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菲利浦羅斯與大衛福斯特華萊士中的德勒茲式內在性創造

Deleuzian Immanent Creation in Philip Roth and David Foster Wallace

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摘要

創造向來被認為是來自超越這個世界的另一境界。在超越性思想中，本體創生來自於非物質領域；美學創作是超越主體作用在被動的物質上，倫理則是應用現有的規範和原則。菲利浦羅斯與大衛福斯特華萊士的小說質疑超越性本體論並表達內在性創造思想。在他們的許多作品中，創造是一個源於物質的體現(embodiment)過程，並具有無法預測的實驗性質。本論文從德勒茲內在性創造理論的角度閱讀羅斯與華萊士小說中關於創造的描寫，認為主體更新是由不可感知的自生性物質所驅動，藝術創作非等於再現而是促使世界改變，倫理則在於實現自己和他者的主體再生。

本論文第一章概述德勒茲哲學中的內在性創造，並討論主體作為一個不斷流變的過程。第二章探討羅斯和華萊士小說中的體現和主體性，以及羅斯和華萊士如何挑戰現代人文主義和後現代科技的去身體化，重新將主體思考為不同物質的連接與斷裂。第三章聚焦內在性美學，討論羅斯小說中的非再現式故事編造如何引發作家本身和世界的本體更新，以及華萊士的敘述風格如何激發讀者的主體再生。結論部分探討內在性本體論、藝術，與倫理學的對等性，並說明羅斯和華萊士的想像力倫理如何使生命成為藝術作品。

關鍵詞：菲利浦羅斯、大衛福斯特華萊士、德勒茲、創造、內在性

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Abstract

Since antiquity in the Western world, creation has been considered to originate in a transcendent realm out of this world. In transcendent thought, ontological creation has its foundation in an idealist sphere, aesthetic creation is the work of a transcendent, autonomous subject on passive matter, and ethics is the application of preexisting rules and tenets. All these assumptions have seen vigorous rebuttal in the novels of Philip Roth and David foster Wallace. In many of their works, creation is an embodied process originating in matter and takes an experimental course with neither preconceived telos nor predictable results. Employing Gilles Deleuze's philosophy of immanence, which conceptualizes matter as alive and inventive in itself, this dissertation argues that in Philip Roth's and David foster Wallace's novels, the renewal of subjectivity is driven immanently by imperceptible, self-creative matter, artistic creation consists not in representation but in bringing change into the world, and ethics lies in enabling subjective regenesis in oneself and others.

After the introduction, which discusses the origin of the project and the concepts fundamental to the methodology of the dissertation, the first chapter presents an overview of immanent creation in Deleuzian philosophy and investigates the ontogenesis of the subject as an ongoing process of the vitalist matter. Chapter Two explores embodiment and subjectivity in Roth's and Wallace's novels to show how Roth and Wallace challenge modern humanist and postmodern technological disembodiment respectively and how they conceptualize the renewal of subjectivity as the connecting and disconnecting of diverse material forces. Chapter Three turns to the aesthetics of immanence to demonstrate how, in Roth, non-representational story-making induces the ontological renewal of the artist and of the world and how

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Wallace's narrative style exercises the ability of art to effect the regeneration of subjectivity in the reader. The conclusion examines the adequation of ontology, art, and ethics in immanence and shows how Roth's and Wallace's ethics of imagination is an immanent ethics that makes life a work of art.

Keywords: Philip Roth, David Foster Wallace, Gilles Deleuze, creation, immanence

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Abbreviations

Works by Deleuze

B	*Bergsonism*
C2	*Cinema 2*
D	*Dialogues II*
DR	*Difference and Repetition*
ECC	*Essays Critical and Clinical*
EPS	*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*
FB	*Francis Bacon*
FLB	*The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*
KCP	*Kant's Critical Philosophy*
LS	*The Logic of Sense*
N	*Negotiations*
NP	*Nietzsche and Philosophy*
PI	*Pure Immanence*
PS	*Proust and Signs*
SPP	*Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*

Works by Deleuze and Guattari

AO	*Anti-Oedipus*
ATP	*A Thousand Plateaus*
WP	*What is Philosophy?*

Works by Roth

AL	*The Anatomy Lesson*
AP	*American Pastoral*
EG	*Exit Ghost*
GW	*The Ghost Writer*
HS	*The Human Stain*
IMC	*I Married a Communist*

Works by Wallace

IJ	*Infinite Jest*
PK	*The Pale King*

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Introduction

In his well-known commencement speech, "This is Water," David Foster Wallace urges graduating seniors to imagine themselves as working adults driving home in a traffic jam when a massive SUV overtakes them and blocks their way. Instead of cursing the driver, they can consider the possibility that the driver inside is a recovering victim of a traumatic auto crash or a father rushing to get his sick child to the hospital. This, Wallace emphasizes, is not an exercise in compassion or other virtues, but learning to think, which means "altering or getting free of my natural, hard-wired default-setting, which is to be deeply and literally self-centered". An ethical way of everyday living lies in this ability to imagine the lives of others. This ethical approach to others is shared by Philip Roth. In *The Ghost Writer*, he had the protagonist, writer Nathan Zuckerman, rehabilitate the historical figure of Anne Frank. As Zuckerman engages in a "sympathetic attempt to fully imagine her," Frank is freed from sanctification by people using her name to buttress their moral dogmas ("Novelist's Obsession"). To the question "what are we to do about this terribly significant business of *other people*?" Roth has Zuckerman answer: to imagine them (*AP* 35).

Roth and Wallace, born 30 years apart and growing up in different cultural environs—a Jewish immigrant community in Newark, New Jersey, and the predominantly white Midwestern state of Illinois respectively, nevertheless have in common the writerly ethics of imagination, an ethics in sharp contrast to moral propriety. Morals, which involve judgment according to inviolable transcendent norms, were not their concern. What they care about is how people act in real situations. That is why Wallace gives his array of morally questionable characters,

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with drug dealers, murderers, and traitors among them, sympathetic portrayals that show an author's willingness to imagine how characters are shaped by their environment and in turn change that environment. It is also why Roth had Zuckerman, the writer-narrator of nine of Roth's novels, try to understand the Swede, the stigmatized father of a teenage terrorist in *American Pastoral*, and Coleman Silk, the college professor ostracized for apparent racism in *The Human Stain*, not through the prism of moral codes but by imagining how they interact with the changing economic, political, racial, and sexual forces in their society.

The ethics shared by Roth and Wallace expresses a pre-conceptual orientation of thought toward immanence, and the accompanying refusal to accept established doxa and moral principles with which to judge people. This ethics of immanence "calls on us to attend to the situations of our lives in all their textured specificity and to open ourselves up to responses that go beyond a repertoire of comfortably familiar, automatic reactions and instead access creative solutions to what are always unique problems" (Lorraine, *Deleuze and Guattari's Immanent Ethics* 1). Roth's and Wallace's novels express the ethics of immanence, which does not teach lessons of morality—a code of behavior transcendent of lived experience—but endeavors to experiment with how people affect and are affected by each other and their environment. The immanent ethics in Roth's and Wallace's fiction can be understood fully form the perspective of Gilles Deleuze, who distinguishes ethics from moral principles. In Deleuze's philosophy, "Ethics . . . replaces Morality, which always refers existence to transcendent values" and "system of judgement" (*SPP* 23). Following Spinoza, Deleuze defines ethics as ethology, the study "of the capacities for affecting and being affected that characterizes each thing" ("Ethology" 60).

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Affective relations within this world without transcendent values are exactly what Roth and Wallace explore through their respective fictional universes.

Roth's and Wallace's shared immanent ethics provided a point of departure for the present research project. Since the ethics of immanence has its roots in an immanent ontology, and, in Roth's and Wallace's fiction, dovetails with an aesthetics of immanence, the project was expanded to also examine the ontology and aesthetics of immanence in the works of the two writers. In all the three aspects—ontology, aesthetics, and ethics of immanence—"creation" is the keyword. When immanence orients ontology, aesthetics, and ethics, these areas of thought break free from transcendent criteria and become discrete aspects of creation. Questions of what being is, what art is, and what is right or wrong are replaced by questions of how anything comes into existence and what kind of conduct promotes such creation. With its focus on processes of change and creation, Deleuze's philosophy is uniquely equipped to provide a theoretical framework for the current project. This dissertation argues that, in Roth's and Wallace's fiction, the creation and renewal of subjectivity is driven immanently by imperceptible, self-creative matter, artistic creation consists not in representation but in bringing change into the world, and ethics lies in enabling subjective regenesis in oneself and others.

At first glance, Roth and Wallace may seem an odd couple to be placed in the same dissertation. In fact, Wallace has specifically criticized Roth alongside John Updike and Norman Mailer as a prime example of what he calls the "Great Male Narcissists" generation ("John Updike"). In this 1997 essay, Wallace accused the three veteran writers of solipsism: their persistent focus on the self, expressed through protagonists and narrators who markedly resemble the real-life authors themselves.

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In his influential 1993 essay, "E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S. Fiction," Wallace had already distanced himself from Roth's generation of writers and the postmodernist irony they exhibited. As a feature of the postmodernist aesthetic, irony for Wallace means self-consciousness, self-referentiality, and metafictional reflexivity. Although it served as an effective form of "ground-clearing" in the 1960s and 1970s, liberating fiction from mimesis, irony failed to install something new in the empty space (67). Wallace therefore calls for fellow writers to rebel against postmodernist irony by having the unfashionable courage to "endorse and instantiate single-entendre principles" (81).

Wallace did not mention Roth by name, but many of Roth's works epitomize the postmodernist irony he criticized. The multi-framed *The Counterlife* is a postmodern ironic metafiction par excellence, and so are *American Pastoral* and *The Human Stain*. Irony is even more conspicuous in *Deception*, whose protagonist, "Philip," is the author of the *Zuckerman books. Operation Shylock: A Confession*, narrated by one Philip Roth, takes the ironic self-reflexivity even further by claiming to be factual account in its "Preface" while averring its fiction status in "Note to the Reader." Even *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* is not immune to irony, as it incorporates the fictional Zuckerman to undermine the credibility of the supposed memoir.

Ironic self-reflexivity, as Brian McHale argues, is a major characteristic of the ontological problematic that defines the postmodernist fiction. It works to highlight "the textuality of the text" by creating the "ontological tension" between the world of words on the page and the extra-textual world (*Postmodernist Fiction* 146, 145). Having fictional characters talk back to their authors, as *The Facts* does, "foregrounds ontological boundaries and ontological structure" (35). Incorporating "real-world

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figures" into fiction, as *Operation Shylock* does, violates the ontological boundaries separating fact and fiction (85).[1]

In ontology lies the departure of postmodernist fiction from modernist fiction. According to McHale, the dominant focus of the modernist novel is "the mind in its engagement with the world," that is to say, epistemology (*Cambridge* 14). This can be seen in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, in which multiple narrative perspectives act to interrogate how we obtain knowledge of the world and whether we can be certain in our knowledge (14). While the modernist novel takes for granted the world where the epistemological pursuit is played out, the postmodernist novel brings that world to the foreground to investigate its construction. The postmodernist novel thus makes ontology its dominant problematic. "Postmodernism multiplied and juxtaposed worlds; it troubled and volatilized them" (15). A prominent instance is Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, where epistemological quests collapse as the world in which they take place loses its stability, multiplying into alternative realities (16).

If Roth accords squarely with the postmodernist preoccupation with ontology, Wallace, a self-appointed rebel against Roth's generation, surely must have made a move beyond the ontological? This is not the case if one looks at Wallace's last novel, *The Pale King*, published in 2011. As "Philip Roth" did in 1993 in *Operation Shylock*, "David Wallace" claims in "Author's Foreword" that the book is a "nonfiction memoir" and yet contradicts that claim by including the typical fiction disclaimer on

[1] In an interview following the publication of *Operation Shylock*, Roth insists the book is non-fiction. See Fein.

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the copyright page (PK 73).[2] The postmodern preoccupation with ontology and the instability of the fiction-fact boundary is still very much alive in Wallace.

Wallace's most obvious engagement with postmodernist metafiction is the short story "Octet." It is composed of a number of vignettes in the form of "pop quizzes" that expose their own statuses as pop quizzes, with the last quiz reflecting on the textuality of the previous quizzes. In this last quiz, the narrator asks the reader to step into the shoes of the "fiction writer" of "Octet" and figure out how to convey the "urgency" of the subject matter explored in the previous quizzes to readers in metafictional form while preventing them from viewing such narratives as a "cute formal exercise in . . . S.O.P. metatext" (147).

The self-reflection of "Octet" on the reflexivity of fiction adds complexity to the ontological problematic foregrounded by postmodernist fiction but hardly signifies a departure from it. It marks "an intensification and mutation within postmodernism" rather than a project "absolutely foreign" to postmodernism (Nealon ix). While postmodernist fiction like Roth's effects "a form of ontological flicker between . . . two worlds," post-postmodernist fiction like Wallace's gives the ontological structure of the worlds a further jerk (McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* 90). In this sense, there is not a rupture between Roth and Wallace, but an aesthetic continuum. This dissertation contributes to both postmodern scholarship and post-postmodern studies by exploring the aesthetic continuum—in particular, a shared expression of immanent creation—connecting two of most influential novelists of their respective generations.

To do so, I will present a Deleuzian reading of relevant works selected from Roth's immense oeuvre—mainly the Zuckerman books—and Wallace's more mature

[2] An extended comparison between *Operation Shylock* and *The Pale King* in terms of metafictional framing can be found in Boswell.

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fiction, published since the 1990s. Such selection is necessary because both Roth's and Wallace's oeuvres defy totalization and it would be too facile to claim Roth and Wallace as Deleuzian novelists. Therefore, the aim of the dissertation is to tease out the intersections between Roth, Wallace, and Deleuze. Although ethics is an undercurrent running through all three's works, few of their writings deal directly with ethics. For this reason, this dissertation will present Deleuzian readings of Roth and Wallace in areas of ontology and aesthetics directly, through close textual analyses of the novels in juxtaposition with Deleuze's philosophy of immanence, and then discuss how Roth's and Wallace's ontological and aesthetic commitments evince an ethics in keeping with the philosophy of immanence.

By enlisting Deleuze's philosophy of immanence for the interpretation of Roth's novels, I hope to bring to light the philosophical aspects of Roth's works. Despite the abundance of Roth scholarship, philosophical engagement with his works remains scant. Fortunately, the last few years saw an increased academic interest in the philosophical implications of Roth's works. In "Sartrian Nothingness: Roth's *The Ghost Writer*, *The Anatomy Lesson*, *Zuckerman Unbound*, *The Prague Orgy,* and *Exit Ghost*," James Duban interprets five of the nine Zuckerman books as the dramatization of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. According to Duban, Roth's books depict the existential flight that the transcendent consciousness takes toward creative possibilities, thereby negating facticity. In his 2014 monograph, *Philip Roth: Fiction and Power,* and a series of essays predating the book, Patrick Hayes argues that Roth was deeply influenced by Nietzsche to seek in literature a will to power beyond "the ethical turn," the recent trend among intellectuals to restitute "humanistic relevance of literature from the influence of deconstruction (493). For Hayes, Zuckerman's literary art is an expression of the will to power not to be constricted by moral codes.

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The present study complements Duban's and Hayes' work on the philosophical richness of Roth's works. By reading Roth through the perspective of Deleuze's philosophy of immanence, this dissertation aims to bring Roth up to date and into dialogue with contemporary theory. The affinity between Roth and Deleuze can already be glimpsed in Hayes' "'The Nietzschean Prophecy Come True': Philip Roth's *The Counterlife* and the Aesthetics of Identity," where Hayes alludes to Deleuze regarding the aesthetic evaluation of identity to show the similarity between Roth's characterization of Zuckerman and Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche (498). Without negating the possible indebtedness of Roth to Nietzsche in aesthetics, this dissertation will demonstrate a strong affinity between Roth and Deleuze not only in aesthetics but also in ontology and ethics.

A dissertation on Roth would not be doing its job if it did not tackle the concept of subjectivity, which Roth himself has claimed as his subject (Sheppard qtd. in Shostak 3). In *Philip Roth—Countertexts, Counterlives,* one of the most influential monographs on Roth, Debra Shostak traces the dialogue between Roth's different books surrounding the concept of subjectivity. Within the nine Zuckerman books, different ideas of subjectivity are in evidence. Subjectivity are variously depicted as embodied, a construct of language, or determined by history (46).

Derek Parker Royal, also a prominent Roth scholar, has shown subjectivity in *The Counterlife* to be "an open-ended and always ongoing process" ("Roth" 30; "Postmodern" 427). Roth's metafictional devices further strengthen the sense of subjectivity as a construct ("Postmodern" 424). Regarding the ethnic subject in *American Pastoral*, Royal similarly argues that it is "an ongoing project, a negotiation of possibilities," a conception similar to R. Radhakrishnan's "post-ethnic" subject,

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which derives from the Derridean deconstructionist concept of différance ("Fictional Realms" 12).

By adopting the Deleuzian concepts such as processual subjectivity and assemblage for an interpretation of subjectivity in Roth, I agree with Royal and Shostak on the open-endedness and multifacetedness of the Rothian subjectivity. However, the perspective of immanent philosophy will allow this dissertation to shed more light on how subjectivity goes through autopoiesis in Roth and to demonstrate that, for Roth, art is a vehicle for the regeneration of subjectivity.

In the burgeoning yet still nascent Wallace scholarship, few critics have dealt directly with Wallace's ontology. One exception is Ryan David Mullins' "Theories of Everything and More: Infinity is Not the End." Mullins argues that *Infinite Jest*, Wallace's 1079-page tour de force, exhibits a "metaphysical pluralism," the belief in an infinite number of worlds or domains, and a "fractal ontology," which claims there is no world of all worlds (224, 230). While agreeing with Mullins on the infinity of Being, I will emphasize, by means of Deleuzian philosophy, the immanence and creativity of the universe, which is precisely what gives the universe its infinity.

Much more widely discussed in Wallace scholarship is subjectivity, a topic profoundly associated with ontology. On this point, a number of critics have discovered an emphasis on connection over unity as the nature of subjectivity in Wallace. In her much-cited essay on *Infinite Jest*, N. Katherine Hayles finds in the novel a reconceptualization of the liberal humanist subject as connections. It exposes autonomous selfhood as an illusion, as each presumably autonomous subject is actually enmeshed in recursive loops that form systems comprising "profound interconnections that bind us all together, human actors and nonhuman life forms, intelligent machines and intelligent people" ("Illusion" 696). Elizabeth Freudenthal

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takes up Hayles' critique but emphasizes the importance of embodiment to subjectivity in *Infinite Jest*. According to Freudenthal, the novel portrays subjectivity as what she calls "anti-interiority," "a paradoxically dynamic thinghood between material and subjective realms" breaking the mind-body dualism of liberal humanist subjectivity (192). More recently, Wilson Kaiser also takes up the posthumanist position in interpreting Wallace's characters as body-milieu, affinities, and networks. In another posthumanist reading of *Infinite Jest*, Brian Douglas Jansen replaces the concepts of subjects and objects, humans and non-humans, with Latournian "imbroglios" and "gatherings," a hybrid of human and non-human entities (64, 71, 74). In *Contemporary Fiction and the Ethics of Modern Culture*, Jeffrey Karnicky presents a highly original, Deleuzian reading of Wallace, arguing that "breakdowns in representation" in Wallace's novels "lead to new configurations of subjectivity" (121). However, with its prodigious emphasis on the importance of stasis to subjective transformation, Karnicky's analysis left unexamined the dynamic, constructive power of reading, without which there would be no emergence of subjectivity. With Deleuze's philosophy of creation as its methodology, this dissertation hopes to contribute to the ongoing discussion on the ways in which Wallace rejects humanist conception of subjectivity while stressing how Wallace's works dramatize the regenesis of subjectivity as immanent and material and how his narrative style promotes such ontological creation.

Immanent Creation

In *What is Philosophy*, Deleuze and Guattari defines what they termed the "image of thought" as "nonconceptual understanding" that precedes and predisposes thought (40). It is "the image thought gives itself of what it means to think, to make use of thought, to find one's bearings in thought" (37). As Miguel de Beistegui

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explains, the image of thought subtends and orients thought, showing that "there seems to always be something pre-philosophical at the heart of philosophy, and something, which, furthermore, signals the internal conditions of philosophy" (10).

Traditional philosophy is characterized by the transcendent image of thought, such as the "good sense" exhibited by Descartes, as the cogito presumes that the "I" naturally think the truth (Deleuze, *DR* 132). Whatever is conditioned by a transcendent image of thought believes in a fixed center, such as God in the Christian religion and the human being in humanism, surrounded by a hierarchical array of beings. Whatever creative acts take place in the universe, this center transcends it and remains eternally unchanged. The telos and principles of this specific transcendent center map out the path of thought in advance and thus preclude genuine invention. There is only theology, not creation. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, "whenever there is transcendence, vertical Being, imperial State in the sky or on earth, there is religion; and there is Philosophy whenever there is immanence" (*WP* 43). Philosophers, who create concepts immanently, are not to be confused with priests and sages, who think in compliance with a transcendent entity, a higher order (43). Genuine creation originates not vertically from a sacred authority above who exists on a different stratum than thought, but horizontally from an outside. This outside is not exterior to thought, as God is, but rather a topological outside that can be folded inside. The plane of immanence is thus "the outside and inside of thought, as the not-external outside and the not-internal inside—that which cannot be thought and yet must be thought" (59-60). With the plane of immanence, thought is always beside itself, being forced to think the unthought.

As James Williams notes, immanence refers to relations of "in," whereas transcendence refers to relations of "to" ("Immanence" 128). God is transcendent in

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that embodied beings are related to God, and yet God is independent of embodied beings. In transcendence, there are thus higher and lower types of beings with different ontological statuses. Immanence, on the other hand, is based on univocity, which means "that Being is said in a single and same sense . . . of all its individuating differences or intrinsic modalities. . . . Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself " (Deleuze, *DR* 36). In the universe of immanence, each individual expresses the same Being without hierarchy.

For Deleuze, creation is not the realization of the possible but the actualization of the virtual, which is an immanent process. The possible is realized according to its resemblance to and limitation by the real, which is the possible that has an added existence (Deleuze, *B* 97). In the realization of the possible, only what already resembles the real is allowed to acquire existence, to become real. Therefore, the possible is a "false notion" because it renders everything "already completely given" (98). The real transcends the possible, dictating what it can be. This is why Deleuze said that the possible "has been abstracted from the real once made, arbitrarily extracted from the real like a sterile double" (98). Produced retroactively from the real, the possible is unable to create anything new.

The actualization of the virtual, on the other hand, is an open process with neither planning not telos. The virtual, as Deleuze illustrates with Jorge Luis Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths," is the sphere of infinity. In the story, a Chinese philosopher named Ts'ui Pen has written a fiction with all the alternative plot lines proceeding simultaneously. "Fang, for example, keeps a secret; a stranger knocks at his door: Fang decides to kill him. Naturally, several outcomes are possible: Fang can kill the intruder; the intruder can kill Fang; both of them can escape from their peril:

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both can die, etc. In Ts'ui Pen's work, all outcomes are produced, each being the point of departure for other bifurcations" (Borges qtd. in Deleuze, *FLB* 62).

"Real without being actual, ideal without being abstract," the virtual is a realm of incompossible multiplicities in excess of and underlying the actual, empirical and intelligible sphere of experience (Deleuze, *DR* 208). The virtual is the pre-empirical that conditions experience and the supra-empirical that generates new experience. However, virtual does not remain unchanged as it actualizes itself. If it does, it would be a transcendent realm just like the real in relation to the possible. On the contrary, as the virtual actualizes, the actual also reshapes the virtual in a dynamic relationship. Imminent creation is characterized by the unpredictability and radical novelty inherent in the actualization of the virtual.

Time as Subjectivity

The key to understanding Deleuze's philosophy of immanence lies in his theory of time, and, particularly, his interpretation of Bergson's and Kant's concepts of time. Bergson's first paradox of time is "the contemporaneity of the past with the present that it was" (Deleuze, *DR* 81). The present does not wait to become past. Instead, the present must do so immediately, when it is still present. Otherwise the present present would never pass and the new present would never arrive. Both the present and the past that it is going to be are therefore in the now as well as in the immediate past. A logical correlative of this is that the past and the present are not two consecutive moments but two coexisting elements.

Therefore, the second paradox, "the paradox of coexistence," states that "If each past is contemporaneous with the present that it was, then all of the past coexists with the new present in relation to which it is now past" (*DR* 81, 81-82). There is a "pure past, a kind of 'past in general'" into which the present continuously pass (*B* 59). The

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relationship between the past and the present is not that of two neighboring points on a straight line. Evoking the image of the Bergsonian cone, Deleuze claims, "each present present is only the entire past in its most contracted state," the tip of the cone (*DR* 82).

This leads to the third paradox, the "paradox of pre-existence," which states that the entire past pre-exist the present (*DR* 82). The passage of the present present and the arrival of the new present presuppose the past. The past "is the in-itself of time as the final ground of the passage of time. In this sense it forms a pure, general, *a priori* element of all time" (82). The cone of the pure past thus cannot be said to exist, as in an empirical moment, but it con-sists with the present present while in-sisting with the present that has passed as a precondition.

Another implication of the Bergsonian cone makes up the fourth paradox: the co-existence of the entire past with itself. All the cross sections, or different non-chronological levels of contraction and relaxation, that compose the conic past coexist and each layer "includes . . . the totality of the past" (Deleuze, *B* 60).

The Bergsonian paradoxes of time, as Deleuze elaborates in *Cinema 2: Time Image*, indicates a fracture or doubling of the subject. "Our actual existence, then, whilst it is unrolled in time, duplicates itself along with a virtual existence, a mirror image. Every moment of our life presents the two aspects, it is actual and virtual, perception on the one side and recollection on the other" (Bergson qtd. in *Cinema 2* 79). The doubling split of the subject is that of time itself. Each moment in time is split into the preserved past in general and the passing present—the entire cone of pure past and its maximally contracted tip. In Deleuze's interpretation of Bergson, "the only subjectivity is time, non-chronological time, grasped in its foundation"

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(Deleuze, *C2* 82). Deleuze will go so far as to claim that "Subjectivity is never ours, it is time" (82).

To argue that time constitutes subjectivity, Deleuze enlists Kant's conception of time. For Kant, time is the interiority of the subject. Kant's argument unfolds as a criticism against Descartes's *cogito ergo sum*. In declaring that "I think, therefore I am," Descartes assumes that two I's are one and the same, and the determination, "I think," of the undetermined existence, "I am," is made instantaneously, outside time. However, Kant argues that time is the form in which anything is determinable. Any object is knowable only within time. The determination of the I that exist as a thinking thing must take place in time (Deleuze, *KCP* viii; Deleuze and Guattari, *WP* 31). The statement, *cogito ergo sum*, involves two moments, one of determination and the other of the undetermined. Time is how the active I comes to determine the passive Ego. It is the form in which the subject affects itself. This self-affection made possible by time defines the subject. Although I and the Ego can be considered two positions in time, the time that serves as the condition of the determinability of the self is not puncta-linear time, or the empirical time as the measurement of movement, but a "pure and empty form." Time is therefore the "form of interiority," which "means not only that time is internal to us, but that our interiority constantly divides us from ourselves, splits us into two: a splitting in two which never runs its course, since time has no end. A giddiness, an oscillation which constitutes time" (*KCP* ix).

Itself being paradoxical, time makes the subject a paradox too. Time makes the I affect itself yet separates it from itself. "I and the Self are thus separated by the line of time, which relates them to each other only under the condition of a fundamental difference" (Deleuze, *ECC* 29). The determination of the Ego by the I manifests time's double capacities as a divider and a joiner of the subject. This fracture of

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self-affection is internal to the self and it is what makes thinking possible. The I is never self-identical, but always split/double in time. Time forms the interiority that binds the I and the Ego, enabling "the affection of self by self" and gives rise to thinking (Deleuze, *C2* 82-83). Moreover, time, the "form of the determinable," "makes the determined Self represent the determination to itself as an Other" (Deleuze, *ECC* 30). The passive Ego necessarily experiences thinking as the activity of an Other (Deleuze, *KCP* viii-ix; Deleuze and Guattari, *WP* 31-32). Kant's paradox of inner sense consists in this constitution and alienation of the subject in time, which Deleuze formulates in Rimbaud's poetic trope, "I is an other" (Rimbaud qtd. in Deleuze, *ECC* 29).

How does time as a "pure and empty form" leads to the immanence of the subject? To answer this question, one must first look at how the ontology of transcendence entails a theory of time as dependent on transcendent entities, such as Heaven and God. Time in antiquity is considered a system of measurement for the movement of celestial bodies. Time, in this scheme, is circular (see Voss 213-14). It is also cardinal, as it designates the quantity of movement traced by objects passing specific fixed marks, such as cardinal points. These objects, which precede time, are organized in a hierarchy according to their proximity to God, Platonic forms, or any other transcendent beings. By making time one of the *a priori* conditions of intuition instead of a measure of things in themselves, Kant renders time pure and empty, a form without content. Kant's move also emancipates time from its fealty to transcendent beings. Circular time thus uncoils into a straight line fracturing the subject. It is as if "Time is out of joint," as Deleuze alludes to the famous line from *Hamlet* (*ECC* 27). It is no longer cardinal but ordinal, a pure order that stipulates a before and an after but has no content.

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Deleuze illustrates how the ordinality of time constitutes the form of subjectivity with Holderlin's Kant-influenced concept of caesura. "The caesura, along with the before and after which it ordains once and for all, constitutes the fracture in the I (the caesura is exactly the point at which the fracture appears)" (*DR* 89). In Holderlin's analysis of *Oedipus Rex*, the caesura marks the moment of Tiresias' revelation that Oedipus is the murderer of his own father and the husband of his own mother. For Oedipus at this moment, "there exists nothing but the conditions of time and space" (Holderlin qtd. in Voss 233). With the appearance of the caesura, time ceases to "rhyme" (*DR* 89). In Deleuze's interpretation, the caesura is a "pure instant" that "distributes a non-symmetrical before and after" (Deleuze, "Cours Vincennes 21/03/1978"). The past and the future do not cohere; they are non-sequential. As Voss explains, Oedipus "can no longer be and resemble what he has been before. In fact, the caesura is not only a break in time, but also a split of Oedipus' self. Oedipus is other to himself. He experiences this internal difference in the pure present" (234). Oedipus becomes other on account of the caesura, which functions to carry out his self-affection.

In the caesura, the active I determines the passive Self as the image of a "formidable action" (Deleuze, *DR* 110). Using *Hamlet* as the example, Deleuze argues that the before of the caesura is the time when the Self is not equal to the act: when Hamlet considers the act of killing the king and avenging his father "too big for me" (89). The caesura proper is "the present of metamorphosis, a becoming equal to the act, and a doubling of the self, and the projection of an ideal self in the image of the act" (89). In *Hamlet*, the caesura proper takes place in the sea voyage, at the end of which Hamlet announces, "Yet have I in me something dangerous," an uncharacteristic pronouncement signaling he has been transformed and is now capable

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of the overwhelming act (5.1.229). The self has become equal to the determination by the I. The caesura constitutes the double and split subject. Importantly, the past and future unevenly distributed by the pure present of caesura are not empirical but parts of the caesura itself; therefore, there is, strictly speaking, no before or after until the appearance of the caesura (Batra 183). The past and future are by no means chronological. Hamlet carries out his "formidable action" after the caesura, whereas Oedipus completed his long before Tiresias' revelation. However, it is still Tiresias' revelation that marks the caesura, where Oedipus becomes capable of patricide.

The "after" cut out by the caesura is the future. However, it is a future independent of the past and the present. "As for the third time in which the future appears, this signifies that the event and the act possess a secret coherence which excludes that of the self; that they turn back against the self which has become their equal and smash it to pieces, as though the bearer of the new world were carried away and dispersed by the shock of the multiplicity to which it gives birth: what the self has become equal to is the unequal in itself" (Deleuze, *DR* 89-90). For the future to occur, the self that went through the metamorphosis instituted by the caesura, the self that has become equal to the momentous act, must be destroyed in the act. Otherwise, the future would not be a genuine future. It would not be radically new, since the "actor" remains the same one. Now that the self that has undergone the past and the caesura is destroyed, it does not equate the self of the future. The newly constituted subject is thus completely new, so novel that Deleuze describes it as "the man without name, without family, without qualities" (90). It is also the Nietzschean Overman, the thinker of the eternal return (90). Only the Overman is capable of the annihilation of the identity that had led up to the moment of the caesura and thus become open to the completely new.

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The eternal return is "the future as such" (90). In Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche, the eternal return is not the recurring of identical entities and events in a circular time, but the return of difference. "It is not the 'same' or the 'one' which comes back in the eternal return but return is itself the one which ought to belong to diversity and to that which differs" (*NP* 46). It is not difference as non-identity: instead of being difference from something else, it is difference in itself. As such, it cannot be represented in discourse much further. "The eternal return has no other sense but this: the absence of any assignable origin—in other words, the assignation of difference as the origin, which then relates different to different in order to make it (or them) return as such" (*DR* 125). The difference that returns is pure and originary (125). As Cisney notes, it is not experiential differences, as in "different things, limits, oppositions, and so forth" but "difference as such." It is not a lack of identity but "a swarm of differences, a pluralism of free, wild, untamed differences; a properly differential and original space and time" (50). Eternal return in this way ensures that the future is change and contingency. Time, in this formulation, is no longer a full circle but an excentric circle, eternally breaking the previous path and tracing a new trajectory. Time is difference in itself, this originary spatio-temporality, which gives birth to the subject and ensures its unceasing renewal. The subject formed though time—the time out of joint rather than the circular time of antiquity—is a subject of immanence.

Aesthetics of Immanence

The concept of immanent time as the originary difference or eternal return has important implications for aesthetics. There is no transcendent being to guarantee the circularity of time, nor is there any truth to serve as the foundation of art. The eternal return is itself creative. In fact, it is the only source of art. "The philosophical doctrine

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of the eternal return (i.e. the return of that which differs, of difference-in-itself) is precisely what undermines the privilege of identity and the model of representation" that have been the cornerstones of the will to truth in art (Voss 247). While the will to truth implies judgment from a transcendent position and ultimately refers to the one God and his moral tenets, "The eternal return affirms difference, it affirms dissemblance and disparateness, chance, multiplicity and becoming" (Deleuze, *DR* 300). By affirming becoming rather than being, eternal return frees difference from its subordination under representation as identity, resemblance, opposition, and analogy (288). In its alterity to truth and representation, eternal return is identified with the power of the false (Voss 247). Liberated by the absence of truth and the death of God, art consists in "the creation of falsehood" (Zepke 19). For art to be genuinely creative, it has to exhibit "the power of the false," which "replaces and supersedes the form of the true" (Deleuze, *C2* 131).

In narrative art, the power of the false means that "narration ceases to be truthful, that is, to claim to be true, and becomes fundamentally falsifying" (*C2* 131). Unlike truthful narration, which preserves the illusion of the unity and identity of self throughout chronological time, falsifying narration is founded on an immanent ontology where time out of joint is the subjectivity: "contrary to the form of the true which is unifying and tends to the identification of a character (his discovery or simply his coherence), the power of the false cannot be separated from an irreducible multiplicity, 'I is another' has replaced Ego=Ego" (133).

