, an old sensation attempts to superimpose itself in order
to unite with the present situation.\textsuperscript{52} We are thus along a line of time that is attempting to recover the past and bring it together with the present. In a way, the sensuous signs offer an ability of taking the line of time that had been lost and bring it back into the present. But it cannot be overemphasized that just because these signs have a privileged relationship to certain lines of time, does not mean that these signs and their temporal “strains” exist in a sole and absolute relationship with each other. The signs mingle amongst the lines of time, and thus are engaged within different temporal ways that the signs are presented and affect us. And with such an ability to proliferate and mix amongst themselves, the signs and thus the lines of time are also “revealing” different and mixed interpretations of the truth.

The final sign that Deleuze acknowledges within Proust is the artistic sign, which relates to the line of time regained. What is perhaps misleading is the language that Deleuze uses when discussing these signs and the corresponding time, in that he writes that the work of art (and thus the artistic sign) is able to unite the other dimensions of the signs and time, and thus reveal their truths.\textsuperscript{53} But we must be careful not to misunderstand what this notion of unity can possibly mean for Deleuze. It would be wrong to interpret such a word as meaning something like a structuring of a Whole that consists of parts that are the other different types of signs and the other temporal lines. No such Whole or One exists in the thought of Deleuze. And although he does seem to find some traces of Platonic thought within Proust’s own thinking, Deleuze does not seem to reduce Proust’s different signs and their relationship to truth to be one of pure solitary essences. The system of truth is rather

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 25.
infinitely complex in that the signs intersect and enter into complex relationships with the
different lines of time, none of which is solely reducible to the other.\(^{54}\)

I have understood the sign to be the first element in the production of meaning and
thus of truth. But the sign is always a sign of something. Regardless of which type of sign we
are discussing, the sign has two halves in that it designates an object and signifies something
different.\(^{55}\) The language that later Deleuze will choose to use to express this is best captured
through Massumi’s explanation of content and expression. “One side of the encounter has the
value of a content, the other of an expression [...] Content is not the sign, and it is not a
referent or signified. It is what the sign envelops, a whole world of forces.”\(^{56}\) If we focus our
attention on the objective (content) side of the sign, we are operating with our perceptual
faculties or those of the intelligence. We are thus on the path towards representation, and
have already “sacrificed” the truth “side” of the sign.\(^{57}\) Our perception and our intelligence
both suppose that the truth is to be seen/observed and spoken/formulated.\(^{58}\) But we have not
yet reached the necessity of the encounter if we operate with these faculties; we are still only
relating to these abstract and conventional truths with the possible values they may have.\(^{59}\)

The problem with approaching the meanings of the signs is that we naturally engage
the sign by understanding it through the object that emits it. But the sign itself is “more

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 25.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 27.


\(^{57}\) Deleuze, *Proust*, 27, 29.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., 29.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., 30.
profound” than the mere object emitting it, despite being attached to that object. And the interpretation that the subject offers the sign is never entirely adequate to the depth of meaning that the sign offers, despite the sign necessarily being attached to the subjective associations. So how is it that we can approach the sign in order to relate to the actual meaning and truth the sign is conveying? For the sign is relating the essence. But again, it is critically important not to understand this essence as something like a Platonic Essence. And not all the signs convey the essence “purely.” For the worldly signs, the signs of love, and the sensuous signs are incapable of relating to us the essence, as such. For these signs always fall into the trap of the object and the understanding of the subject’s chain of relations. What we want to be able to “uncover” in the sign is the essence that is “alogical” or “supralogical,” transcending the subjective states as well as the properties of the object. The essence is what constitutes the meaning of the sign, in that it is not only irreducible to the subject that apprehends it, but also the object which seemingly “transmits” the sign.

So what is this “essence” that Deleuze has brought into the conversation? Is it possible that such a philosopher of difference would advocate something as seemingly contradictory to an interpretation of the truth as production? For in using language such as “essence” are we not beginning to conceive of truth as an eternal and stable ground from which signs and meaning comes? Not necessarily. For Deleuze finds the essence to be

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60 Ibid., 36.

61 Ibid., 36.

62 Ibid., 36; The most famous example of this dilemma is the eating of the madeleine in the beginning of Proust’s novel. While the narrator is brought back to his childhood through the involuntary memory that the encounter with such a sensual sign creates, he is still caught within his own personal and subjective “chains.” This is not to say that he is not experiencing some force and movement of truth in virtue of having such an experience. But the narrator has yet to get beyond his own “private” experience of the truth.

63 Ibid., 37-8.
difference, the “absolute and ultimate Difference.” Here we are given our most explicit connection between the discussion of “essence” from Proust’s Search and our intention of understanding truth. For we must not forget that truth as we have thus far attempted to formulate it is the differentiating power that is fundamental to the production of the signs that we encounter. And this ontological difference is not merely the difference between objects, but rather Difference that gives rise to being and what makes us conceive being. The signs that Deleuze finds to have been privileged in relating such essences to us are the artistic signs, in that the artistic signs are the only signs that are immaterial. Such an immaterial sign offers a unity of a sort, in that it unifies the immaterial sign with a “spiritual” meaning. But we must be sure not to fall into a trap of subjectivity. The subject does not reveal or explain the essence, but rather it is the essence that implicates the subject: the essence literally constitutes subjectivity; “Essence is not only individual, it individualizes.” And how are we to understand this individualizing “viewpoint” towards the spiritual meaning of the immaterial sign that is unified in art? Is each subject’s personal viewpoint what Deleuze has in mind in coming to understand the essence? No; the viewpoint is not identified with the person who assumes such a stance, but the viewpoint is the absolute internal difference itself. Each subject is expressing the world from a certain viewpoint, or rather, the viewpoint that is difference itself is expressed through the subject. While this may sound

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64 Ibid., 41.
65 Ibid., 41.
66 Ibid., 39.
67 Ibid., 40.
68 Ibid., 43.
69 Ibid., 43.
quite counterintuitive, it is at the very least consistent with what I have previously attempted to demonstrate. Deleuze is not concerned with representational accounts or concepts. He is rather attempting to conceptualize and allude to that which lies “behind” the mere representational signs, and concepts of subjectivity and “ego.” As May writes regarding difference, “When Deleuze says that difference is behind everything, we should not take him to mean that it is beyond everything. It is behind everything, but still within them.”\(^{70}\) It is this difference, understood as essence, that is the truth.

If we take seriously this claim that essence is the “absolute and ultimate Difference” we are being directed towards understanding the “birth of Time itself.”\(^{71}\) Colebrook comprehends such a claim by understanding that “Time, or the flow of life, is just this pulsation of sensible events or singularities, which we then experience and perceive as an actual world.”\(^{72}\) Deleuze explicitly notes that such an essence of pure difference is what time would consist of, prior to it being deployed or having the distinct dimensions or lines according to which time unfolds and is distributed.\(^{73}\) But can we possibly conceive of such an original time or an original world? Deleuze finds that in works of art we witness a transmutation of substance in that substance is spiritualized and the physical surroundings dematerialize in order to “refract” essence.\(^{74}\) That is to say, we are shown the quality of an original world. Once again, Colebrook assists in that “The supposed real world that would lie behind the flux of becoming is not, Deleuze instists, a stable world of being; there ‘is’

\(^{70}\) May, *Gilles Deleuze*, 82.

\(^{71}\) Deleuze, *Proust*, 45.

\(^{72}\) Colebrook, *Gilles*, 127.