The power of the false affirms difference as the immanent genesis of life. This is in contrast to the will to truth, which considers the world of appearance as deceptive and posits a transcendent ideal world that is epistemologically true at the same time as it is morally good (Rodowick 135). As Rodowick points out, such "seeker-of-truth's

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strongest desire is not to be fooled" (135). Deleuze overturns this Platonist position by rethinking simulacra. As Deleuze wrote, "the eternal return concerns only simulacra, it causes only such phantasms to return" (*DR* 126). In Plato, the Idea holds the transcendent place of being the purest identity, followed by copy as a good imitation, which is in turn followed by simulacrum as a failed derivative. The copy is defined as "instance of the Same, the Similar, the Analogous and the Opposed" in relation to the Idea (265). Simulacra, however, are such bad copies of the Idea that they cannot be recognized as related. Deleuze identifies simulacra as the originary difference-in-itself. Unlike the Idea that "is nothing other than what it is," simulacra are always other than what they are, as it is what returns as difference in the eternal return (126).

Art as simulacra is characterized by paradox. It exerts its falsifying power in four ways: the incompossible, the indiscernible, the inexplicable, and the undecidable (Deleuze, *C2* 131). In narrative art, these would be, for example, the coexistence of "incompossible presents," "the indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary," and the inexplicability and undecidable alternatives between the true and the false (131-132). These instances are able to exert "a power of the false as adequate to time, in contrast to any form of the true which would control time" (132). These paradoxical narratives drives time out of joint, out of its subordination to any transcendent being and redefine it as the excentric circle of the eternal return.

With such a fundamental ontological import, the power of the false is not to be confused with pluralism. It is not "a question of tolerating equally possible yet incomplete and contradictory perspectives on the true" (Rodowick 85). In the pluralist thinking, there is still truth reigning over falsehood. To exert the power of the false, the artist has to understand that there is no pre-existing truth to represent. The artist is the "*creator of truth*, because truth is not to be achieved, formed, or reproduced; it has

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to be created" (Deleuze, *C2* 146). Truth is no longer the transcendent truth. "There is no other truth than the creation of the New: creativity, emergence" (147). The truth to be created in art is the immanent difference, the simulacra that are their own model.

Art and Ontogenesis

The work of the power of the false does not stop at the creation of new works of art. Its operation extends to the creation of new thinking and thus new subjectivity. The power of the false renews thought and subjectivity by creating signs, a word that in Deleuze's technical use refers to whatever frustrates thinking and in this way paradoxically kindles its regeneration. The confrontation with baffling yet captivating signs, material intensities that cannot be sensed by sensation, is what Deleuze terms an "encounter," in which the subject is forced to interpret the sign, which in turn generates thinking (Bogue, *Deleuze on Literature* 52).

The concept of the encounter holds a crucial place in Deleuze's formulation of the subject as an ongoing process immanent in the material realm. The subject is always embodied but not necessarily within the human body. Avoiding the traditional association between the subject and the human, Deleuze constructs his ontology around the "individual," a relatively stabilized state of relations and interactions between forces but one that retains the potential for further transformation. No individual transcends these forces, be they biological, social, or cultural. Rather, individuals are immanent in them.

Ontogenesis is the ongoing process comprising difference-in-itself, the originary, evanescent material realm; the determination of Ideas in the virtual; the individuation of these virtual tendencies into actual states of affairs; and the counter-actualization reverses the production of the individual to start the process over again, leading to the

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metamorphosis of the individual. The individual is not only the product of this process but also denotes the process itself.

The process from intensity to extensity, from the virtual to the actual, is a four-fold process of "differentiation-individuation-dramatisation-differenciation" (Deleuze, *DR* 251). Differentiation determines virtual Ideas, which are made up of differential relations and pre-individual singularities. "Individuation is the act by which intensity determines differential relations to become actualized, along the lines of differenciation and within the qualities and extensities it creates" (246). Intensities, differences of potential in the environment, are individuating factors. They perform the drama of spatio-temporal dynamisms, generating actual, differenciated individuals.

An individual retains the potential for further individuation because of the material intensities implicated in the individual like a fold. Re-individuation, or the renewal of subjectivity, is initiated by the encounter. Deleuze argues, "Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*" (*DR* 139). Art with the power of the false can induce encounters, where the individual is forced to interpret signs, which pushes faculties outside of their current state, and thereby generates a renewed individual.

Creative Ethics of Immanence

The ontology of immanence entails an ethics free of moral judgment and transcendent centers. As mentioned before, ethology deals with the affective capabilities of a body, or "what a body can do" (*ESP* 218). Here "body", a term that Deleuze uses synonymously with "individual," refers to a network of relations, whether ideal or material. The immanent ethics of ethology does away with transcendent judgment of good and evil, replacing it with "the qualitative difference

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of modes of existence (good-bad)" (*SPP* 23). Ethology endeavors to discover what is good or bad for different bodies in their encounters: whether body x gains loses in power, or affective capabilities, in its encounter with body y and vice versa. However, "you do not know beforehand what a body or a mind can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination" (125). Such knowledge cannot be gained *a priori* but only though embodied experimentation, by actually engaging in relations with other bodies. The ethics of immanence is thus creative. It is what keeps the universe creative.

Outline of Chapters

This dissertation consists of three chapters. The first chapter, "Immanent Creation in Deleuze," presents an overview of immanence in Deleuzian philosophy and discusses what constitutes immanent creation. The first section of the chapter, "Immanence in Deleuze's Philosophy," looks at immanence in noological and ontological terms. It discusses the pre-philosophical, dogmatic image of thought and its suppression of difference under identity. It then introduces Deleuze and Guattari's critical image of thought, where thought is free from transcendent presuppositions and therefore able to think difference as an immanently generative force. This section also dwells on Spinoza's concept of univocity, Bergson's "duration," and Nietzsche's "eternal return," to show how they influence Deleuze's ontology of immanence.

The second part, "The Ontogenesis of the Subject," presents an overview of the critiques against the modern humanist subject before discussing Deleuze's ontology of the subject as a process. It demonstrates the ontogenesis of the subject from the pure difference in itself through the three syntheses of time to virtual Ideas, the actual individual, and the encounter with the sign that restarts the process. Since it aims to unpack Deleuze's speculative ontology, this section will necessarily be technical in

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nature, and, at first glance, seems less pertinent than it is to the literary analysis that defines the goal of this dissertation. However, to fully appreciate the immanent creation of subjectivity in the literary texts examined in later chapters, it is of paramount importance to explicate Deleuze's technical language and philosophical arguments first.

Equipped with the conceptual tools from Deleuzian philosophy, Chapter two, "Ontology of Immanence and Embodied Creation in Roth and Wallace" begins to look at the ontological significance of Roth's and Wallace's works. The first segment of the chapter, "Embodiment: Crossroads between Roth, Wallace, and Deleuze," discusses how Roth and Wallace challenge modern humanist and postmodern technological disembodiment respectively, before examining Deleuze's redefinition of the body that emphasizes the embodied nature of subjectivity.

The second section, "Regenesis of Subjectivity in Wallace's *Infinite Jest*," opens by demonstrating that the Wallacian subject is a process, a becoming rather than being. It goes on to argue that the renewal of subjectivity in tennis training requires making oneself what Deleuze terms a body without organs (BwO), which allows the actual individual to give up sovereign subjectivity, loosen up the existing organization of their body, and thus access the virtual and its creative resources. This section also examines addiction as the manifestation of the empty BwO, where the body, through connecting to a fixed object in an exclusive manner, has lost the power to form assemblages with other bodies.

The third part of the chapter, "Roth's *The Human Stain* and Creative Lines of Life," argues that, upholding the modern humanist subjectivity of individualism and autonomy, Coleman Silk's passing and Zuckerman's reclusion are self-creations on what Deleuze and Guattari call the rigid line of segmentarity and thus destined to

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ossification and sterility. In contrast, the 71-year-old Coleman's transformation after meeting Faunia and Zuckerman's revitalization through an impromptu dance with Coleman illustrate the immanent regeneration of subjectivity creation on the "line of flight." Unpredictable and experimental ontogenesis on the "line of flight" increases an individual's affective capacity, enabling further creation.

The fourth part of chapter two, "Ontological Creation Through the Probe-Head in Roth's 'Eli, the Fanatic,'" looks at the renewal of subjectivity through bodily gestures and sartorial experiments from the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the abstract machine. The secular Jewish Eli Peck's experimental use of traditional Hasidic garb constructs the abstract machine of the probe-head that helps him break out of fixed signifying subjectivity within the social hierarchy of his community.

The fifth and final part of chapter two, "Boredom and Creation in Wallace's *The Pale King*," interprets the dynamic between the boring and the interesting as the creative excentric circle of chaos and chaoid. Any creation, whether that of a piece of information or a work of art, requires one to cast off one's transcendent subjectivity and immerse oneself in chaos as intensive matter.

Chapter three, "Aesthetics of Immanence and Literary Creation in Roth and Wallace," discusses how Roth and Wallace challenge the traditional notion of art as representation and demonstrates how their works express the transformative power of art. The introductory section of the chapter, "Power of the False," presents an overview of Deleuze's concept of the power of the false, which will provide the framework for the textual analyses of Roth's and Wallace's works in later sections.

The second part of chapter three, "Wallace's 'The Soul Is Not a Smithy' and Crystalline Narration" approaches Wallace's frustratingly desultory story from the perspective of Deleuze's concept of the crystalline narration to show how the

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mirroring between the factual and the imaginary, the real and the oneiric, and the present and the past refutes the model of truth and representation and ultimately compels the renewal of thinking and the regenesis of subjectivity in the reader.

The third section of chapter three, "Wallace's Style and the Becoming of Language," turns to Wallace's narrative style, showing that, on the level of notes, vocabulary, syntax, and voice, Wallace's fiction "deterritorializes" language, contributing to the regeneration of language itself. Fundamental to my analysis is Deleuze's concept of style not as personal distinction but a use of language that enables its becoming. This section also dwells on how the chaotic plots of Wallace's works thwart representational reading and prompt readers to read experimentally.

The fourth part of chapter three, "Roth's Aesthetic of Creative Fabulation," deals with the anti-representational concept of writing in the Zuckerman books. Reading *The Ghost Writer* and *The Anatomy Lesson* from the perspective of Deleuzian fabulation, a form of story-making free from the conditions of truth, this section argues that Zuckerman's stories about Anne Frank and Milton Appel enable him to create new possibilities of life.

In the conclusion, I will return to the ethics of immanence, the point of departure of the present project, to discuss the adequation of ontology, art, and ethics in immanence. Roth's and Wallace's ethics of imagination is an immanent ethics, "an ethics of the virtual" that, through connecting with others on the level of material intensities, induces counter-actualization of individuals and makes life a work of art (Bogue, *Deleuze's Way* 11).

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Chapter One

Immanent Creation in Deleuze

Section One

Immanence in Deleuze's Philosophy

In Deleuze's philosophy, immanence has two roles. Immanence is a method of noology, without which there would be no genuine thinking or philosophy. Secondly, immanence is ontological. It is how beings are engendered and renewed. The key to understanding immanence as noological lies in the third chapter of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*. Titled "The Image of Thought," the chapter adumbrates the traditional conception of thinking as a representational image, which posits something transcendent and prior to thinking. "The image of thought is what philosophy as it were presupposes; it precedes philosophy, not a nonphilosophical understanding this time but a prephilosophical understanding" (Deleuze, *N* 148).[3] As a representational image, thought is detached from the creative movement of the world. For this reason, Deleuze opposes the traditional conception of thought. "Thought is not set over against the world such that it represents the world; thought is a part of the flux of the world. To think is not to represent life but to transform and act upon it" (Colebrook, *Understanding* xxiv)

When philosophy starts with the activity of thinking, it begs the question of what thinking is. Deleuze cites Descartes' *Second Meditation* as an example of the logical fallacy. By defining man as thinking being, Descartes presuppose that the meanings of thinking and being are self-evident, that everyone knows what is meant by these terms.

[3] For detailed discussions on Deleuze's concept of the image of thought, see Lambert, *In Search of a New Image of Thought* 1-24 and Dronsfield, "Deleuze and the Image of Thought."

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In other words, the definition of man as *cogito* is built on the pre-philosophical opinions about what thinking and being means (*DR* 129). There is thus an implied "distribution of the empirical and the transcendental," where thinking and being are viewed as iterations of their models on a higher level (133). In contradistinction to the presupposition-laden philosophy like Descartes's, "a philosophy of immanence is a philosophy that does not appeal to anything outside the terms and relations constructed by that philosophy" (Kerslake 2). By understanding the image of thought that turns thinking into representation—an understanding that Deleuze equates with noology, one receives a "prolegomena of philosophy" (*N* 149).

For thinking to be creative, it has to think the new. For Deleuze, the new is not the more recent in time. It is the "unrecognizable *terra incognita*" (*DR* 136). However, the image of thought turns thinking into the identification of the already recognizable. Deleuze shows how thinking is traditionally prevented from creativity through a discussion of eight postulates of the dogmatic image of thought. The eight postulates have in common that they commit the paralogism of "elevating a simple empirical figure to the status of a transcendental, at the risk of allowing the real structures of the transcendental to fall into the empirical" (154). In other words, they mistake something empirical for the transcendental, leaving it an unquestioned premise for philosophical inquiries (Hughes, *Deleuze's* Difference and Repetition 71). Postulates have an insidious effect on philosophy, because, unlike propositions, which can be philosophically examined and then accepted or rejected, they are implicit, hiding behind philosophical discourse and left unexamined (131).

The first postulate is "the double aspect of a *good will on the part of the thinker* and an *upright nature on the part of thought*" (Deleuze, *DR* 131). This refers to the assumption that everyone has a natural aptitude for thinking and that thinking always

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seeks out the true. The thinker naturally desires truth and thought "formally contains truth" (*NP* 103). By applying the concepts of goodness and uprightness to thinking, this postulate makes morality the transcendent guiding principle of thinking (*DR* 132).

The second and the third postulates are about subjective identity and objective identity respectively. On the part of the subject, all the faculties—sensibility, memory, imagination, and thought—work together harmoniously as they are directed toward the object. The supposed common sense, or the unity of the subject, has a correlate in the "model of recognition" in accordance with the unity of the object (*DR* 134). Therefore, the third postulate states that it is the same object that is sensed, remembered, imagined, and thought by the subject. Thought is rendered secondary to a primary world of identical and unchanging subjects and objects. To experience the object is thus to recognize it, to confirm what it "really" is. Thus "thought is but a provisional process, destined to fill the distance separating us from the object; it lasts exactly as long as it takes to recognize" (Zourabichvili 48).

The fourth postulate is representation, defined by "identity with regard to concepts, opposition with regard to the determination of concepts, analogy with regard to judgement, resemblance with regard to objects" (Deleuze, *DR* 137). Deleuze is here alluding to Aristotle's *Categories*, in which a species is classified according to its genus and differentia.[4] Categories, as the concepts that are appropriate to all objects of possible experience, are related to each other analogically. Their generic difference is cast as different ways to consider the self-same Being. On the lower tiers are genera, each of which retains its identity despite being divided into species. Specific difference is rendered oppositional predicates, different only with regard to

[4] The categories are: substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, and affection (Aristotle, *Categories* 4; ch. 4).

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their shared genus. The human being as the rational animal is different from cats and dogs as irrational animals but all of them share the genus "animals." Individual difference is suppressed as the resemblance between the instances of the same species. Each person is just like the next, as all are united under the label "humans." Here, "*different things differentiate themselves only through what they have in common*" (Smith 38). In this hierarchical scheme, difference is qualified by identity and cannot be contemplated without the preceding identity.

The fifth postulate, derived from the first, focuses on the negative operations of the innately truthful faculty of thought. Since thought has the innate talent for truth, that it cannot but find the truth, any falsehood is considered an error resulting from the diversion of thought by "external forces which are opposed to thought" (Deleuze, *NP* 103). It "recognises only *error* as a possible misadventure of thought and reduces everything to the form of error" (*DR* 148). Whenever thinking fails, the failure is attributed to error, which refers to "all these forces that divert thought from its proper use" (Voss 27). Bodily sensations, for example, can distract thought from its path toward truth. To ensure the correctness of thinking, one needs a method, a universal discipline of reason valid across all time and space. Reason acts as the transcendent guarantee for thinking to think the true.

The sixth postulate, the postulate of the proposition, states that the truth value of a proposition lies solely in the dimension of designation rather than expression. Expression, or sense, is the meaning or idea of a proposition, while designation, or referent, is the object to which the expression applies. Although sense is the condition for the possibility of truth—nonsensical propositions would be neither true nor false, "sense would only found the truth of a proposition while remaining indifferent to what it founds" (Deleuze, *DR* 153). Truth value is determined by investigating the

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designated object alone. Sense, "in as much as it remains external to the dimension of designation, presents us with an unbridgeable divide between words and things" (Bowden, *Priority* 100). Built on propositions, philosophy is rendered nothing but signification, which presupposes representation.

The seventh postulate is the tracing of problems from propositions. To illustrate this, Deleuze cites an example from Aristotle, where the problem "Is two-footed terrestrial animal the definition of man" is traced from the proposition that is its answer (*DR* 158). The answer pre-exists the problem and it would be a matter of providing the appropriate information or inquiry for the true solution to surface. The problem is formulated as an interrogation or a referendum, with readymade propositions as answers, thus foreclosing the possibility of the new.

The eighth postulate is the postulate of knowledge, which states that education is the attainment of knowledge. This sums up the fifth postulate, the postulate of the error, where error can be prevented by following the method of reason, and the second postulate, the postulate of common sense, or the harmonious collaboration between faculties. "Method is the means of that knowledge which regulates the collaboration of all the faculties" (*DR* 165). The postulate of knowledge also refers back to the postulate of problems and solutions. It is by following the method provided by knowledge that one can discover the true solutions to problems. Considering education as knowledge is akin to assuming thinking as recognition, as "thinking amounts to the happy contemplation of the known object, or the mechanical exercise of a sovereign power of recognition" (Zourabichvili 48).

In all the eight postulates, thinking is assumed as reflecting the world and thought can be validated against a preexisting, transcendent reality. What makes such an image of thought dogmatic is that it takes this representational thought, which is but

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"a moment of thinking, to be the entirety of thought" (Somers-Hall 97). Representation certainly has its place in practical, everyday matters, but it is not all. When Deleuze opposes the dogmatic image of thought, he is by no means trying to attack any particular school of philosophy. The dogmatic image of thought comes in the form of a diffused and insidious array of "small impurities and paltry compromises" underlining even the most mundane thought (Foucault, *Language* 181; Conway 155).

Against such representational image of thought, Deleuze's philosophical enterprise aims to demonstrate that pure difference cannot be neutralized as non-identity and understood only in relation to Platonic Ideas. Rather, identities are but temporarily stabilized states produced as effects of the originary difference that never ceases to differentiate itself. If it is to be creative, thought must be able to think difference unconditioned by identity.

Deleuze proposes a critical image, which works toward "the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself" and shows "the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself" (*DR* 139). "The thought . . . engendered in its genitality, is a thought without image" (167). Without a transcendent directive, the critical image shows thought to be immanent. "Thought without image will exhibit difference as pure difference, i.e., difference freed from the category of mere negation" (Brown 38). As mentioned before, Deleuze characterizes the dogmatic image of thought as moral. This does not mean the critical image of thought would be immoral, as celebrating the immoral would be just as much as directed by transcendent dogma as exalting the moral image (Bryant, *Difference* 140). It is rather a question of finding an amoral image of thought unburdened by transcendence.

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In *What is Philosophy*, Deleuze and Guattari names this critical image of thought paradoxically without an image the "plane of immanence." "If philosophy begins with the creation of concepts, then the plane of immanence must be regarded as prephilosophical" (40). Here the word "plane," synonymous with "image," allows Deleuze and Guattari to elaborate on the multifaceted nature of the pre-philosophical orientation of thought. The French word *plan* is associated with *arrière-plan*, the background in visual media, such as photography, or in storytelling, as the setting of characters and stories (Beistegui, *Immanence* 11). At the same time, *plan* is something like a blueprint directing how something is going to proceed. As Beistegui points out, "the plan is both behind and ahead, both a background and a plan, and that thought, as creation of concepts, unfolds on a stage that it does not quite create" (*Immanence* 11-12). With the plane of immanence as its image, thought is immanent in itself, with no external predisposition.

However, this does not mean that thought is self-contained, with nothing outside of it. In fact, the plane of immanence is exactly the outside of thought. And yet, it is a paradoxical outside. "It is the most intimate within thought and yet the absolute outside—an outside more distant than any external world because it is an inside deeper that any internal world" (Deleuze and Guattari, *WP* 59). It is "the outside and inside of thought, as the not-external outside and the not-internal inside—that which cannot be thought and yet must be thought" (59-60). The relation between the plane of immanence and thought can be considered one of folding (Rodowick, *Philosophy's Artful Conversation* 153). Thought is a way that matter, the originary difference, folds itself into shape.

This is understandable when one considers that Deleuze and Guattari call the plane of immanence by another name, the plane of consistency, where things

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"con-sist." It is "peopled by anonymous matter, by infinite bits of impalpable matter entering into varying connections" (*ATP* 255). It is a plane "upon which everything is given, upon which unformed elements and materials dance that are distinguished from one another only by their speed and that enter into this or that individuated assemblage depending on their connections, their relations of movement (255). The plane of consistency is the originary matter, which is not the "physicochemical strata" but a "submolecular, unformed Matter" (503). This insensible matter is an endless number of heterogeneous elements that interact with each other, continuously forming ever new connections and yet never coming under any ultimate unity.

The plane of immanence and consistency is also the plane of univocity. This is the second, ontological role of immanence in Deleuze's philosophy. As Deleuze and Guattari wrote, "The plane of immanence has two facets as Thought and as Nature, as Nous and as Physis," thinking and being (*WP* 38). Being does not transcend thinking, and neither does thinking transcend being. In fact, "thinking and being are said to be one and the same" (38). Thinking and being are immanent in each other. Both are folded out of the plane of immanence. When they add that "movement is not the image of thought without being also the substance of being," Deleuze and Guattari are saying that thinking and being are both generated from the infinite movement or "pure variation" that describe the genetic difference of the world (39).

Univocity describes the ontological stance where being is "A single and same voice for the whole thousand-voiced multiple, a single and same Ocean for all the drops, a single clamour of Being for all beings" (Deleuze, *DR* 304). Unlike representational schemes, in which the one paramount God transcends all the categorical, generic, and specific differences down the tree of Porphyry, the ontology of univocity considers Being as paradoxically the one and the many on the same level.

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"Being is not first a 'one thing' that then divides, but division, the proliferation of difference, from the beginning. Its oneness *is* the proliferation" (Evans 34). The time of Being is also a paradox. If the representational time is Chronos, the linear succession of presents trackable with chronographs, the time of univocity is Aeon (34). Unlike chronological time, Aeon is "the past-future, which in an infinite subdivision of the abstract moment endlessly decomposes itself in both directions at once" (Deleuze, *LS* 77). To think univocity is to think time and being in paradoxical terms, free from the presuppositions of analogy, opposition, resemblance, and identity.

Deleuze traces univocity to Medieval Scholastic philosopher and theologian John Duns Scotus. In the Scholastic debate on the nature of Being, there were three positions: equivocity, analogy, and univocity. An equivocal ontology attributes different senses of Being to different beings. God, humans, animals, and mountains all have different kinds of being. These senses of being are absolutely different, without any common measure among them (Bain 65; Thacker 146). According to position of analogy, "being is said in several senses of that of which it is said. Only these senses are not without common measure: these senses are governed by relations of analogy." (Deleuze, "Cours Vincennes 14/01/1974"). The ontology of analogy is based on Aristotle's *Categories* mentioned previously, in which each of the categories is a sense in which Being can be said of beings.

Duns Scotus puts forward the notion that being is univocal. However, to avoid committing the Medieval Christian crime of pantheism, he made it a highly qualified form of univocity. For Scotus, "being is univocal insofar as it is being. That is to say that it's metaphysically univocal" and yet being is still "analogical, which is to say that it's said in several senses physically" (Deleuze, "Cours Vincennes 14/01/1974").

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What is univocal is "common nature," a universal that exists indifferently in individuals, each of which has its own haecceities or "thisnesses," which contract common nature. However, individuals are merely instances of the ontologically prior common nature in that individuals depend on common nature for their existence but common nature is independent of them (McGinley 66). Although common nature and haecceities are inseparable, they are formally distinct (67). The difference in kind between common nature and haecceity neutralized univocity, leading Deleuze to comment that Scotus "only *thought* univocal being" (*DR* 39).

It was Spinoza who followed through with the ontology of univocity that Scotus initiated. Spinoza does so through the conceptual triad of substance, attribute, and mode. For Spinoza, God, or Nature, is the only substance in the world. The infinite substance has an infinite number of attributes, or forms of being. "By attribute I understand what the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence" (Spinoza 85; pt. I, D4). Attributes are forms in which God's essence can be conceived. There is an infinite number of ways in which the essence of substance is conceivable, but human beings comprehend only two of them: thought and extension. As Spinoza wrote, "to be able to exist is to have power" (92; Spinoza pt. I, P11). The essence of substance is an "absolutely infinite power of existing" (92; pt. I, P11).

Attributes express substance qualitatively, determining it in formal designations. The attributes are in turn expressed in modes: infinite "modifications of infinite substance" or "affections of substance" (Somers-Hall 37; Spinoza 85; pt. I, D5).[5] Modes express attributes quantitatively, manifesting them in particular bodies. The existence of substance is in and as modes. Although they are individuated and numerically distinct, modes are "all moments of a singular substance" or "ways of

[5] For a detailed discussion on substance and modes, see Smith 30-37.

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being of the substance" (Somers-Hall 37; Beistegui, *Immanence* 29). Because "God's existence and his essence are one and the same," attributes and modes are not different levels of beings, but different expressions of God (Spinoza 100; pt. I, P20). "Expression comprises both determination and differentiation" (Beistegui, *Immanence* 37). While the essence of substance is expressed in attributes, the existence of substance is, through attributes, expressed in individual, differentiated modes. Through the middle term that is the attribute, which has the same sense when applied to the infinite God and the finite creatures, Spinoza makes sure that being is univocal. The meaning of being remains consistent whether said of substance or of modes.

Before Spinoza, philosophers in the Judeo-Christian world would not posit any continuity between the finite reality and infinite substance, between creatures and their creator, God. To do so would run the risk of pantheism. That is why Western ontology had always been characterized by transcendence until Spinoza. Although Spinoza did not say that being is immanent in so many words, his concept of immanent causality points in that direction and is therefore adopted by Deleuze for the latter's own ontology, whose foundation is the plane of immanence (Beistegui, *Immanence* 28).

Spinoza's concept of immanent causality is set against the traditions of imitation and emanation as the formulations of the causal relationship between God and the world, the One and the many, and Being and beings. The relationship of imitation can be traced back to Plato, for whom particular sensible and intelligible things imitate Forms, the original paradigms in which they participate.

Emanative causality was advanced by Neo-Platonist Plotinus to rectify a flaw in Plato's theory of participation by imitation: the violence imposed by participants on the participated (Beistegui, *Immanence* 31). In Plotinus' view, the One automatically

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has to cause all things because it is like a fountain so overflowing with perfection that it cannot help but produce all the myriads of things in the world ("Emanation"). As it produces all things, the One remains untouched, never goes outside of itself, and suffers no diminution in the production process. Deleuze characterizes Plotinus' emanative causality as gifting. "Emanation is at once cause and gift: causality by donation, but by productive donation" (*EPS* 170). Emanation presumes an ontological transcendence, as "the One is necessarily above its gifts, that it gives what does not belong to it, or is not what it gives" (171). Emanation also presupposes a hierarchical universe. The infinite power of the One radiates outward in a procession of ever lesser divinity. The cause is eminent to the effect and there is a hierarchy separating the One as the highest principle from the lower levels of beings.

In Spinoza's immanent causality, there is no eminence of cause. God is both *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, that is to say, both cause and effect, substance and mode. Nevertheless, Deleuze critiques Spinoza's immanent ontology for being held back by theology and thus haunted by the specter of transcendence: "Spinoza's substance appears independent of the modes, while the modes are dependent on substance, but as though on something other than themselves" (*DR* 40). For Deleuze, expression, the relationship between substance and modes, has to be bilateral (Haynes 40-42). Substance as cause and modes as effect have to be "interconnected through a mutual immanence: on one hand, the cause remains in itself in order to produce; on the other hand, the effect or product remains in the cause" (Deleuze, *SPP* 92). Using a Renaissance vocabulary, Deleuze argues that in expression, substance complicates all modes and is implicated in them while modes explicates substance and remains inherent in it (*EPS* 175). In this way, Deleuze turns Spinoza's concept of expression into a reciprocal determination, where substance is no longer independent of modes.

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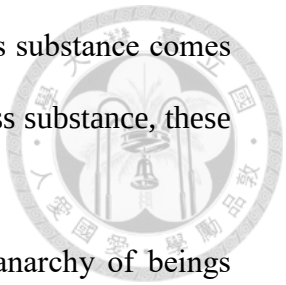

"At the same time as substance is expressed through its modes, this substance comes about only through its modes. At the same time as the modes express substance, these modes also bring this substance about" (R. Butler 79).

In immanent causality, there is no hierarchy but "a kind of anarchy of beings within Being" (Smith 34). However, if there's no category, genus, or hierarchy, does that mean there is no distinction among beings? In his interpretation of Spinoza, Deleuze affirms there is difference among modes, but this difference refers not to transcendent genera or species but a "univocal difference" (Thacker 148). "The only difference . . . from the point of view of a univocal being, is obviously difference solely as degrees of power" ("Cours Vincennes 14/01/1974"). As Deleuze elaborates, "between a table, a little boy, a little girl, a locomotive, a cow, a god, the difference is solely one of degree of power in the realization of one and the same being" ("Cours Vincennes 14/01/1974"). These distinct entities have their respective genus and species in practical terms but, ontologically speaking, they are all expressions of one substance. Their distinction lies in what they are able to do. That is why Deleuze said, "Between a racehorse and a draft horse, which belong to the same species, the difference can perhaps be thought as greater than the difference between a draft horse and an ox" ("Cours Vincennes 14/01/1974"). Two things are different not because they belong to different pre-existing identities but because they act upon the world and are acted upon in different ways. Unlike genres and species, which are static categories, powers can be obtained or lost, ensuring that the universe remains dynamic, open to change and movement.

As an unceasing process where the infinite substance and the finite modes reciprocally determine each other, expression is temporal (May 40-41). A problem emerges here that threatens to subsume expression under transcendence. The problem

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lies in the nature of time. Time is traditionally conceived as the milieu in which things take place (42). It is conceptualized as a boundless but fixed space in which each happening has a marked position. In other words, time is transcendent to happenings. An ontology of immanence requires a concept of time that does not stand outside of the world. For the immanence of temporality, which Spinoza failed to considered, Deleuze turns to Bergson's "duration" and Nietzsche's "eternal return." We will first look at Bergson's concept of time as duration.

Unlike the everyday definition of the word, duration in Bergson is not a stretch of time in which something lasts. Duration in this sense would be a quantitative homogeneity measurable in units, such as thirty minutes or five years. Rather, duration refers to time as qualitative multiplicity: "the continuous and unbroken flow of change and newness," a pre-empirical "kaleidoscopic stream of sensations" (Mueller 28, 26). The Bergsonian concept of time is therefore distinct from the mathematical, linear time, where the past is considered over and done with.

For Bergson, the past never goes away and remains very much in the present. A present experience cannot but incorporate elements of the past, since one's temperament, outlook, and approach to the world are all shaped by accumulated past experiences (Mueller 29-30). There exists a "mutual support" between the past and the present: memories of the past guide the embodied present in reacting to situations, "giving to the motor reaction the direction suggested by the lessons of experience," while the "sensori-motor systems" of the body in the present provides the past with the "means of taking on a body, of materializing" itself, and "of becoming present" (Bergson 152-53).

Bergson illustrates this with a diagram of the inverted cone whose tip, S, intersects a plane, P, a plane that Bergson calls "my actual representation of the

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universe" and Simon O'Sullivan interprets as "the plane of matter" (Bergson 152; O'Sullivan, *On the Production* 46). The base of the cone, AB, and each of the cross-sections of the cone—A'B', A"B", and so on—is the whole of the past in a certain level of contraction and expansion. The cross-sections that are more contracted, i.e., closer to the point S, are not necessarily chronologically nearer to the present. Equating greater contraction with less elapsed time would revert to the traditional linear view of time. Instead, "a greater contraction means a closer relation to a person's behavioral involvement with the world" (May 50). It means this section of the past is something we can better avail ourselves of in our engagement with present sensori-motor situations or in our present goals and projects.

If these descriptions seem centered around the subject, almost suggesting that time is dependent on the subject, it is something Deleuze tried to modify in his appropriation of Bergson. As Todd May notes, Deleuze moderates the psychological undertones of duration to make duration a fully immanent concept. "It is not merely *my* past that exists like a cone in relation to my present; it is *the* past. My past is a particular perspective on the ontological past in which it participates" (May 50). Ultimately, Deleuze's project of theorizing immanent temporality had to move beyond Bergson, because the "continuity of the past, present and future" in duration sits uncomfortably with Deleuze's insistence on a radical temporal discontinuity required by the creation of the new (Bergson 27).[6] For his concept of the future as immament creativity, Deleuze turns to Nietzsche for inspiration.

Deleuze's adapts Nietzsche's concept of the "eternal return" to show the unpredictable, dynamic nature of the future. Contrary to the standard interpretation of the concept as the recurrences of the same, Deleuze construes the "eternal return" as

[6] See also Widder, *Reflections* 90.

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the repetition of difference. This unconventional interpretation is supported by Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche in general. As Jon Roffe points out, the framework of Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche consists of three concepts: the quantity of forces, the quality of forces, and the will to power ("Deleuze's Nietzsche" 74). Before discussing Deleuze's appropriation of Nietzsche's eternal return, an overview of these key concepts is in order.

For his ontology that replaces being with becoming, Nietzsche puts forward the will to power as the genetic condition for the world, a "pre-form of life" that gives momentum to forces (Nietzsche, *Beyond* 36). These force relations are what makes up reality. As Deleuze wrote, "the object itself is force" and "Every force is . . . essentially related to another force. The being of force is plural. . . . A force is domination, but also the object on which domination is exercised" (*NP* 6). Anything, physical or otherwise, is a relation of forces. "What defines a body is this relation between dominant and dominated forces" (40). There is never an equilibrium between forces because forces are fundamentally unequal. "Difference in quantity is the essence of force and of the relation of force to force" (43). In this picture, identifiable objects do not come first. Only when anonymous forces come into relations of domination do identifiable objects come about. "Every relationship of forces constitutes a body—whether it is chemical, biological, social or political. Any two forces, being unequal, constitute a body as soon as they enter into a relationship" (40).

Domination and subordination describe the quantity of forces. The quality of forces refers to whether they are active or reactive. "In a body the superior or dominant forces are known as active and the inferior or dominated forces are known as reactive" (Deleuze, *NP* 40). The quality of forces corresponds to their quantity in their relation with other forces. According to Nietzsche, active forces are forces of

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"appropriating, injuring, overpowering the alien and the weaker, oppressing, being harsh, imposing your own form, incorporating, and at least, the very least, exploiting" (Nietzsche, *Beyond* 259). These traits are not to be judged moral or immoral; they simply characterize the state of striving for life. In Deleuze's explication, an active force is a force that "goes to the limit of its power" (*NP* 59). Deleuze also describes active forces as the "power of transformation, the Dionysian power" to emphasize the creativity of active forces (42).

Forces that are dominated in quantity are reactive in quality. If active forces create by asserting their power, reactive forces "proceed in an entirely different way—they decompose; they separate active force from what it can do; they take away a part or almost all of its power" (Deleuze, *NP* 57). Reactive forces do not try to compete with active forces for predominance. That would be thinking reactive forces in active terms. Reactive forces are better considered "entropic," "something like a wasting disease" (Roffe, "Deleuze's Nietzsche" 72). The reactive quality "manifests itself in submission, but also adaptation, compromise and utilitarian calculation" (Widder, *Political Theory* 68). It is an atrophy of growth rather than an active suppression of action.