\(^{73}\) Deleuze, *Proust*, 45.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., 47.
nothing other than the flow of becoming.”75 And if we further the notion of essence as being in itself difference, Deleuze finds that in having the power to diversify, and in coming to diversify itself, it must of necessity repeat itself.76 This is due to the fact that difference as being a quality of a world is affirmed only through a repetition that is able to traverse various forms of media and is able to unite different objects: “repetition constitutes the degrees of an original difference, but diversity also constitutes the levels of repetition no less fundamental.”77 As Deleuze has famously put forward in most of his works in regard to difference and repetition, these two “elements” are the inseparable and correlative powers of essence.78

But the essence of which we are attempting to come to a clearer understanding is not only conceivable by the mere contemplation of artistic signs. For the essence displays itself through multiple ways and is indeed polyvocal. Time is understood through not only conceptual faculties noting change but also through our ability to recall and remember. As Colebrook writes, “To see anything as actual also requires the virtual synthesis of time: we see things only by retaining the memory of past perceptions and anticipating and connecting future perceptions.”79 It is through memory that Deleuze is able to invoke a concept of the virtual into Proust, and thus into time and truth. Keeping in mind the insistence of the violence of the encounter, Deleuze finds that voluntary memory does not properly disclose the essence of time or of truth. It appears that Deleuze wants the different ecstasies of time as

75 Colebrook, Gilles, 125.
76 Deleuze, Proust, 48.
77 Ibid., 49.
78 Ibid., 49.
79 Colebrook, Gilles, 127.
we normally conceive them to not only intermingle in the numerous signs, but to be thought of as necessarily coexistent. Conceiving of time as a series of consecutive points is no longer possible, for Deleuze argues that if the present was not also at the same time past, coexisting with itself as past and present, it would never pass into the past.\(^8\) It is this coexistence of the past and the present that composes the virtual. The virtual that is normally overlooked because of voluntary memory and conscious perception that establish a seemingly real succession, instead of the constant coexistence of the virtual that is revealed through violent involuntary memory.\(^9\)

It is important to further explain why the virtual as coexistence is so fundamental in coming to understand what “essence” means for Deleuze, and thus for truth. And we should not forget that we are attempting to investigate into what the truth can possibly mean within Deleuze’s conceptual “framework.” In understanding the virtual in terms of a past and present that is coexistent, we are given an example of the Difference that is the essential. For the powers of essence are expressed in the difference of the past moment and the repetition occurring in the present.\(^9\) Despite this, however, Deleuze wants to retain the most “pure” expression of essence to the artistic signs. This is due to involuntary memory containing a certain amount of “generality” to it that the artistic sign does not have. The artistic sign loses nothing of its singularity in expressing essence; the two objects and their relations as realized in the artistic sign are a result of appropriation determined by essence itself.\(^9\) As Massumi

\(^8\) Ibid., 58.
\(^9\) Ibid., 58.
\(^9\) Ibid., 61.
\(^9\) Ibid., 62.
writes with regard to the meaning of events, and thus of signs, “The meaning of an event can be rigorously analyzed, but never exhaustively, because it is the effect of an infinitely long process of selection determining that these two things, of all things, meet in this way at this place and time, in this world out of all possible worlds.” Artistic signs are far more “dematerialized” in expressing essence than involuntary memory can hope to achieve. Involuntary memory is largely composed by numerous circumstances and contingencies that are grounded within the “world,” and thus remain more subjective. This is not of course to say that involuntary memory exists outside the realm of events that Difference has determined. But Deleuze is insistent that artistic signs still offer more in terms of coming to understand the differentiating essence than involuntary memory does.

It will be wise to recall what has been previously mentioned with regard to essence individualizing the individual. At no point should we attempt to understand Deleuze’s comments as a philosophy of the “subject” in which essence is expressed through an individual’s viewpoint towards the artistic sign. It is important rather, to remember that Deleuze finds the viewpoint of difference itself expressing itself through the subject. It is essence as pure difference which “appropriates” the individual in giving her a viewpoint by which essence expresses itself most effectively: in the artistic sign. And while involuntary memory occupies a central part of the process towards understanding essence -- and thus truth -- it is the artistic sign itself that will “reveal” essence as pure difference.


85 Deleuze, Proust, 64. Again, thinking of Proust’s own example of the madeleine should help clarify this point. The insistence by Deleuze that involuntary memory is not sufficient to “relate” what the essence (truth) is as pure Difference seems to rely upon the claim that works of art do not necessarily have to invoke any personal “chain of relations” that involuntary memory does. The artistic signs are able to push beyond the bounds of the mere subjective experience.
But since Deleuze acknowledges the artistic sign as the sign most capable of expressing essence, we should not forget that truth is a process of production. And while it is in Art that the other signs are included and are able to be offered an explanation, the pluralism of the signs also contains their own privileged lines of time to which essence is also of necessity related. But essence as pure difference needs to be complicated. It is not enough to say that essence is difference; essence as difference is a proliferation of not only types of signs but of time as well. In the concluding remarks to the first part of *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze writes briefly about the image of thought that is offered by Proust. And perhaps in attempting to understand Deleuze’s concepts in a “roundabout” way we will be better equipped to confront the concept itself as such.

Deleuze argues that Proust’s writings are critical of “philosophy” and its “will to truth” that has motivated its traditional pondering. I have discussed that what actually drives thought to think is nothing like a structured methodology as offered by a philosophic will to truth. Thought, like truth, proliferates through its infinite movement. In offering a criticism of the tradition of philosophy, Deleuze finds Proust to be acknowledging that “philosophy, like friendship, is ignorant of the dark regions in which are elaborated the effective forces that act on thought, the determinations that force us to think; a friend is not enough for us to approach the truth [...]. The truths of philosophy are lacking in necessity and the mark of necessity.”

Of course, in including friendship along with the criticism of philosophy we are being given a direct criticism of the philosopher as traditionally understood. In attempting to “remove” the necessity by which thought comes to fruition, the traditional philosopher has been merely

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86 Ibid., 95.
offering a “peaceful” approach and method of “knowledge” that completely misses what is 
esentially true. Deleuze continues, “As a matter of fact, the truth is not revealed, it is 
betrayed; it is not communicated, it is interpreted; it is not willed, it is involuntary.”

If Deleuze’s reading of Proust is “productive,” then it seems correct to find some 
desire navigating through Proust’s writings to reintroduce the danger into thinking. The 
inclusion of friendship is reminiscent of a Nietzschean spirit, in that a good friend is not one 
who removes obstacles and makes your travels easier. Thought too, needs to acknowledge 
the truth of production, which is not easily “communicated” if at all. And I have already 
acknowledged the strength of involuntary memory that relates pure difference in a more clear 
manner than that of voluntary memory (will to truth). Truth -- and thought -- is not something 
that is willed by any subject to investigate and understand. Hence we can see the hesitation to 
want to enter the tradition of the “will to truth” that is philosophy. “Thought is nothing 
without something that forces and does violence to it.”

Perhaps though it will be beneficial to return to one of the first questions introduced 
in this analysis: What is thinking? Thinking as it relates to thought is not necessarily to be 
understood as intelligence. In a way, it is intelligence that is the enemy of thought. For it is 
intelligence that begins the methodology of the “will to truth.” The encounters with the signs 
that begin the Search for truth are not only encounters of a violent nature but are involuntary 
as well. Those encounters which are anticipated and attempted to be formulated are not those 
that best reveal the individuating essence of pure difference (truth); nor does such

87 Ibid., 95.
88 Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, trans. Adrian Del Caro (United Kingdom: Cambridge 
University Press, 2014), 69.
89 Deleuze, Proust, 95.
anticipatory formulation lead one towards thought that thinks. “In Socrates, the intelligence still comes before the encounters; it provokes them, it instigates and organizes them. [...] One must be endowed for the signs, ready to encounter them, one must open oneself to their violence. The intelligence always comes after; it is good when it comes after; it is good only when it comes after.”