Roffe cautions against considering reactive forces as based on a "primordial negativity" of the universe ("Deleuze's Nietzsche" 72). As becoming, life is essentially active. Reactivity is just what happens to some forces when they come into certain relations. Nietzsche expresses the fundamental positivity of life by the phrase "will to power." A living body "will have to be the embodiment of will to power, it will want to grow, spread, grab, win dominance,—not out of any morality or immorality, but because it is alive, and because life is precisely will to power" (*Beyond* 259). For Deleuze, "The will to power is the differential element of forces,

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that is to say the element that produces the differences in quantity between two or more forces whose relation is presupposed. The will to power is the genetic element of force, that is to say the element that produces the quality due to each force in this relation" (*NP* 52-53). The will to power is what drives forces, giving it a "non-subjective compulsion" to come into relations with other forces (Widder, *Political Theory* 69).

However, as with Spinoza's substance and modes, Deleuze considers will to power and force to be immanent in each other: "from the standpoint of the genesis or production of forces it determines the relation between forces but, from the standpoint of its own manifestations, it is determined by relating forces. This is why the will to power is always determined at the same time as it determines, qualified at the same time as it qualifies" (*NP* 62). Force relations express the will to power, whereas the "will to power . . . must *manifest* itself in force" (62). Active forces express the will to power as affirmation, "the power of becoming active," whereas reactive forces express it as negation, "a *becoming reactive*" (54).

Despite being the genetic condition of forces and their relations, the will to power does not directly shape specific force relations, which are formed through unpredictable chance encounters. "Chance is the bringing of forces into relation" (Deleuze, *NP* 53). Fundamentally affirmative, the will to power welcomes all chance events (53). No relation of forces is rejected by the will to power; nothing is considered immoral or monstrous. Whatever force relations are brought about by chance, the will to power says yes to them all.

Now we can begin to see why, for Deleuze, the future as immanent creativity has to be conceptualized as the eternal return of difference. In affirming chance, the will

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to power is affirming that the future is change and difference, that it is not the recurrence of the same. As Deleuze argues:

> It is not being that returns but rather the returning itself that constitutes being insofar as it is affirmed of becoming and of that which passes. It is not some one thing which returns but rather returning itself is the one thing which is affirmed of diversity or multiplicity. In other words, identity in the eternal return does not describe the nature of that which returns but, on the contrary, the fact of returning for that which differs. (NP 48)

The only thing certain about the differential and genetic element of forces—that is, the will to power—is that it keeps differing and generating forces, that it returns.

Through his interpretations of Spinoza, Bergson, and Nietzsche, Deleuze shows that the world is immanently creative. However, as the world creates, doesn't it have to transcend itself? How can the future be radically new if nothing transcends the status quo? To solve the apparent conundrum, we must consider Deleuze's characterization of his own philosophy as transcendental empiricism.

In the essay "Immanence: A Life," Deleuze equates the plane of immanence with the "transcendental field" (*PI* 28). The word "transcendental" in "transcendental field" is emphatically opposed to "transcendent" (26).[7] Therefore, the transcendental field cannot be conflated with subject or object, thought or empirical matter, for these are the dichotomies of "transcendent" fields of equivocity and ontological hierarchy. Under the moniker, "transcendental field," the plane of immanence is what makes experience move horizontally beyond itself, outside its current perimeters, without a

[7] For discussions on the origin of Deleuze's concept of "transcendental field," see Agamben 155-56 and Beistegui, *Immanence* 14.

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higher guiding principle. As Beistegui explains, for Deleuze, "there is no origin of the world, and of thought, other than the world itself" (*Immanence* 14).

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze argues that the purview of transcendental empiricism is the originary difference that generates experience, or the sensible world:

> Empiricism truly becomes transcendental . . . only when we apprehend directly in the sensible that which can only be sensed, the very being of the sensible: difference, potential difference and difference in intensity as the reason behind qualitative diversity. . . . The intense world of differences . . . is precisely the object of a superior empiricism. (*DR* 56-7)

Transcendental empiricism is the empiricism that does not take experience as the starting point, as the given, but deals with the genetic conditions of experience, the pure difference that is the genesis of representational difference. These conditions are immanent in the world itself, affording experience its "immanent transcendence." Now what exactly are these conditions? It is to these immanent conditions of experience that we now turn.

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Section Two

The Ontogenesis of the Subject

In Western philosophy since Aristotle, experience has been the commonsense experience of "medium-sized sensible things," such as Descartes's piece of wax in the *Meditations*, Sartre's inkwell in *Being and Nothingness*, and Heidegger's bowl in "The Thing" (Clancy 110n16). The condition of experience is thus a perceiving subject transcendent to sensible objects (110). For Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, it is, on the contrary, the sensing subject that must be analyzed and traced genealogically. The genetic condition of experience is also the condition for the emergence of the sensing subject of common sense.

"Subject" is a fraught term with many implications and presuppositions. The subject of Modernity, from the Cartesian subject of self-reflective consciousness to the Kantian subject of autonomy and reason, is an anthropocentric concept. As with Ancient cosmocentrism and Medieval theocentrism, Modern anthropocentrism is aligned with the ontology of transcendence, with a hierarchy of static genres and species of beings. It was only that human beings are now elevated to the privileged position at the top of the hierarchy.

The humanistic Cartesian-Kantian subject has been forcefully challenged by Nietzsche, whose ontology of will to power and force relations anticipates Deleuze's. Nietzsche removes the subject from its throne as the *causa sui* of thinking and experience to become a multiplicity of contingent relations. In fact, Nietzsche debunks not only the subject as a unified agent but its metaphysical foundation: substance. For Nietzsche, substance is a function of language: "the concept of substance—that when there is thought there has to be something 'that thinks' is

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simply a formulation of our grammatical custom that adds a doer to every deed" (*Will* 268; sec. 484). Nietzsche considers substance a "logical-metaphysical postulate" supported not by fact but merely "a very strong belief" (*Will* 268; sec. 484).

This is not to deny the existence of the subject but to redefine it as effect rather than cause, secondary instead of primary. The subject is a relatively stable collective of forces that tend toward particular styles of actions, or force relations. It does not precede action, but is "action collectively considered with respect to all anticipated actions (action and the probability of similar actions)" (Nietzsche, *Will* 302; sec. 556). The subject as a multiplicity of force relations does away with the atomic subject, as the forces are anything but atomic; they are not material entities that have tendencies but are themselves "dynamic quanta" or "microdispositions" (Nietzsche, *Will* 339; sec. 635; Cox 127). With the elimination of the concept of substance, the subject is no longer a being but a becoming, a process.

Among Deleuze's contemporaries, Foucault was the most prominent self-appointed Nietzschean who continued the 19th-century philosopher's critique of the modern subject.[8] According to Foucault, "There are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" (Foucault, *Beyond* 212). As Bob Robinson explains, it is the "the normativity of conscience" imposed by an external source on an individual that gives it a goal identity to strive toward and realize (105). The theory

[8] In an interview, Foucault comments on his influence by Nietzsche: "I am simply Nietzschean, and I try to see, on a number of points, and to the extent that it is possible, with the aid of Nietzsche's texts—but also with anti-Nietzschean theses (which are nevertheless Nietzschean!)—what can be done in this or that domain" (*Politics* 251).

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of the subject must start with how the subject is constituted, or, in Foucault's words, "subjectivated."

The concept of the subject as "the Subject in capital letters, of the subject as origin and foundation of Knowledge, of Freedom, of Language and History" has to be studied genealogically, a method inspired by Nietzsche, particularly in the *On the Genealogy of Morals*, to see that "the subject is not one but split, not sovereign but dependent, not an absolute origin but a function ceaselessly modified" (Foucault, *Foucault Live* 67). Foucault considered genealogy a form of "historical ontology," that seeks to "account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework" (*Beyond* 237; *Power/Knowledge* 117). He therefore focused his analysis on how specific incidents and local circumstances constitute subjects. For instance, in *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault attributed the constitution of the sexual subject to the discourses of sexology and psychoanalysis, the byproducts of the repression of non-reproductive sex.[9]

The repression of non-reproductive sex is in turn traced to the development of capitalism from the 17th century to the Victorian era. During this period, the economic clout and political power of the bourgeois class rose in tandem with the ascent of capitalism. Gratuitous sex clashed with the bourgeois model of utilitarian, reproductive conjugal sex. In short, Foucault located the genesis of the subject of sexuality within the "regime of power-knowledge-pleasure" of a specific spatio-temporal environment (*History* 11). This is the same way he had traced how the prisoner, the patient, and the insane are subjectivities produced by "polymorphous

[9] The sexual subject is to be understood as "the subject that experiences oneself as possessing a sexuality or embodying a sexuality with all of the regulatory and productive force—productive of shame, productive of desire, productive of pleasure, productive of love—of that experience" (Boyarin and Castelli 359).

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techniques of power" embodied by the institutions of the prison, the hospital, and the asylum (*History* 11; Boyarin and Castelli 359). In all these analyses, Foucault's genealogy "reveals the contingency, even arbitrariness, of what appears natural and necessary" rendering the universal humanist subject no longer sustainable (Mahon 14).

Whereas Foucault understands the subject as "the outcome of empirical material relations" embedded in specific historical conditions (Colebrook, *Deleuze and the Meaning of Life* 100), Deleuze traces the genesis of the subject to the pre-empirical, the "impersonal and pre-individual transcendental field" that provides the condition for the "synthesis of the person" (*LS* 103). In what follows, I will present an overview of Deleuze's immanent ontology, as elaborated mainly in *Difference and Repetition* and *Proust and Signs*, to demonstrate the continuous ontogenesis of the empirical subject.

Three Syntheses of Time

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze details the genesis of the individual, or the subject of experience. This process begins with pure difference, "that by which the given is given," and, through differen*t*iation and differen*c*iation, ends with a processual subject, or what Deleuze calls, a "different/ciation" (*DR* 222, 209). Differentiation is the step from the contraction of discontinuous, evanescent matter, or intensity, to the birth of virtual Ideas, while differenciation denotes the phase in which Ideas go through intensive processes to create actual individuals. The term different/citation refers to this double process of virtual/actual creation. It also refers to the individual, which is not only the product of the process but also the process itself.

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The process of differentiation consists of three syntheses. In each synthesis, a faculty is produced. The three syntheses give birth to imagination, memory, and thought consecutively. Each synthesis, as it forms a faculty, also creates a dimension of time. With imagination, the present in general is born; with memory, the past in general in created; and with thought, the future in general comes into being. The syntheses are passive because each synthesis "is not carried out by the mind, but occurs *in* the mind" (*DR* 71). The active exercises of imagination, memory, and thought—what these three terms are commonsensical defined—do not take place until the actual subject is fully formed.

As Joe Hughes notes, Deleuze's ontology is based on two givens: "unindividuated matter," the plane of immanence, and "a principle of synthesis" (*Philosophy* 37). The matter here is not "physicochemical" substance or matter defined in opposition to the mind (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 503). Rather, it is "relatively unformed and unstructured energy flows" (Beistegui, *Immanence* 62). In Deleuze's vitalist materialism, matter is "active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable" in contradistinction to the dead, mechanistic matter of crude materialism (Coole and Frost 9).

The first passive synthesis begins with matter being apprehended by a transcendental sensibility. Matter, Deleuze argues, is discontinuous (*DR* 84). It is "a repetition of successive elements or instants" (84). This repetition is subject to "The rule of discontinuity or instantaneity," according to which "one instance does not appear unless the other has disappeared—hence the status of matter as *mens momentanea*" (70). Deleuze refers to the discontinuous matter as intensity, or "pure difference in itself" (144). Fragmentary and immediate, intensity is imperceptible, in the sense that it cannot be sensed by empirical sensibility. It is to be encountered by

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an original transcendental sensibility, which is then constrained to a transcendent exercise that generates each faculty in turn.

The transcendental exercise begins with the first passive synthesis, in which "a contractile power" spontaneously retains the fragmented passing data of evanescent materiality, synthesizing it into the present in general, "the general possibility of any present" moment in experience (Deleuze, *DR* 70, 81). As Deleuze argues:

> A succession of instants does not constitute time any more than it causes it to disappear; it indicates only its constantly aborted moment of birth. Time is constituted only in the originary synthesis which operates on the repetition of instants. This synthesis contracts the successive independent instants into one another, thereby constituting the lived, or living, present. (70)

The contraction is the "'capture' of parts by other parts" (O'Sullivan, *On the Production* 140). A passive imagination contracts the ever-passing instants into relations.

Deleuze characterizes the contractile function of the first passive synthesis as habit: "Habit *draws* something new from repetition—namely, difference" (*DR* 73). What Deleuze means by habit is something much more fundamental than what the term means in everyday language. It refers to the "contemplative soul," the originary attention to the insensible intensity (74). Deleuze explains, "It is simultaneously through contraction that we are habits, but through contemplation that we contract" (74). "To contemplate is to draw something from," to extract a pre-subjective fusion from discontinuous sense data (74). Through contraction, the repetition of the clock's "tick, tick, tick . . ." becomes a difference, "tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock, tick . . . ," and unrelated, transient instants become a relation with two elements (72). In Deleuze's poetic description, "Underneath the self which acts are little selves which

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contemplate," and these contemplative souls are "thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us" (75).

The contemplative souls are "larval subjects," who are not distinct from the objects they contemplate, but a kind of an auto-affection (Deleuze, *DR* 78). They can be anything, even plants. "What we call wheat is a contraction of the earth and humidity, and this contraction is both a contemplation and the auto-satisfaction of that contemplation" (75). "We must always first contemplate something else . . . in order to be filled with an image of ourselves" (74-75). In a kind of pre-individual narcissism, the contemplative soul identifies with what it contemplates. "The eye binds light, it is itself a bound light" (96). The contemplating larval subject contracts, thereby has, and thereby is what it contracts. In other words, it *is* precisely the difference it draws from discontinuous matter.

On its own, the contemplative souls will never contract itself into the active subject of representation, because, like the matter they contract, they fade. A contemplative soul is coextensive with its contraction. The living present constituted by the first passive synthesis lasts for a certain duration, whose length is determined by the contractile range of the passive, larval subject. The duration breaks up when fatigue occurs. "Fatigue marks the point at which the soul can no longer contract what it contemplates" (Deleuze, *DR* 77). The transience of the living present means that there has to be a second synthesis.

The second passive synthesis constitutes memory. This memory is not the empirical memory which reproduces or remembers particular past moments but a transcendental one (Deleuze, *DR* 81). The passive memory "constitutes the being of the past," or "the pure element of the past, understood as the past in general, as an *a priori* past" (80). Like the present in general created by the first passive synthesis, the

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past in general is a temporal dimension with no specific content. It provides the condition for the living present to pass.

The past in general, based on Bergson's pure past, and the living present have a paradoxical relationship characterized by "the contemporaneity of the past with the present that it *was*" and the coexistence of the entire past with the new present (Deleuze, *DR* 81). Moreover, the past in its entirety pre-exists the passing present and is the element in which the present present passes (*B* 59). Each layer of the past contains the pure past in its entirety.

Deleuze also describes the first and the second passive syntheses in the language of physics. Any system originates from intensive difference or excitation. Through the process of "coupling," the intensive differences come into communication for the first time, and then the resulting series enter into "*internal resonance*," second-degree synthesis of the differences drawn through the originary coupling (Deleuze, *DR* 117). Memory, the second passive synthesis, is the resonation between the differences extracted by imagination from evanescent matter. In other words, the second passive synthesis draws a new difference from the series of differences contracted by the first passive synthesis.

As mentioned before, the living present and the pure past co-exist. Their co-existence is made possible by a third synthesis, that of the future in general, which paradoxically precedes the other two temporal dimensions. Deleuze details how the future comes about and conditions the relation between the past and the present using Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a metaphor.

The central action of *Hamlet*, the revenge with which the eponymous prince is tasked, is "a unique and tremendous event, an act which is adequate to time as a whole" (Deleuze, *DR* 89). The narrative of *Hamlet* symbolizes the relations between

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three temporal dimensions. The action of the revenge will relate past, present, and future to one another. In this sense, it is a "totality of time" (89). In the first half of the story, Hamlet imagines himself incapable of revenge, which is deemed a "formidable action" (110). Heroes like Hamlet "are in the past and live themselves as such so long as they experience the image of the act as too big for them" (89). The pure past—Hamlet's past as a whole—has yet to co-exist with the present—the time of revenge. The Bergsonian pure past has yet to contract into a pinnacle. The second moment, the sea voyage, sees Hamlet become capable of the overwhelming action. The cone of pure past contracts into a tip as the past as a whole is brought into co-existence with the present.

The third moment in the narrative is when the emergence of the past in the present brings about the future. By connecting his past self to the present action of revenge, Hamlet generates a new situation. "We produce something new only on condition that we repeat—once in the mode which constitutes the past, and once more in the present of metamorphosis" (Deleuze, *DR* 90). The product of the two repetitions is itself a repetition, but one that brings about absolute novelty. It is "the third repetition, this time by excess, the repetition of the future as eternal return," the "complete novelty" (90). The excess that sets the third synthesis apart from the earlier two is the involvement of the originary unidentifiable intensive difference, which is what returns in the eternal return (90). In this manner, the third synthesis undoes the results of the previous two syntheses and initiates another round of syntheses, forming time as "an eternally . . . decentred circle of difference" (91). Deleuze elaborates further:

> In the third synthesis, however, the present is no more than an actor, an author, an agent destined to be effaced; while the past is no more than a condition operating

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> by default. The synthesis of time here constitutes a future which affirms at once both the unconditioned character of the product in relation to the condition of its production, and the independence of the work in relation to its author or actor. (*DR* 94)

By dissolving what leads up to its birth, "expelling the agent and the condition in the name of the work or product," the eternal return ensures it brings about only the "absolutely different," the radically new (94).

The product of the third synthesis is virtual Ideas, which provide the structure for the emergence of the actual subject. Ideas have been through progressive determination in the first two syntheses, but become fully determined only in the third. The virtual is the transcendental field that can be considered a multiplicity composed of Ideas, which are themselves multiplicities.

In Deleuze's philosophy, "multiplicity" refers not just to plurality or variety. Drawn from 19th-century mathematician Bernhard Riemann, "multiplicity" signifies "a formal network of processes" that do not "conform to a single overarching law, logic or process" (J. Williams, *Gilles* 3). In Deleuze's words, "multiplicity must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather an organization belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system" (*DR* 182). The concept of multiplicity "overthrows the entirety of the One-Many dyad" typical of ontologies of transcendence (Roffe, *Badiou's Deleuze* 11).

"An Idea . . . is . . . a multiplicity constituted of differential elements, differential relations between those elements, and singularities corresponding to those relations" (Deleuze, *DR* 278). Before it is completely undetermined, the Idea is the discontinuous matter or intensity, capable of driving the faculties to their limit in a

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"superior exercise" that makes the faculties acquire new uses (146). For example, the multiplicity of differential phonemic elements—the undetermined Idea of language—drives the faculty of speech to its transcendent exercise, thereby bringing about the poetic use of language, which goes beyond the empirical use of everyday language (193).

Deleuze uses Galois' group theory as an example to explain the process of the progressive determination of Ideas: If the group R is a group of ideal elements, "successive adjuctions to this field (R', R", R"'…)" progressively clarify the invariable structure of R through the application of variations (*DR* 180). This is the stage of reciprocal determination, in which the differential relations between the ideal elements reciprocally form a structure which can then be incarnated in the actual. Nevertheless, it is not until a "divine game" has taken place that the Idea is completely determined.

As Nietzsche uses "the great dice game of existence" to explain the workings of the eternal return, so Deleuze uses the dice-throw as a metaphor for pure chance, which determines how intensity become determined as Ideas in the virtual (Nietzsche, *Will* 549; sec. 1066). The dice-throw is a "divine game" because it has "no pre-existing rule" (Deleuze, *DR* 116).

As the third passive synthesis of time closes with the eternal return as unregulated dice-throw, the faculty it produces, thought, is also unpredictable and nothing like the active, representational thought. It is paradoxically thought as "the impossibility of thinking" (Deleuze, *DR* 199). "Thinking is not something 'we' do . . . , for the event of thought lies beyond the autonomy of choice. Thinking happens" (Colebrook, *Gilles* 38). The unthinkable intensity is "at once that which cannot be thought and that which

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must be thought"—"the differentials of thought" that generates thinking as the emergence of the new (Deleuze, *DR* 199).

The throwing of the dice is carried out by a "blind, acephalic, aphasic and aleatory original point" (Deleuze, *DR* 199). The aleatory point is the differentiating principle that commands the unregulated distribution of differential elements. The aleatory point determines the Idea by determining its singularities, the values of the differential relations between Ideal elements (175). According to Daniel W. Smith, singularities can be considered turning points or critical points where changes or transitions occur, such as the points at which a curve changes direction, or the points at which water changes its phase (56).

As the aleatory point rolls its hand of dice, "singularities emanate from that aleatory point which every time condenses the whole of chance into one time" (Deleuze, *DR* 198). The moment the dice thrown are in mid-air marks the totality of chance (Deleuze, *NP* 25-27). Any combination can result. In this manner, each throw affirms chance as such. The moment when the dice settle and exhibit particular combinations marks the moment of necessity (25-27). There is no such thing as error or accident in the result. As Deleuze wrote, "every combination and every throw which produces it is by nature adequate to the place and the mobile command of the aleatory point" (*DR* 198). The Idea that is determined in the virtual is always necessitated by the incidental circumstances of the dice-throw.

Ideas can be understood as problems, or responses to the imperative questions of being. Questions are "the beginning of the world," the source of all Ideas (*DR* 200). Deleuze uses the term "question" to refer to being, which, for him, is an open question (Dronsfield, "Between Deleuze" 152-153). That is why, in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze replaces "being" with "?-being" (64). Because of the openness of the

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question, it cannot be definitively answered. What it can do is incite responses: "the peculiarity of questions is to 'draw' a response," i.e., a problem (78). What Deleuze calls the "question-problem complex" also demonstrates the univocity of being (Deleuze, *DR* 195; Dronsfield, "Between Deleuze" 157). As they respond to the question by "retaining, repeating, and continually going over it," problems are each unique and yet, as responses to the same question, ontologically the same (Deleuze, *DR* 195; Dronsfield, "Between Deleuze" 156-57). The question repeats as the dice-throw repeats; and yet it repeats differently because it is the originary difference that is repeated.

From the Virtual to the Actual

So far the Idea has remained virtual. It takes differenciation for the Idea to become experience in the actual. The Idea is a problem that demands solutions, or coping mechanisms, and differenciation generates the solutions. Differenciation is a two-prong process, "simultaneously differenciation of species and parts, of qualities and extensities" (Deleuze, *DR* 210).

Actualization involves a parallel process in which the differential relations of the virtual Idea are incarnated as qualities or species whereas singularities are embodied as distinct parts, extensities or organizations. However, quality and extensity are by no means mutually exclusive concepts; in fact, they are immanent in each other. What is actualized as quality are differential relations, but the value of these relations are singularities, which are incarnated as the spatial coordinate of quality (Deleuze, *DR* 210). Conversely, extensity is actualized from singularities, but these singularities express the differential relations manifested in the quality attached to the extensity.

Actualization is made possible by "spatio-temporal dynamisms," "the actualising, differenciating agencies" (Deleuze, *DR* 214). In "Method of Dramatization," Deleuze

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obliquely defines spatio-temporal dynamisms thus: "Beneath organization and specification, we discover nothing more than spatio-temporal dynamisms: that is to say, agitations of space, holes of time, pure syntheses of space, direction, and rhythms" (96). Spatio-temporal dynamisms are intensive processes that "dramatize" Ideas according to the latter's structural rules in the realm of intensities. It is an improvised drama played by matter loosely based on the script of the Idea. In the egg, for example, spatio-temporal dynamisms are "morphogenetic movements: the augmentation of free surfaces, stretching of cellular layers, invagination by folding, regional displacement of groups" (Deleuze, *DR* 214).[10] By connecting Ideas and intensities, spatio-temporal dynamisms animate intensities, giving them spatial orientation and temporal development to create out of them actual objects with the qualities and extensities that correspond to virtual Ideas.

Importantly, even after actualization, virtual Ideas remain within the actual individual, making the individual a "differen*t*/*c*iation" (Deleuze, *DR* 209). The individual is an ongoing problem-solution complex, as "differentiation determines the virtual content of the Idea as problem, differenciation expresses the actualisation of this virtual and the constitution of solutions" (209). For instance, the eye as an organ is a local solution to the problem of light (211). The solution is not final. The virtual problem remains in the actual solution, giving the eye the potential to become keen, bleary, or go blind as it tackles the changes in light. In this sense, the eye, or any individual for that matter, is in fact an open-ended metamorphosis without completion.

The process of actualization requires not just Ideas but intensities. The actualization of Ideas is differenciation, whereas the actualization of intensities is

[10] For a biological perspective on Deleuze's account of actualization, see Protevi, "Deleuze and Life."

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individuation. A concept taken from Gilbert Simondon, "Individuation is the act by which intensity determines differential relations to become actualized, along the lines of differenciation and within the qualities and extensities it creates" (Deleuze, *DR* 246).[11] "Intensities are not entities, they are virtual yet real events whose mode of existence is to actualise themselves in states of affairs" (Boundas, "Intensity" 134). As differences of potential in the environment, intensities induce individuation by providing the stage for dramatization with spatio-temporal dynamisms. To return to the egg as an example, "The nucleus and the genes designate only the differentiated matter—in other words, the differential relations which constitute the pre-individual field to be actualized; but their actualization is determined only by the cytoplasm, with its gradients and its fields of individuation" (Deleuze, *DR* 251). The DNAs in the nucleus determine the differential relations in the virtual organism, while intensities in the cytoplasm express the differential relations in the DNAs, individuating the actual organism. The field of individuation in the egg can be considered a topological space; through individuation, it becomes a metric space (Beistegui, *Truth* 306).

Intensities explicate themselves into extensity, reducing their differences in the process. "Intensity is difference, but this difference tends to deny or to cancel itself out in extensity and underneath quality" (Deleuze, *DR* 223). However, intensities do not totally disappear in the actual. "Difference in the form of intensity remains implicated in itself, while it is cancelled by being explicated in extensity" (228). From the perspective of intensities, the empirical is illusory, but not in the sense of being unreal. While the empirical and the intensive are both real, the former is only the surface effects of a transcendental depth that is the intensive. "Depth is the intensity

[11] Bogue provides an illuminating explanation of Simondon's concept of individuation in *Deleuze and Guattari* 61-62.

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of being, or vice versa" (231). It is through depth explicating itself that extensity, or space, comes about (229). Depth here is not one of the three spatial dimensions, as everyday language supposes, but their ultimate origin. "The original depth . . . is indeed space as a whole, . . . space as an intensive quantity: the pure *spatium*" underlying the commonsense divisible metric space (230).

The explication of intensity in extensity involves a series of syntheses of space that correspond to the three syntheses of time. The actual extensity has the temporality of the present, the first synthesis of time; the temporality of the explication of the virtual depth is the pure past, the second synthesis of time (Deleuze, *DR* 230). Depth itself corresponds temporally to the eternal return, the third synthesis of time (230). The transcendental principle of the eternal return governs the depth, the "volcanic *spatium*," in contrast to the laws of science that dominate the surface world of experience (241). The "identical which is said of the different," eternal return ensures that original, infinite intensive difference keep occurring to generate space from depth (241).

Intensity has three characteristics. Firstly, intensity "includes the unequal in itself" (Deleuze, *DR* 232). As Henry Somers-Hall notes, "for Deleuze difference can only be equalised in a constituted realm, leaving it unequalised in its original domain" (176). Intensities are differences that cannot be equalized. In the realm of numbers, ordinal numbers are intensive numbers, since their differences are irreducible, whereas cardinal numbers are extensive and can be equated with each other through mathematical functions.

The second characteristic of intensity is that it "affirms" difference (Deleuze, *DR* 234). Therefore, negation, which operates by limitation and opposition, does not apply to intensity, but only to extensity and quality. "It is underneath quality and

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within extensity that Intensity appears upside down, and that its characteristic difference takes the form of the negative (either of limitation or of opposition)" (235). Intensive differences are positive, independently different rather than the negation of identity (235). Such positive difference lies beyond the purview of the senses. Only peculiar activities such as vertigo or pharmaceutical distortion of the senses can yield the experience of the intensive depth and pure difference (237).

The third characteristic of intensity is that it is "an implicated, enveloped or 'embryonised' quantity" (Deleuze, *DR* 237). Intensity is never exhaustively explicated. Something remains implicated or enveloped when intensity is explicated in extensity. This something is what Deleuze calls "distances," the ordinal, "indivisible asymmetrical relations" between "series of heterogeneous terms" (238). Because of its enveloped part, intensive quantity is neither divisible, like extensity, nor indivisible, like quality. It can be divided, but only with the result of changing its nature (237). An extensive quantity, such as a length of path or an amount of water, is a homogeneous whole composed of parts or units of the same order, and thus can be divided metrically. An intensive quantity, such as a speed or a temperature, is not the total of separate units of the same order but refers to the relation between heterogeneous series, and therefore it cannot be divided without changing its nature. In other words, any attempt to metricize an intensive quantity only leads to further explication of intensity.

In the individuation process, intensities focus on some of the differential relations and the accompanying singularities in the Idea to express them clearly. The other differential relations and singularities are also expressed by intensities, though confusedly. Deleuze compares the expressive individuation to Leibniz's monadology: "all monads convey the entire world and are distinguished only by their subdivisions,

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by the clear zones of their expression" (*FLB* 113). Moreover, "the world does not exist outside of the monads that are conveying it" (93-94). However, Deleuze departs from Leibniz, whose monad refers to the substantive individual, in making monads "implicated intensities" (Wilkins 226). Citing a metaphor from Leibniz, Deleuze illustrates individuation with the example of a person perceiving the sound of the sea. The totality of the infinite drops of water in the sea makes up the differential relations and singularities. Individuation is the process whereby the intensities in the perceiver express the relations and the corresponding singularities. Intensities give clear expressions to certain differential relations and singularities. What the intensities express clearly, the perceivers hear as the sound of the sea—an apperception; what they express confusedly are registered unconsciously as minute perceptions (Deleuze, *DR* 253). The existence of these two types of perceptions is due to the fact that intensities are implicated in each other. What intensities directly attend to, they express clearly, and what they access through the intensities they envelope, they express confusedly. Because of the presence of enveloped intensities, which retain the potential for further explication, individuation is an ongoing process.

There is a strong affinity between intensities and virtual Ideas but the two are not identical. Intensities and Ideas are two "figures of difference," or two capacities of pure difference (Deleuze, *DR* 244). There is an "effective identity of the realms of the virtual and the intensive, considered in themselves" (Wilkins 212). In its role as differential relations to be actualized, the pure difference is Ideas; in its role as the driving force of actualization, this same thing is termed "intensity" (211). According to Deleuze, "Ideas are problematic or 'perplexed' virtual multiplicities, made up of relations between differential elements. Intensities are implicated multiplicities, 'implexes', made up of relations between asymmetrical elements which direct the

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course of the actualisation of Ideas and determine the cases of solution for problems" (DR 244). They are both multiplicities rather than atomic entities. However, virtual Ideas are the relations that entwine differences, whereas intensities are the energies enfolded from the imbalances between differences (Cisney). Ideas and intensities can thus be considered two concepts with which to approach the self-actualization of the originary positive difference that is the world.

Ontogenesis is a continuous four-fold process of "differentiation-individuation-dramatisation-differenciation" (Deleuze, *DR* 251). The potential for the ontological renewal of the individual is closely associated with the complexity of its system. Intensities are interiorized in "centres of envelopment," and the more complex a system is, the more centers of envelopment it contains (256). The center of envelopment is where intensities remain implicated in extension. Deleuze refers to centres of envelopment as the dark precursor or "*obscure precursor*" ("Method" 97). A "differentiator" of differences, the dark precursor brings two series of differences into resonance or communication and then conceals itself in the result (Deleuze, *DR* 119). In cloud-to-ground lightening, for example, the dark precursor is the negatively charged channel of ionized air that reach upward from the ground to connect with a downward-reaching positively charged ionic channel to induce the lightning strike ("Method" 97). The dark precursor initiates the individuation process to bring continual change into the explicated system.

Encounter and Apprenticeship

The ontological renewal of the individual is initiated by what Deleuze calls the "encounter." "Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*" (*DR* 139). The encounter kindles the counter-actualization necessary for the genesis of the subject. The regeneration of

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subjectivity is a process of learning, an "apprenticeship." "To learn is first of all to consider a substance, an object, a being as if it emitted signs to be deciphered, interpreted" (*PS* 4). Anything may emit signs, as long as it affects the subject like a puzzle, a mystery, provoking an act of interpretation as if the signs were hieroglyphs (4). Only when confronted with the not yet explicated, the unrecognizable signs, is the subject able to become other. "What forces us to think is the sign. The sign is the object of an encounter" (97). Unrecognizable by the faculties in their current state, the sign prompts a line of genesis of imagination, memory, and thought.

Alluding to Plato's *Republic*, Deleuze argues there are two kinds of objects: recognizable objects and encountered ones (*PS* 100-101). Recognizing objects is an exercise of common sense, which is "defined subjectively by the supposed identity of a Self which provided the unity and ground of all the faculties, and objectively by the identity of whatever object served as a focus for all the faculties" (Deleuze, *DR* 226). As Todd May points out, commonsensical recognition consists of an active subject making judgments about to which existing category the current object belongs (78). The subject is contentedly ensconced within its experience and thus closed off from any possible renewal of subjectivity.

Encountered objects, on the other hand, are "imperceptible . . . from the point of view of recognition" (Deleuze, *DR* 140). Since they cannot be recognized, i.e., judged correctly, they can only be interpreted and they never fail to compel interpretation. The initiation of the apprentice is therefore characterized by the "accident of encounters and the pressure of constraints" (Deleuze, *PS* 16). The encounter is never in the subject's plan. The subject has no innate desire to interpret signs and finds them disruptive or disturbing. Deleuze therefore characterizes the thought sparked by the encounter as "involuntary intelligence, the intelligence that undergoes the pressure of

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signs and comes to life only in order to interpret them" (*PS* 98). It can even be said that signs select their interpreters: The subject enters apprenticeship because the sign exerts an "existential grip on us that demands we overcome its mere appearance" (Drohan 27). The encounter is always fortuitous but the thinking it generates, the new subjectivity it brings about, is always the necessary result of the peculiarities of the specific encounter.

Paradoxical, nonsensical, and unintelligible, the sign throws the apprentice off the representational framework. The object of encounter is the "being of the sensible," or intensive difference (Deleuze, *DR* 236). As such, it is both the insensible and "that which can only be sensed" (140). It is insensible in that it cannot be recognized empirically. It can only be sensed because it is confronted by sensibility alone, without the collaboration of other faculties. Baffled by the unrecognizable, sensibility is forced to go outside of experience and exert itself beyond the limit of its power. Unassisted by other faculties, it breaks down, pushing other faculties into work in its stead and triggering a violent chain of discordance among faculties, in which "Each faculty must be borne to the extreme point of its dissolution" (143). New subjectivity is created through the demolition of the old one through the transcendental exercise of the faculties, from sensibility to thought. "To think is to create—there is no other creation—but to create is first of all to engender 'thinking' in thought" (147).