If we are not yet satisfied with what has been offered thus far in understanding thought and the “image of thought” in *Proust and Signs*, we can once again look to the larger Deleuzian conceptual “framework.” Deleuze devotes an entire chapter of his magnum opus *Difference and Repetition* explicitly towards the image of thought. And we are fortunate to find that Deleuze is consistent throughout his writings with respect to such a unique concept. He writes “Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental encounter.” Of course, we are familiar with this concept of what forces thought, but Deleuze continues: “The object of the encounter, [...] really gives rise to sensibility with regard to a given sense. [...] It is not a quality but a sign. It is not a sensible being but the being of the sensible. It is not the given but that by which the given is given. It is therefore in a certain sense the imperceptible [insensible]” (p. 139-40). With this Deleuze is beginning to reveal the fundamental ontological question behind the being of the encounter, the being of the sign, the being of thought and thus of truth. But we should be clear not to misread Deleuze, for the “imperceptible” discussed above refers to the ability of recognition to formulate and model the object of the encounter. But by virtue of what it is,

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90 Ibid., 101.


92 Ibid., 139-40.
the encounter is essentially something that cannot ever be wholly formulated. It is only when we approach the encounter with the anticipatory intelligence do we think we have understood the sign wholly. But as we have discussed at some length, the more fundamental relationship towards thought, and thus towards truth, is not something to be appropriated; the intelligence has only apparently encountered such truth and attempted to formulate it.\(^93\) It is rather the violent and forceful that provides the fundamental ground by which the later synthesis of memory is founded.\(^94\) It is our ability to be open and “endowed for the signs” that allows truth and thought as productive becoming to be most evidently recognized.

So what does it mean for thought to be creative and thus more productive in relating to the essence of pure difference? Deleuze insists that philosophy is the \textit{creation} of concepts, and intimately related to thinking. “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.”\(^95\) It is still not clear how the “genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself” is to be understood, but we can at least have confidence in understanding that an image of thought which presupposes itself (the intelligence as previously discussed) is not conducive to creativity (truth). And with these comments perhaps we are seeing exactly what “thinking in thought itself” amounts to: creativity. It then seems appropriate to understand the truth as the creative process that is revealed in encounters with signs. Now, of course, merely to say that truth is creativity does not reveal much explicitly. But if we take into account all that has been discussed thus far, we can see a

\(^93\) Deleuze, \textit{Proust}, 81.

\(^94\) Ibid., 81.

\(^95\) Ibid., 139.
clearer image of thought that amounts to the concept of truth for Deleuze. If essence is pure
difference and is the acting individuating “agent” that individualizes the individuals in
relation to artistic signs; if the “paradoxical element” within language which displaces the
“tyranny of the signifier” between the forms of content and the forms of expression; if the
encounter with the sign is not one of an anticipatory intelligence which attempts to formulate
the sign by means of memory - then all of these aspects of our discussion thus far have been
attempting to sketch what the pure difference which founds “truth” and “knowledge” is. The
essence of pure difference (truth) is that creative power which is never entirely determinable,
and always betrays the simulacrum of which we find within the world.

The main difficulty in attempting to have discussions related to philosophies of
difference is the trend towards appropriating difference. But that is not how Deleuze wants us
to conceive of this fundamental ontological concept of essence as pure difference.

“Opposition, resemblance, identity and even analogy are only effects produced by these
presentations of difference, rather than being conditions which subordinate difference and
make it something represented.” It is difference that produces the problem for thought.
These problems are related to us through encounters with signs, through sense and
sensibility. “It is true that on the path which leads to that which is to be thought, all begins
with sensibility. Between the intensive and thought, it is always by means of an intensity that
thought comes to us. [...] In effect, the intensive or difference in intensity is at once both the
object of the encounter and the object to which the encounter raises sensibility.” And of

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96 Ibid., 145.
97 Ibid., 144-5.
which is the object of the encounter. This would be to have misread our entire investigation thus far. Truth as essence (pure difference) is that which gives rise to the necessity of the encounter and determines the ways in which such difference will be sensed. The intensity is the amount of force that is given by sense, by virtue of pure difference (truth), which provokes us to think.

One foundational aspect to the image of thought is the reason as to why any such thought comes to be. I have acknowledged the seemingly ontological force of difference that produces the image of thought in which thinking occurs. But I have only casually referred to the problem to which thought is “reacting.” And not only have I largely overlooked the problem itself, but the relationship to truth that such a problem has. “A solution always has the truth it deserves according to the problem to which it is a response, and the problem always has the solution it deserves in proportion to its own truth or falsity - in other words, in proportion to its sense.” 98 But with this quotation have I not encountered a contradiction within Deleuze? Are we not now seemingly appropriating truth in such a way that is entirely foreign to any conceptualization of truth as difference? Not necessarily. We must keep in mind that the fundamental question for the Deleuze/Gutarri “war machine” is not “What does it mean?” but rather “How does it work?” And if we keep this in mind, then it seems possible to understand what is meant by the truth “value” of a problem and its solution. If the problem -- determined by the forces of production that is pure difference itself -- that is encountered and experienced through sense is not of any great productive “value” or consequence, then the solution, will of course, not require any great force of truth either. And this seems not

98 Ibid., 159.
only coherent within Deleuze’s conceptual “framework,” but also appeals to observable phenomena within the world.
CHAPTER 5

RESPONSE TO BADIOU

The fear, of course, in coming to use such words as “essence” when discussing truth is the historical and conceptual baggage. There can be no doubt that Deleuze does not want to attribute an entirely Platonic conception of essence to be Proust’s work. But there seems to be an implicit acknowledgment of something like Plato’s Form of the Good in coming to describe the essence that is demonstrated in the artistic sign. After all, it is the essence that individualizes the individual and her relation to the art work by which the sign is emitted. And it is also the essence which is best related to through the artistic sign that the other signs seemingly attempt to “aspire” towards and are enveloped under. Of course, we should be cautious against accepting all such readings while attempting to interpret Deleuze.

Alain Badiou reads Deleuze not as a philosopher of multiplicity, but rather as a philosopher of the tradition; a philosopher of One. He explicitly acknowledges that “Deleuzianism is fundamentally a Platonism with a different accentuation.”99 And despite Deleuze’s insistence on breaking any ontological notion of One into a fracturing multiplicity of power, Badiou finds that all such attempts still fall short of breaking out of the philosophic tradition. I shall attempt to understand Badiou’s criticism of Deleuze, while simultaneously

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utilizing such a criticism to help clarify what we have thus far come to understand of Deleuze’s own conceptual framework while investigating Proust’s Search.

Badiou understands Deleuze’s project to be a direct response to the ontological investigation begun by Heidegger. But according to Badiou, and Deleuze himself, Heidegger did not go far enough in his ontologic investigation and was instead trapped within a “vulgar” phenomenological framework. For it is the goal of phenomenology to begin with consciousness, and thus intentionality, which comes to understand by means of “creating” the significance in the world. But Deleuze does not want to begin with consciousness, but rather problems and the power of the problem that is a result of the productive power of difference. Such emphasis on the problem explains Deleuze’s distance from consciousness, as “problems by their nature escape consciousness.”\footnote{Badiou, \textit{Deleuze}, 24.} And while the charge made against Heidegger may not be entirely fair, it is important to note that Badiou is correct in noting that Deleuze is not interested in consciousness as a starting point towards reaching the essence of which we have spoken earlier.