The sign forces thought to conceive "essence," "at once the thing to be translated and the translation itself, the sign and the meaning. They are involved in the sign in order to force us to think; they develop in the meaning in order to be necessarily conceived" (Deleuze, *PS* 101-02). In terms of their ability to initiate the transcendent exercise of the faculties, the essences can be understood as intensities; in terms of their conception in thought, the essences can be understood as virtual Ideas.

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The sign compels the apprentice to access the virtual, "a spiritual milieu populated by essences" (Deleuze, *PS* 37). For instance, in *In Search of Lost Time*, a piece of madeleine brings Marcel to the virtual Combray in a moment of involuntary memory, a kind of transcendent exercise of the faculty of memory. In the case of voluntary memory, the madeleine would remind Marcel of the actual Combray of his childhood in a way that the two memory objects are similar but external to each other. In contrast, involuntary memory "internalizes the context, it makes the past context inseparable from the present sensation" (60). The past Combray, which is implicated in every present moment, is now explicated by the present madeleine. The Combray evoked involuntarily is not the actual Combray but the virtual one, the "Combray as it could not be experienced: not in reality, but in its truth; not in its external and contingent relations, but in its internalized difference, in its essence" (61). Unlike the actual Combray frozen in its unity and sameness in the chronological past, the virtual Combray is a multiplicity of differential elements and relations potent with ontological creativity.

The interpretation of the signs is the re-creation of the individual. Here the subject has no more agency than in the encounter. "It is not the subject that explains essence, rather it is essence that implicates, envelops, wraps itself up in the subject. Rather, in coiling round itself, it is essence that constitutes subjectivity" through the process of individuation (Deleuze, *PS* 43). Essences are not the materials with which the individual actively builds itself. Rather, essences, now in their role as intensities, explicate themselves spontaneously to create the new individual and remain implicated in it. "Essences . . . have imprisoned themselves, have enveloped themselves in these souls they individualize. They exist only in such captivity" (43-44).

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"Each subject expresses the world from a certain viewpoint," Deleuze argues, because each implicates the essence in a unique way (*PS* 42). It seems intuitive to associate the word "viewpoint" with its subjectivist meaning in everyday language. However, in Deleuze, a point of view is not a property of the subject; rather, the subject belongs to a point of view. As Levi R. Bryant explains, "the subject occupies its perspective like a zebra occupies the plains . . . as a medium of movement" (152). The viewpoint is the specific local material environment that determines the course of individuation and the way the subject expresses the world.

In terms of Ideas, the last step in the apprenticeship is the emergence of solutions to problematic Ideas. According to Deleuze:

> Learning to swim or learning a foreign language means composing the singular points of one's own body or one's own language with those of another shape or elements, which tears us apart but also propels us into a hitherto unknown and unheard-of world of problems. To what are we dedicated if not to those problems which demand the very transformation of our body and our language? (*DR* 192).

The learning that brings about the new individual requires the commingling of the virtual Ideas of the learner and those of the unfamiliar water or the foreign language to form a "problematic field" (165). As the singularities pooled from the two sides interact, the Ideal problems of the would-be swimmer are determined. The intensities of the swimmer and the water, such as neural and muscular actions and hydrodynamic elements, interact to generate a swimmer. The unique way the swimmer swims is a contingent solution to the problem of water. "Genuine learning," Ronald Bogue notes, "involves . . . a re-orientation of thought following its initial disorientation, such that thought may comprehend something new in its newness, as a structured field of potential metamorphic force" (*Deleuze's Way* 67). Apprenticeship is the process in

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which disorienting signs compel the individual to go through a metamorphosis executed by suprasensible forces. The swimmer is not an identity but a process, always subject to another encounter, another sign, and a new individuation.

The principle of the continuous ontogenesis and ongoing renewal of subjectivity is the Nietzschean-Deleuzian eternal return of difference, which traces "an eternally excentric circle, the decentred circle of difference" always starting somewhere new (*DR* 91). The eternal return is excentric because the virtual and the actual are in a relation of "reciprocal determination," a "torsion . . . or . . . shared twist, each expressing the force exercised at the other end" (J. Williams, *Transversal* 38). This is evident in the re-contexualization of memory by a present discovery: "the realisation of a betrayal changes our memories and colours them in different ways (*He was stealing money all that time*)" (68). While the virtual past contracts into the actual present, the latter joins the former, modifying it, so that it is a different virtual that returns to be actualized.

In this way, the subject never ceases to become. In fact, it is "an impersonal becoming. . . . The subject is a becoming of being" (Kristensen 15). Being, immanent in the subject, becomes with it, with every individuation, every dice-throw, and every spatio-temporal drama. As a becoming, the world has no final end-point. The ontogenesis of the subject and the world is a never-ending process.

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Chapter Two

Ontology of Immanence and Embodied Creation

Section One

Embodiment: Crossroads between Roth, Wallace, and Deleuze

The modern era commenced with the Cartesian mind-body dualism and the concomitant the belief in the autonomy of the mind. Since then, consciousness has been considered as such only to the extent that it is free from the constraints of matter. Creation is a phenomenon of the mind in its transcendent disembodiment. The dualism continues into postmodernity with the advances in technology and media. Cyberspace and globalization created the seeming disposability of the circumscriptive body. The value that postmodernity places on the transcendence over materiality means that creation continues to be disassociated from embodied experience.

Philip Roth and David Foster Wallace both challenge the privileging of the mind as the vehicle of creation. Roth questions the autonomy and transcendent disembodiment of the modern humanist subjectivity, whereas Wallace emphasizes the material foundation of postmodern hyperreal technology, thus debunking the postmodern continuation of the modern disembodied subject.

This chapter focuses on the ontology of immanence in Roth and Wallace and how the renewal of subjectivity is an embodied process from the Deleuzian perspective. In this introductory section, I will explore the theme of embodiment in Roth's and Wallace's novels as problematizations of modern and postmodern disembodiment respectively, and then move on to a discussion of Deleuze's philosophy of embodiment, which will serve as foundation for the interpretation of specific texts by Roth and Wallace in the later sections of this chapter.

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Challenge to Modern Mind-Body Dualism

Critiqued by Foucault as the "Age of Man," modernity is characterized by a strain of humanism upholding the dichotomy between mind and body and the subordination of the latter to the former. Creation is located in the mind, which determines bodily acts. As Simon During notes, humanist modernity believes that "human beings have a unified self in which consciousness determines behavior" (17). This trend is even more prominent in high modernism, whose central tenets are "impervious autonomy and transcendent disembodiment" (McCabe 639). Privilege is given to a supposedly disembodied interior core identity that dictates bodily acts as the physical manifestations of this core.

The modernist mind-body dualism is forcefully refuted in the late 20th century by Foucault and corporeal feminists, including Judith Butler and Elizabeth Grosz. Foucault traces the history of the mind or soul to show that it is not a given or a universal substance, but "the present correlative of a certain technology of power over the body" (*Discipline* 29). Consciousness or interiority is "born . . . out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint" applied to the body (29). Since embodiment is the condition of subjectivity, Foucault's genealogy of the subject is the genealogy of the body, which bears the marks of normalizing forces but also "constructs resistances" to these forces (McLaren 83; Foucault, "Nietzsche" 87).

Taking up the implications of Foucault's argument for the relationship between sex and gender, Butler lays out her refutation of modernist mind-body dualism in her redefinition of "sex." Butler finds in Simone de Beauvoir, a major influence on Butler's generation of feminists, a Cartesian distinction between sex and gender, in which sex is a "biological facticity" and gender is a construct by cultural and historical discourses ("Gendering" 254). However, for Butler, "the prediscursive can

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only ever be a particular product of a particular discourse" (Chambers and Carver 59-60). Sex, not unlike gender, is itself a normative category, "a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs" (J. Butler, *Bodies* xi). The manner in which regulatory norms produce sex is performativity, but this performativity is not of the subject expressing its preexisting inner substance but of the power of discourse materializing a body through the reiteration of norms.[12]

With the redefinition of sex, Butler also reconceptualizes the body, and, by extension, matter. Instead of being a natural given, a blank surface, or a discursive construction, matter is "a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter" (J. Butler, *Bodies* xviii). Furthermore, materialization is never complete once and for all. There are inevitably fissures and instabilities where the body is not quite in perfect accord with the norms that materialized it (xii). Therefore, there is always rematerialization, which means the body is never static or fixed but remains a temporally dynamic process. Sex and gender are not the two poles of a material/ideal dualism but different ways of materialization.

Grosz agrees with Butler that there is no naturalistic, substantial, pre-social body that is contingently inscribed by discourse. There are only *bodies* as products of specific confluences of cultural relations, which include not just gender but race, class, and many other categories. Claiming for bodies an "organic openness to cultural completion," Grosz proposes a non-dualistic paradigm for rethinking the relationship between mind and body, inside and outside, culture and nature (xi). "The Mobius strip," a three-dimensional one-sided surface, illustrates "the inflection of mind into body and body into mind, the ways in which, through a kind of twisting or inversion,

[12] For a detailed discussion on Butler's theory of performativity and the body, see Loxley 117-20.

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one side becomes another" (xii). The corporeal and the incorporeal thus have a topological relationship, as they morph into each other and create each other.

To illustrate the reversibility of the physical and the psychical, Grosz cites the work of neurologist and psychoanalyst Paul Schilder on body image, the mental representation of the biological body, and the phenomenon of the phantom limb after amputation. The sensation felt in amputated body parts is a psychical compensation for the biological loss. It is a way the body image keeps, albeit temporarily, the organic body intact (Grosz 72-73). On the other hand, objects external to the biological body is often incorporated into the body image. Clothing is an obvious example, but "Anything that comes into contact with the surface of the body and remains there long enough will be incorporated into the body image," even other bodies (80). Schilder's findings thus supports Grosz's claim that the subject is the interface topologically connecting consciousness and the physical environment.

Philip Roth on Pain

Roth's repudiation of mind-body dualism is expressed most prominently in his depictions of undiagnosable physical pain. An early example is a lesser known short story titled "Novotny's Pain," published in 1962. Novotny, a young Chicagoan, has just been drafted into the Army during the Korean War when he becomes afflicted with a back pain. A disciplined and obedient soldier, Novotny at first tries to force himself to go about his daily duties as if nothing is wrong. Only when the pain has progressed beyond his tolerance does he go on sick call. None of the medical professionals or his superiors takes his condition seriously. They all say the same thing: "Everybody's back hurts" (50). To onlookers, Novotny's problem seems negligible compared with other patients in the army hospital, most of whom were maimed on the battlefield.

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Frustratingly, Novotny's severe back pain has no identifiable cause despite its severity. "That all the doctors were unable to give a satisfactory diagnosis did not make his pain any less real" (Roth, "Novotny" 55). The pain makes Novotny feel "as lonely as he had ever been" and drives him to shut himself off from his affectionate mother and quarrel with his girlfriend during their visits (53). As Arne Johan Vetlesen argues in *A Philosophy of Pain*, pain sufferers are "cast out into a kind of aloneness" and "withdrawal from a common human universe" (28). So withdrawn is Novotny that he was even glad to see his mother leaving at the end of her visit (Roth, "Novotny" 51).

Desperate to become well again, Novotny entertains "the fantasy of reaching inside himself and cutting out of his body the offending circle of pain. He saw himself standing over his own naked back and twisting down on an instrument that resembled the little utensil that is sold in dime stores to remove the core of a grapefruit" (Roth, "Novotny" 53). The body in pain is ambiguously experienced as both oneself and not oneself. The body appears "uncanny," felt to be separate from the self and yet recognized ineluctably as the self (Burwood 274). "The sense of the uncanny arises because I am drawn to recognize . . . the inescapability of my particular embodiment" despite "a sense of otherness" of the body to the mind (275). Novotny's fantasy illustrates the body-mind dissociation that is paradoxically founded on the immanence of the body and the mind.

Alone in his pain, Novotny wonders to himself whether the mysterious pain is a form of divine punishment: "What had he done, from the day he had grown out of short pants, but everything that was asked of him?" (Roth, "Novotny" 50). Raised Catholic, Novotny entertains the possibility that the pain is a way in which God punishes him for his sexual relationship with his girlfriend: "Was he being punished

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for being so happy with her? Were they being punished for all that sex?" (53). As the anonymous third-person narrator makes clear, this is a possibility that Novotny ultimately dismisses, as "he was not the kind of Catholic who believed in Hell; he was not the kind who was afraid of sex. All he wanted was his chance at life. That was all" (53). Novotny does not believe that sex makes him a sinner, nor does he believe that his body is a vessel of punishment by his own conscience.

If Novotny refrains from giving his ailment a moral interpretation, the army does not hesitate to ascribe it to a combination of moral culpability and psychological weakness. As the back idiomatically represents a person's ability to take up burden and responsibility, Novotny's back pain is interpreted as a lack of moral backbone. That "there were men in Korea who had much worse . . . was the statement that everyone finally made to him" (Roth, "Novotny" 51). The colonel even accuses Novotny of egocentrism. "Haven't you ever heard of self-sacrifice?" he asks the young soldier rhetorically (56).

The army doctor suspects the cause of the pain is not physical abut psychological. Novotny "tried to explain that . . . the pain wasn't on the surface but deep inside his back. The doctor said it was deep inside his head" and "told him to go back to duty like a man" (Roth, "Novotny" 51). Since a medical explanation cannot be found, it must be Novotny's lack of manly courage that produces the back ache. As Susan Sontag maintains, psychological explanation for physical afflictions, which has been prevalent since modernity, creates a sense of control over the uncontrollable. The "'reality' of a disease . . . has to be explained. (It really means; or is a symbol of; or must be interpreted so.)" (55). The urge to psychologize physical debilitation, "That ineluctably material reality," comes from the desire to assert a presumed supremacy

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of the mind, or spirit, over matter (56). Physical debilitation is thus viewed as an epiphenomenon of primary psychological flaws.

In the end, Novotny is discharged after the military psychiatrist diagnosed him as being a "passive-aggressive," a term meaning, the colonel informs him, "Just another kind of coward" (Roth, "Novotny" 55). Any reader's lingering suspicion that Novotny's pain was caused by his fear of the battlefield is laid to rest, when, in the closing paragraphs, the narrator assures us that Novotny continues to have the unaccountable back pain even to this day, many years after his discharge. However, the pain has ceased being as debilitating as before because Novotny has learned to live with it.

"Pain is pure experience relative to the one experiencing it and accepting that frees him from trying to understand pain as a categorical entity" (Frank 78). Having given up trying to make sense of his condition as a category in medical or psychological discourse, Novotny accepts the back pain as an idiosyncrasy of his body, something that requires no explanation. What it does require is attuning his lifestyle to the material peculiarities of his back. "When the other men in Park Forest go bowling on Friday nights, Novotny stays home, for he tries not to put strains upon his body to which he has decided it is not equal. In a way, all the awfulness of those Army days has boiled down to that—no bowling" (Roth, "Novotny" 56). As he adjusts his daily activities to his back pain, Novotny is acknowledging his inescapable embodiment.

Novotny's back pain, Debra Shostak notes, is interpreted by doctors and army officers as "a hysterical symptom of his fear of fighting in the war" (42). This connects Novotny with Roth's other back pain suffering character, Nathan Zuckerman in the 1983 *The Anatomy Lesson*. Like Novotny, Zuckerman is tormented by an

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undiagnosable back pain. Over 18 months, Zuckerman has seen "three orthopedists, two neurologists, a physiotherapist, a rheumatologist, a radiologist, an oesteopath, a vitamin doctor, an acupuncturist, and [an] analyst"—all to no avail (Roth, *AL* 14). Also like Novotny, Zuckerman vehemently objects to psychological interpretations of his ailment and the transcendence of mind over body. However, as we will see later, Zuckerman's attitude to embodiment in general is more complex and changing throughout the novel.

The excruciating pain consumes Zuckerman's life. "Every thought and feeling ensnared by the selfness of pain, pain endlessly circling back on itself, diminishing everything except isolation—first it's the pain that empties the world, then it's the effort to overcome it" (Roth, *AL* 171-72). Zuckerman's experience is exactly what Elaine Scarry discusses in *The Body in Pain*. According to Scarry, "It is the intense pain that destroys a person's self and world, a destruction experienced spatially as either the contraction of the universe down to the immediate vicinity of the body or as the body swelling to fill the entire universe" (35). Zuckerman feels that his self and world has no other content but the pain. "Had he kept a pain diary, the only entry would have been one word: Myself" (Roth, *AL* 232).

Pain also destroys language as a means of representing the world and communicating with others, resulting in the "reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned" (Scarry 35; cf. Vetlesen 17). To the extent that Zuckerman's pain prevents him from so much as lifting a pen, it deprives him of his language. The pain is such a hindrance to writing that he is frequently forced to rest during writing, and "by the tenth time he'd stopped he had nothing left to write, and with nothing to write, no reason to be" (Roth, *AL* 10).

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Being a writer, Zuckerman experiences the loss of his language as the loss of his subjectivity.

Intense pain challenges the mind-body, subject/object dualism by showing up the limit of the subject's power over the objectified body. "Pain heaves the ego down from the pedestal" and gives the lie to the transcendence of the mind over the body (Vetlesen 52). As Vetlesen states, "the pain by means of its body-located reality transforms my whole being into immanence, since every attempt to go beyond (transcend) it becomes impossible" (57).

Because of its medically unexplainable nature, Zuckerman's pain is diagnosed by his psychoanalyst as a "hysterical conversion symptom," a form of self-laceration for having sent his parents to early graves with his scandalous novel *Carnovsky* (Roth, *AL* 24). However, "Zuckerman wasn't buying it," responding to the diagnosis by walking out on the therapy session (35).

Through Zuckerman, "Roth questions the very notion of hysterical symptoms, the psychoanalytic doctrine according to which somatic phenomena always *mean*" (Shostak 41).[13] From the perspective of psychoanalysis, Zuckerman's "causeless, nameless, untreatable phantom disease" is a vehicle for his unconscious to punish him for his filial crimes and, insofar as it stops him from writing, to prevent him from further offenses (Roth, *AL* 28; Shostak 34-35). However, Zuckerman doesn't believe his pain is that "interesting" (200). He avers:

> Everybody wants to make pain interesting—first the religions, then the poets, then, not to be left behind, even the doctors getting in on the act with their

[13] Richard Webster identifies the 19th-century French neurologist J. M. Charcot as the first person to explain medically inexplicable phenomena by "unconscious symptom-formation," which is the foundation of hysteria. In developing his psychoanalytic theory, Sigmund Freud was strongly influenced by Charcot, his teacher.

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> psychosomatic obsession. They want to give it significance. What does it mean? What are you hiding? What are you showing? It's impossible to suffer just the pain, you have to suffer its meaning. But it's not interesting and it has no meaning—it's just plain stupid pain. (200)

As Zuckerman rebuffs the religious meaning of physical suffering professed by George Herbert's poem, "The Collar," in the opening pages of the novel, so now he rejects the "reductive symbolism" of Freudian conversion theory (5-6; Medin 69).

Zuckerman's antipathy to representational interpretations of his pain coheres with Deleuze's critique of psychoanalysis and his insistence that hysteria is the "pure presence of the body" (*FB* 45). As Tomas Geyskens notes, "Psychoanalysis has domesticated the hysterical body by considering it to be a corporeal expression of unconscious representations. Its therapy . . . neglects the pure presence of the body, its rhythms, vibrations and paroxysms" (Geyskens 227). Even Josef Breuer, who co-authored *Studies on Hysteria* with Freud, admits in his contribution to the book that some seemingly hysterical symptoms have physical rather than psychical causes, which contradicts "the exclusive importance of representation in the clinic of hysteria" (Geyskens 222).

In the chapter, "Hysteria," in *Francis Bacon*, Deleuze argues that the symptoms of the hysteric appear physically uncaused because they are not operations on the organic level. They are forces working directly on a subterranean depth. "Everywhere there is a presence acting directly on the nervous system, which makes representation . . . impossible" (*FB* 44). The equivalent of hysterical symptoms in painting is the "insistence of a scream that survives the mouth" in many portraits by Francis Bacon (44). Whether an uncaused pain or an unattached smile, hysterical symptoms are happenings of the "flesh and nerve" unassimilable into "the bounds of

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organic activity" (40). In hysteria, the "excessive presence" of things "is immediately conveyed in the flesh through the nervous wave or vital emotion" (44, 40). Instead of manifesting the hysteric's sexuality, symptoms present "the pure presence of the body at the mercy of invisible forces," or material intensities (Geyskens 227).

As previously mentioned, Zuckerman's attitude to embodiment is not without ambivalence. On the one hand, he is as adamant as Deleuze is in resisting transcendent interpretations of bodily pain. On the other hand, he is unable to reconcile himself to his own embodiment, and the correlative mortality, which the back pain, as well as the recent deaths of his parents, has brought into focus. He tries to numb his pain with alcohol and both legal and illegal drugs. Harboring "a sick man's delusion about healing himself," Zuckerman decides to enroll in medical school (Roth, *AL* 171). In his desperation, Zuckerman simplistically believes that doctors, like his college friend Bobby Freytag, whom he tries to consult on medical school application, are fighters in the battle of "Life vs. Death," and that, by fighting on the side of Life, he can beat his own death (202).

Accompanying Freytag's father on a visit to the grave of the old man's recently deceased wife, the drug-and-alcohol-addled Zuckerman passes out, falling flat on his face against a headstone and breaking his jaw. Lying unconscious amid the dead in the cemetery, where the snow keeps falling on his body and the bodies of the dead alike, constitutes a fortuitous foretaste of death that helps Zuckerman give up any lingering mind-body dualism and the attendant efforts to assert subjective transcendence over his bodily pain.

Drawing from Emile Benveniste's linguistics, Shostak notes that subjectivity is constructed through language, or, more specifically, the act of saying "I" (31-32). When he comes to in the hospital, Zuckerman finds himself unable to speak because

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of his mouth injury. Instead of a speaking organ, he has a "huge, echoing hole" (Roth, *AL* 263). Having tried to subjugate physical pain to medical discourse—a manifestation of the enlightenment humanist belief in sovereign subjectivity—by becoming a doctor, he is now deprived of the status of the speaking subject that enables such discourse. Tellingly, from this point on in the novel, Zuckerman's back pain seems to have disappeared. In his silence, where there is no dualism between the speaking subject and the objectified body, Zuckerman appears to have learned to accept "what is coming," that "illness is a message from the grave. . . . You and your body are one" (254).

As Shostak indicates, "The Corpus," the tile of the concluding chapter of *The Anatomy Lesson*, has two meanings that pertain to the novel. It primarily refers to a dead human or animal body; figuratively, it means a body of writing (44). Zuckerman's blackout in the cemetery leads him from first to the second of these meanings. Only when his mouth is shut is Zuckerman able to write again. "Write for me, Zuck," Freytag urges, "You know how to do that" (Roth, *AL* 266). Zuckerman picks up a notepad and a pen by his bedside and begins communicating with his anesthesiologist friend in written form. Writing is something he has not been able to do properly since the onset of his back pain. Among what Zuckerman writes with the Magic Marker is a sentence—"WHEN HE IS SICK EVERY MAN NEEDS A MOTHER"—nearly identical with the one that opens *The Anatomy Lesson*: "When he is sick, every man wants his mother" (270, 3).[14] The similarity suggests that Zuckerman has renewed his ability to write, and probably to write the book, *The*

[14] David Coughlan also highlights the near-repetition of the two sentences but maintains that it signifies Zuckerman's reconciliation to the loss of his mother (103).

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Anatomy Lesson, itself.[15] It is not through the application of medical discourse but accepting his embodiment that Zuckerman becomes free from the pain and able to write again.

Challenge to Postmodern Disembodiment

In postmodernity, the dichotomy between body and mind is supported by technological advances that promote a sense of disembodied consciousness unconstrained by the specificity of bodies. Early cyberpunk, Allison Muri notes, also contributed to the "postmodern state of technologized disembodiment" (75). According to Katherine Hayles, the development of cybernetics led scientists to believe in the disembodiment of consciousness, or the mind as data separable from the body, a contingent medium. They supposed that "consciousness in an entirely different medium would remain unchanged, as if it had no connection with embodiment" (*How* 1). Citing Hans Moravec and Norbert Wiener, Hayles wrote "a defining characteristic of the present cultural moment is the belief that information can circulate unchanged among different material substrates" (1). This belief in the cybernetic posthuman shares with liberal humanism "the erasure of embodiment" (4). The universality that characterizes the liberal humanist subject and the pure data that defines the cybernetic posthuman subject both presume the disposability of the body to the self while "erasing markers of bodily difference, including sex, race, and ethnicity" (4-5). At the extreme, cybernetic posthumans "regard their bodies as fashion accessories rather than the ground of being" (5).

[15] There is a possibility that the third-person narrator of the novel is Zuckerman himself, or Zuckerman at an older age. This is a valid speculation if we take in account that the first Zuckerman book, *The Ghost Writer*, has the 40-year-old Zuckerman as the narrator framing the events the 23-year-old Zuckerman went through.

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In *How We Became Posthuman*, Hayles highlights a continuum between liberal humanism and cybernetic posthumanism. In both of these schools of thought, the subject is "Identified with the rational mind," and, as such, "*possessed* a body but was not usually represented as *being* a body" (4). The book aims to interject "what had to be elided, suppressed, and forgotten to make information lose its body" by showing how "the body writes discourse" instead of repeating the commonplace that "discourse writes the body" (13, 205). Enlisting Mark Johnson's philosophy of meaning, Hayles demonstrates that the vertical posture of the homo sapiens walking on two feet has generated experiences that inscribes language through metaphors and analogies, as when we say that someone is morally "upright" or refer to successful people as being "at the top" (205). Just as discourse affects bodily actions, so embodied experience shapes language and culture (206-07).[16] Embodiment is something cybernetic posthumanism has to reckon with, not suppress or brush aside.

David Foster Wallace on Hyperreal Technology and Mediation

David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* questions the separation between data and medium and between consciousness and the corporeal body through its portrayal of postmodern technology, exemplified by the fictional videophone and the game of Eschaton. In the novel, most of whose action takes place in the first decade of the 21st century, high-tech disembodiment finds its most prominent instance in the fictional videophone, a telephone with a monitor for combined aural and visual communication. The greatest effect of the videophone on users is making telephone conversation a stressful situation, since almost nobody is happy with the image of his or her face on

[16] Hayles therefore proposes instead a new definition of the posthuman that emphasizes body-mind compositeness: "The posthuman subject is an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction" (3).

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the monitor. Consequently, some entrepreneurs begin marketing masks cast out of a composite image of "the most flattering elements of a variety of flattering multi-angle photos of a given phone-consumer" (148). The mimetic masks soon give way to a new generation of masks that not only combine flattering features but cosmetically enhance them so that the images of phone users are "horrendously skewed" (148).

Masks are then replaced by another invention, the "Transmittable Tableau (a.k.a. TT)," a video-transmittable diorama "of an incredibly fit and attractive and well-turned-out human being, someone who actually resembled you the caller only in such limited respects as like race and limb-number" (Wallace, *IJ* 149). TT images departs from representation even more than masks in that they include no input at all from the phone user but are custom-made using photographs of minor celebrities posing on stage. TT illustrates what Baudrillard termed the "hyperreal." This ultimate level of simulation has no referent in the corporeal realm. "It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (1). The visual data on the videophone screen is entirely independent of the material existence of phone users. The materiality of phone users may well be generated by their videophone images. TT is like a map that precedes rather than represents the physical terrain. "It is . . . the map that precedes the territory—*precession of simulacra*—that engenders the territory" (1).

However, in *Infinite Jest*, the hyperreality of TT self-destructs as consumers become increasingly aware of the separation between their videophone image and their corporeal body. As callers use TT dioramas to cover the lens of their videophones, they are once again liberated from social stress while also being free to engage in other activities when talking on the phone. It soon occurred to most consumers that using TT dioramas is no different from traditional telephoning. With

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the realization, they abandon the expensive device altogether and revert to using old-fashioned aural telephones. The history of videophone suggests that hyperreal technology tend to self-defeat. The simulation that has advanced into hyperreal technology is, after all, an attempt at making communications more embodied. In the case of the videophone, the monitor is intended to make communication more embodied by adding visibility. A communications technology that completely detaches itself from the body will ultimately backfire.

Infinite Jest further critiques such separation between mind and body through its portrayal of Eschaton, a global nuclear warfare game based on "EndStat® ROM-run nuclear-conflagration game," played by Enfield Tennis Academy, or ETA, students on a world atlas covering several tennis courts (996). Representing geopolitical blocs and units, such as IRLIBSYR (coalition of Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Syria) and REDCHIN (Red China), players lob tennis balls, which symbolize nuclear warheads, at targeted areas. With each lob of the ball, the game-master uses the official PC, mounted on a food cart, to run complex calculations of kill-ratio, radius of fallout, number of casualties, and other data, factoring in climate condition and a range of other variables, before determining the outcome of the strike in compliance with "detailed decision-algorithm files" (328). Proceeding by programs and models, the Eschaton is a hyperreal game, much like the typical video game. The lobbing of the tennis ball parallels as the manipulation of the joystick on the video game console.

Ironically, the ethereally disembodied game turns hot-blooded when it begins to show. One of the players, J.J. Penn, the avatar of INDPAK, claims it's snowing on the "territory," the hyperreal globe of nuclear apocalypse, whereas, Michael Pemulis, a former player watching the game from the bleachers, avers it's snowing on the "map," the physical piece of world atlas covering the tennis courts (Wallace, *IJ* 333). As their

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argument heats up, the material threatens to break out of its ideal confines. The division between the corporeal and the incorporeal crumbles when Evan Ingersoll, representing IRLIBSYR, hits a "thermonuclear" "warhead" directly on the head of Ann Kittenplan, the Air Marshal of SOVWAR, claiming to wipe out the "launch capacity" of the simulated former USSR (336). The physical attack inflames Pemulis, who insists on a strict separation of the hyperreal world and the body. "Players themselves can't be valid targets," he shouts, "Players aren't inside the goddamn game. Players are part of the *apparatus* of the game. They're part of the map. . . . You can only launch against the *territory*" (338). Players have to be physically non-existent to the game, "otherwise nonstrategic emotions would get aroused and Combatants would be whacking balls at each other's physical persons all the time and Eschaton wouldn't even be possible in its icily elegant game-theoretical form" (338). Pemulis' categorical insistence only highlights the impossibility of precluding the material from the informational. Eschaton consists not only of computer programs but also hardware: embodied players lobbing physical tennis balls using their muscles, nerves, and athletic skills. However, the material aspect of Eschaton is suppressed in the emphasis on its hyperreal sophistication.

With Kittenplan retaliating against Ingersoll and others joining the scuffle, Eschaton descends into a bedlam of group fistfight. Trying to escape from the fracas, the game-master, the aptly named Otis P. Lord, pushes the computer-carrying food cart toward the exit of the tennis courts. As he runs at full speed, a series of collisions send him headfirst into the screen of the computer, whose chassis, containing "Eschaton's nervous system," has just been smashed to the ground (Wallace, *IJ* 342). Ending with Lord's body sticking out from the broken screen, the Eschaton passage

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suggests that the corporeal and the incorporeal, material body and hyperreal modulation, are in the end inseparable.

Gilles Deleuze on Embodiment

The foregoing discussion shows where Roth and Wallace stand, in their respective historical and technological contexts, on the issue of embodiment. Before moving on to an exploration of the immanent—and always embodied—renewal of subjectivity in Roth and Wallace, it is necessary to take a preliminary look at Deleuze's theory of embodiment. What makes Deleuzian theory, instead of any of the other varieties of embodiment thought that I mentioned previously, the chosen methodology for the current study is the emphasis Deleuze places on the dynamic and creative nature of embodied subjectivity, and this emphasis is clear in his redefinitions of the body.

Influenced by Leibniz's and Spinoza's monistic metaphysics, Deleuze conceives of body and mind as immanent in each other. From Leibniz's monadology, Deleuze drew the trope of the fold. The Leibnizian monad, a conscious perception folded out of micro-perceptions, gives shape to the organic body, which is folded out of the tiny material vibrations it contracts. The monad and the body are conjoined by a third fold, a "Zweifalt," an ambivalent twofold-ness, that renders the monad and the body, soul and matter, inseparable and structurally parallel (*FLB* 120; Cheng 89). Deleuze also infuses his reading of Leibniz into Foucault's concept of subjectivity. In *Foucault*, Deleuze argues that "The outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside of the outside" (*F* 96-7). The concept of subjectivity as folding collapses the dichotomy between interiority and exteriority, mind and body.

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Through his interpretation of Spinoza, Deleuze redefines the body: "A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity" (*SPP* 127). A body is a network of relations. What pertains to the relational definition of the body is not its form, functions, or substance. Instead of these essentialist concepts, Deleuze's Spinoza asks only about the speed and affect, longitude and latitude, of a body. Deleuze elaborates thus:

> We call longitude of a body the set of relations of speed and slowness, of motion and rest, between particles that compose it from this point of view, that is, between *unformed elements*. We call latitude the set of affects that occupy a body at each moment, that is, the intensive states of an *anonymous force* (force to exist, capacity for being affected). In this way we construct the map of a body. (*SPP* 127-28)

This definition locates the body on the plane of immanence, the depth of intensities, and renders it not a substance but a force, an affectivity. It also ensures that the body is never fully formed but a changing collectivity of dynamics.

In its Spinozian-Deleuzian context, affect must be distinguished from emotion, a term drenched in personal, subjective associations. Affect is "a form of pre-personal perception," an intensive response to stimuli before one can conceptualize the experience (Colebrook, *Gilles* 38). It is "the change, or variation, that occurs when bodies collide" resulting in "an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act" (Colman "Affect" 11; Massumi xvi). Therefore, affect, unlike emotion, does not dwell inside the subject but describes the relations between things (Thacker 149). The formulation of affect is thus consistent with Deleuze's emphasis on the exteriority of relations to the individuals related. Moreover, defining a body by its affects is not the

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same as attributing affects to a body. It is not that a body has certain affective capabilities, but that it is "an a posteriori product of newly connected capacities" (Buchanan, "Problem" 75). The body does not come before affects but emerges with them.

Any change in the kinetic or affective relations creates a new body, a new individual. The body or the individual, two terms that Deleuze uses synonymously, is therefore processual and metastable. As Ella Brians notes, the "'individual' (here we can fill in 'object', 'self', or any entity) is merely shorthand for a relatively stable state of affairs that is both partially determined by previous states and open to change" (132). Through its changing connections with other individuals, an individual re-generates itself.

Autopoietic through assembling and reassembling, the individual is literally a machine, as Deleuze and Guattari assert in *Anti-Oedipus*. "Everywhere it is machines—real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections" (1). Machines are not to be confused with mechanical devices with their predictable functions and repetitive movements. In Deleuze and Guattari's redefinition of bodies as machines, machines are contingent, reticulate networks shaped by fluid interruptions and connections with other machines (36-7). What from the humanist perspective is a person having dinner, for instance, is from Deleuze and Guattari's perspective a machine created out of the continuity of the "organ machine," the mouth, and the "energy-source machine," the food (1).

The machinic connections that make up an individual, whether animate or inanimate, is all the time in flux and never definitive. As Claire Colebrook notes, the bicycle is part of a transportation machine, in which the bicycle is a vehicle and the

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human body is a cyclist, but the bicycle machine becomes part of an art machine when connected with artists and curators in a museum (*Gilles* 56). A body, or a machine, has no innate purpose. The myriad connections a bicycle makes are not the different meanings of the same categorical being. Rather, each set of connections makes a different machine. Each machine is a continual process of connections and disconnections.