The problematic concept for Badiou is Deleuze’s “Univocity of Being.” For Badiou, any such notion begins to describe something entirely Platonic, inherited from the philosophic tradition. His reading of Deleuze begins by noting that “univocity does not signify that being is numerically one.”\footnote{Deleuze, \textit{Difference and Repetition}, 208.} This is most certainly correct, and we should recall what has already been discussed earlier: that the essence which is best understood through the artistic sign is not some pure and stable Form that we can come to “know.” But rather the essence is pure \textit{difference} -- a power which begins the production and process of truth. And

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Difference and Repetition}, 208.
  \item \textit{Deleuze}, 24.
\end{itemize}
again, Badiou is seemingly in alignment with what has previously been understood when he writes that “The One (of Deleuze) is not here the one of identity or of number, and thought has already abdicated if it supposes that there is a single and same Being.”102 For if “the One,” as Badiou refers to it, was some such stable identity we would seemingly fall into the trap of representation when confronting the multiple beings within the world. Such a trap is exactly what Deleuze is seemingly attempting to avoid in coming to write about the essence of the artistic sign.

Badiou’s understanding of how Deleuze’s ontology takes up a Neoplatonic “air” is found in his understanding of how Being is “distributed” to the beings within the world. We should be cautious, though, in coming to approach Badiou’s reading, for this difference between Being and beings is already not a distinction that Deleuze himself is wanting to evoke. Badiou writes that “if one classes -- as one should -- every difference without a real status, every multiplicity whose ontological status is that of the One, as a simulacrum, then the world of beings is the theater of the simulacra of Being.”103 This latter claim regarding the simulacra of Being comes from Badiou’s understanding of Deleuze which sees beings as “never having the fixedness or power of distribution and classification,” but are instead “local degrees of intensity or inflections of power that are in constant movement and are never singular.”104 These inflections of power are “only expressive modalities of the One.”105 Because beings are rather only inflections of power that is given to them by Being, beings

102 Ibid., 24.
103 Ibid., 26.
104 Ibid., 24.
105 Ibid., 24.
become simulacrum. This is not to say of course that the simulacra are “copies” of some original as Plato would have it. Rather, these simulacra are what is produced within the process of production between powers of differentiating force that is truth.

Badiou is right to understand Deleuze’s simulacrum as not being of a fundamentally depreciated order, subordinate to the Real. “If Being is said in one and the same sense of everything of which it is said, then beings are all identically simulacra and all affirm, by inflection of intensity whose difference is purely formal or modal, the living power of the One.” I agree with the understanding of Deleuze thus formalized by Badiou. What is puzzling though, is that Badiou finds that Deleuze’s account of a multiplicity is fictitious in the end, never amounting to more than a glorification of the One. But perhaps we can come to better understand Badiou’s implicit criticism of Deleuze if I narrow the scope of the investigation and Badiou’s criticism. I shall now consider the chapter out of Badiou’s work on Deleuze titled, “Time and Truth.”

If we consider the truth as just a mere signification or correspondence between the “beings,” and nothing like what we have previously discussed with regards to Proust’s work, we can understand why Deleuze had written to Badiou personally that he never had “any interest” for writing on the truth. Badiou seems to want to understand “truth” merely as a concept in which Deleuze would hold no interest, in that it does not relate to the virtual. But as we have seen with Deleuze’s interpretation of Proust, we know that truth is fundamentally important, in that it itself is related to pure difference: essence. But instead of the truth, Badiou prefers to focus on Deleuze’s “power of the false.” This reading of Deleuze along

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106 Ibid., 26.
107 Ibid., 29.
with our discussion of the essence from *Proust and Signs* seems in agreement. But there will be subtle differences in interpretation as we progress further in Badiou’s reading.

Badiou’s reading of Deleuze is a controversial one. For even the translator of Badiou’s interpretation of Deleuze notes the uproar that the work caused after Deleuze had died. It is not so much an explicative attempt at understanding and thinking along with the philosopher, as it is a criticism and subtle attempt to promote the strengths of his own philosophic views against Deleuze’s. Badiou, himself a philosopher of multiplicity, understands that the univocity of Being (pure difference; essence) requires “its integral actuality.”  

Now this “actuality” will require much rigor within Badiou’s framework in that he must somehow be able to have a “formal isolation of truths in the infinite deployment of actual beings.” And he contrasts his understanding of the univocity of Being as requiring actuality, versus the virtuality of Deleuze. This virtuality will then come to make the theme of truth as necessarily being that of power. “For truth is coextensive with the productive capacity of the One-virtual, and does not reside as such in any particular actual outcome, in isolation from the rest.” In acknowledging that truth cannot be localized to any particular entity “within” the wold, but is rather “there” in having come to produce that particular entity through all of the creative and productive powers, we are discussing the virtual. The truth is not identical with the virtual, for truth is what gives rise to the flux between the actual and virtual, but it is seemingly “present” “within” the virtual while having come to produce the actual.

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108 Ibid., 58.
109 Ibid., 58.
110 Ibid., 59.
This understanding of truth as a power residing within the pure difference of the univocity of Being (the essential) seems in agreement with what has been remarked with regards to the artistic sign and the production of truth. But we should still inquire further into Badiou’s reading of Deleuze in order to get at what the “power of the false” could possibly mean, and where falsity lies within a Deleuzian ontology. According to Badiou, the difficulty in having come to understand the truth to not be localized in a formal isolation within actual beings is “of linking the anarchy of the simulacra to an immanent affirmation-of-the-true.”\textsuperscript{111} We can already foresee where Deleuze will want to find the most pronounced “affirmations-of-the-true,” i.e., in the artistic sign, based upon his Proust writings. But Badiou complicates Deleuze’s ontology, in that he finds that any such affirmation will of necessity exist within the simulacra of the beings within the world, and thus will exist as an affirmation within “falsities.”\textsuperscript{112} This is where we will find the “power of the false” to first take hold within the Deleuzian framework.

It is in discussing the “power of the false” that we will come to our first break with Badiou’s reading of Deleuze. For Badiou begins to criticize Deleuze for simply stating a tautology in that “the forms of the true will be the false-product of this (virtual) power.”\textsuperscript{113} He then goes on to say that “power of the false” is the Deleuzian name for truth.\textsuperscript{114} But it seems that it is exactly any such notion of “forms” of truth that we must be quick to reject. If we are to take seriously the concept of truth as a productive power, we cannot subscribe to a

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 59.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 59.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 59.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 59.
reading that discusses the “forms” of truth. Of course there is a way of preserving Badiou’s writing here, in that the productive power of truth as pure difference will produce the “simulacra” which are falsities. But to understand that truth itself takes “form” as such falsities is an error. At most, and this is why Deleuze’s work with respect to Proust is so critically important, for in coming to investigate into the “false” simulacrum as a “product” of truth we are tracing truth as production through signs.

Now we must be careful not to misread Badiou’s interpretation of Deleuze. He does in fact seem aware of Deleuze’s insistence in rejecting any localized inception of truth residing in any one artifact. Badiou writes that for Deluze “truth is coextensive with the productive capacity of the One-virtual, and does not reside as such in any particular actual outcome.”115 We are certain that truth does not reside within the empirical world as such, “within” any one simulacrum. But what Badiou means in that the truth is coextensive with the virtual must still be uncovered. For his understanding may in fact lead to such troubling words as “form” in coming to understand truth as productivity, and its relationship to the power of the false. As previously mentioned while investigating *Proust and Signs*, the Search as a search for truth will “point” to the virtual in that the signs point to the different lines of time. And as previously discussed, the virtual (at least in the work on Proust) is related to the different lines of time and their coexistence.

Badiou continues his investigation into Deleuze’s truth by acknowledging the connection between truth and time. Instead of finding the truth to reside in some eternal realm or something resembling the eternal as has traditionally been done in philosophy,

115 Ibid., 59.
Deleuze will want to give primacy to time in order to “uncover” truth. As we progress through Badiou’s interpretation, we should keep in mind the discussion from earlier regarding essence as pure difference, and the virtual as the coexistence of the different lines of time. For in doing so we may avoid falling into the same interpretation that Badiou attempts to put forth.

While Badiou himself does not acknowledge the different types of signs and their relations to the different lines of time, it seems possible to understand his reading of Deleuze with such relations in mind. Badiou gives great importance to the simulacrum and how the “image is referred, as it should be, to its specific being as simulacrum (and not to mimesis), and eternity to the One qua integral virtual, [and] we can understand that, for Deleuze as well, for Deleuze above all, the essence of time consists in expressing the eternal.”

Before we begin to attempt to understand what Badiou has formulated here, let us add one further interpretation he puts forth regarding Deleuze’s truth: “the time-images, which can be situated in the creative power of the All, are ‘volume-images which are beyond movement itself’. This clearly underlines that the profound being of time, its truth, is immobile.”

Recall that the different types of signs refer not only to different lines of time, but are of necessity related to different objects within the world. We know that the worldly signs attempt to cover up the constant alteration and change within the world by “standing in” for them. Perhaps this is the clearest sense of simulacrum that we can understand with regard to Badiou’s interpretation. Of course Badiou is discussing a time-image as a simulacrum, because it is sensible time, but again we can understand how such a “time-image” is related

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116 Ibid., 61.

117 Ibid., 61.
to a sign (the work in particular Badiou is referring to in interpreting the time-image breaks the different signs into many more than the ones offered in *Proust and Signs*). But regardless of whether Badiou is explicitly talking about a time-image or any other “image” related to a line of time, we can still use our earlier discussion from *Proust and Signs* to our advantage. The different signs relate to the different lines of time, and we know that the artistic sign relates to the *essence* as pure difference “better” than the other signs. We also know that the artistic sign in relating the different lines of time, reveals the virtual nature of time itself: coexistence of the different ecstasies of time. Now Badiou understands Deleuze’s virtual to be an inheritance of the tradition, in masking what has historically been understood as “the One.” (I will ultimately reject this phrasing, but for now accept it in coming to understand Badiou’s interpretation.) If we understand that “the essence of time consists in expressing the eternal” to mean something closer to the way in which the essence of time as pure virtuality - *as pure difference* - expresses not just one “line of time” but the plurality of Time itself, perhaps we can reconcile our reading of *Proust and Signs* with Badiou’s interpretation. But the second quotation I have called attention to is seemingly irreconcilable. What underlines the profound being of time, and thus truth, is nothing immobile. In being “beyond movement,” Deleuze is not committed to a mere negation of movement. We are instead discussing something beyond, in that it founds movement: *pure difference itself*, the *essence*.

In the prefatory comments in his work dedicated to Kant, Deleuze himself addresses conceptualizing the foundation of time as immobile. “Everything which moves and changes is in time, but time itself does not change, does not move, any more than it is eternal. It is the form of everything that changes and moves, but it is an immutable Form which does not
change. It is not an eternal form, but in fact the form of that which is not eternal, the immutable form of change and movement.” Perhaps we can empathize with Badiou in his interpretation, for Deleuze does not immediately propose a “solution” to entirely understanding this conceptualization of time. However, we should also be sure not to misinterpret Deleuze as being committed to some entirely immobile “ground” for conceptualizing the becoming of the world, and thus of truth. Perhaps one can object to Deleuze for using such seemingly contradictory language of the “immutable form of change,” but this too does not suffice as a strong criticism. Deleuze is attempting to understand what a fundamental ontological conceptualization of “pure difference” yields. We should not reject his conceptualization of time as “immutable form of change” outright, but attempt to understand how such a conceptualization works towards the production of the “false” surrounding us in the world, and the signs that affect us in directing us towards the truth, as productive and creative differentiating power.

Badiou’s apparent confusion in coming to write on Deleuze’s conceptualization of truth seems to rest upon a desire to place Deleuze within the philosophic tradition. And, of course, there are ways of finding Deleuze to be a rather “traditional” philosopher. But if the way in which Deleuze is a traditional philosopher rests upon an interpretation related to an immobile foundation of truth that expresses the virtuality of the One, we must reject such interpretations outright. Badiou’s understanding of Deleuze, which gives importance to the “power of the false,” seems to be aligned with what we have discussed thus far related to the different signs and their ability to express essence. The signs that are easily identified with

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the mere objects that “embody” the signs are most certainly some type of simulacrum produced by the individuating essence. The “false” objects within the world that are “products” from the productivity of truth as individuating essence also, seem in agreement. Of course we should not understand such “products” or simulacrum as a telos which the productive forces of truth work towards producing. Such a notion would be anti-Deleuzian, and would throw us right back into the philosophic tradition. In fact, in attempting to understand truth as such, focusing our attention on the “falsities” of the world seems a misstep. In some way, we should instead attempt to look at the violence from which essence makes itself most clearly manifest. We have already acknowledged the artistic sign, but there is another source by which Difference confronts us: the problem. But how the problem comes to manifest itself to us will of course depend upon the “image of thought” one is operating with. We have already discussed what the image of thought means for Deleuze, and how it comes to produce traditional conceptualizations of truth such as the “will to truth,” and also how it makes truth itself a problem. What is fundamental to all readings of Deleuze, if they are to be “accurate” in thinking along with the philosopher, is understanding how pure difference (truth) comes to produce the different signs and images we encounter and interpret. Where Badiou seems to begin his apparent misreading of Deleuze is his insistence in making the “falsities” of the world simulacra of a greater One. Rather, the simulacra can only be properly understood as such from a productive power of difference in which truth manifests itself immanently, but never as something representational of a “ground” that is the traditional conception of One.
CHAPTER 6

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Let me now attempt to compare the analysis of Deleuze’s conceptualization of truth and the ontological basis for such an analysis with some contemporary interpretations. I shall turn to an article written by Mohamed Zayani titled “Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and the Total System” in which Zayani attempts to understand the project undertaken by the two thinkers throughout their Capitalism and Schizophrenia series as well as What is Philosophy? While the texts used throughout Zayani’s article have not been the primary texts in composing my understanding of Deleuze’s thinking, it will be beneficial to see if my thoughts thus far can be reconciled with the areas of the co-authored works highlighted by Zayani.