The momentum for machinic connections comes from desiring production. Comparable to Nietzsche's will to power, desire in Deleuze and Guattari is a positive force—not predicated on lack as in psychoanalysis—that drives one machine to reach out to another. Once the machine is produced, it is an organism, a body in organization or "rigid stasis" (*AO* 8). The creativity of the individual lies in continually desiring, forming new flows or connections and cut off old ones. "Desire causes the current to flow, itself flows in turn, and breaks the flows" (5). Desire interrupts existing flows or connections, draws off the flow to other machines, thus placing itself in a new network of connections.

Reconceptualizing bodies as relations of velocities and affects, and, along with Guattari, as machines, Deleuze supports the notion of an embodied subjectivity, as do Roth and Wallace. The rest of this chapter will focus on individual novels from the perspective of different Deleuzian concepts to discuss the ontological creation in Roth and Wallace. In the following section, I look at Wallace's works first, demonstrating that the Wallacian subject is an ongoing process whose renewal is effected by the Deleuzian "body without organs" (BwO). In the third and fourth parts of chapter two, I examine Roth's works to show that the renewal of subjectivity lies in embodied experimentation. Deleuzian concepts of the "line of flight" and "probe-head" serve as conceptual tools in my textual analyses. After discussing the ontological creation of

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human subjectivity, I return to Wallace to discuss the ontogenesis of something non-human—information—in the closing section of the chapter, from the perspective of the Deleuzian concept of the chaoid.

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Section Two

Regenesis of Subjectivity in Wallace's Infinite Jest

In this section, we will look at the immanent renewal of subjectivity in Wallace's *Infinite Jest* from the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the body without organs (BwO). Before addressing its renewal, it is necessary to understand the nature of the Wallacian subject. Using the story "Good Old Neon" as an example, I argue that the subject in Wallace is processual, a becoming rather than a being.

One catchword in Wallace scholarship is "sincerity," which is used to distinguish Wallace from the previous generation of writers, who are now considered postmodernist ironists.[17] Critics and readers alike find that "Wallace affirmed and embodied sincerity as a crucial value in his life and work, perhaps even as that work's defining feature" (Kelly, "New Sincerity" 131). As Adam Kelly defines it, Wallace's sincerity means being true to one's self as a way of being truthful in intersubjective communications with others (132).[18] Wallace's sincerity is widely seen as part of a more general movement in arts against the postmodern ethos of irony and the subculture of hipsterism (Wampole).

The problem of attributing sincerity to Wallace is that it contradicts the concept of self his works manifest. As Elderon notes, sincerity presupposes the expressist paradigm, which believes in a pre-existing true self that one can express to others

[17] For recent examples, see Kirsch, den Dulk, Kušnír, and I. Williams. Although not using the word "sincerity," Konstantinou reads Wallace in a similar light when he describes Wallace's aim as the creation of the "believer," as opposed to the ironist (Konstantinou, "No Bull" 85).

[18] Referencing Lionel Trilling, Kelly distinguishes sincerity from authenticity, an inner-directed truthfulness to oneself for its own sake (132).

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(Elderon 513). However, Wallace, as "Good Old Neon" shows, does not subscribe to the notion of a true, core, permanent self.

The story opens with the first-person narrator's proclamation, "My whole life I've been a fraud" (Wallace, "Good" 141). Neal, a 29-year-old white yuppie, tells his story from beyond the grave after he committed suicide following years of severe depression. All his life, he tells the reader, he manipulated people into liking him. His admirable behavior, he claims, was disingenuous because it did not come from his true inner self (160). Or, rather, Neal "actually seemed to have no true inner self, and that the more I tried to be genuine the more empty and fraudulent I ended up feeling inside" (160). To discover his true self, Neal tried joining a church, learning Eastern meditation, and undergoing psychoanalysis. In each context, he quickly learned to do what other people expected of him but failed to discover what he genuinely think and feel.

Despairing of ever finding his true self, Neal decides to end his life by crashing his car into a bridge abutment. Right before impact, he had a revelation: the true self he had been looking for is an illusion. The self is nothing but the "infinitely dense and shifting . . . millions and trillions" of "interconnected . . . ideas, memories, realizations, emotions, and so on" (178; 151). These "thoughts, memories, juxtapositions . . . flash through your head and disappear" at the infinitely fast yet achronological "head-speed" (178; 151). In the presence of another person, part of the "all the endless inbent fractals of connection and symphonies of different voices, the infinities" is squeezed through something like a tiny keyhole opening to become what this other person knows of oneself (179). All the transient flashes of "thoughts and connections" are reduced and organized into the "linear, one-word-after-another-word English we all communicate with each other with" when speaking with other people (151). In the

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absence of a unified, self-identical subjectivity to be represented in one's interactions with others, fraudulence and sincerity are invalid concepts.

The subjectivity Neal experiences is nothing like the representational, humanist subject; it is more akin to the Deleuzian processual subject that is half virtual and half actual in perpetual becoming. Every instance of connecting with the world and interacting with others re-actualizes the individual. There is no true self because the self is not "one." The subject is a becoming, a process, taking different shapes in different environments, different machinic connections, in the actual while retaining an ontological reserve in the virtual for future reincarnations.

Infinite Jest demonstrates that, as a process instead of a substance, the subject is renewed immanently through embodied experience. The complex plot of the novel involves three main locales: the Enfield Tennis Academy (ETA), the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House, and *Les Assassins des Fauteuils Rollents* [sic] (*A.F.R.*). The last of these, known in English as the "Wheelchair Assassins," is a Québécois separatist group employing terrorist tactics to urge Canada to secede from the Organization of North American Nations, a new superstate the United States set up with Canada and Mexico.

A.F.R. agent Rémy Marathe, a quadruple spy pretending to pretend to betray his organization, recovers from depression through an embodied chance encounter. After having his legs run over by a train in order to join *A.F.R.*, Marathe fell into a severe depression, lamenting the loss of his limbs and the lost cause of his organization. He was stuck in an impasse where he was able neither to kill himself nor to go on with his life. He felt "I am chained in a cage of the self, from the pain. Unable to care or choose anything outside it. Unable to see or feel anything outside my pain" (Wallace,

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IJ 777). Humanist concepts such as free will and autonomy are unable to help Marathe out of his depression.

Marathe is alone on a hilltop thinking about suicide when he sees on the freeway under the hill a frightened woman in the path of a massive truck. The sight of the woman throws him out of his mental self-absorption. Marathe recounts, "I do not think of me. I do not know this woman or love her, but without thinking I release my brake and I am careening down the downhill" toward the woman (778). As Marathe makes clear, his rush toward the woman is characterized by a total lack of deliberation. The scene affects him on a bodily level, disrupting his thought and making him respond to the sight without thinking.

Marathe uses his wheelchair to rush into freeway traffic and scoops up the woman from the impending truck, saving her life. Unexpectedly, the rescue saves his own life too. Seeing the woman "saved my life. This moment broke my moribund chains . . . . In one instant and without thought I was allowed to choose something as more important than my thinking of my life," he recalls (778). By this fortuitous, embodied encounter, Marathe is plucked out of his old machinic assemblage—with his amputated legs and the dim prospects of the separatist movement—and installed in new ones, as he gets married with the skull-less woman he saved and, in order to give her medical support, engages himself in multiple spy rings as a quadruple agent.

Marathe couldn't think himself out of depression because thinking, in its disembodied sovereign subjectivist form, only induces "Analysis-Paralysis," which keeps him in a solipsistic stasis without momentum for subjective renewal (203).[19]

[19] "Analysis-Paralysis" is an Alcoholic Anonymous slogan used among Ennet House residents to refer to substance addicts' compulsion to think and the accompanying inability to act. Although the phrase appears in Infinite Jest in the context of addiction and rehabilitation, it is an apt description of Marathe's situation.

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The sight of the frightened woman produced "*a shock to thought, communicating vibrations to the cortex, touching the nervous and cerebral system directly*," jolting the depressed Marathe into action and detaching him from entrenched ways of thinking and being (Deleuze, *C2* 156). Marathe's story illustrates that the renewal of subjectivity has to be embodied.

Embodiment characterizes not only the recovery from depression but also rehabilitation from drug addiction. Demerol addict Don Gately was going through the AA's 12-step program when he ran up against an enormous obstacle. He was instructed to pray to a "Higher Power" and advised to "turn your Diseased will over to the direction and love of 'God as you understand Him.' It's supposed to be one of AA's major selling points that you get to choose your own God. You get to make up your own understanding of God or a Higher Power or Whom-/Whatever" (Wallace, *IJ* 442, 442-43). However, Gately's problem is not disagreement with any specific conception of God but with the existence of Higher Power in general. He "Came In with 0 in the way of denominational background or preconceptions": he doesn't have any concept of a transcendent entity to whom he can pray (443). Whenever he "meditates or tries to achieve a Big-Picture spiritual understanding of a God as he can understand Him, he feels Nothing—not nothing but Nothing, an edgeless blankness" (443).

Without a thread of spirituality, Gately is unable to pray in the usual sense of supplicating a deity. And yet pray he does. His prayer is an embodied experiment. As he describes it to a group of other AA members, "His sole experience so far is that he takes one of AA's very rare specific suggestions and hits the knees in the a.m. and asks for Help and then hits the knees again at bedtime and says Thank You, whether he believes he's talking to Anything/body or not, and he somehow gets through that

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day clean" (443). In a daily ritual characterized by what Freudenthal calls "anti-interiority," Gately discards the question of whether or what to believe in his prayer, focusing instead on bodily engagement with material forces—the floor he kneels on and the sounds of the words he utters (193).[20] By experimenting with his material environment, Gately is able to break old habits and become clean from drugs. No "God as you understand Him" or any other transcendent being is necessary for creation; matter is itself creative.

With the example of Gately, *Infinite Jest* shows that rehabilitation is not about the magical guidance of a deity. Neither is it about "mind over body" or the assertion of the autonomy of the humanist subject.[21] All of these discourses are based on the ontology of transcendence. Rather, rehabilitation is the re-creation of the individual through the formation of new, substance-free machinic assemblages—an immanent, material process.

Central to the regenesis of subjectivity in *Infinite Jest* is the Deleuzian concept of the body without organs (BwO), the state in which the stable organization of the body is either unformed or loosened up. BwO drives the regeneration of subjectivity in Wallace's depiction of narcotics, entertainment, and tennis in the novel. Before tackling the regenesis of subjectivity through the BwO in these diverse areas, let us first unpack this dense technical term.

To prevent traditional, humanist interpretations of their writings, Deleuze and Guattari created a range of terminologies relatively free of humanist associations.

[20] According to Freudenthal, "Anti-interiority is a mode of identity founded in the material world of both objects and biological bodies and divested from an essentialist notion of inner emotional, psychological, and spiritual life" (193).

[21] N. Katherine Hayles interprets Gately's rehabilitation as the dismantling of the illusion of autonomous selfhood, a cornerstone of liberal humanism.

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Two of the most important terms among them are territory and stratum. A territory is a machinic assemblage formed through life-affirming desiring production. Territory and deterritorialization are the two elements that make up life itself (*WP* 186). A "territory can be a system of any kind, conceptual, linguistic, social, or affective" (Patton, "Future" 21). A territory is only metastable, since it inherently contains forces of destabilization. The "territory itself is inseparable from vectors of deterritorialization working it from within" (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 509). On the other hand, "deterritorialization . . . is in turn inseparable from correlative reterritorializations" (509). In life, there is no more absolute deterritorialization than there is absolute territorialization, since "any perception of life is already an ordering or territorialisation" (Colebrook, *Understanding* xxiii).

A term almost interchangeable with "territory" is "stratum," which refers to "a centralized, hierarchical, and strongly patterned body" (Protevi, "Deleuze and Life" 257). Compared with "territory," "stratum" places a greater emphasis on the rigidity of machinic connections. The genesis of any machinic assemblage is a process of territorialization and stratification, both of which have their basis in the BwO.

Deleuze and Guattari define BwO as "the unformed, unorganized, nonstratified, or destratified body and all its flows: subatomic and submolecular particles, pure intensities, prevital and prephysical free singularities" (*ATP* 43). Also described as "intense matter," BwO can be considered the intensities implicated in the actualized, extended individual (153).

The desiring machine, the machinic assemblage produced by desire, goes through three stages in its production. The connective synthesis is the desiring production proper. It is the spontaneous attraction that brings intensities and heterogeneous machines into a multiplicity. The connective synthesis is accompanied by disjunctive

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synthesis, the repulsion undoing the organization already formed. In Deleuze and Guattari's words:

> Desiring-machines make us an organism; but at the very heart of this production, within the very production of this production, the body suffers from being organized in this way, from not having some other sort of organization, or no organization at all. . . . The automata stop dead and set free the unorganized mass they once served to articulate. (*AO* 8)

The anti-production within desiring production is the force of the BwO, which breaks up strata and disassembles the machine. The "body without organs" is really a misnomer, because the anti-production of the BwO does not eliminate organs per se but loosens up "the organic organization of the organs" (*ATP* 158).

The stage of conjunctive synthesis is "a side effect of sorts of the oscillation" between connecting and disjoining processes (O'Sullivan, *On the Production* 175). This is the stage of the formation of subjectivity as the residue of the counteracting operations of connective synthesis and disjunctive synthesis, production and anti-production:

> the proportions of attraction and repulsion on the body without organs produce . . . a series of states . . . and the subject is born of each state in the series, is continually reborn of the following state that determines him at a given moment, consuming-consummating all these states that cause him to be born and reborn. (Deleuze and Guattari, *AO* 20)

To be precise, it is not that a subject goes through the syntheses. The primary term here is the syntheses. As the syntheses construct and deconstruct machines, a subject is recognized retrospectively as the peripheral trace left by all the syntheses.

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The residue of continual transfigurations of machinic relations, the subject has "the form of a becoming," "with no fixed identity, wandering about over the body without organs, but always remaining peripheral to the desiring-machines" (*AO* 16). The subject is "an after-effect," and not the agent of the production and anti-production (E. Holland 33). If an agent has to be identified, it is desire, or the Nietzschean-Deleuzian will to power. There is therefore no static, sovereign subject, but only "a series of lived subject-states" (36).

Providing the forces of disconnection inherent in machinic connections, BwO is crucial to the genesis and regenesis of the subject. A term adopted from Antonin Artaud's radio play, *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*, the body without organs in Deleuze and Guattari refers to the state before the organization of the body or between one organization and another. The BwO takes the actualized body to the plane of immanence or consistency. Its role is positive, since the non-existence of machinic connections or the dissolution of existing machinic assemblages is necessary for the formation of new machines. "Desiring-machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down" (Deleuze and Guattari, *AO* 8). The BwO, located in the breakdown and restoration processes, is the destruction that provides conditions for constructions: "Repulsion is the condition of the machine's functioning, but attraction is the functioning itself" (329-330). BwO is "the model of death" that makes the regenesis of subjectivity possible (329).

Like the obverse and the reverse of a coin, forces of repulsion and attraction counteract each other to keep machinic assemblages from grinding to a halt or falling apart. Although it is the condition of the organization of an organism, the BwO does not become an organism in the process. "Although the organ-machines attach themselves to the body without organs, the latter continues nonetheless to be without

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organs and does not become an organism in the ordinary sense of the word. It remains fluid and slippery" as extra-empirical, intensive matter (*AO* 15). Moreover, it is not something outside of the enclosed subject, but integral to it. The BwO "is always swinging between the surfaces that stratify it and the plane that sets it free" (*ATP* 161). Its dynamic movement keeps the subject open to becoming.

The regenesis of subjectivity in *Infinite Jest* is played out in three aspects: tennis training, narcotics use, and entertainment. All of these involve the work of the BwO to help the subject deterritorialize, accessing the plane of immanence or consistency, and reemerge with a new subjectivity. Self-creation starts with making oneself a BwO.

In training young tennis players, ETA Founder James O. Incandenza and Head Coach and Athletic Director Gerhardt Schtitt both object to the common coaching method of "short-haul psychology and motivational speaking" (Wallace, *IJ* 81). The self-improvement approach presumes the sovereignty of the subject and autonomy of the mind over the body. In other words, it reinforces the existing stratification of the subject, leaving it ossified and unlikely to change.

Since he was hired by Incandenza, Schtitt has put into practice his philosophy that the improvement in tennis skills comes from giving up the mastery of self and redrawing the boundaries of self. Tennis players have to allow themselves to "Disappear inside the game" and "break through limits" that define their existing subjectivity (84). Only by dissolving the current organization of their body into the BwO can players prime themselves for a new organization.

Excellence in tennis is not about "reducing chaos to pattern" (82). On the contrary, it is about the dissolution of pattern and order and requires an escape to the

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realm of "not-order," "the places where things broke down, fragmented into beauty" (81). Schtitt believes that:

> it was a matter not of reduction at all, but—perversely—of expansion, the aleatory flutter of uncontrolled, metastatic growth—each well-shot ball admitting of n possible responses, n^2 possible responses to those responses, and on into . . . infinities of possible move and response, . . . this diagnate infinity of infinities of choice and execution, mathematically uncontrolled but humanly contained, bounded by the talent and imagination of self and opponent, bent in on itself by the containing boundaries of skill and imagination that brought one player finally down, that kept both from winning, that made it, finally, a game, these boundaries of self (82).

The moment when a tennis ball, having been launched, is in mid-air, the plane of immanence or consistency, where intensities "con-sist" or coexist, opens up. Only by dismantling one's organization into a BwO can one access this supra-empirical realm inhabited by the infinite number of variables and their interactions. In this state of loosened organization, the body is able to experiment with the material forces of balls, racquets, winds, light, space, and the infinity of their relations. The outcome of a tennis match depends on how the boundaries of players' selves are redrawn, how the body is reorganized, which is affected by former boundaries, such as acquired skills or body memories, and the specificities of the material environment—particularities such as the soil of the court or the conditions of the wind and air.

In any case, a tennis match is not a psychological battle between two strategizing autonomous subjects. It is an experiment for two individuals to see how boundaries of their selves can be redrawn, how they can renew their machinic connections. Seen in this light, players are not opponents but partners. "The competing boy on the net's

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other side: he is not the foe: he is more the partner in the dance. He is the . . . excuse or occasion for meeting the self. As you are his occasion" (84).

The stratification of the body—the maintenance of techniques, the habit of training, the hypertrophy of the playing arm, and so on—is necessary for someone to be a tennis player, but they also limit the player. Therefore, for Schtitt, "the animating limits are . . . to be killed and mourned, over and over again" through the experimental way of playing (84). By abandoning psychology and motivation, players tear down their subjective limits as they reconnect with the material forces of tennis in new ways.

Making oneself a BwO in tennis is not only to stop considering one's opponent as an enemy in an intersubjective competition but also to stop considering oneself as sovereign subject with mastery over objects. Proficiency in tennis comes from seeing matter as more than mere matter. At a practice match against Hal Incandenza, James O. Incandenza's youngest son and ETA's second best senior player, the younger Ortho "The Darkness" Stice shows impressive progress by being attuned to the intensive matter of the court. Lyle, the ETA weight room guru, has repeatedly told him about the vital force of matter: "Do not underestimate objects" and "Do not leave objects out of account" (395). Heeding Lyle's advice, Stice opens himself to the intensities emitted by objects and thus become able to notice the "mysterious curves and downdrafts that seem to favor The Darkness alone," and "several balls' sudden anomalous swerves against wind and their own vectors" and take advantage of them (637). By shedding the sovereignty of the subject and letting himself become submerged in the teeming intensities normally suppressed by commonsense

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experience, Stice turns into "A body in commerce with bodies," as he transcends the boundaries of self (161).[22]

On the tennis court, the regenesis of subjectivity lies in experimenting with new connections with matter. Off the court, narcotics provide another way for the adolescent students of ETA to renew subjectivity. The prevalence of drug use is an open secret in ETA. For many, drugs allow them "to basically short out the whole motherboard and blow out all the circuits and slowly recover and be almost neurologically reborn and start the gradual cycle all over again" (53). As Deleuze remarks, "The drug user creates active lines of flight," allowing him or her to escape from rigidified subjectivity ("Two Questions" 153). Narcotics are consumed not just for recreation, but literal re-creation, renewing their neurological, or, in Deleuzian terms, machinic connections. The destratifying BwO inherent in narcotics use paves the way for the athletes toward the creation of new subjectivity.

However, the effects of narcotics are much less benign on the Ennet House residents, who ended up in the institution because drug and alcohol use had destroyed their life. How could the same type of things—narcotics—works so differently for different individuals? Because they are used to construct different BwOs. Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between three kinds of BwO, which dissolve organizations in different ways (*ATP* 162-64). The most felicitous for the renewal of subjectivity is the full BwO, which, as it takes the individual to the plane of consistency, prepares it for ontological renewal and reorganization. This type of BwO characterizes the ETA tennis players' recreational drug use. However, if the force of reorganization is too strong, the BwO will be a cancerous one, which disrupts the present organization only

[22] Playing tennis should be "A body in commerce with bodies" is the advice James O. Incandenza received from his father, also a tennis player, when he began training at the age of ten.

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to engage in redoubled organization, as if toppling a democratic state and setting up a fascist one instead. This type of BwO fails to reach the plane of consistency, despite having set out in that direction, and leads back into the status quo. The third type of BwO is the empty BwO, exemplified by addiction.

Along with the masochist, the drug addict is an example Deleuze and Guattari use to illustrate the empty BwO. The "masochist has made himself a BwO under such conditions that the BwO can no longer be populated by anything but intensities of pain, *pain waves*" (*ATP* 152). Similarly, the drug addict's BwO allows no machinic connection but those with the drug. The functioning of the desiring machine includes two phases: collapse and restoration. "One phase is for the fabrication of the BwO, the other to make something circulate on it or pass across it" (152). Destratification must be followed by restratification. The BwO needs to swing like a pendulum toward the virtual and the plane of consistency and return to the actual, so that it is not merely destructive but also constructive.

Drug use turns into addiction when the user continues producing the BwO, and yet "nothing is produced on it, intensities do not pass or are blocked" (*ATP* 161). The reason for this is "a too-violent destratification" (163). Deleuze and Guattari emphatically warn against this danger: "You don't reach the BwO, and its plane of consistency, by wildly destratifying" (160). Rather:

> You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn; and you have to keep small supplies of signifiance and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it, when things, persons, even situations, force you to; and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality. (160)

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The function of the BwO is to dissolve the organization of the organism, not its organs. Narcotic addicts' indiscriminate demolition of the organism *"emptied themselves of their organs*," so that not even the most rudimentary organization is possible (*ATP* 161). The disorganizing work of the BwO has to be carried out "patiently and momentarily," not recklessly beyond the point of no return (160-61).

In *Infinite Jest*, James O. Incandenza's suicide can be considered a result of his empty BwO. A heavy drinker of Wild Turkey whiskey for many years, alcohol becomes the only thing sustaining his life. Often shrouded in an alcoholic haze, he is so distant from his family that his sons nickname him "Himself." His machinic assemblage has lost the fullness that enables new connections. When Incandenza finally decides to quit alcohol, he is severing the only machinic connection he has. Literally unable to live without alcohol, Incandenza kills himself after three months of abstinence. As Molly Notkin, a friend of Incandenza's, rightly observes, the "ingestion of spirits . . . had been all that was keeping the man's tether ravelled" (Wallace, *IJ* 791).

Significantly, from the Deleuzian perspective, narcotics and alcohol—or anything else for that matter—are not inherently good or bad. Their value lies in whether they promote the creation of the new for the specific user. As Atte Oksanen notes, "the Deleuzian formulation of addiction is based on a desiring-production that narrows down the possibilities in life" (61). What could have been "vital experimentation" with substance, which opens up the individual to new connections, turns into "deadly experimentation" in Incandenza's case (Deleuze, "Two Questions" 153). The rhizomatic flows of desire to and from his machinic assemblage go through "organized disconnection," leaving his life hanging by the single thread that is alcohol (154).

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Compared with narcotics, TV may seem an innocuous way to destratify subjectivity.[23] However, as United States Office of Unspecified Services field operative Hugh Steeply's account of his father's TV-viewing suggests, TV entertainment has an ambiguous nature. A few years before retirement as a delivery dispatcher for a heating oil distributorship, where he had been a diligent employee all his adult life, Steeply's father began to form "An attachment or habit" to *M*A*S*H*, an American television series first broadcast from 1972 to 1983 (Wallace, *IJ* 639). Every Thursday, he watched *M*A*S*H* when he came home from work. As syndication put the show on air more frequently, a "gradual immersion" in the habit began (640). He watched new episodes as well as the reruns of old ones and began recording every detail of every episode in his notebooks; then he started quoting from *M*A*S*H* in everyday conversation, writing letters to the characters, and writing a book about the show (641-5).

Steeply "was never sure how it started," but what was at first a way for the industrious delivery dispatcher to unwind from monotonous office work and reconnect himself with his world led him to sever old connections without establishing new flows (639). His life took a "dark shift," with a gradual "withdrawal from life" (640). Steeply Senior stops spending time with his family, his fraternal organization, "Knights of Columbus," and his "bowling league" of longtime friends, devoting all his free time to watching the show instead (640, 643). Later, he even stopped going to work. The "suicidal enterprise occurs when everything is reduced to

[23] In the current era of binge-watching, facilitated by online streaming and on-demand viewing, TV is no longer just good clean fun but can be a powerful drug, easily abused. An indication of the parallel between TV-viewing and narcotic use can be found in the prediction by Reed Hastings, CEO of Netflix, an online streaming service, that TV and movies will one day be placed by "pharmacological" forms of entertainment, such as entertainment pills (McCormick).

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this flow alone" (Deleuze, "Two Questions" 153-54). Watching *M*A*S*H* non-stop day and night, he finally dies in front of the TV set.

However, it is not a simple matter of "addiction kills." When his interlocutor, Marathe, concluded at this point of Steeply's narration that "consuming obsession" killed Steeply's father, Steeply avers: his father had a hereditary heart condition and the cause of death is actually "transmural infarction" (*IJ* 646). In fact, he amazed his doctor by outliving his life expectancy for a long time. In other words, without the empty BwO of addiction, he would have died a long time ago. Addiction is destructive not necessarily in the sense of driving the addict to death. When the object of addiction becomes the only flow the addict is able to connect with, the object can act as an artificial life support, keeping the addict in a vegetative state but, in terms of its disconnection with everything else, as good as dead.

The hair-raising story of Steeply Senior's gradual self-destruction echoes with Deleuze's remarks about addiction in *The Logic of Sense*. Citing F. Scott Fitzgerald's idea that the major events of a life do not happen out of nowhere but proceeds insidiously, like the invisibly fine crack on an old plate, Deleuze maintains there's no telling when an attachment or habit would turn into addiction: "the crack pursues its silent course, changes direction following the lines of least resistance, and extends its web only under the immediate influence of what happens, until sound and silence wed each other intimately and continuously in the shattering and bursting of the end" (157). The inconspicuous crack gets noticed only when it's too late; the addict's BwO has become empty.

In *Infinite Jest*, the titular "unwatchable underground Entertainment-cartridge" is unwatchable because it induces the catatonic condition much like what *M*A*S*H* does for Steeply Senior (548). When being played, the film cartridge has a compelling

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power to irreversibly paralyze anyone who so much as gives the screen a sideway glance. For its fatal power, the video cartridge is fervently sought after by A.F.R. to release into the public as a terrorist weapon. Its fatally addictive power has nothing to do with the plot or story of the film but comes from its ability to "reproduce an infantile visual field. That's what you could feel was driving the scene. My face wasn't important," as Joelle Van Dyne, the actress of the solo-character film, acknowledges (940). Incandenza, the auteur of the film, used a custom-made "auto-wobble" lens with a "milky blur" to create the effect of "Neonatal nystagmus," putting the viewer in the place of a newborn (939). Using optical technology, the film forces viewers into infancy, the human body in its most unorganized state. For the adult viewers, this is such an extreme destratification that they become what Deleuze would call empty BwOs. Indeed, the victims of the cartridge have eyes that are "empty of intent," that is, devoid of desiring production that enables machinic production, on the basis of which subjectivity is possible (508).

As the narrator of *Infinite Jest* observes, "people are virtually unlimited in their need to give themselves away, on various levels," to destratify themselves and link up with other individuals and be otherwise than they are (53). Some people give themselves away to tennis while others give themselves away to narcotics or TV entertainment. In all these instances, the vital energy of the will to power and desiring production refurbishes itself to keep the world and the subject in constant becoming.

To experience the regenesis of subjectivity immanently, without resorting to transcendent principles, is always an experiment. One might become a brilliant tennis player like Stice or end up dead in front of the TV like Steeply Senior. Despite the risks of immanent regenesis of subjectivity, it profits no one to stay safe in the one's familiar stratum, to "[remain] on the shore," contemplating but never living.

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Deleuze's advice is to begin experimenting with a cautious dip in the water, to leave the shore and "go a short way further to see for ourselves, be a little alcoholic, a little crazy, a little suicidal—just enough to extend the crack, but not enough to deepen it irremedially" (*LS* 158). Deleuze is not encouraging his readers to try drugs or alcohol here, because what is even better is for the body to be affectively mobile enough to build a BwO and reach the plane of consistency without relying on narcotics or any fixed machinic connection.

Instead of repeatedly trying to "start over again from ground zero, either going on the drug again or quitting"—an oscillation between abstinence and indulgence that many of the addicts in *Infinite Jest* have gone through—the body can have a totally different relationship with narcotics, where it would not be impossible for the body "To succeed in getting drunk, but on pure water" and "To succeed in getting high, but by abstention" (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 286). The speed and affect that make up a body, the acceleration and deceleration as well as the affecting and being affecting, can be stretched and made agile through experimentation with all things, so that one can find intoxication and pleasure in unexpected ways and prevent life-emptying addiction.

The regenesis of subjectivity consists in immanent, embodied experimentation, which, like all experimentation, comes with its risks. Wallace's *Infinite Jest* depicts how tennis players renew their subjectivity through exploring new connections with material forces at the same time as it highlights the risks of exclusive attachment to selected substances or entertainments. However, it is also possible for new attachments and a new subjectivity to become stale and rigid, losing its creative malleability. This is the situation depicted in Philip Roth's *The Human Stain*, which we will discuss in the next section.

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Section Three

Roth's *The Human Stain* and Creative Lines of Life

A story narrated by writer Nathan Zuckerman about his recently deceased friend, Coleman Silk, a light-skinned African American who lived most of his life as a white Jew, *The Human Stain* is widely considered a novel about racial passing.[24] However, that is assuming Coleman is the sole protagonist of story at the expense of Zuckerman, the transformation of whose life is no less important to the story. When both Coleman and Zuckerman are put into focus, *The Human Stain* becomes a story about a different kind of passing, not the kind that moves a person from one racial category to another but passing as movement, the movement that characterizes the creative mobility of life. In this section, I will use the Deleuzian concept of the three lines of life to demonstrate how, in the novel, the regeneration of life results from affective receptivity and embodied experimentation.

A former classics professor at the fictional Athena College in Massachusetts, the 71-year-old Coleman, Zuckerman's neighbor and friend, has gone through two major transformations in his life. The first is his passing as white at 19, and the second is his falling in love with thirtysomething menial laborer Faunia Farley. Coleman's first transformation exemplifies the idealist, autonomous creation typical of modern, humanist concept of subjectivity. Although racial passing may involve bodily performance, in Coleman's case, passing is mostly discursive, consisting of making up a coherent personal history. Coleman takes advantage of his light beige skin to represent himself as white; he "could play his skin however he wanted, color himself

[24] For examples of recent criticism on the subject of passing in the novel, see Moynihan, Elam, Maslan, and Rankine.

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just as he chose" (Roth, *HS* 109). The autonomous subject discursively controls the passive, objectified body through its ability to tell stories.

Coleman fully subscribes to another bulwark of humanist modernity: individualism unhindered by family, class, or race. Born to educated African American parents in East Orange, New Jersey, Coleman has his first taste of racism in college, when a hot dog peddler calls him a "nigger" and refuses to serve him (Roth, *HS* 102). Later on, as a navy sailor, he is thrown out of a brothel for being black (114). The incidents make Coleman realize that, in other people's eyes, he is not an individual but a specimen of a group. These traumatic experiences motivate him to seek individualist freedom not only from his racial group, but all groups: "Overnight the raw I was part of a we with all of the we's overbearing solidarity, and he didn't want anything to do with it or with the next oppressive we that came along either. . . . He was Coleman, the greatest of the great *pioneers* of the I" (108). He decides to never be oppressed or constricted by any racial category. "He saw the fate awaiting him, and he wasn't having it. . . . You can't let the big they impose its bigotry on you any more than you can let the little they become a we and impose its ethics on you" (108). As a black man, he is destined to suffer the white society's discrimination and the black society's moral demand for loyalty. Unlike his elder brother Walter, who desires freedom for all African Americans, Coleman wants nothing more than freedom from race, which he believes he transcends.

Individualist freedom becomes a real possibility for Coleman after his father dies. Without the family patriarch, "who had been making up Coleman's story for him," Coleman is free to create his own story (Roth, *HS* 107). It is a story of a singular individual unconstrained by identity categories: "All he'd ever wanted . . . was to be free: not black, not even white—just on his own and free" (120). However, in the

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1940s American society, Coleman's "passionate struggle for singularity," "to be his particular I," and to acquire the greatest possible level of individual freedom entails for him a relabeling of himself as white (109,108).

The idea of passing has first been suggested to him by his boxing coach, Doc Chizner, when he trained as a teenage boxer. On the way to meet the boxing team coach of a university for which Coleman was trying to get a scholarship, Chizner instructs the young man to refrain from mentioning his racial identity: "If nothing comes up, . . . you don't bring it up. You're neither one thing or [sic] the other. You're Silky Silk. That's enough" (Roth, *HS* 98). Chizner's advice exposes the contradiction inherent in humanist individualism: being "Silky Silk" is clearly not enough; Coleman has to be a white "Silky Silk." The humanism that upholds the ideal of individualist freedom came about precisely through white people's exclusion of non-whites like Coleman. As Sartre argues, "the European has only been able to become a man through creating slaves and monsters" out of other ethnic groups (26).

Passing himself as white in the cosmopolitan Greenwich Village, New York City, after WWII, Coleman believes himself a unique pioneer of passing, refusing to recognize the prevalence of passers in his generation. To nurture his illusion of being an autonomous, individualist creation, he gives up Ellie, a young black saleswoman he fell in love with. Ellie is familiar with the phenomenon of passing and knows many other passers. "There's one on every other block. You're so vain, you thought you'd dreamed it up yourself," she tells Coleman (Roth, *HS* 135). Similarly, Coleman's sister, Ernestine, finds nothing unique in Coleman's passing as she urges Walter to "See him historically, . . . see him as part of something larger" (327). Contrary to his own belief, Coleman does not transcend history; his passing is driven by the material forces of history.

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To make himself "a perfect one-of-a-kind creation," Coleman decides to pass definitely as Jew by marrying the "non-Jewish Jewish" Iris Gittelman and severing all ties to his black family (Roth, *HS* 131, 132). For "the medium through which to make himself anew," Coleman's choice is out of convenience. Iris comes from a "thoroughgoing heretical anarchist" family that would be expected to respect Coleman's individualist freedom (127; Neelakantan n9). Moreover, "Jews embody the American spirit of self-invention" (Elam 114). Because of their history as a wandering race, Jews have also been attributed "racial chameleonism" (Itzkovitz 40). For African Americans, Jews serve as the model for both assimilation into the white society and as the intermediary between racial opposites (Glaser 1470).[25]

Aspiring to chameleonic self-creation and freedom from polarized identities, Coleman passes as Jewish, raises a family with Iris, and becomes a classics professor at Athena College. His passing is successful, and yet, too successful. Except for occasional, secret phone conversations with his sister, Ernestine, Coleman has no contact with his family and his past. A classics professor, he specializes in the very foundation of white culture. His repeated allusions to figures from Greek and Roman mythologies, such as Zeus and Voluptas, show his strong self-identification with European culture. He also surrounds himself with white people, choosing to pursue his career in a college located in the predominantly white Berkshire County, Massachusetts. As Walter says of him, Coleman is "more white than the whites" (Roth, *HS* 336).