The first quotation to which Zayani calls attention deals with the “negative” definition of philosophy offered by Deleuze and Guattari in What is Philosophy? “We can at least see what philosophy is not: it is not contemplation, reflection, or communication.”119 And we can understand this “negative” formulation considering all that we have uncovered thus far with regard to what philosophy, thought, and truth are for Deleuze; namely, production. We should always keep in mind the distinction made earlier that philosophy is the creation of concepts and not the traditional will to truth.120 Truths are not communicated as such, but rather

119 Deleuze and Guattari, What is Philosophy?, 6.
120 Ibid., 5.
produced from the individuating essence of pure difference. The notion that we can effectively communicate some truth that is Platonic in its stability or relational ability to be “properly” understood is entirely anti-Deleuzian. I am in agreement with Zayani on this point, in that he writes “For a philosophical inquiry to be sound and rewarding, it has to shake the integrity of the essence, problematize the claim to a universal truth, shatter the belief in the sacrosanctity of a transcendental principle, question the idea of an inherent reality, and put to the test the possibility of reducing meaning to a stable structure.”121 And again, I agree with his reading in that “Philosophy is neither a reflection nor a mediation, but a process of production -- a bringing-to-being, so to speak in which the concept deterritorializes itself at the very moment it is created.”122 Now I have not explored the concept of deterritorialization as such, but we can understand what is meant by such a term in that concepts are never “found” in some eternal and stable Truth. We are always adding to them, creating new understandings and relationships to the world never leaving them grounded but constantly uprooted and destabilized in their apparent stability. Truth is not something necessarily quantifiable, although as noted previously, problems “have the truth they deserve,” but rather is understood by the effect the sign creates. Of course the sign is a product of truth as a differentiating power, and we must keep this in mind always while reading Deleuze and his critics. For some critics and commentators some attempt to completely divorce all conversations of truth from the philosophy and ontology of Deleuze, which I reject outright.


122 Ibid., 94.
The interpretation that Zayani offers with regard to the production of meaning, instead of finding its essence to be in communicable power, is aligned with the interpretation I have been offering throughout this investigation. “The whole is not anchored in a verifiable truth, but is instead animated by processes of becoming and acts of return.” Of course, the “whole” is in a sense anchored in a truth: the truth of pure difference and radical becoming. And with this interpretation I am not alone in my dismissal of the interpretation offered by Badiou investigated earlier. Discussions of the “whole” or “One” are always problematic when attempting to understand Deleuze, but there is a way of preserving such traditional terms if we conceptualize difference as being “fundamental” to any such understanding. Zayani continues his investigation into understanding how capitalism as a system is against the understanding of production that Deleuze and Guattari have been attempting to formulate. We will not investigate this aspect of Deleuze’s thought as such, but the implication is an interesting one.

I will now look to a much more recent publication that attempts to understand Deleuze’s relationship between truth and time. While much of this investigation is parallel to the one we have explored thus far, there will be a difference of interpretation eventually. The article in question is written by Daniel Smith, and titled “Temporality and Truth.”

Smith begins his investigation by examining the traditional understandings of time which attempted to conceptualize time as a measurement of change. Deleuze acknowledged how Kant calls all of this into question while he was writing the preface to his work on Kant: “Time is no longer defined by succession because succession concerns only things and

\[123\] Ibid., 98-9.
movements which are in time. If time itself were succession, it would need to succeed in another time and on to infinity."\textsuperscript{124} Now it is not my intention to question whether Deleuze’s understanding of the problem facing Kant and the proposed solution was in fact correct, but rather to attempt to understand where Deleuze understands such a problem’s productivity towards new conceptual “solutions” leads.

Smith’s understanding of Deleuze’s time is seemingly correct. He writes, “time is an empty form that is no longer dependent on either the extensive or intensive movements that fill time; instead, time has become the pure and immutable form of everything that moves and changes - not an eternal form, but precisely the form of what is not eternal.”\textsuperscript{125} And this too seems to add further argument against Badiou’s attempt at characterizing Deleuze as believing in anything like an eternal One of which the simulacra derive their “essence” of falsity. Smith continues, “We cannot even say that the immutable form of time is permanent, since what is permanent -- no less than what is successive or simultaneous -- appears and is perceived in time, whereas the immutable form of time itself cannot be perceived.”\textsuperscript{126} This recognition of time as being the immutable form of pure change that is unable to be perceived is what makes room for concepts of the chaosmos that Deleuze and Guattari put forth. It is the infinite variability of time that renders my understanding of truth thus far formulated as seemingly justified. The essence of pure difference which underlies all interpretations and “truths” within the power of the simulacrum of the false.

\textsuperscript{124} Deleuze, \textit{Kant}, vii.


\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 382.
Smith’s article on Deleuze’s temporality and its relationship to truth ends with a series of questions. And while such a “conclusion” seems appropriate, in that coming to a definite understanding of such an elusive philosopher appears to be inappropriate, I would like to challenge some of the ways in which Smith formulates the questions.

“Speaking in general terms, the true is not the same thing as the real; it is rather the distinction between the real and the imaginary (or between essence and appearance).”\(^{127}\) Now while Smith is right in a certain sense to formulate his reading of Deleuze in this way, we should also be careful here. He is clearly attempting to distance his reading of Deleuze from one which finds the true to exist amongst us within the worldly signs. That much is clear. But it is the latter part of his formulation that causes concern, in that if we are stuck within the traditional lexicon, then the “essence” would not be appropriate to locate truth in either. This of course would be due to the fact that “essence” is usually understood in a very stable and eternal Platonic sense. But if we keep in mind the discussion from *Proust and Signs*, and seemingly the conceptual analysis of pure difference that flows throughout Deleuze’s writings then we should not be afraid of allowing essence to be the pure differentiating power of truth. Now Smith wants to differentiate truth from falsity by acknowledging that truth has a *form*. This is seemingly not incorrect in itself, if we properly understand what is meant by such a form. But Smith does not seem to give a positive definition of what he understands the form of truth to be as such. He rather gives a negative definition by way of noting that it is the false that does not have a form. The false simulacrum that exist amongst us within the world (worldly signs) do not have “universality and necessity” to them; only the form of

\(^{127}\) Ibid., 384.
truth has. And while I have not previously discussed truth with respect to form explicitly, perhaps I can agree with Smith in some ways. If we recall the discussion from the investigation into *Proust and Signs*, I acknowledged that what eventually privileged the artistic sign over the other types of signs was the necessity that such a sign brought with it. All of the signs carry a type of universality with them, in that the differentiating essence has caused them to appear; but only the artistic sign has the distinct and potent ability to convey an urgent sense of necessity with it. And as we previously acknowledged, if we attempt to only interpret the other types of signs, we interpret and judge signs that carry with them a certain type of contingency (the contingency of the sensual signs for instance). This too seems in agreement with what Smith has been understanding the false to be in that “judgments made about it (the false) are by right deprived of all universality and necessity.”

We should take caution here though, and carefully make sure we understand what Smith is saying. For in a certain sense, we cannot agree with the idea that it is possible to make judgments relating to the essence of pure difference. This active power, which causes the signs amongst the world and forces us into the Search for truth, does not offer itself to judgment. If it did we would seemingly fall into the trap of representation, which is not what we should be attempting when attempting to think of pure and active difference. In a way, if we are to form judgments at all they will always be dealing with the false. It is not judgments that Deleuze is concerned with, but rather interpretations. We will return to the importance of interpretation in the concluding remarks, but for now we shall remain within our critique of

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128 Ibid., 385.
129 Ibid., 386.
judgment. This is not in direct conflict with Smith’s reading of Deleuze, although he does not explicitly acknowledge the impossibility of judgments when attempting to investigate into the truth. It is truth itself that determines the judgments we make when regarding the false, but that does not mean we have made a more properly “true” judgment. As Deleuze and Guattari write themselves, “The role of conceptual personae is to show thought’s territories, its absolute deterritorializations and reterritorializations. Conceptual personae are thinkers, solely thinkers, and their personalized features are closely linked to the diagrammatic features of thought and the intensive features of concepts.”\(^{130}\) The importance of the thinker is not necessarily to formulate judgments. A thinker is a thinker by virtue of thought which forces itself upon said individual, necessitating the violent encounter with a sign that begins the productive Search “towards” truth.