In Deleuzian terms, Coleman's radical passing exemplifies the rigidification of the line of supple segmentarity into a "rigid segmentarity" (*D* 124). Deleuze proposes

[25] In *The Human Stain*, Doc Chizner, dentist by day and boxing coach by night, and Dr. Fensterman, a successful surgeon at a time of discriminatory quotas . . . designed to keep Jews out of medical school" are prominent examples (86).

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the existence of three lines immanent in any life. The line of "rigid segmentarity" is total transformation from one clearly delineated identity or status to another, such as the renunciation of one nationality to acquire another (124). Another line is supple segmentarity, a "molecular" line unlike the "molar" solidification of the first line, to use mechanics terminology. The supple line is less stable and allows a range of variation within an identity. It consists of "molecular fluxes with thresholds or quanta" allowing small variations and changes (124). Transformations characterized by the supple line are attenuated creations and tend to stiffen into a rigid state. "Supple segmentarity . . . is only a kind of compromise operating by relative deterritorializations and permitting reterritorializations that cause blockages and reversions to the rigid line" (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 205). Coleman's passing as Jewish starts out on the supple line, as an exercise of chameleonic self-invention, but soon ossifies into a fixed identity. It is the same situation as the "micro-fascisms of gangs," where individuals rebel against tyranny only to set up an equally oppressive regime (Deleuze, *D* 139).

The rigidification of identity ultimately brings about Coleman's downfall in his late sixties following the "spooks" incident. Six weeks into a new semester, Coleman finds that two students have never shown up for class. Displeased, he asks the class, "Does anyone know these people? Do they exist or are they spooks?" (Roth, *HS* 6). Later the same day he is called into the dean of faculty's office to face charges of racism by the missing students, who happen to be black. In the ensuing embroilment, Coleman lost everything. He is forced to resign from the faculty, whereas Iris dies of a stroke fighting for his reputation.

As Jennifer Glaser points out, Coleman has become "colorblind" because of his abandonment of the realm of the body and racial lineage for the ideal, "transcendent

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realm of the intellect" (1473). His self-isolation in the "extraideological universe of classical literature" has completely desensitized him to racial issues (1473). His fossilized thinking is illustrated by how he tries to defend himself against the accusation of racism: he claims he was "using the word in its customary and primary meaning: 'spook' as a specter or a ghost" (Roth, *HS* 6). The protest shows his blindness to the existence of black people. The possibility of his absent students being black—a real possibility in the multicultural campus of the late 1990s America—never occurs to him. Zuckerman laments that Coleman, who once subverted history by passing, is now caught unawares by new cultural and political situations: "The man who . . . sets out to spring the historical clock, and who does so, brilliantly succeeds at altering his personal lot, only to be ensnared by the history he hadn't quite counted on: the history that isn't yet history" (Roth, *HS* 335). While the machine of history never ceases to morph, Coleman has disconnected his machinic assemblage from it. After his successful passing, Coleman closed off all desire for creation. "After that, he'd done it: never again lived outside the protection of the walled city that is convention" (335).

By the time of Coleman's catastrophe, Zuckerman has lived in self-imposed seclusion for three years, as he considered himself, over sixty years old, no longer capable of dealing with the complexities of life that come from human relationships. Like Coleman, he has transformed himself on a line of rigid segmentarity. Also like Coleman, Zuckerman in seclusion leads a life of the mind and the mind only. The only communication he has is the idealist "communications of a solitary mind with itself" in the form of writing (Roth, *HS* 44). His daily sustenance is written words, "the wisdom of the brilliant deceased," gleaned from reading and rereading his favorite author, Hawthorne (44). It is a life direly devoid of embodied, machinic

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connections and thus devoid of life, as he is "[determined] to concern myself . . . with nothing but the daily demands of work, to be engrossed by nothing but solid work, in search of adventure nowhere else—to have not even a life of my own to care about, let alone somebody else's" (43).

In a humanist effort to subjugate the objectified body to sovereign subjectivity, Zuckerman rigorously controls his own body. Early in his seclusion, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer and underwent surgery, which left him impotent and incontinent. The disruption in normal bodily functions draws attention to the body and reveals the modernist disembodied subjective autonomy to be an untenable delusion. According to Jason L. Powell and Azrini Wahidin, "Through pain, disability, illness and death, our normal modes of bodily disappearance tend to become profoundly disrupted. The body, in other words, becomes a central aspect of experience, albeit in an alien form: it dis-appears (i.e; 'appear in a dysfunctional state)" (141). Suffering from incontinence, Zuckerman feels he is no longer a full human subject transcending yet controlling his physical body:

> of course, I was habituated to being a free and easy, dry and odorless adult possessing an adult's mastery of the body's elemental functions, someone who for some sixty years had gone about his everyday business unworried about the status of his underclothes. . . . I still despair to think that the contingency that virtually defines the infant state will never be alleviated. (Roth, *HS* 36)

For Zuckerman, losing control of his body equals losing subjectivity and a regression into infancy.

Zuckerman's response to his new situation is a redoubled endeavor to recuperate his autonomous subjectivity. He checks his underclothes regularly and masters self-care routines that reduce the disruptive bodily condition to "ordinary

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inconvenience" (Roth, *HS* 36). To subdue the disruptive force of his illness, Zuckerman installs an even more osseous segmentarity in his life than before. To maintain the stringent regimen and the "rigorous reclusion . . . away from all agitating entanglements, allurements, and expectations," Zuckerman has made it a habit to "organize the silence" of his everyday existence into reading and writing (43-44, 44). The radically stratified, regimentalized existence seems ironically to have a withering effect on Zuckerman's writing. Never shy about mentioning his writings and even including entire pieces in his narratives, Zuckerman is tellingly vague about the "solid work" he is currently doing.[26] It is highly likely that his sterile lifestyle has not fueled his creative endeavor.

In Deleuze's philosophy, for a life to be genuinely creative, there has to be a third kind of line, the "line of flight." As Deleuze argues, "it is always on a line of flight that we create" (*D* 135). Only the line of flight can take the individual out of fixed identities and sedimented status quo. The line of flight is not just a slight modification of a segment, as in the line of crack, but a "clean break," a "rupture," from strata or identity (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 199). It leads not to the relatively new, but the radically novel. The line of flight works by "Absolute deterritorialization," totally uprooting an individual from its fixed identity and sending it flying with no predetermined destination in sight (200). It is "as if something carried us away, across our segments, but also across our thresholds, towards a destination which is unknown, not foreseeable, not pre-existent" (Deleuze, *D* 125). Traveling on a line of flight involves embodied experimentation with no goal or predictable outcome.

[26] The Chapter titled "Femme Fatale" in *The Ghost Writer*, Zuckerman's undelivered eulogy to Henry in *The Counterlife*, and his high school reunion speech manuscript in *American Pastoral* are some examples.

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Along with the lines of rigid segmentarity and supple segmentarity, the line of flight is necessary for life. Deleuze does not privilege the line of flight above molecular and molar lines, but acknowledges that "each of them are [sic] needed for the ongoing process of life" (Lundy 99). The line of flight is drawn from the stratum provided by either a rigid or a supple line as a starting point. To free a line of flight, Deleuze and Guattari suggest:

> Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. . . . Connect, conjugate, continue. (*ATP* 161)

Life consists in the ever-revolving cycle through the three lines, none of which should dominate the others. The experimental nature of the line of flight means it is laden with danger as well as creativity (Deleuze, *D* 140). On the other hand, the stabilizing character of the line of rigid segmentarity can lead to sterility and death. It takes suppleness and, sometimes, pure chance, to move from one line to another.

Two years after the "spooks" fiasco and Iris's death, the 71-year-old Coleman meets Faunia and begins a romantic relationship with her. In contrast to his passing, Coleman's second transformation is unplanned and unexpected—a genuine creation taking place on the line of flight. As Coleman confides in Zuckerman, his love affair with Faunia is not an autonomous choice he made. It comes "out of nowhere, completely unexpected, even unwanted" (Roth, *HS* 26). Having devoted two years to writing *Spooks*, a book aimed to attack his enemies and clear his name, Coleman was surprised at the ease with which falling in love with Faunia made him put the incident all behind him. What becomes important for Coleman is the thrill of living, of life

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itself. “He’s more than happy—he’s thrilled, and he’s bound, deeply bound to her already, because of the thrill. . . . Tomorrow he develops cancer, and boom. But today he has the thrill” (33).

Coleman’s involuntary connection with Faunia is the opposite of his strategic marriage. Iris was a deliberate choice because her naturally curly hair could help him avoid exposing his black identity: “all that he had ever wanted from Iris Gittelman was the explanation her appearance could provide for the texture of their children’s hair” (Roth, *HS* 136). Coleman’s love affair with Faunia is an unexpected encounter regenerating his subjectivity and helping him give up his old bitterness over his downfall. Using Deleuze’s language, we can say that the septuagenarian Coleman is drawn out of his rigidified assemblage by a fortuitous encounter on a line of flight into a new, experimental assemblage.

Coleman’s transformation on a line of flight gives him increased power to release lines of flight, to bring change into the world, and he does so when he draws Zuckerman out of his moribund seclusion. One sultry evening, when Zuckerman visits him at home, Coleman heard Frank Sinatra singing “Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered” on the radio and suddenly feels an irrepressible urge to dance to the music (Roth, *HS* 24). He asked Zuckerman to dance with him. As if infected with Coleman’s exuberance, Zuckerman uncharacteristically accepts the unconventional invitation. “I gave him my hand and let him place his arm around my back and push me dreamily around that old bluestone floor,” Zuckerman recalls of the impromptu fox trot and how “Coleman Silk danced me right back into life” (26, 45). The dance seals Zuckerman’s friendship with Coleman and connects him to a new network of machinic assemblages, fertile with the messy “entanglement with life” from which he fled years ago (44).

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The unpremeditated, adventitious dance draws a line of flight leading Zuckerman to experiment with life with childlike energy. As he danced with Coleman, he feels "a thoughtless delight in just being alive . . . [,] the kind of delight you take as a child when you first learn to play a tune with a comb and toilet paper" (Roth, *HS* 26). The extemporaneous and experimental regeneration of subjectivity on the line of flight is also embodied. It is effected by material intensities: the touch of Coleman's hands, the sultry summer air, the coolness of the beer, the rhythm of jazz music, and the moves of the fox trot.

The dance and Coleman's confession about Faunia at the end of the dance loosen Zuckerman's grip on his prized subjective autonomy. After he returns home, Zuckerman found urine stains on his trousers and realized "I'd been so engaged by Coleman and his story that I'd failed to monitor myself" (Roth, *HS* 36). However, Zuckerman is not distressed by the mishap. The dance and Coleman's story about his sexual affair makes Zuckerman realize that life is more than "communications of a solitary mind with itself," that life is embodied (44). "How can one say, 'No, this isn't a part of life,' since it always is? The contaminant of sex, the redeeming corruption that de-idealizes the species and keeps us everlastingly mindful of the matter we are," Zuckerman challenges (37).

From the Deleuzian perspective, forming new connections through the line of flight increases an individual's, or a body's, "Affective capacity," "the capacity that a body has to form specific relations" (Deleuze, "Ethology" 59; Buchanan, *Deleuzism* 80). As we remember from Chapter One, a body refers not to a physical substance but a network of relations—the relations of affecting and being affected. As Deleuze notes, "an animal, a thing, is never separable from its relations with the world. The

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interior is only a selected exterior, and the exterior, a projected interior" ("Ethology" 60). The regeneration of the individual lies in its exchange of affects with its world.

In *The Human Stain*, the creative force of the line of flight provides the momentum for Coleman to form affective relations with Zuckerman through the dance. In their affective exchange, Coleman—who was passive in his encounter with Faunia in the sense that he didn't autonomously seek her out for his own agenda, the way he did with Iris—is affectively active, whereas Zuckerman is affectively passive, accepting his friend's initiation to connect. This does not mean Zuckerman is lacking in affective capacity. On the contrary, it is passivity and receptivity that allows an individual to go through ontological renewal.

As Mark Bonta and John Protevi point out, the French verb "pouvoir" ("can" or "to be able to") in Deleuze and Guattari's pronouncement, "We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do [ce qu'il peut]" has both passive and active meanings, so the affective capacity of a body includes both "'passive' and 'active' senses of affect" (*ATP* 257; Bonta and Protevi 50). Alan Bourassa similarly notes, "In terms of a singular being, affect is what the being is capable of, but equally what it is capable of experiencing or undergoing" (47). Terence Blake even stresses the importance of the passive aspect of affect to creation. In the transformation of an individual, "the key factor is not one of action but of receptivity" (Blake np).

The passive, receptive power of the body, its ability to be affected, is significant because it helps loosen up established patterns in thought and behavior. The creative line of flight requires such passivity and receptivity. "One is not consciously passing through the line of flight," but is rather being passed through by it (Semetsky 334). To bring about creation, the individual has to be both passive and active at the same time and subject itself to the affects of other individuals.

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What reading dead authors in his silent cabin on Madamaska Mountain in the Berkshires couldn't do for him, Zuckerman achieves fortuitously by dancing with Coleman and listening to his confession. He becomes affectively responsive and even active, open to the unfamiliar and spontaneous. "We are enjoying ourselves now . . . . I was gushing and I knew it. I surprised myself with my eagerness to please, felt myself saying too much," Zuckerman remembers (Roth, *HS* 43). He can't help but "act as you don't normally do and a lot more openly than you may even want to" (43). Zuckerman surprises himself because what is coming alive is a new subjectivity: "to create" ontologically, "One has to lose one's identity, one's face, in it. One has to disappear, to become unknown" (Deleuze, *D* 45).

In a virtuous circle, forging new connections on the line of flight expands one's affective capacity, promoting further connections. "I ceased being able to live apart from the turbulence and intensity that I had fled. I did no more than find a friend, and all the world's malice came rushing in" (Roth, *HS* 45). Connected with Coleman, Zuckerman also gets connected with language in a new way. "Indeed, the dance that sealed our friendship was also what made his disaster my subject. And made his disguise my subject," Zuckerman reflects (45). Through his connection with Coleman, Zuckerman meets Ernestine when she attends Coleman's funeral anonymously. Inspired by Ernestine's revelation about Coleman's passing, Zuckerman begins writing *The Human Stain*.

Zuckerman's renewed creativity at the end of *The Human Stain* consists not just in writing a new book but, more importantly, the further expansion of his affective capability. When he comes across Les Farley, Faunia's jealous ex-husband and the possible suspect for Faunia and Coleman's fatal car accident, Zuckerman does not flinch from physical proximity with the likely murderer. "The *fact* of him drew me on.

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This was not speculation. This was not meditation. . . . This was the thing itself. The laws of caution that, outside my work, had ruled my life so strictly for the last five years were suddenly suspended" (Roth, *HS* 350). Caution was what kept Zuckerman within the confines of reclusion and rigid segmentarity. Now, with replenished affective capacity, he welcomes the opportunity for an embodied connection with the unknown in the form of Les Farley. As the novel draws to a close, Zuckerman has made Les' acquaintance and is on his way to East Orange to have a Sunday dinner with Ernestine and Coleman's family. As he embarks on the open highway network, Zuckerman is also reengaging himself with the complexity of life, with its unforeseeable lines of flight lying in wait for him.

This section has provided a reading of *The Human Stain* through the framework of Deleuze's three lines of life and affective capacity. It has shown that Coleman Silk's passing at 19 and Zuckerman's self-imposed reclusion are based on the humanist conception of the autonomous subject, whereas Coleman's love affair at 71 and Zuckerman's revitalization by Coleman are immanent, embodied ontological creation on the Deleuzian line of flight. If the regenesis of subjectivity is always embodied, do the objects the surrounding the body have a role to play in ontological creation? This is the issue to be discussed through Roth's earlier work, "Eli, the Fanatic," in the next section.

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Section Four

Ontological Creation Through the Probe-Head in Roth's "Eli, the Fanatic"

Set in the fictional New York suburb of Woodenton in 1948, "Eli, the Fanatic" tells the story of how Eli Peck, a young attorney, struggles to evict a group of newly arrived German Hasidic Jewish Holocaust survivors. Eli's clients are the Jews of Woodenton, of which he is also a member. Descendants of earlier immigrants, they have long become assimilated into the originally Protestant community. Their complaint about the Hasids and their yeshivah revolves around the principal's mute assistant, or "the greenie," as the townspeople call him. Always dressed in the long black gabardine, flowing beard, and "round-topped, wide-brimmed Talmudic hat" customary for Hasidic men, the greenie stands out sharply when he comes downhill into town to run errands for the yeshivah (253). The traditional religious attire, the townspeople claim, connotes fanaticism and backwardness incompatible with the modern secular American lifestyle. Caught between his sympathy for the displaced Hasids and his loyalty to his clients and neighbors, Eli decides to make a compromise by giving the greenie his own clothes.

The story illustrates how individuals can go through ontological creation through sartorial experiments. Specifically, it depicts how Eli breaks away from the normalizing regime of the Woodenton community to experience the renewal of subjectivity through what Deleuze calls the "probe-head." In what follows, I will first elaborate on the Deleuzian concepts of the "probe-head" and its opposite, "faciality," and then read "Eli, the Fanatic" in the light of these concepts to show how it portrays immanent, embodied ontological creation.

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The probe-head and faciality are the two dimensions of the abstract machine of the face, or its two "complementary . . . modes of effectuation" (Zepke 122). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari argues that every individual, every actual machine, is always accompanied by its abstract machine, which "inhabits the assemblage like its virtual double" (Patton, *Deleuze* 44). The abstract machine is what gives a concrete machine or assemblage its identity and also what demolishes its original identity and gives it a new one. In both cases, the abstract machine provides a diagram for the construction of concrete assemblages. "The diagrammatic or abstract machine does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality" (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 142). Oriented toward the future, the abstract machine "plays a piloting role," delineating the shape a concrete assemblage will take (142). The abstract machine is like "the software program which turns a given assemblage of computer hard ware into a certain kind of technical machine (a calculating machine, a drawing machine, etc.)" (Patton, *Deleuze* 44).

The virtual, abstract machine and the actual, concrete assemblage are immanent in each other, creating and sustaining each other in a mutual genesis. "The abstract machine is like the diagram of an assemblage. It draws lines of continuous variation, while the concrete assemblage treats variables and organized their highly diverse relations as a function of those lines" (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 100). For example, in language, "abstract machines and assemblages of enunciation are complementary, and present in each other" (100). The abstract machine of language, such as the definitions and usages of a word in a dictionary, provides rules for making enunciations, but enunciations in turn modify the rules and thereby changing the abstract machine (Tampio 66-67). The dictionary definitions of a word do not

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pre-exist its actual enunciations, nor are they independent of the latter. The same goes for grammar, syntactics, and phonematics (Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* 145-46). The relationship between *langue* and *parole* is an endless cycle of mutual creation (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 77-78).

Whether a concrete machine is a mere representation of existing identity categories or something radically new depends on the kind of abstract machine that conditions its genesis. As Deleuze and Guattari argue:

> There are different types of abstract machines that overlap in their operations and qualify the assemblages: *abstract machines of consistency*, singular and mutant, with multiplied connections; *abstract machines of stratification* that surround the plane of consistency with another plane; and *axiomatic or overcoding abstract machines* that perform totalizations, homogenizations, conjunctions of closure. (*ATP* 514)

The operations of the different types may converge or interrupt each other (514). Caught up in the competing forces of different abstract machines, a concrete machine may destratify from its current connections or territory, restratify itself in new connections through routinization or organization, and come to solidify or even ossify these connections in turn.

Regarding the face, the overcoding abstract machine is faciality, while the abstract machine of consistency is the probe-head. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualize the abstract machine of faciality as an organizational mechanism that serves as the "condition of possibility" for two semiotic regimes—"signifiance and subjectification" (180, 167).[27] The regime of signifiance is

[27] The term "signifiance" in the English translation of *A Thousand Plateaus* is borrowed from the French original. As Brian Massumi, translator of the book, explains, signifiance refers to the

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a “white wall” of signifiers for interpretation, whereas the system of subjectification is a “black hole” for the emergence of consciousness and interiority (167). The signifying regime delineates “zones of frequency or probability” to preclude or neutralize anything incompatible with a system of “appropriate significations” (168). Inasmuch as it prevents heterogeneity, the semiotic regime of signifiance is a “despotic . . . assemblage of power” (181). The subjective regime produces a psychological center that coordinates the “mental reality” according to a “dominant reality” (168). It is thus an “authoritarian” assemblage (180).

A “mixed semiotic of signifiance and subjectification,” faciality circumscribes what an individual can possibly be and do (179). A “*white wall/black hole* system,” the face signifies a body’s subjectivity, placing the individual within a grid of race, class, gender, and other categories, which make up the social hierarchy (167). What Deleuze and Guattari term “face” is a stratifying mechanism. It works to “crush all polyvocality, set up language as a form of exclusive expression, and operate by signifying biunivocalization and subjective binarization” (180). By selecting and structuring polysemic signs and affective energies into types and hierarchies, the faciality machine gives the speaker a subject position and the speaker’s utterance its signifiance. The “volume-cavity system” of the body is thus decoded and then overcoded by the “surface-holes” system of the face (170). The faciality machine works not only on the head, but also “touches all other parts of the body, and even, if necessary, other objects without resemblance” to the face (170). Things attached to or surrounding the body, such as clothing and accessories, signify subjectivities no less

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“syntagmatic . . . processes of language” (xviii). In *The Deleuze Dictionary*, Tamsin Lorraine explicates signifiance as “systems of signifiers and signifieds that interpreters interpret” (153). The word “signifiance” emphasizes the materials for interpretation and should not be confused with the English word “signification,” whose usual definition emphasizes the act of signifying.

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than do eyes and mouths (181). Facialization turns bodies and their accoutrements into faces, or "signifying subjectivities" (171).

Faciality is a First World phenomenon, contrary to the "essentially collective, polyvocal, and corporeal" semiotic of primitive societies (175). Unlike primitive tribes, who wear body paintings and tattoos to highlight the "multidimensionality of bodies" and masks to affirm the head as a part of the body, contemporary industrialized society uses garments, mannerisms, and landscapes to dematerialize the head, flattening it into a signifying, subjective face (176).

Generally located in the West, the faciality system has a fixed center: the "White Man" (176).[28] Faciality explains how Europe upholds "whiteness, reason, and secularised Christianity as the markers of human superiority" (Watson 208). Although Deleuze and Guattari's "White Man" is a racial and sexual category, the model of faciality also uses gesture, culture, and ethnicity for the purpose of hierarchization (209). With the White Man as the majoritarian face, the abstract machine of faciality declares all alternatives to this face type abnormal and illegitimate.[29]

The assimilated "Jews of Woodenton" have long adopted the majoritarian face of the White Man, represented by Woodenton's original, Protestant residents. Eli and his neighbors are the descendants of Jewish immigrants from European countries such as Poland, Russia, and Austria, who moved to the United States to escape the pogroms

[28] As Patricia MacCormack contends, the "majoritarian face is situational," varying with "social situations and structures, the parameters of power and signifying systems" (137). As different groups have different standards of normalcy, the majoritarian face changes with the community.

[29] In Deleuze and Guattari's technical use, the word "majoritarian" characterize the privileged term in any binary distribution. It is not the same as "majority," as the privileged position in a system is not always occupied by those of the largest number. The word "minoritarian" applies to whatever misses the standards or norms. Again it is not to be confused with "minority," which is only a matter of number.

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prevalent in the 19th century (Roth, "Eli" 279). Despite Eli's claim that Protestants and Jews established amity through mutual adjustment, in which "both Jews and Gentiles alike have had to give up some of their more extreme practices in order not to threaten or offend the other," the behavioral adjustment is by no means equal between Jews and Protestants (262). The reality is "that Jews have offended and Gentiles have threatened" (Watts 163). The Protestants' adjustment involves opening some of their country clubs, neighborhoods, and universities to Jews, whereas the Jews' adjustment means not dressing or speaking like Jews anymore (163). What Eli calls "extreme practices," on the Jews' part, extend to "any outward display of Judaism" (Furman 212). Only by abandoning their Jewish face did the earlier immigrants obtain acceptance into the Woodenton society.

In contrast, the Hasidic immigrants are not so ready to trade in their face for communal acceptance. When Eli asks Rabbi Tzuref, the director of the yeshivah, to have his assistant dressed in "clothing usually associated with American life in the 20th century" when in town, he rejected the idea (Roth, "Eli" 262). The traditional black robe the greenie wears is "inseparable from his being" (Oster 73). "The suit the gentleman wears is all he's got," Tzuref avers (Roth, "Eli" 263). During Holocaust, the greenie lost his family and home community. The Hasidic costume composes the only tie to his ethnic and religious identities. To "change his clothes is to change the man" (Shostak 120).

The acculturated Jews of Woodenton have not only lost their face but also their faith, as they embrace the secular lifestyle of their adopted hometown. Proud of being a "modern community" living in "an age of science," they consider "common sense" to be the guiding principle of their lives. Ted Heller, owner of a shoe store and leader of the yeshivah relocation campaign, sees the Biblical Abraham as a horrifying

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madman and criminal. “This Abraham,” he tells Eli, “was going to kill his own son for a sacrifice. . . . You call that religion? Today a guy like that they’d lock him up” (277). The story of the father of Judaism is in Ted’s secular mentality either a madman or a criminal.

Eli represents the Woodenton Jews not only in the legal battle against the yeshiva but also in terms of their upper-middle-class white American heterosexual subjectivity. Like the affluent business owners and professionals that make up the suburban town, Eli lives in a cozy house with a back lawn surrounded by flowering plants. His wardrobe consists of tweed and flannel suits by up-market clothiers such as Brooks Brothers and J. Press and dress shirts of Oxford weave or exquisite batiste textiles. With her wife nine-month pregnant, he will soon be the patriarch of the family. These things construct his face as majoritarian. Against this White Man face, the Hasids of the yeshiva are denounced as fanatics.

The faciality machine operates as a “deviance detector,” comparing individual concrete faces to the majoritarian face type and measuring their degrees of deviance. (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 177-78). This analysis of facial units demands a binary response: yes or no. When “given a concrete face, the machine judges whether it passes or not, whether it goes or not, on the basis of the elementary facial units” (177). Each face is then assigned a place in a grid of varying degrees of normalcy and deviance. The faciality machine “rejects faces that do not conform, or seem suspicious,” but it also sets up “successive divergence-types of deviance” to designate everything that thwarts binary categorization (177). The deviant face is either rejected outright or tolerated, but it’s never allowed to escape from the signifying system. In other words, the faciality grid refuses to reckon with any radical difference but imposes established categories on faces that elude categories. Therefore, there is

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never an “Other” to be excluded. Everything is a “Same” with a “degree of deviance” (178).

Thus the Woodenton Jews refuse to consider their Hasidic new neighbors as coming from a radically different cultural environment but insist on classifying them according their own system of the White Man faciality. Dressed in austere black gabardines, the Hasids are classified as sub-human, “Goddam fanatics” who may even engage in deceptive or clandestine schemes (Roth, “Eli” 258). Ted complains to Eli: “We’re not just dealing with people—these are religious fanatics is what they are [sic]. Dressing like that. . . . It smells like a lot of hocus-pocus abracadabra stuff to me” (276-77). The Hasids’ adherence to tradition is interpreted as anachronistic superstition, as Ted tells Eli: “They live in the medieval ages, Eli—it’s some superstition, some *rule*” (278).

Eli associates the Hasidic attire with deformity. When meeting the yeshivah director in the dim light of the latter’s office, he exclaimed inwardly, “The crown of his head was missing!” (250). Actually, the “black circle on the back of [Tzuref’s] head” is only the yarmulke worn by all Orthodox Jews (250). The deviance detector of the faciality machine interprets the unfamiliar headwear as a deformity, thus preventing the recognition of the foreign as it is and rendering the minoritarian face as an inferior or faulty instance of the majoritarian face.

The minoritarian face, that which fails to pass the test of normality, is embodied in “figures of unrest,” exemplified by terrorists, illegal immigrant workers, and criminals, who need to be managed and normalized to safeguard the community (Watson 210). To protect their “progressive suburban community” where “families live in comfort and beauty and serenity,” the Woodenton Jews found a piece of zoning law to try to evict the yeshiva (Roth, “Eli” 261). Fanatics like the Hasids, the

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Woodenton Jews believe, should be assigned to the same category as other deviants and moved to a neighborhood frequented by criminals, such as Brownsville in New York City. As Artie Berg, another of Eli's neighbors, complains, "Eli, in Woodenton, a Yeshivah! If I want to live in Brownsville, Eli, I'll live in Brownsville" (255). Set up to prevent the establishment of schools in residential areas, the zoning law is brandished by the Woodenton Jews to keep deviant figures away from the homogeneous "peace and safety" of their community (279).

The majoritarian face of the Woodenton community is one of not only secularism but also sanity. Emotions are monitored and managed at the first sign of their emergence. No mental state is left uncategorized or unexplained. Throughout the story, Eli fiercely resists this form of normalization. Having had two nervous breakdowns in the past, Eli is closely monitored by his wife, Miriam, who suggests Eli see the therapist whenever he shows any lack of perfect composure. Well-read in psychoanalytical theory, Miriam is in the habit of explaining to Eli his psychology. If "Miriam were . . . to see Eli upset, she would set about explaining his distress to him, understanding him, forgiving him, so as to get things back to Normal, for Normal was where they loved one another" (254).

However, Eli experiences affects that cannot be easily explained. When Miriam tries to categorize Eli's affects, saying, "Eli, you're upset. I understand," he retorts, "You *don't* understand" (257). But immediately Eli finds his protest futile because whatever affects he exhibits would be "understood" upon its appearance—as "neurotic" (258), "aggressive" (259), "jealous" (260), or "guilty" (296)—even when he demands that Miriam "Stop understanding me" (257, 296). By forcing experience into conventional psychological categories, Woodenton residents ensure "there's no fanatics, no crazy people" in their community (277).

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The exercise of the abstract machine of faciality can never be absolute, because, as an ever-morphing multiplicity of speeds and affects, the body resists total stratification. The "hierarchical binary presuppositions: human/animal, man/woman, healthy/unhealthy, lawful/criminal, hetero/gay, clean/junkie," and so on are "Binaries that bodies never fully correspond to" (Malins 86). The impossibility of full correspondence between a body and the significance and subjective categories it receives from faciality holds the key to desubjectification and resubjectification: the decomposition of existing organization and the formation of a new organization.

Therefore, the abstract machine of faciality is not omnipotent; one can "escape the face" by creating "*probe-heads*," the abstract machine that is the destratifying counterpart of faciality (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 171, 190). As forces of "defacialization," probe-heads "dismantle the strata in their wake, break through the walls of signifiance, pour out of the holes of subjectivity, fell trees in favor of veritable rhizomes, and steer the flows down lines of positive deterritorialization or creative flight" (190). The "positive deterritorialization" produced by the use of probe-heads is contrary to the negative deterritorialization during facialization, the deterritorialization that prepares the body for reterritorialization into a pre-existing system (190). The probe-head experiments with all possible connections between faciality traits or even traits of non-faces, such as landscape and music (189). The probe-head functions to enable one "to become imperceptible, to become clandestine," and to "make faciality traits themselves finally elude the organization of the face" (171). One step ahead of the force of striation, individual faces created by the probe-head are "independently different," rather than deviant from the majoritarian type (MacCormack 138).

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As Simon O'Sullivan points out, probe-heads are "alternative modes of organization" ("Pragmatics" 312). The utilization of the probe-head does not represent a return to the pre-signifying, pre-subjective primitive society (312). Instead of nostalgia for primitive "prefacial inhumanity," Deleuze and Guattari call for a focus on the future (*ATP* 190). "Beyond the face lies an altogether different inhumanity: no longer that of the primitive head, but of 'probe-heads'; here, cutting edges of deterritorialization become operative and lines of deterritorialization positive and absolute, forming strange new becomings, new polyvocalities" (190). The probe-head, which, in its original definition, refers to an instrument for exploring unseen space, suggests experimentality and becoming in Deleuze and Guattari's metaphoric use. In dismantling the face, the probe-head unbinds faciality traits, making each of them a haecceity (187). The probe-head can be understood as any practice that "ruptures the dominant (faciality)," disrupts the conventional regime, and prepares for further deterritorialization of the body, which heralds ontological creation (O'Sullivan, "Pragmatics" 313).

It is through the probe-head that Eli dismantles his own majoritarian face to bring about the renewal of subjectivity—but not before giving the greenie a majoritarian face. Seeing that the greenie has no "man's regular clothes" to wear, Eli decides to give him his own J. Press green tweed suit, complete with shirts, shoes, and a hat (Roth, "Eli" 281). To the delight of everyone in town, the greenie, clad in Eli's brown hat and green suit, goes walking "up and down every street in town" to exhibit his willingness to adopt the norm (282). Keeping his beard and side-locks, the greenie still looks recognizably Hasidic. Eli's larger-size clothes fit him badly. What's worse, he has no idea how to wear the typical Western dress suit properly. He wears the button-down shirt unbuttoned and ties the necktie loose and lopsided (282). Taking on

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the new identity as the secular suburban bourgeois American, he doesn't know how to conduct himself and moves with "a walk that was not a walk" (283). However, in the eyes of the Woodenton Jews, the modern suit reclassifies the greenie as one of them, and "for all his strangeness—it clung to his whiskers, signaled itself in his locomotion—he looked as if he belonged" (283). When the greenie sees Eli from a distance, he stops and then runs his fingers through every feature of his face. "To Eli, the fingers said, *I have a face, I have a face at least*" (283). The greenie has now acquired the majoritarian face that will ensure his acceptance into the Woodenton society.

However, the townspeople didn't expect the greenie to leaving his own black gabardine at the door of Eli's house (292). In what Sander L. Gilman calls a "moment of cultural cross-dressing," Eli tries on the greenie's antiquated black suit and Talmudic hat (159). In front of a mirror, Eli experiments with "the stranger's strange hat," seeing how different ways of wearing the hat produce different effects on his face (Roth, "Eli" 285). Ignorant about how to wear the Hasidic outfit, Eli puts on the robe and accessories haphazardly. He comes across a white serape of unknown function and decides to wear it as "special BVD's" under the black suit (286). The sartorial experiment is the exercise of the probe-head. By connecting disparate, incompatible, facial traits, such as Eli's secular American beardless face and the ancient black Hasidic suit, the probe-head disrupts the categorizing and hierarchizing functions of the faciality machine. Therefore, the bizarre combination of his body and the Hasidic attire gives Eli inexplicable feelings. Eli feels "every inch of its strangeness," and yet as if "those black clothes . . . were the skin of his skin" (293).

It was actually not Eli's first probe-head experiment in the story. When he visits the yeshivah earlier to leave his own clothes at its door for the greenie, he sees him

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beating his chest with his fist and moaning. With the greenie facing away from him, Eli observes him from the back. “Some feeling crept into him for whose deepness he could find no word. It was strange. He listened—it did not hurt to hear this moan. But he wondered if it hurt to make it. And so, with only stars to hear, he tried” beating his own chest and moaning (281). Taking on the greenie’s bodily gesture and vocalization is taking a line of flight from his own habitual ones. It take Eli out of his fixed subjectivity into what Deleuze and Guattari call “a zone of proximity and indiscernibility, a no-man’s-land” that is prelude to ontological creation (*ATP* 293; Beistegui, *Immanence* 150). Eli’s moan is not exactly like the greenie’s, as it “became a scream, louder, a song, a crazy song that whined through the pillars and blew out to the grass” (Roth, “Eli” 281). The “crazy” vocalization opens up a node in his solidified machinic assemblage and offers an opportunity for the regenesis of subjectivity. However, Eli did not carry through the experiment. When the greenie, startled by the loud cry behind him, turns around, Eli comes to himself and takes to his heels, running back into town and his existing subjectivity.