This brings us to Smith’s next question, which asks “Who then is the truthful person?” Smith believes that the answer is “someone who would allow their body and soul to be modified only by the form of the true.”\(^{131}\) And who else allows their body and soul to be modified by the form of the true (pure active difference) than the thinker? It appears that the artist is the only other “true” friend to the thinker who allows thought to think within her. Perhaps to attempt to create a distinction between the thinker and the artist is in fact anti-Deleuzian. For it appears entirely possible to read Deleuze’s works as those not only of a complex philosopher, but of a “truly” artistic artist too; as someone who was constantly attempting to deterritorialize the “essence” of what philosophy and the philosopher is. The image of thought that has for so long dominated the tradition of philosophy was likewise

\(^{130}\) Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 69.

\(^{131}\) Smith, “Temporality,” 385.
undergoing radical change with the introduction of the conceptual understandings as formulated and embodied by Deleuze.

The next question posed by Smith is the most problematic for our investigation. In this question Smith is attempting to draw a distinction between time and truth, which does not always seem correct. He is very much concerned with calling attention to the form of time which is replacing the form of truth. But this appears to make sense only if we are discussing the form of time (as that of immutable change) replacing what has traditionally been understood as the form of truth (eternal stability). For within the Deleuzian conceptual “framework” we do not have a form of truth that is anything other than that of pure and active difference, which agrees with the form of immutable change. Perhaps this is where Badiou took his apparent misstep in attempting to converge time and truth into One which is immobile, but we must reject this reading. We do not want to understand the active power of difference as being something of a pure One, but rather radical becoming of multiplicity. The consequence, though, of having challenged the traditional rendering of the form of truth to become that of pure and active difference is that the false now has a power “of its own.” And here we get a controversial interpretation of Deleuze, in that Smith writes “this in no way implies the banal conclusion that ‘everything is false’, which would now be presented as a truth [...] There is no longer either truth or appearance, and the false is no longer presented as being true; instead, the false assumes a power of its own.”132 Now, once again, this seems to only makes sense if we understand the false as the tradition has. For if we work within Deleuze’s concepts, it does in fact appear that we are in a radical world of falsity. We have

132 Ibid., 386.
encounters with signs, which demand interpretation and thought, but that in no way offer anything but a distinct moment in which the power of production has come to a moment of singularity. The power of the false lies in its ability to force us towards thought. This does not in itself reveal any Truth for judgment, but rather allows the productive force that is truth as pure difference to manifest itself “within” the simulacrum.

Smith notes that we should not understand truth to be something “relative,” for it does not go far enough in having challenged the traditional form of truth. But in another way, the signs that manifest themselves for our interpretation towards understanding truth as a power of difference is very relative. In fact, it may be pure “relativity” in that none of the falsities of which we encounter within the world offer an objective interpretation or judgment to be formed. The false is no longer being presented as true, as Smith states, but that does not mean that we can comfortably disregard notions of the relative ways in which the false present their inherent powers by virtue of difference. Again, Smith’s language in attempting to understand Deleuze should be understood as strongly related to the traditional ways in which we understand such concepts. Deleuze himself will adopt many of the traditional terms, such as essence, but this does not mean he conceptualizes such terminology in a similar manner. If understanding time in such a new radical way renders the traditional notions of truth obsolete, it does not commit us towards disregarding language of truth. Todd May, in his commentary on Deleuze repeatedly insists that Deleuze is not concerned with the truth. But this can only be understood if we acknowledge that Deleuze is no longer concerned with the Truth of the philosophic tradition. We must rather understand truth in a radically new way as well as the language in which we discuss such a concept. It now appears that our most
sincere relationship which truth is one of interpretation, and not of a “correct” correspondence of judgments. In our concluding remarks, I shall now attempt to see where such interpretations lead us, and what they imply.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

I have discussed at length the Deleuzian conception of truth as a productive power of difference. Due to such an understanding of such an ontological conception of truth there has been a dissolution of the traditional dichotomy of truth and falsehood. It now appears that the signs themselves, indicative of truth, appear as simulacrum that are in a way “false.” This is not to say that the signs themselves are embodiments of falsity in any traditional notion, but rather that the “location” or correspondence between the current state of affairs and an accurate representation of such affairs is no longer fundamental to conceptualizing truth.

In keeping with the tenor of Deleuze I should ask how such a conceptualization is beneficial to approaching the world and philosophy as a study. Has this not reduced all of knowledge and claims of truth to utter skepticism? It appears not. Earlier I had noted that in conceptualizing truth in such a way we have made truth a problem. Due to the constant and productive force of difference that truth is, and the ways in which the different signs come to be produced, we can now understand in a new way how truth itself is problematic. Truth quite literally produces different understandings, knowledge, appearances, observations,
beings, etc. It is the fundamental (non-)relation which makes our relationships to the different
signs possible and actual.\textsuperscript{133}

And yet is such a metaphysical understanding of truth useful beyond such
problematising? It seems evident that such a conceptualization is useful in coming to make
truth a problem and in coming to help us understand a world of becoming, but is there still
more to “get out of” such a formulation? I have previously discussed how Deleuze wanted to
break free of judgment. It seems possible that with such an ontological conceptualization that
gives power to the “false” we may be able to conceive of a philosophy without “judgment.”
Now, this may be a problematic claim in that Deleuze’s writings (and especially the writings
with Guattari) seem inherently judgmental in that they appear to be advocating not only an
approach to the world but a politics as well. We need not be too concerned with such an
objection, for there is a way to understand how such writings come about based upon
fundamental concepts of difference.

If the signs we encounter all implicate and are indicative of truth as power of
differentiation, we are beginning to create a metaphysics and epistemology which is non-
hierarchal. This begins to explain how we are no longer permitted a platform on which we
are either judge or jury. The fundamental question in coming to understand how power and
force as fluctuation are operating seems inherently non-judgmental. This is not to say our
understanding of how is not interpretive, for we are always interpreting, but rather that there
is no longer a strong justification for thinking that any one view of the world is inherently

\textsuperscript{133} The insistence here in truth being a (non)relation is due to the attempt on Deleuze’s part to distance
himself from any understanding of truth as being a mere relation or correspondence between things “as they
are” and our conceptualizations of them. Truth is a “relation,” but nothing like the more traditional way in
which we usually understand relations to be.
better than another. From this understanding we can see why there is such admiration and praise of Kafka throughout Deleuze’s corpus, in that Kafka had consistently written works in which the judge is viewed in a highly critical manner.

There is a strong hesitancy in the writings of Deleuze (and Guttari) to operate in ways that are products of “fascism,” but this is not to say that so called “fascism” is necessarily “political” or even avoidable. In fact, the goal of Deleuze’s writings does not seem to be to abolish fascist thought altogether, but rather to understand how such “territorializing” frameworks of thought operate and attempt to form hierarchal structures. We have seen criticism above how such structures are inherently flawed in attempting to capture the constant flux and becoming of what is. Perhaps such criticisms serve as enough of a “reason” to be hesitant to pursue such formulations of thought. For we can see that the “how does it work?” of fascism is not altogether useful or productive in attempting to understand the radical differentiating power that appears implicit within the multiple signs within the world.