This time, as he tries out the Hasidic costume, Eli is ready to go further. He visits the yeshivah again to see the greenie. Looking at the greenie, Eli entertains the “strange notion that he was two people. Or that he was one person wearing two suits” (289). The bizarre, anti-biunivocal notion goes against the guiding principles of the Woodenton lifestyle: reason and common sense, as “Common sense is the ruling thing” in the community. It also suggests Eli’s “becoming imperceptible”, as Deleuze and Guattari would call it.

Becoming imperceptible is a necessary part of ontological creation. It is “to be like everybody else,” not in the sense of being an average Joe, but in the sense of shedding off one’s identity, eliminating one’s “complaint and grievance, unsatisfied

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desire, defense or pleading, everything that roots each of us (everybody) in ourselves, in our molarity" (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 279). Becoming imperceptible means losing one's well-defined patterns and organized wholeness, losing oneself to oneself as "a perceptible form and a perceived, discerned subject" (281). For the body to affect and be affected, that is, for an individual to experience re-creation, it has to first be defaced beyond recognition and rendered unintelligible. For Deleuze, camouflage fish is exemplarily imperceptible: it does not imitate any organism; "disorganized, disarticulated, it worlds with the lines of a rock, sand, and plants, becoming imperceptible" (280). By losing its own identity, it forms a new world as it connects with each entity that comes along on its wandering journey.

Eli's self-creation with the probe-head disrupts the rigid order maintained by the abstract machine of faciality, as his neighbors react with bewilderment and discomfiture to his new, incongruous appearance and demeanor. As he "spun a moan high up in his nose as he walked" up and down the main thoroughfare and "raised his face to all," "adults whispered of his strangeness and children made 'Shame … shame' with their fingers (Roth, "Eli" 292, 294, 293). Shedding his majoritarian face is something for which even children know that Eli should be ashamed.

The reaction was the polar opposite of that the greenie's new outfit received. This is because becoming imperceptible through the probe-head happens only on the side of majoritarian subjects. There is nothing experimental or creative about adopting the majoritarian face, since it is a process of reterritorialization into a conventional identity category.[30]

[30] Deleuze and Guattari therefore differentiate between the ontologically creative becoming-woman and the restratifying becoming-man (*ATP* 291-92). See also Lorraine, *Irigaray and Deleuze* 184.

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In the end, however, the normalizing force of Woodenton's faciality machine proves overwhelming and Eli's probe-head formation does not last long. Seeing the black-robed Eli on his lawn, his next-door neighbor, Harriet Knudson, immediately informs her husband, "Eli's having a nervous breakdown again" (Roth, "Eli" 287). Within minutes, the news of Eli's alleged breakdown spreads through the entire neighborhood. When Eli goes to the hospital to see his new-born first child in his new suit, his neighbors have the interns tranquilize him and get him hospitalized. If the Hasid's black costume marks his "disease of the spirit," then Eli's indicates his disease of the mind, and both have to be corrected for the harmony of the community.[31] Woodenton's faciality machine effectively detects Eli's becoming-imperceptible as a form of deviance, and assigns him to the minority category of mental patient. Eli's hospitalization shows the efficiency with which the faciality machine works to "compensate for deterritotializations with reterritorializations, . . . decodings with overcodings," to prevent ontological renewal (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 514).

Even in his deviance from the standards of sanity, Eli is normal. The hospital interns attribute Eli's breakdown to a perfectly normal cause: "First child upsets everyone" (Roth, "Eli" 298). The fact that Eli is committed for nothing but his probe-head experiment casts doubt on the townspeople's claim that he had suffered two mental breakdowns before (294). In all likelihood, Eli had "*chosen* to be crazy" in all the three instances in order to dismantle faciality and probe new becomings (295).

[31] In "Fanaticism: A brief history of the concept," Alberto Toscano traces the origin of the concept of fanaticism to the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther criticized the peasants who rebelled against the German lords who exploited their labor. Luther condemned what he called the "fanaticism" of the peasants who subverted social order. The peasants' desire for social equality was considered "a disease of the spirit."

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The story ends with Eli being dragged away by the medics. “The drug calmed his soul, but did not touch it down where the blackness had reached” (298). It is foreseeable that Eli will soon come out of the hospital a seemingly normal man, but still with the power to release the probe-head and initiate the renewal of subjectivity anytime.

Clothing and accessories, along with bodily gestures and physical traits, are the means by which signifying subjects are created and how they are assigned their places in a social hierarchy. On the other hand, they also provide ways for the individual to self-create immanently by breaking away from the grid of typologies, with no subjectivity that can be recognized in the present state of affairs. “Eli, the Fanatic” explores ontological creation as an immanent process through sartorial experiments. So far in this chapter, we have looked at the ontological creation of human beings. Do other beings—animals, plants, or even data—have faces, territories, and identities? In the last section of this chapter, I will turn to the non-human and discuss the ontological creation of information in Wallace’s *The Pale King*.

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Section Five

Boredom and Creation in Wallace's *The Pale King*

Revolving around a group of tax examiners at the U.S. Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Regional Examination Center in Peoria, Illinois, in 1985, Wallace's *The Pale King* deals with boredom, exemplified by the work of reviewing income tax returns. In the novel, the boring also characterizes narratives that are too desultory to engage the audience, reports filled with random facts, and landscapes that have nothing to attract the eye. The boring does not necessarily stay boring forever. When the reader, audience, or tax examiner pay attention, the boring becomes interesting. That is to say, new information can be created from raw data provided that there is adequate attention. In this section, I will look at the dynamics between boredom and interest, which Wallace associates with data and information, chaos and order, from the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of creation as chaoid, to show that the creation of the new—everything from a new piece of information to a new work of art—lies in the immanent process of paying attention as the passive contemplation of chaos.

Boredom is a broad term and *The Pale King* portrays more than one type of boredom. In *Boredom: A Lively History*, Peter Toohey identifies two forms of boredom. The first type of boredom is "characterized by lengthy duration, by its predictability, by its inescapability—by its confinement" (Toohey 4). It can result from attending a long lecture or waiting in a long queue. This "simple" type of boredom makes one become detached from the circumstances and sensitive to the progression of time (5). The second, "complex" kind of boredom is existential boredom often associated with "'existentialist' nausea and despair" (5, 6).

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In Wallace's novel, these two meanings of boredom are combined in the character Lane Dean, a new entry-level tax examiner. His job makes him realize that "hell had nothing to do with fires or frozen troops" (*PK* 379). Rather, to build a hell, one only needs to "Lock a fellow in a windowless room to perform rote tasks just tricky enough to make him have to think, but still rote, tasks involving numbers that connected to nothing he'd ever see or care about" (379). For Dean, "these soul-murdering eight daily hours" are hellishly boring because of not just their inescapable monotony but also the lack of connection between the tax files and his own personal interests (381). In other words, Dean is bored because in his job, there is "a lack of personal meaning," a lack that defines existentialist boredom (Svendsen 31).[32] Reviewing tax returns hour after hour, Dean can't help thinking of "a stick that kept breaking over and over but never got smaller" and "The Frenchman pushing that uphill stone throughout eternity," in an allusion to Albert Camus's *The Myth of Sisyphus* (Wallace, *PK* 384).

For the most part, however, *The Pale King* employs a more distinctive meaning of boredom: the state of facing a random collection of heterogeneous data. It is the response the opening chapter of the novel seems programed to elicit from the reader. The chapter describes a flatland in miniscule details: the sunlight, the river, the plants, the minerals, the horses, the birds, the insects, the breeze, the signboard, and the second-person narrator's socks. The description glances over everything but focuses on nothing. But for its limited length of just under one page, the chapter would certainly repel readers from the book with boredom.

[32] Svendsen does not discuss the existentialist idea of boredom directly, attributing the absence of personal meaning to the Romantic idea of boredom instead. However, he notes that "Romanticism is already existentialism and existentialism is incorrigibly Romantic," because of their historical and political circumstances (70).

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IRS employee and intra-institutional spy Claude Sylvanshine illustrates such boredom-inducing pool of data. Sylvanshine is what the narrator calls a "*fact psychic*" or "*data mystic*" (Wallace, *PK* 118). Unlike supernatural psychics, whose revelations are meaningful and even life-changing to the audience, fact psychics involuntarily perceive random, inconsequential facts. "These subjects' sudden flashes of insight or awareness are structurally similar to but usually far more tedious and quotidian than the dramatically relevant foreknowledge we normally conceive as ESP or precognition" (118). Suffering from "*RFI* (=*Random-Fact Intuition*)" syndrome, fact psychics find their consciousness intruded upon by useless, trivial facts, such as "What Cointreau tasted like to someone with a mild head cold on the esplanade of Vienna's state opera house on 2 October 1874" or "The exact (not estimated) height of Mount Erebus, though not what or where Mount Erebus is" (118-19). Constantly bombarded with flashes of random facts, Sylvanshine is unable to concentrate when he attends a training session. While listening to the trainer's explanation of the protocols for tax return examination, he experiences "data incursions of the annual rainfall in Zambia for even-numbered years since 1974," a fact totally incongruous with his present activity or interest (331).

RFI makes Sylvanshine an ineffectual spy that Human Resources Systems Deputy Merrill Erroll Lehrl employs to monitor the institutional changes DeWitt Glendenning, director of Peoria Regional Examination Center, is implementing. When being debriefed by Reynolds, the other of Lehrl's special assistants, Sylvanshine prattles on without distinguishing between intelligence and incidentals. Significant pieces of intelligence, such as Glendenning's "elimination of first-years on Exams" (365) in contradiction to IRS tradition is thrown in only as an aside among descriptions of the way Glendenning's secretary wears her sweater (363) and

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Glendenning's hair color and style (360). Therefore, it takes Reynolds, whose focused mind is "a rifle to Sylvanshine's shotgun," to receive Sylvanshine's report and "reduce them to relevant fact-patterns for Lehrl" (16, 358).

As Stephen J. Burn points out, Sylvanshine's condition makes him a "nonconscious mind" ("Paradigm" 384). According to Timothy Wilson's *Strangers to Ourselves*, which Wallace was reading during the period he worked on *The Pale King*, "our five senses are taking in more than 11,000,000 pieces of information," at any one time, and of these, "the most liberal estimate is that people can process consciously about 40 pieces of information per second" (Wilson qtd. in Burn 384). The selection of information for entrance into consciousness is carried out by a "nonconscious filter" (384). In contrast to Sylvanshine's astronomical intake of facts, Reynolds acts as the filter that creates information from raw data.

Intelligence work, detecting hidden tax evasions—a kind of "armchair detective work," or any other form of creation, requires transforming random, heterogeneous data into structures (Zelenak 979). For the individual enabling such transformation, boredom gets replaced by interest. This process can be understood from the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the chaoid in *What Is Philosophy*.

Creation of the new consists in producing the chaoid, a "chaos that becomes consistent" (Bell, Deleuze and Guattari's *What is Philosophy* 239). Chaos in Deleuze is not the negative, "privative chaos," an undifferentiated mass in need of the imposition of forms by the Platonic divine craftsman, but the "heterogeneities that make up the world" (Toscano "Chaos" 48). At the same time, chaos is also the evanescence of the originary matter or intensities. "Chaos is defined not so much by its disorder as by the infinite speed with which every form taking shape in it vanishes" (Deleuze and Guattari, *WP* 118). Chaos comprises "all possible particles and drawing

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out all possible forms, which spring up only to disappear immediately without consistency or reference, without consequence. Chaos is an infinite speed of birth and disappearance" (118). It can be considered the "pure difference in itself" from which begins the first passive synthesis that initiates ontogenesis in *Difference and Repetition*, which I discussed in Chapter One (Deleuze, *DR* 144). Chaos is Being as plenitude, which gives rise to beings with finitude and consistency (Bell, *Philosophy* 138).

Dwelling mainly on the disciples of art, science, and philosophy, *What Is Philosophy* emphasizes that the creation of chaoids is not only a struggle against chaos but also a battle against the status quo, or what they call "opinion." Since the "infinite speeds" and "infinite variabilities" of chaos are too disorienting, it is tempting to seek comfort in opinion, which work like an "umbrella" that shields the individual from chaos (Deleuze and Guattari, *WP* 201-02). Established beliefs and determinate rules confine the individual within the world of clichés. For the artist, the scientist, or the philosopher to create the new, it is necessary to "tear open the firmament and plunge into chaos" (202).

Creation requires making a slit in the protective umbrella to "let in a bit of free and windy chaos and to frame in a sudden light a vision that appears through the rent—Wordsworth's spring or Cezanne's apple" (203). These chaoids of art are new for their specific time and place. As they grow in circulation and become accepted standards, they join the ranks of opinion. Later poets and artists who imitate Wordsworth or Cezanne are followers of clichés, whose imitation serve to mend the umbrella instead of making new slits and generating new visions.

Insofar as it is the drawing of a just a slit of the umbrella, creation is not a total surrender to flitting instants of difference in itself. Such would be Sylvanshine's RFI

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syndrome. A chaoid is "a composed chaos" or "a chaos rendered consistent" in the sense of James Joyce's chaosmos (204, 208). "Too orderly or unified to be chaos, and too internally divergent to be cosmos, chaosmos presents us with a reality that defies the exclusiveness of the two traditional concepts" (Evans 33). As chaosmos, the chaoid acquires organization immanently from chaos without the imposition of transcendent forms or models.

As Ronald Bogue notes, "in all creative activities, the goal is to instigate movement, to make something happen," and to open up "a passage from chaos to chaosmos, a mutative form in formation that inaugurates something new" (*Deleuze's Wake* 6). Franco Berardi similarly points out that creation is constructing a "crossing bridge over the abyss of chaos" (134). In Deleuze and Guattari's own mathematically influenced formulation, chaosmos or chaoid is a secant plane that crosses the curve of chaos in contradistinction to the umbrella that shuts it out (*WP* 202-03). Creation is thus the drawing of a cross section from chaos rather than the iteration of a preexisting fixed order or opinion. To create chaoids is to open oneself up to the eternal return of difference that is the world and to be part of the ceaseless becoming of the world.

To return to *The Pale King*, we can see that the relationship between boredom and interest is the ontogenetic dynamic between chaos and chaoid. The creation of the new has to go through chaos. This is evident in the character Shane Drinion, a tax examiner with an unlimited ability to pay attention. In conversations, Drinion "just gives whoever's speaking his complete attention" and never feels bored by his interlocutors (448). Not even tax returns can bore him. He is able to pay such total attention when doing his job that he unconsciously levitates. "One night someone comes into the office and sees Drinion floating upside down over his desk with his

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eyes glued to a complex return, Drinion himself unaware of the levitating thing by definition, since it is only when his attention is completely on something else that the levitation happens" (485).

Drinion's creativity is set in sharp contrast to opinion in the chapter where, at an office outing in a bar, he becomes party to a "tête-à-tête" with his colleague Meredith Rand (450). Rand is well known among tax examiners for being "a serious bore," who "goes off on these long stories but at some point loses the thread and it's nearly impossible not to drift off or zone out when you can't understand what the hell she's getting at anymore" (489, 495). Rand begins telling Drinion "a sad story" about how she met her husband when she was a teenage patient in a psychiatric hospital (466). The story, which lasts forty pages, soon proves a succession of random elements, a chaos that would have been boring. However, Drinion finds it interesting, as he tells Rand, "anything you pay close, direct attention to becomes interesting" (456). Listening to Rand, he begins levitating above the chair (468, 489). The levitation is the manifestation of Drinion's happiness.

> Drinion is *happy*. Ability to pay attention. It turns out that bliss . . . lies on the other side of crushing, crushing boredom. Pay close attention to the most tedious thing you can find . . . , and, in waves, a boredom like you've never known will wash over you and just about kill you. Ride these out, and it's like stepping from black and white into color. (546)[33]

By making Drinion his "most enviably happy character," Wallace places a high value on attention (Piepenbring). Attention provides an alternative to the humanist sovereign subjective approach to data. A "total lump in terms of personality," Drinion

[33] Andrew Bennett points out that Wallace's description of boredom and attention shows considerable influence from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* ("Inside" 75).

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"becomes part of the table's environment, like air or ambient light" (Wallace, *PK* 448). His "expression could be called pleasant in the way that certain kinds of weather are called pleasant" (449). Drinion's kinship with the object world and divestiture of personhood and individuality seem to help him immerse in chaos and place him in contrast to Rand's humanist subjective avoidance of it.

Despite her tendency to ramble, Rand maintains a fixed idea of the colloquy with Drinion, complaining to him that "you don't seem like you have any sense of what the real topic of a conversation is" (464). When Rand talks about how she felt in high school when people nicknamed her one of the "*foxes* at Central Catholic," Drinion responds, "So you were raised in the Catholic faith," much to Rand's chagrin because the supposed topic was her hurt feelings, not her religion (472). When Rand describes the late night talks she had with a caring ward attendant in the hospital, who was to become her husband, Drinion asks a "small, reinforcing question" about why the man kept his feet elevated while talking (475). Drinion's response aggravates Rand's irritation because its focus on such a detail threatens to divert the story from its "real topic" (464).

Rand embodies the humanist sovereign subject's transcendent approach to data: coding and representation. There is a pre-existing topic that her story is meant to represent. "Coding does not allow that things might (will) deviate and divide from themselves to form something new. It cannot cope with difference in itself—as movement, change and emergence" (MacLure 169). Composed of a heterogeneous collection of words, which are in turn composed of morphemes, a story is a pool of the chaotic difference in itself, especially when the story is as desultory as Rand's. Allowing no off-topic response, Rand refuses to acknowledge the chaotic nature of stories. Establishing a topic in advance is a form of coding that shields both the

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story-teller and the listener from chaos. “Coding also tends to take you ‘away’ from the data—from their detail, complexity and singularity. Indeed this is one of the primary aims of coding” (169). Coding is a form of what Deleuze and Guattari calls opinion; it protecting the individual from the teeming intensities in chaos and prevents creation.

While “the humanist subject appears as fully and fatally cut off from ‘the data,’” Drinion is immersed in them. Attending to all the details of Rand’s story and not just those that represent the pre-established topic, he draws unexpected information from the pool of data. Drinion’s attention is different from the “distanced contemplation” in the “rarefied atmosphere of abstractions and generalities” that characterizes the sovereign subject’s processing of data (MacLure 175). In letting all the data “wash over” him, Drinion responds to chaos with passive contemplation, the kind of contemplation that can only be carried out by what Deleuze terms pre-individual “larval subjects” rather than the transcendent humanist subject-observer (Wallace, *PK* 546; Deleuze, *DR* 78).

As Deleuze and Guattari argues, “it is through contemplation that one contracts, contemplating oneself to the extent that one contemplates the elements from which one originates” (*WP* 212). As he loses his transcendent subjectivity and “becomes part of the table’s environment,” Drinion also becomes what he contemplates (Wallace, *PK* 448). In the process, he contracts a consistency from chaos, producing the chaoid. In other words, Drinion’s creative attention makes the boring interesting, which demonstrates “the immanent identity of chaos and cosmos” (Deleuze, *DR* 128).

Since chaos and cosmos are immanent in each other, creation is not a unidirectional process (Lundy 81). As he makes Rand’s chaotic story interesting in his own way, Drinion also disrupts the preordained teleology of the story. Toni Ware,

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another tax examiner, approaches creation from the opposite direction.[34] In her leisure, Toni plays pranks on strangers, as when she pretends that a supermarket clerk has smeared nasal mucus on her coat. After complaining to the manager about it, she runs away as the manager starts investigating. With no goal or purpose, Toni plays the nonsensical pranks "merely to pass the time" (Wallace, *PK* 514). However, for Toni, her pranks "felt like art" because they introduce a little mayhem into total order (511). "The issue was not destruction. Just as total order is dull, so is chaos dull: There's nothing informing about a mess" (511). Toni's art pokes holes in the umbrella of routine to generate a little chaos that prevents the world from total stagnation, whereas Drinion's confronts chaos to bring about metastable consistency. The combination of these two kinds of efforts keeps the world in ongoing creation.

In plot and characterization, *The Pale King* challenges the reader to confront chaos and transform boredom into interest. Since the novel is "a decentralized network of characters, none of which bears the classical features of a protagonist," readers have no clue as to on which character they should focus (Konstantinou, "Unfinished"). Regarding plot, Wallace's rough plan for the novel is to present "a series of setups for things to happen but nothing ever happens" (Pietsch viii).

Chapter 25 presents just such a setup. Almost every sentence here is about a tax examiner turning a page: "'Irrelevant' Chris Fogle turns a page. Howard Cardwell turns a page. Ken Wax turns a page. Matt Redgate turns a page" (Wallace, *PK* 310). Sentences like these cover the three pages that make up the chapter. Forcing the

[34] The character Toni Ware parallels Drinion in at least two aspects. She has the ability to pay literally unblinking attention, a result of a miserable childhood spent training her eyes to stay open for minutes as she imitated her cataleptic mother and grandmother. Also like Drinion, Toni is described as "invisible," "under people's radar," and devoid of any distinctive feature (Wallace, *PK* 512).

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reader into the place of an IRS examiner and inundating them with trivial data, the chapter can be considered what David Letzler calls "cruft," a computer programming jargon referring to anything excessive, redundant, or useless (131). Cruft in novels is not meant to be "read." It seeks to provoke readers to "test and even alter the way we process data" and to filter seemingly nugatory materials for useful information (134). Cruft like the "turns a page" chapter presents chaos pregnant with the possibility of creation for readers willing to plunge into chaos by paying attention. As her film, *Heart of a Dog*, shows, artist Laurie Anderson is an example of such attentive reader. From this chaos of a chapter, she extracted the words, "Every love story is a ghost story," hidden near the end of the chapter, and gave them consistency and a new meaning by making the quote part of her monologue in the film (Wallace, *PK* 312).

Left in its rudimentary form by Wallace's death, *The Pale King* would not have been a novel without a confrontation with chaos on the part of Michael Pietsch, Wallace's editor. Pietsch worked through thousands of pages in the form of incomplete manuscripts, workbooks, handwritten notes, "Zero drafts," "freewriting," and other fragments Wallace produced over a span of more than a decade to create the unfinished novel (Pietsch ix). With no guideline except Wallace's expressed intention for the novel to have a "tornado feeling," Pietsch's work requires the immanent creation of chaoid from chaos (viii). If Wallace scholar Toon Staes credits Pietsch as a "co-author" or even a "ghostwriter" of the novel, it is because extracting an intelligible novel from an incoherent pool of fragments is an act of creation in its own right (Staes 83; Brian Richardson qtd. in Staes 83).

Whether in the form of tax reviewing, listening a rambling story, filtering cruft, and sifting the raw materials of a novel, facing chaos is a daunting task, and boredom can be considered the negative designation applied to such a task to justify one's

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aversion to it. *The Pale King* demonstrates the value of chaos because nothing new is created ex nihilo by a transcendent subject. Rather, creation requires loosening one's subjectivity, contemplating and contracting chaos as larval subjects, and thus rendering chaos consistent. The process of turning the boring into the interesting in the object is what turns boredom into interest in the subject. The subject becomes with the object in their immanence in a world that is itself a creative chaosmos.

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Chapter Three

Aesthetics of Immanence and Literary Creation in Roth and Wallace

Section One

Power of the False

Roth and Wallace are both highly self-reflective writers who have deliberated extensively on the nature of authorship and literary creation in their respective works. Roth's Zuckerman books trace the life of the writer protagonist, Nathan Zuckerman, from youth to old age. Through Zuckerman, as a character and a metafictional device, Roth reflects on the nature of writing and challenges the convention of viewing writing—both fiction and non-fiction—as representation.[35]

Writing a generation after such high postmodernists as John Barth and Thomas Pynchon, Wallace is steeped in a literary milieu dominated by postmodernist distrust of mimetic representation. Wallace's way to carry on and reconsider the postmodern legacy is to foreground literature as representation and yet challenge the representational proposition at the same time.[36] Instead of celebrating the dissolution of the representational relationship between literature and reality as his postmodernist

[35] The character Nathan Zuckerman first appeared in Roth's 1974 novel *My Life as a Man* as the writer protagonist Peter Tarnopol's invention. Therefore, when *The Ghost Writer*, the first of the Zuckerman books, was published in 1979, Zuckerman can already be viewed intertextually as a metafictional character. Roth's 1988 *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* is bookended by the letters Roth exchanges with Zuckerman, who reviewed the manuscript at Roth's request. Zuckerman provides the device for Roth to proclaim his doubt about non-fiction as representation: "You try to pass off here as frankness what looks to me like the dance of the seven veils—what's on the page is like a code for something missing" (162).

[36] As Mary K. Holland points out, "Wallace creates a postmodern revision of William Carlos Williams's modernist manifesto, from 'No ideas but in things' to 'No ideas but in how we see and represent things'" (114). For Wallace, the status of representation in literature is self-reflexively the main concern of literature.

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predecessors did, Wallace, like his fellow "post-postmodern" writers, attempt to "reconnect with something beyond representation, something extralinguistic, something real" (McLaughlin 213). In other words, Wallace seeks to relate to reality through writing in a way other than representation.

As this chapter will show, Roth does more than question the status of literature as mimesis, whereas Wallace's approach to literature does not equal a return to a pre-postmodern mimetic representation. Both writers go beyond questioning whether art is supposed to re-present what is present and whether it's capable of this task. As chapter two has made clear, Roth and Wallace exhibit an ontology where the world is pure difference-in-itself that eternally becomes, not a self-identical, unified, static Being. Therefore, there is no reality in the traditional sense for art to represent; there is only becoming where art plays the role of a catalyst of transformation. Roth and Wallace affirm art as the immanent creation of the radically new and the harbinger of becoming.

In this chapter, I will look at Roth's and Wallace's aesthetics from the perspective of Deleuze's concept of the "power of the false" as immanent creation. At first glance, the "power of the false" seems like an endorsement of the untrue, of what contradicts reality and violates truth. However, in Deleuze's definition, it involves a fundamental redefinition of truth as immanent creation. A Deleuzian reading of Roth and Wallace would show that the two writers do not aim to distort reality and disfigure facts but to make art the creative force of becoming.

The "Power of the false" is Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche's concept of will to power. As Nietzsche sees it, the sciences of the 19th century, especially Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, is proof that the Western metaphysics, which began with Plato and became entrenched through the rise of Christianity, has defeated itself.

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The separation of the universe into the transcendent realm of true reality and that of appearances or nature, along with the accompanying mandate to strive for the knowledge of truth, have ironically led to the demise of Truth and the Death of God (Morrison). For Nietzsche, this means that there is only the apparent world left, or that all there has ever been is the apparent and nothing more. However, this doesn't entail a crude materialism where the world is mere matter operating mechanistically. As Nietzsche argues, "With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one" (*Portable* 486).[37] No longer oppressed by a higher, transcendent realm, matter acquires a new meaning.

Under the influence of nineteenth-century physicist Roger Joseph Boscovich and philosopher Maximilian Drossbach, Nietzsche conceives of the apparent world as more than mere matter—inanimated extended bodies governed by the laws of Newtonian mechanics (Emden 105-8). Instead, the apparent world, the nature, is a dynamic field of forces, where what is formerly regarded as solid entities are "configurations of forces" (Morrison). Objecting to mechanistic materialism, Nietzsche further attributes a "primitive nisus" to dynamic forces, making them the will to power (Morrison). What the will to power does is overcoming—the overcoming of resistance to achieve growth and continuation (Jenkins 17). Nietzsche proclaims:

> This world: a monster of energy, . . . as force throughout, as a play of forces and waves of forces, . . . a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing and eternally flooding back with tremendous years of recurrence. . . : this, my Dionysian world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally

[37] An alternative translation by Judith Norman: "we got rid of the illusory world along with the true one!" (Nietzsche, *Twilight* 171).

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self-destroying . . . —This world is the will to power—and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing besides! (*Will* 550)

Will to power defines the universe, where forces overcome other forces in a two-fold action of creating while destroying. It is "the unexhausted procreative will of life," the ontological basis of all beings and of life itself (*Portable* 226).

Incorporating Nietzsche into his ontology of assemblages, Deleuze interprets the Nietzschean will to power as "The relation of force to force" (*PI* 73). Will to power is thus the momentum driving forces to interact with each other—a "power to affect and be affected," thus driving the becoming of the immanent universe (*C2* 139).

As Nietzsche's will to power is ultimately founded on the death of God and the bankruptcy of Truth, Deleuze interprets the power in "will to power" as the power of the false. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze explains, "The world is neither true nor real but living. And the living world is will to power, will to falsehood, which is actualised in many different powers" (184). In *Cinema 2: The Time-Image,* Deleuze attributes the power of the false to Nietzsche: "it is Nietzsche, who, under the name of the 'will to power,' substitutes the power of the false for the form of the true, and resolves the crisis of truth, wanting to settle it once and for all, but, in opposition to Leibniz, in favour of the false and its artistic, creative power" (131).[38] The power of the false is life unhindered by transcendence but animated by will to power: "By raising the false to power, life freed itself of appearances as well as truth: neither true nor false, an undecidable alternative, but power of the false, decisive will" (*C2* 145). As Deleuze adopted "will to power" for a book on the cinematic art, he turned it into the "power of the false" to emphasizes the artistic, creative nature of the world. The

[38] For an overview of Nietzsche's influence on Deleuze, see Flaxman xiii-xxi.

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power of the false can thus be understood as the ontological substance that is the will to power in its aesthetic capacity.

The "false" in the power of the false is not the false in its traditional definition as the opposite of the true or the lack of truth. Deleuze highlights this point by discussing the false in another context: Platonism, where the power of the false would be found in simulacra. In "The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy," Deleuze examines Plato's three-tier ontology.[39] On the top tier are Ideas as the Truth. These are the immaterial essences of things. The Idea of a flower, for example, is undiluted and perfect—a pure flower. Inasmuch as it is an Idea, "Flower" is the self-identical, eternal and unchanging Truth of all tangible flowers. One notch down from Ideas are copies, material images modeled on Ideas. On the lowest level of the hierarchy are simulacra, which are not only twice removed from Ideas but, unlike copies, have no mimetic relations with them. The simulacrum partakes nothing of the Idea. From the perspective of the Idea, the Simulacrum exhibits "an essential perversion or a deviation" (*LS* 256). It simply has "an *effect* of resemblance" externally "obtained by ruse or subversion" but, internally, has nothing of the essence of the Idea (*LS* 258). As Deleuze argues, it would be a mistake to say that the simulacrum is "a copy of a copy," as it is traditionally understood to be, since the copy and the simulacrum are not merely different in degree but in kind: "The copy is an image endowed with resemblance, the simulacrum is an image without resemblance" (*LS* 257). Like a painting of flowers so beautiful that it moves the viewer to tears, the simulacrum has real effects that give them the ability to take the place of Ideas.

Art is the prime example of the simulacrum. For Plato, art is such a dangerous type of simulacra that he wanted to banish artists from the ideal city of the Republic.

[39] For a summary, see Zepke 25.

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Plato's concern, Deleuze argues, was not philosophical but moral: "the will to eliminate simulacra or phantasms has no motivation apart from the moral" (*DR* 265). As Beistegui points out, Platonism was driven by anxieties over the rise of Athenian democracy and the power of rhetoric to influence public opinion ("Deleuzian Reversal" 57). Platonism is a reaction to Athenian democracy where the art of rhetoric was able to steer political subjects away from Truth.

For Deleuze, the simulacrum suggests an ontology that runs counter to the Platonic transcendence of "the Same and the Similar" (*LS* 263). The "Idea is the very figure of sameness, or self-identity, and defines being as identity" whereas the copy is the Similar that relates to it in the manners of similarity, analogy, and opposition (Beistegui "Deleuzian Reversal" 60). Taken together, identity, similarity, analogy, and opposition are the four dimensions of representation. On the other hand, the simulacrum, due to its non-relation with the Idea, cannot be judged according to how well or how badly it represents sameness. It is free from the fealty to the Truth and represents nothing, not even itself. The simulacrum is able to dethrone representation and disrupt the ontology of transcendence because in it "the very idea of a model or privileged position is challenged and overturned" (*DR* 69). "By rising to the surface, the simulacrum makes the Same and the Similar, the model and the copy, fall under the power of the false" (*LS* 263). With nothing to serve as the criteria of truth, the simulacrum cannot be judged as "the false." The very dichotomy between being true or false to the model crumbles down, so what would have been termed false under the Platonic scheme is affirmed and recognized as a power. The simulacrum embodies the "power of the false," and, as such, equals the eternal return of difference (*LS* 264; *DR* 128).

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As the false turns into the power of the false in the simulacrum, the meaning of truth also changes: "'truth' now becomes an affirmation of the simulacrum itself" (Smith 16). Truth and falsity are conflated in the power of the false. That is why Deleuze wrote, "There's no truth that doesn't 'falsify' established ideas" (*N* 126). Only the simulacrum, which breaks down the transcendence of truth over falsity and thus exercises the power of the false, is able to create. Therefore, "for art to truly bring forth the 'power of the false,' it must first become a 'simulacrum' itself" (Liao 6).[40]

The creative, anti-representational art as simulacrum might at first glance seem to fall under the postmodernist aesthetic. However, there is a fundamental disparity. For instance, simulacrum as the power of the false is not to be confused with Jean Baudrillard's famous conception of simulacra in *Simulacra and Simulation*. According to Baudrillard, signs or images have evolved throughout history through four stages. They started out as mirror reflections of reality, and then they began obscuring or perverting reality—here images turn into first-order simulacra. After passing through the phase of masking the absence of reality, signs reach its final incarnation as the third-order simulacra—"miniaturized cells, matrices, and memory banks," models and codes for infinite reproduction of images that take the place of the original (2). "It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real" (2). In this conception of postmodern simulacra, whose prime examples are mass media, the original reality was once accessible but has now escaped from our epistemological sphere. Art is false only in the negative sense, as it's impossible to reach the real and discover the truth.

[40] See also Zepke 19.

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In *The Politics of Postmodernism*, Linda Hutcheon counters Baudrillard's stance that the loss of the real is a postmodern phenomenon by arguing "There is nothing natural about the 'real' and there never was—even before the existence of mass media" (31). Unmediated reality and objective history never existed, since everything is already interpretation and representation, or, in a word, culture, from the very beginning. The distinctive characteristic of the postmodernist aesthetic is the recognition of this fact. The "notions of truth, reference, and the non-cultural real," Hutcheon notes, "are no longer unproblematic issues, assumed to be self-evident and self-justifying" (32). Therefore, postmodernist art "self-consciously acknowledges its existence as representation" so as to problematize the possibility of neutral representation while highlighting the constructedness of meaning (32). The postmodernist aesthetic challenges natural mimesis and the assumption of a reality untainted with subjective perspectives. In Hutcheon's formulation, art has never been able to reach the truth.