So what is the benefit then in conceptualizing and understanding truth in the way we have attempted to interpret Deleuze? It appears that interpretation itself is the answer. Deleuze himself writes near the end of the first half of *Proust and Signs* that “We are wrong to believe in facts; there are only signs. We are wrong to believe in truth; there are only interpretations. The sign is an ever-equivocal, implicit, and implicated meaning.” The importance of the sign in the productivity of truth is clear here: there are no longer objective facts that offer themselves to us, there are only the multiple signs. These signs are produced by various and different fluctuations of power, and convey difference (truth) in their own

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ways. The above formulation is not to say that truth as productive power is no longer available for interpretation, but that the traditional notion of truth is no longer appropriate for attempting to understand a world conceptualized upon fundamental difference.

There is one point on which we should be clear with regards to interpretation. In coming to focus our investigation on the “philosopher Deleuze” rather than the “war-machine,” we must acknowledge a slight variation in diction. The interpretation which is openly advocated in the solitary writings of Deleuze is not the same interpretation that Deleuze-Guattari warn against. This is due to the desire to distance themselves from the psychoanalysts who attempt to interpret, formulate, and schematize patients into a structured framework. Such a framework is not actually offering an interpretation, but rather a schematization that from the start attempts to find the patient within such an understanding. It is this type of “interpretation” of which we must be cautious while reading Deleuze and attempting to understand the concept of truth thus far formulated.

There is an immediate objection that can be offered upon denying facts and “truth,” and advocating signs and interpretation. It can be roughly formulated as “Why believe that such a concept is any more credible than the structured notions? Is such a conceptualization itself not merely an interpretation?” To this I must answer that in coming to understand truth as productive difference “locatable” within each differential relationship, we have in fact offered nothing more than an interpretation. This is not to say that it is subservient to the imperialist Truth of a traditional philosophic sense, but rather it is a different method of approaching the problem of truth. And perhaps this is where the strength of such an interpretation truly comes forth. For if we were to be unsatisfied with such a formulation of
truth, Deleuze can still maintain his conceptual analysis in coming to understand any formulated objection. If we were to maintain a more traditional notion of correspondence or accuracy between propositions and the state of affairs, Deleuze can ask not only how such understandings came to be adopted, but why such formulations have been able to maintain themselves throughout the tradition. This is perhaps why the “war-machine” writings are so central to the Deleuzian framework, in that there is a type of psychoanalysis of power fluctuations (so-called schizoanalysis) that can be conducted in coming to understand objections to understanding truth as productive difference. And, of course, we can easily see the alignment with the genealogical project of Foucault, in that both thinkers seem to be aligned in their endeavors of interpretation. The problem is not one of accuracy or correspondence. Truth as a problem worthy of our interpretation is a result of the signs that we encounter due to the productive forces of power that is essential difference.

In my analysis of Badiou’s reading of Deleuze I acknowledged the apparent correct interpretation that gave importance to the false simulacra (signs) while distancing myself from placing Deleuze within a traditional formulation of a Platonic One. And yet, perhaps I moved too quickly. It seems possible to read Deleuze as being a proponent of a philosophy of the One, but it does not seem to be a Platonic reading. It appears more aligned with the writings of Parmenides. However, it appears that Plato’s interpretation of Parmenides that is offered in his dialogue dedicated to the great pre-Socratic may be of use here. This ineffable One, that offers such a problem for Parmenides’ listeners begins to sound strikingly similar to what I have attempted to understand Deleuze’s conceptual interpretation of truth to be. In Plato’s *Parmenides*, Parmenides is said to argue that the One has a unique and seemingly
inexpressible ontological status. It is the discussion of the One throughout this dialogue that may be of use here in coming finally to relate what my investigation has sought to explain: Deleuzian conception of truth. In offering these quotations from Plato, I must emphasize that I will not be offering any interpretive account of Plato as such. Rather, it appears that there is a way of attempting to understand this essence of pure difference that truth is, by appealing to the language of the One from the discussion within the dialogue. Parmenides is written to have said that the One,

when it goes from one to many and from many to one, it is neither one nor many, and neither separates nor combines. And when it goes from like to unlike and from unlike to like, it is neither like nor unlike, nor is it being made like or unlike. And when it goes from small to large and equal and vice versa, it is neither small nor large nor equal; nor would it be increasing or decreasing or being made equal [...] The one, if it is, could undergo all that.\(^{135}\)

As stated previously, it is not my intent here to offer an exhaustive interpretation of what Plato could have possibly meant throughout the entire *Parmenides* dialogue. But it does seem plausible to see some similarity between what is written above, and the interpretation of truth as pure difference this investigation has sought to uncover. For the ontological status of truth does not appear to be discussable within any dichotomy of thought such as like and unlike, small or large, nor equal and unequal. I must once again emphasize that truth as has been traced it throughout Deleuze’s writings are *pure difference*. It is the seemingly groundless-ground from which beings and signs come to be encountered and interpreted.

There is one more explicit point of overlap between this investigation and the conversation within *Parmenides*: time. The conclusions regarding the temporal structure of

the One reached in this dialogue are so close to the virtual relationship of time that the truth is in Deleuze must be noted. Again, Parmenides is said to have concluded

Therefore, the one was and is and will be, and was coming to be and comes to be and will to come to be. [...] And something could belong to it and be of it, in the past, present, and future. [...] And indeed there would be knowledge and opinion and perception of it, if in fact even now we are engaging in all those activities concerning it. [...] And a name and an account belong to it, and it is named and spoken of. And all such things as pertain to the others also pertain to the one. 136

Is this discussion not the very same as the virtual temporality that truth as pure difference is said to be? And not only the immediate comments related to time are striking, but the relationships by which all things partake of, namely, truth! This seems to be the ever “present” pure difference that is a (non-)relation operating throughout the world. We can attempt interpretations of the fluctuations of power and force, and trace them as they operate throughout the world, but it appears that the groundless-ground from which they “originate” is no-thing by which we can easily locate and discuss.

Badiou charged Deleuze with being a philosopher of the tradition, who is not actually concerned with multiplicities but rather the One as a unitary ontological “ground.” I have previously said where we must reject his interpretation despite any other merits it might have. For I cannot agree with Badiou that Deleuze’s truth is “immobile” or unconcerned with multiplicity. Rather, if we are to retain the notion and language of “the One,” when interpreting Deleuze, we should note that such a concept is nothing but the immutable form of pure difference. There is no reason to suppose that because Deleuze rejects the language of the tradition, in stating that truth is beyond movement it of necessity falls into the dichotomy

136 Ibid., 155d3-e2.
of immobility. What I have pursued throughout this investigation is a conceptualization of truth that is “outside” of the tradition: *pure difference*.

It is interesting to note that the philosopher who has come up in our concluding remarks is Parmenides. While it is not my intention to investigate who was actually speaking in Plato’s dialogue, I can accept that the dialogue itself ends without any formidable or strong answer. The discussion is elusive, and does not offer itself to easy interpretation. Perhaps it can be understood as Plato’s most direct challenge to the Form of the Good which scholars argue will be advocated in his later writings. But regardless of the interpretation of whom is speaking “through” Plato, we are immediately confronted with Parmenides in that he has seemingly anticipated twentieth century philosophies of difference. There is one other major philosopher from the twentieth century who took note of Parmenides: Martin Heidegger.\footnote{I refer the reader to Martin Heidegger’s *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992).} Heidegger’s discussions of truth, while not being synonymous with the conceptualization offered by Deleuze is strikingly similar. For Hediegger’s *aletheia* is that which is never purely “present,” but always in its “sheltering” is concealing. Perhaps there is a way of interpreting Deleuze directly through Heidegger’s concept of *aletheia*, but such a question falls outside the scope of the current investigation.
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