Also an influential postmodernist thought, Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist theory criticizes "the view from nowhere" characteristic of traditional representation. The real or the thing in itself is inaccessible except through signs. Contra Saussure, for whom the meaning of a signifier is ultimately anchored by its correspondence with the signified in the extra-textual reality, Derrida believes that "From the moment that the sign appears, that is to say from the very beginning, there is no chance of encountering anywhere the purity of 'reality'" (*Of Grammatology* 91). "The fundamental signified, the meaning of the being represented, even less the thing itself, will never be given us in person, outside the sign" (*Of Grammatology* 266). The manner in which signs operate is différance, a concept combining difference in space and deferral in time. Any of the signs in a system acquires meaning from its

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opposition and relation to other signs both synchronically and diachronically. That is to say, a sign is comprehended not merely through how it is different from other signs in the structure in the moment of signification. Its meaning is also determined by the signs that came before it, and continues to be modified by those appearing after it. There is therefore an "infinite implication, the indefinite referral of signifier to signifier" in a system of representation (Derrida, *Writing* 29). Referentiality to any presence always fails since the infinite pursuit of meaning never leads one to the signified that transcends the realm of signifiers. What is conventionally considered reality is actually an effect produced by différance. Derrida's is "a radical theory of interpretation that no longer claims to have access to things or meanings but produces new interpretations that are in turn interpreted, giving rise to new interpretations ad infinitum" (Mangion 131-32).[41] Truth is dissociated from experience, and all we are left with is interpretations. Art is also interpretation, something whose truth value can never be ascertained.

Despite its rejection of absolute truth and of the attainability of truth, the postmodern aesthetic is still based on the correspondence theory of truth, which can be traced back to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and even Plato.[42] As Tim Crane argues categorically, "there is really no such thing as the postmodern critique of . . . Aristotle's idea: we speak the truth when we say how things really are." Although it forsakes the possibility of obtaining ultimate truths—what Lyotard calls "grand narratives" or what Foucault calls "totalizing discourses," postmodernism maintains the representational model of ancient Greek philosophy. Truth has not changed its

[41] See also Braver.

[42] Aristotle defines truth in *Metaphysics*: "To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true" (3438; bk 4, pt. 7). Plato's correspondence theory of truth is evident in *Cratylus* 385b2 and *Sophist* 263b.

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meaning. It is just paired with a pluralist tolerance of different or conflicting perspectives and interpretations on the one self-identical Being.

As is clear from Chapter One, in Deleuze's philosophy of immanence, the ontology of being is replaced with that of becoming. When the world is becoming and the eternal return of difference in itself, there is no transcendent realm to ground the correspondence theory of truth. Therefore, we can say that "becoming is the power of the false of life, the will to power" (Deleuze, *C2* 141). The aesthetic of the power of the false is the logical correlate of the ontology of becoming. Unlike the postmodernist pluralism of perspectives, it proposes a peculiar form of "perspectivism" that is "*not* defined by variation of external points of view on a supposedly invariable object (the ideal of the true would be preserved)" (143). Rather, it is the object itself that is multiple: "different objects which were . . . the metamorphosis of one and the same thing in the process of becoming" (143). Such "perspectives" are to be understood in terms of "*projective geometry*," where circle, ellipse, and hyperbola are all metamorphoses of the cone (143). It is not that the cone is a true Idea that appears to be these discrete curves from different points of view. As becoming, the cone is itself a series, a multiplicity encompassing all these curves.

As immanent becoming, the world's power of the false entails a redefinition of truth as creativity. "There is no other truth than the creation of the New: creativity, emergence" (*C2* 146-47). What is truthful is what falsifies, making beings become and bringing about the radically new. As James Williams comments succinctly, "to say that something is true is not to say something verifiable in some way, but to say something that vivifies and alters a situation" ("Truth" 293). A truthful work of art is one that disregards accuracy and precision but transforms the artist, the audience, and whatever else it encounters. The ontological import of art is central to the Deleuzian

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aesthetic and the reason why Deleuze's concept of the power of the false cannot be identified with postmodernism.

Art as simulacra exercises the power of the false by being indiscernible, inexplicable, undecidable, and incompossible (*C2* 131). These characteristics allow simulacra to compel thought and unsettle identity by counter-actualizing the subject. The following sections of the chapter are devoted to textual analyses of Roth's and Wallace's novels to see how they not merely challenge representation but conceptualize art as immanent creation. In the next section, I interpret Wallace's "The Soul Is Not a Smithy" as what Deleuze calls a "crystalline narration," which has the falsifying power to incite immanent ontogenesis in the reader. The third part of chapter three will deal with Wallace's narrative style from the Deleuzian viewpoint as the renewal of language in general. The final section of this chapter turns to Roth's works to show how Nathan Zuckerman's Deleuzian fabulation brings about ontological creation in himself and for a potential future community.

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Section Two

Wallace's "The Soul Is Not a Smithy" and Crystalline Narration

"The Soul Is Not a Smithy," the second story in Wallace's *Oblivion* is a work that, instead of representing a pre-existing transcendent reality, thwarts conventional understanding of narrative and thereby induces ontological creation immanently in the reader. As this section will show, the story is a Deleuzian crystalline narrative, a narrative style of that "ceases to be truthful, that is, to claim to be true, and becomes fundamentally falsifying" (*C2* 131). In other words, it is exemplary of the aesthetic of immanence and the creative power of the false.

"Smithy" is a first-person narrative that opens with the unnamed narrator claiming, "This is the story of how Frank Caldwell, Chris DeMatteis, Mandy Blemm, and I became, in the city newspaper's words, the *4 Unwitting Hostages*, and of how our strange and special alliance and the trauma surrounding its origin bore on our subsequent lives and careers as adults later on" (67). The ensuing narrative fulfills its promise of recounting a classroom hostage situation only tangentially. Whether this is the overall plan of the narrative is not even certain, since the claim is preceded by a capitalized paragraph about the military accomplishments of one "TERENCE VELAN," who does not belong to the "*4 Unwitting Hostages*" (67). Typographically and narratively, the story is a split from the very beginning. As the narrative proceeds, the main story of the hostage trauma is revealed to be infested with an array of seemingly irrelevant narrative threads that distract from rather than contribute to the telling of main story. Within just a few pages, the proclaimed subject of the story gets lost and the narrative disintegrates into a multiplicity. The plethora of narrative threads includes, but is not limited to, the following:

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1. The hostage incident.
2. Watching two dogs mating some distance outside the classroom window.
3. A "narrative fantasy" about a blind little girl named Ruth Simmons, her dog Cuffie, and her parents and sisters. The narrator imagines the story in the style of "filmic storyboards" onto the checkered window by his desk (92, 71).
4. The aftermath and media coverage of the hostage incident.
5. Memories about father.
6. Recurrent nightmares about adult life.
7. The peripheral quality of certain images, with an example from the movie *The Exorcist*.
8. Presidents' Day presentation one month before the incident.

Complicating the interweaving of narrative threads are the capitalized sections that seem to have been randomly inserted into the typographically regular narrative. One way to view the capitalized sections is to see them as rubrics, which make the structure of the narrative echo a storyboard (Tracey 177-78). However, although the use of capitalized sections as rubrics is a common literary convention, the sections in this case are too irrelevant to be meant for this purpose. Another possibility is that the typographical difference between these sections and the other sections means to signify that they belong to different narrative levels or form disparate narrative threads. However, judging by the contents, one finds no separate narrative levels. The capitalized sections seem to be fragments from the typographically regular text.[43]

[43] The capitalized paragraphs are or deal with: Terence Velan as an adult (67); the narrator's seat in the classroom (70); Mr. Johnson in press coverage (73); Mary Unterbrunner and Brandy Blemm, Mandy's sister (75); the single sentence, "ESSENTIALLY, I HAD NO IDEA WHAT WAS GOING ON" (80); Mr. DeMatteis' business and Chris DeMatteis' adult career (85); the narrator's relationship with his father (89); why the police opened fire on Mr. Johnson (99); Frank Caldwell was afraid (103); and the meaning of the phrase, "*KILL THEM*" (110).

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As the narrator claims to have "always possessed good peripheral vision," so the narrative is characterized by the profusion of peripheral texts on various levels (71). The hostage narrative keeps getting interrupted by the imaginary story of the Simmons and their pet dog. Often a paragraph goes from one narrative thread to another without transition. For instance, right after describing the day after the incident, when Chris DeMatte falls from a sled, injuring his head, the narrator goes on to describe Ruth Simmons' mother, Marjorie, and her dream of entering the upper class (81). Moreover, by the narrator's own admission, many of the passages are only tangentially related to the main narrative. Following a lengthy description of the classrooms of R. B. Hayes Primary School, he adds in the same paragraph, "None of this is directly relevant to the story" of the hostage crisis (69). Several marginal characters receive extended descriptions, such as Terence Velan, Mr. Snead, and the narrator's uncle (69, 89, 82). There are also would-be narrative threads that are left undeveloped, such as the passages about the narrator's elder brother (74, 78, 110).

There seems to be no rule regarding how the narrative threads are connected. Some connections are associative, but others seem gratuitous. The thread about sighting dogs outside the classroom window segues into the narrator's family history with dogs (73). The description of a peripheral flash in the storyboard thematically connects with the memories of a peripheral snapshot in *The Exorcist* (94). On the other hand, when the narrator turns from press coverage of Mr. Johnson to his brother's "flights of fancy" regarding the family's antique table, there seems to be nothing to justify the transition (76). Futhermore, like the substitute Civics teacher Mr. Johnson, who inserts *KILL THEM*'s into the texts of the Amendments to the Constitution that he is copying onto the chalkboard, the narrator inserts the capitalized sections in between thematically and spatio-temporally incongruent passages.

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Upon its publication, the narrative style of "Smithy" and the story collection *Oblivion* baffled many critics. In a review of the book, Wyatt Mason remarked, "The typical mode of their narration is digressive" and "the defining quality of these fictions is the degree to which they leave the reader unsure about very basic narrative issues: who is telling this story? Where are we? What exactly is happening?" Writer Chad Harbach describes the collection as consisting of "distinct, asymptotic plot lines that . . . never quite converge. There is a superabundance of data to be sifted through, all of it accurate but much of it irrelevant or unmarked," which gives the reader "the growing suspicion that one can never really know what happened." James Wood expresses a similar sentiment when he characterizes the stories in *Oblivion* as the "shaggy-dog story" (29). In a more recent essay, Chloe Harrison comments, "the defining quality of 'The Soul Is Not a Smithy' is that the narrator himself, by his own admission, 'had no idea what was going on,'" so much so that the reader is left wondering "What story are they trying to tell? Which story should we pay the most attention to?" (62).

In the rest of this section, I will interpret "Smithy" from the perspective of Deleuze's concept of the crystalline narration to show how the puzzlement effected by the story is its way of exercising art's power of the false that brings about imminent ontological creation and renewal of subjectivity in the reader.

Deleuze developed his concept of the "crystalline narration" in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* to characterize a new kind of cinema appearing after World War II, with the advent of Italian neo-realism. Narration in its traditional form is "organic" in the sense that narration proceeds in accordance with sensory-motor schemata, where characters "act . . . according to how they perceive the situation. Actions are linked to perceptions and perceptions develop into actions" (*N* 51). The "characters react to

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situations or act in such a way as to disclose the situation" (*C2* 127). The "sensory-motor schemata" governs the commonsense world "structured by our needs, desires, purposes, and projects, and the practical application of our perceptions and actions to meet those ends depends on a coordinated interconnection of our sensory and motor faculties" (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 66).

Such a world is what Kurt Lewin terms "hodological space" in the sense that objects are registered by the subject only in terms of what they afford to or how they interest the subject (Deleuze, *C2* 127). It can also be considered a "Euclidean space . . . organized according to tensions and resolutions of tension, according to goals, obstacles, means, or even detours" (128-29). In an organic narrative, the narrator would not present irrelevant or extraneous descriptions that do nothing for the plot. Characters act with goals and means to achieve these goals in time that proceeds chronologically. Actions are related to each other through temporal continuity and linear causality. In sum, the organic regime "is a regime of localizable relations, actual linkages, legal, causal and logical connections" (126-27). Irrational, non-causal actions are presented as contrary to the norm, while disruptive moments are rationalized as flashback, dream, or imagination, which are thus reintegrated into the prescribed temporal linearity (127).

Sensory-motor schemata "denotes a view of the world that is oriented towards the survival and well-being of the subject," and in this view, "actions have objectives and effects have causes" (Vanhanen 111-12). The narrative is thus a linear chain of actions and reactions, causes and effects (Rodowick, *Time Machine* 84). This is the way organisms perceive the world for survival. As Deleuze argues, "We have schemata for turning away when it is too unpleasant, for prompting resignation when it is terrible and for assimilating when it is too beautiful" and "even metaphors are

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sensory-motor evasions, and furnish us with something to say when we no longer know what to do" (*C2* 20). Instead of subjecting oneself to the force of intensities, the common course of action is to resort to the sensory-motor images of objects, which Deleuze calls "clichés" (20). "We . . . normally perceive only clichés" (20). In our basic behavioral mode, "we do not perceive the thing or the image in its entirety, . . . we perceive only . . . what it is in our interest to perceive," whether the "interest" is physiological or psychological or of any other nature (TI 20). We experience not the world but only an image of the world, an image produced by filtering out all the intensities not necessary for survival and the furtherance of our interest. Due to the sensory-motor schemata acting as an "agent of abstraction," herbivores, for example, recognize only grass in their environment (45). Sensory motor images preserve habitual recognition and prevent creativity and the regeneration of subjectivity.

Only when "our sensory-motor schemata jam or break" can the narrative "brings out the thing in itself literally, in its excess of horror or beauty, in its radical or unjustifiable character"—in its intensities and counter-actualizing power (Deleuze, *C2* 20). There has to be "the excess, the violence of the unbearable as that which cannot be accommodated, thereby forcing us into a different, deeper dimension of experience" (Moulard 330).[44] Only when a narrative overwhelms the sensory-motor schema with unassimilable strangeness—illogicality, anachronism, or non-causality, for example—is it able to depart from the organic regime and become aesthetically and ontologically creative.

The crystalline narration does this by presenting the habitually obscured virtuality of the object along with its actuality. While the organic regime assumes an independent, pre-existing reality that it represents, the crystalline regime contradicts

[44] See also Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 110-11.

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this scheme by showing the object as an ever-shifting virtual-actual compound, whose representation is always at the expense of the virtual.

In the crystalline regime, "perception and recollection, the real and the imaginary, the physical and the mental . . . continually followed each other, running behind each other and referring back to each other around a point of indiscernibility," the point of the "coalescence of the actual image and the virtual image" (Deleuze, *C2* 69). Like the physical crystal, the crystalline narration is characterized by the conjunction of ununifiable splits and fractures. Each of two sides—actual and virtual—of the crystalline narration keeps "taking the other's role in a relation which we must describe as reciprocal presupposition, or reversibility" (69). Because of their incessant reversals, the actual and the virtual become "distinct and yet indiscernible" (81). As in a hall of mirrors, the distinction between the actual and the virtual objects still obtains but it is now impossible to identify (Marrati 72-73). "When virtual images proliferate like this, all together they absorb the entire actuality of the character, at the same time as the character is no more than one virtuality among others" (Deleuze, *C2* 70). Unlike subjective illusions or mental confusion, as when one mistakes a dreamt scene for real-life experience, this situation is an "objective illusion" with counter-actualizing effects for the reader or viewer (69).

Referring back to the Bergsonian cone of time discussed in Chapter One, we can say that the crystal allows one to experience time. The crystal, in which the actual image and its virtual image converge, is the tip of the inverted cone and embodies the paradox of time in which the present co-exists with its own past. In other words, the crystal reveals the world as "coalescences of the actual and the virtual produced by the perpetual scission of time into the Bergsonian actual present and the virtual 'memory of the present'" (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 122). In Deleuze's words, "the

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crystal constantly exchanges the two distinct images which constitute it, the actual image of the present which passes and the virtual image of the past which is preserved" (*C2* 81). In a crucial passage in *Cinema 2*, Deleuze elaborates on the connection between the crystal image and Bergsonian time:

> What constitutes the crystal-image is the most fundamental operation of time: since the past is constituted not after the present that it was but at the same time, time has to split itself in two at each moment as present and past . . . . Time . . . splits in two dissymmetrical jets, one of which makes all the present pass on, while the other preserves all the past. Time consists of this split, and it is this, it is time, that we *see in the crystal*. The crystal-image was not time, but we see time in the crystal. We see in the crystal the perpetual foundation of time, nonchronological time, Chronos and not Chronos. This is the powerful, non-organic Life which grips the world. (81)

In bringing the virtual and the actual into a dance of continuous reversal of positions, the crystal embodies the paradoxical relationship of the present, the temporal mode of the actual, and the past, the time of the virtual. Just as any moment, when it's present, is already past, so any object is both actual and virtual at the same time. While the organic regime limits time to its chronological dimension, the crystal regime adds to Chronos the nonchronological dimension of time, the Aion. If the traditional, organic narration operates on the sensory-motor schemata, where time is chronological and considered a measurement of movement, the crystalline narration makes the reader experience time in itself directly—a direct image of time freed from movement. "We no longer have an indirect image of time which derives from movement, but a direct time-image from which movement derives" (Deleuze, *C2* 129). Departing from chronological time based on the ontology of transcendence, the

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crystalline presentation of time as disruptive and paradoxical intimates to the reader the ontology of immanence.

The crystalline narration has a falsifying power. "The formation of the crystal, the force of time and the power of the false are strictly complementary, and constantly imply each other" (Deleuze, *C2* 132). The organic narrative is "a veracious narrative, in the sense that it claims to be true, even in fiction" (127). However, in the crystalline narration, the direct presentation of the paradoxes of time debunks truth and redefines the world as creative falsity. As Deleuze wrote, "if time appears directly, it is in *de-actualized peaks of the present*; it is in *virtual sheets of past*" (130). As it "poses the simultaneity of incompossible presents, or the coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts," the crystalline narration embodies the paradoxes of time to overturn the transcendent ideal of truth (130).

The classic example of how the paradox of time threatens truth is the ancient problem of future contingents. If it is true that a sea battle may take place tomorrow, and, when tomorrow arrives, it does occur, then a few paradoxes emerge. The first paradox is that the impossible proceeds from the possible, as "the sea battle may not take place tomorrow" is possible today but becomes impossible tomorrow. Secondly, the past is not necessarily true, as today's proposition, "the sea battle may not take place tomorrow," turns out to be not true (Deleuze, *C2* 130).[45] Leibniz famously sidestepped the paradox by proposing a multiplicity of incompossible worlds, in some of which the battle does happen and in others it does not. For Deleuze, this signifies a wish for the transcendence of truth from time, to "keep the true away from the existent, in the eternal or in what imitates the eternal" (130). Instead of presuming the transcendence of truth, Deleuze acknowledges that time consists in the proliferation in

[45] See also Bogue, *Delezue on Cinema* 148, and Rodowick, *Time Machin*e 97.

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one and the same world of incompossible presents forever being folded out of the virtual, where exist all the pasts, none of which is necessarily true. In showing the paradoxical nature of time and thus invalidating the model of truth, the crystalline narration can be understood as simulacrum, the kind of art with the power of the false.

From the perspective of Deleuze's concept of crystalline narration, how is "Smithy" a crystalline narrative with the power of the false? First of all, its overwhelmingly digressive narrative style collapses the hodological space characteristic of organic narration.[46] In approaching the story, the reader is unable to make sense of the intertwining and mutually disrupting plot lines in commonsense sensory-motor terms. Labeled by adults as a child with attention deficit, the narrator is unable to pay sustained attention in class or perceive only what is in his interest to perceive. Instead of maintaining the hodological space of survival and interest, he finds his attention frequently attracted by things that do not concern him, such as litter or passing vehicles outside the window. As a character, he is unable to put the sensory-motor schemata into play and be an actor in the hostage drama. As a narrator, his attention to everything undermines the subtracting function of the sensory-motor schema. Because of its all-inclusiveness, his narration works to "restore the lost parts, to rediscover everything that cannot be seen in the image, everything that has been removed to make it 'interesting'" (Deleuze, *C2* 21). Detached from sensory-motor situations of linear processions of perception and action, cause and effect, his story bifurcates randomly and goes off on tangents. To call his narrative style digressive, as

[46] In "Beyond Narratology," Richard Stock points out that narratological concept of temporal sequence and the assumption of causal and progressional connection between events fail to provide the means of understanding contemporary novels like Wallace's (36). Despite its narratological perspective, Stock's comments pertain to the present discussion because chronological time, progression, and causality are also the assumptions of the organic regime. Wallace's fictions thwarts narratological attempts to discover a "grammar of narrative" because it is not an organic narrative (35).

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Mason does, is not even precise, as the main narrative thread gets lost among others so quickly and thoroughly that there is nothing to digress from. The effect of the ever-wandering narrative attention in "Smithy" is to remove the reader from the organic regime and the commonsense world.

Secondly, the proliferating, distracting narrative threads serve to absorb the actual into the virtual, forming the crystal of the narrative. The hostage crisis, "most dramatic and exciting event I would ever be involved in in my life," makes for an eventful and horrifying story with a high narrative "tellability" ("Smithy" 69).[47] After a three-page preamble detailing the layout of the classroom where the incident is to take place, the narrative finally mentions Mr. Johnson, the alleged hostage-taker, but only in passing, before delving into a description of the windows of the classroom and the then nine-year-old narrator's practice during class of imagining "storyboards" unto the window grills. The most unusual event for him on the day of the hostage situation, the narrator tells us, is the appearance of dogs outside the window.

With the exception of one paragraph on Mr. Johnson, the narrative continues with the description of how he created the "narrative fantasies" that his teachers and parents considered "daydreaming" (71, 77). From here, the narrative departs from "the real incident" of the hostage crisis into the narrator's imaginary universe of the window pane "narrative fantasy" in which he was engrossed during the time when the hostage crisis unfolded (84, 92). Across three pages transpires what at first seems a childlike tale. Cuffie, a brindle puppy, was tricked into escaping from the Simmons' yard by two cunning feral dogs. His owner, a blind little girl named Ruth, prays for Cuffie while her parents take turns looking for the dog on the streets. At this point in

[47] For a discussion of tellability or narratability, see Prince 23.

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the Simmons' story, the narrator's attention returns to the real world and finds the two stray dogs outside the window disentangling from each other after mating (81).

He then continues with the Simmons's story, which dominates the next three pages. Marjorie, Ruth's mother, used to dream of marrying a rich man and is bitter about her marriage to the working-class Mr. Simmons and cruel to Ruth. Meanwhile, Cuffie regrets leaving home as the two feral dogs force him into a seedy area far away from home. At this juncture, in the classroom, Mr. Johnson has written the first "*KILL*" on the chalkboard (84). Yet the narrator immediately proceeds with the storyboard: Mrs. Simmons is perfunctory in her search for Cuffie as she drives in a snowstorm, while a diligent Mr. Simmons is operating a snowplow to clear snow off his employer's driveway. In the classroom, Mr. Johnson begins to insert "*KILL*" and "*KILL THEM*" more frequently in the texts of the Constitution (87).

Here the narrator returns to the Simmons's story, which is turning increasingly dramatic and terrifying. Mrs. Simmons's car gets stuck in the snow, while Cuffie is forced by the feral dogs to enter an ominous industrial pipe leading to a chemical factory. Meanwhile in the classroom, "something was now evidently wrong with Mr. Johnson's face and its expression" (89). After this passing comment, the narrator picks up the storyboard fantasy again: the snowplow gets stalled and, when Mr. Simmons tries to fix it, the rotating blade suddenly starts, splintering his arm right off. At the same time, Mr. Johnson is covering the chalkboard with repetitions of "*KILL THEM KILL THEM ALL*" with the children paralyzed with fear and consternation (91).

Things in the window storyboard also take a dark turn at this point. Ruth is surrounded by her classmates ridiculing her for the crude statuette of Cuffie she made, while the exhaust pipe of Mrs. Simmons's idling car gets blocked, killing her with

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carbon monoxide poisoning; Scraps, one of the two feral dogs intimidating Cuffie, is being eaten alive by an army of mutant roaches; and Mr. Simmons, blinded by spurts of his own blood, stumbled headfirst into a pile of snowdrift. At this moment, the narrator's attention finally returns to the classroom for a longer time and hears the chalk snap in Mr. Johnson's hand as the teacher looks "simultaneously electrocuted and demonically possessed" (101). Although the narrative does relate the denouement of the hostage situation—panicked children scrambling out of the classroom and the police entering and shooting Mr. Johnson, it is not without interruption by another frame of the storyboard: a close-up revealing Ruth's statuette of Cuffie to be a half-human, half-beast monster (101).

So far, the narrator's account of the hostage crisis has kept cartwheeling between the actual event in the classroom and its virtual counterpart, the Simmons's story, which turns nightmarish as the classroom situation does so. Sometimes the hostage story rises to the top, but most of the time, the imaginary Simmons's story submerges the real-life event. The actual and virtual, real and imaginary, stories are "distinct and yet indiscernible" in that readers are all the while aware of the distinction between the two threads but find the imaginary tale to possess as much vividness and drama as the real event that they cannot tell the real from the imaginary while reading (Deleuze, *C2* 81). This is how the narrative enters the crystalline regime. Deleuze terms this situation the "unequal exchange, or the point of indiscernibility, the mutual image" (81). It is unequal because, in their ceaseless role reversal, which alternatively puts one in the foreground and the other in the background, the virtual is no longer marginalized but comes to absorb the actual.

This is comparable to the use of the mirror in cinema, for Deleuze the quintessential example of the crystal: "the mirror-image is virtual in relation to the

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actual character that the mirror catches, but it is actual in the mirror which now leaves the character with only a virtuality and pushes him back out-of-field" (*C2* 70). The Simmons's story, though virtual in relation to the actual event of the hostage crisis, is alive and real for the reader when it takes over the narrative, relegating the hostage incident to the peripheral of the reader's attention, the way the incident is marginalized in the nine-year-old narrator's consciousness when it is taking place. This doubling of one event and its obverse forms the crystalline narration, where the actual and its virtual coalesce, allowing the reader to experience the paradox of time, "the perpetual scission of time into the Bergsonian actual present and the virtual 'memory of the present' that extends into the entirety of the virtual past"—a paradox that manifests the non-truth of the world (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 122).

The hostage narrative thread does not end here but only recedes into the background, as the narrator goes on to describe the recurrent nightmares he had in childhood, a narrative thread interspersed with memories of his father (Wallace, "Smithy" 103). The dreamt nightmare is virtual in relation to the actual nightmare of the hostage incident. Additionally, as the nightmares "involved my father's life and job and the way he looked when he returned home from work at the end of the day," it can also be considered the virtual obverse of the actuality of the adult life the narrator's father had (103).

Interpolated now is a capitalized paragraph deliberating in retrospect on for whom the exhortation, "*KILL THEM*," was meant. After this brief resurfacing, the "real incident" recedes into obscurity once again, ceding its position to the narrator's recollections of the Presidents' Day presentation taking place in the same classroom one month before the hostage incident. This makes the past and the present take each other's place, creating another virtual-actual circuit.

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Taken together, the imaginary narrative of the Simmons' story, the dream narrative of the adult life nightmare, and the recollection narrative of the Presidents' Day presentation inundate the real incident of the hostage crisis.[48] Crucially, the imaginary, the oneiric, and the recollective are not presented as deficient in truth or deviant from the real or the present. Reading the story as a whole, the reader has the impression that the hostage crisis could be an imaginary episode happening in the Simmons' story; the hostage nightmare could be a dream in the adult life nightmare; and the hostage event could be the memories the narrator has at the time of the Presidents' Day presentation. In terms of the virtual-actual relationship of the crystal, it is not just a mirror structure but a crystal polygon with reflecting planes. Like "a face reflected on the facets of a ring," the actual event is rendered "no more than one virtuality among others" (Deleuze, *C2* 70). In the crystalline regime, the hostage crisis is not an independent reality represented in the media or eye witness accounts but the web of complexly connected virtual and actual events. As the actual incident loses its transcendence and identity, the narrative becomes falsifying.

The narrative also creates crystalline narration through its depth of field. As Harrison notes, each of the various narrative threads involve such fine-grained details that "elements which are usually backgrounded or schematised in this discourse become foregrounded to the extent that it becomes unclear which of the figures are salient in the narrative trajectory," to the extent that "reading this story becomes an exercise in . . . trying to decide where our attention should be directed" (Harrison 64,

[48] Further complicating the narrative structure is the fact that the hostage narrative is patchwork consisting of the narrator's own experience, his classmates' accounts, and newspaper reports. Being "absent in both mind and spirit," the narrator admits he did not actually witness the incident until Mr. Johnson has already covered the chalkboard with iterations of "*KILL THEM*" and was in extremis (Wallace, "Smithy" 80).

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66). After describing the sudden appearance of a horrifying frame in his storyboard, the narrator observes that a fleeting peripheral vignette tends to affect the viewer more strongly than a lasting central image, citing his experience of an ephemeral shot from *The Exorcist* as an example. In elaborating on the example, a large amount of background information is provided in such detail that they become the foreground, such as the narrator and his future wife's shared response to the film, the film character Father Karras' dream about his mother, and the actor playing Karras. The depth of field deepens even more when one considers that *The Exorcist* passage is itself a background in relation to the Simmons narrative thread, which is itself a background to the hostage story.

The relationship between the different foreground and background narrative threads are transversal.[49] For instance, when the storyboard fantasy depicts Cuffie being harassed by the feral dogs on the bank of the Scioto River, the narrative crosses the threshold between the foregrounded imaginary and the backgrounded real syntactically through a relative clause, "which," to recount his father's memories of fishing in the river as a child (Wallace, "Smithy" 82). In one sentence, the imaginary and the real cross over into each other's realm.

In another prominent instance, the narrator describes the "Snow Boy" snowplow that Ruth's father maneuvers as "little more than a modified power lawnmower, which our neighbor Mr. Snead was proudly the first on our street to get one of, and had turned it over for the neighborhood children's inspection" (Wallace, "Smithy" 89). Once again the foregrounded imaginary and the backgrounded real interact across the depth of field. The different narrative planes interpenetrate each other in something

[49] In a narratological analysis of the story, Harrison points out the connection across discrete spatiotemporal frames and the dissolution of "the boundaries between the ontological levels of the story" (63).

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analogous to the cinematic or pictorial "depth of field," which operates by "crossing all planes, making elements from each interact with the rest, and in particular having the background in direct contact with the foreground" (Deleuze, *C2* 107). "The function of depth is . . . to constitute the image in crystal, and to absorb the real which thus passes as much into the virtual as into the actual" (85). Each of the narrative transversals gives the reader a glimpse of the narrative crystal showing time to be the doubling and scission into the present and the past, the actual and the virtual.

Furthermore, in the last passage of the narrative, the narrator recalls that "Ruth Simmons and Yolanda Maldonado stood with adult supervision on the catwalk above" the stage at the Presidents' Day presentation (Wallace, "Smithy" 113). The inexplicable remark begs the questions: Is this Ruth Simmons the imaginary blind girl who lost her puppy? Or is Ruth Simmons is a classmate of the narrator's in real life? These undecidable yet incompossible alternatives form another circle of vertiginous exchange between the virtual and the actual.

By presenting the real and the imaginary, the waking and the dreamt, and the present and the past as "distinct and yet indiscernible" and transversally connected in a profound depth of field, "Smithy" creates a crystalline narration, where "the virtual ceases to be a derivative of the actual and takes on a life of its own," and thus the "false . . . comes into being" (Buchanan, "Schizoanalysis" 152). Literature that exhibits the immanent aesthetic of the power of the false has to compel thinking, as "'Thinking' is how creation brought forth by immanence manifests itself" (Liao 5). By thwarting thought with the indiscernible, the inexplicable, the undecidable, and the incompossible—namely, with Deleuzian signs, "Smithy" compels thinking and thus immanently renews subjectivity.

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The foregoing discussion provides a new perspective on critics' bafflement regarding "Smithy" and Wallace's fiction in general. Their inability to summarize the story or figure out "What exactly is happening?" shows that the story is not an organic narrative with comprehensible actions (Mason). If the title of the story plays with Stephen Dedalus' metaphor, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, of the soul as a smithy, then Wallace is suggesting that the artist is not like a blacksmith actively forging a representational object the audience can easily recognize and use.[50] Rather, the artist is "a seer, a becomer," whose vision of the world as virtual and actual at the same time is meant to evoke in the reader the question, "What is there to see in the image?" and not "What are we going to see in the next image?" (Deleuze and Guattari, *WP* 171; Deleuze, *C2* 272). It is an invitation to the reader to deterritorialize themselves from the actual realm of Chronos, commonsense, and sensory-motor situations to become open to creative encounters with the virtual and the intensive.

[50] "Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (Joyce 213).

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Section Three

Wallace's Style and the Becoming of Language

In the previous section, I demonstrated how the narrative structure of Wallace's "The Soul Is Not a Smithy" promotes immanent ontological creation through what Deleuze terms "power of the false." In this section, I focus on the stylistics of Wallace's fiction in general to show that Wallace's deterritorialization of language also carries the power of immanent ontological creation. Specifically, Wallace's vocabulary, syntax, and use of notes obstruct conventional reading and thinking and thereby promote the reader's encounter with signs, the outside of thought that renews thought and effects immanent ontological creation. However, it is not the aim of this section to claim that reading Wallace automatically changes the reader's life. Referencing the Deleuzian concept of the literary machine, I will examine the two ways readers have approached *Infinite Jest*, for example, to show that in the last instance, it is the experimental way of reading that produces the renewal of subjectivity and the world.

The most conspicuous stylistic feature of Wallace's fiction is the extensive use of notes. *Infinite Jest*, for example, includes 388 endnotes covering 97 pages. David Letzler finds two major types of endnotes in the novel: one is the scholarly note, which provides specialized knowledge and supplementary information necessary for understanding encyclopedic novels like *Infinite Jest*; the other is the narrative-layering note, which serves to separate the narrator and the author, thereby destabilizing the narrative (127-128). However, Letzler adds, the two categories are by no means exhaustive (128-129). Some seemingly informative notes, such as note 8, which details the recreational pharmaceuticals taken by ETA students, do not actually inform,

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because they are too arcane for regular readers (130-31). Some notes are empty of content except instructing the reader to look up other notes. Notes 39b, 45, 173, and 302a contain only the imperative that the reader "q.v." or "see" note 304, which makes acquiring the information in note 304 unnecessarily tortuous (141).

Some notes contain entire episodes that could have been in the main text. For example, note 324, where Pemulis is proselytizing Todd Possalthwaite, a younger tennis player, to mathematics, is unattached to the main text but stands alone in a blank space on page 787, between two unrelated episodes, of Hal's visit to Ennet House and of Molly Notkin's interview by U.S.O.U.S. respectively. The method is repeated with note 332, keyed to page 795 without reference from the main text (Letzler 128). Some endnotes are more than supplementary, as they develop the aspects of characters ignored by the main text. For example, note 123, Pemulis' exposition of the "Mean-Value Theorem for Integrals," which provides the theoretical foundation for the game Eschaton, shows "another side of his character" (Wallace, *IJ* 323; Stock 48). The Pemulis shown in the endnote is passionate about math, while in the main text, he is seen excited only about drugs (Stock 48). Some notes have primary rather than secondary importance in terms of plot. For example, note 114 remarks in passing that the Year of Glad is the last subsidized year, a crucial piece of information revealing how the climatic "Continental Emergency" is resolved (*IJ* 934). Other endnotes, such as note 143, which simply consists of the editing term, "*Sic*," should have been in main text (Tresco 120). Similar situations can also be found in Wallace's stories. Footnote 4 in "The Depressed Person" does not supplement the main narrative but "becomes a competing narrative" running in parallel for a quarter of the length of the story (Nadel 219). All these notes overturn the hierarchy that conventionally obtains between a main text and its notes (Tresco 120).

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Furthermore, many endnotes undermine their own *raison d'etre* (Benzon, *Poetics* 170). An example is note 100a. Attached to note 100, a letter Avril Incandenza sent to his son Orin but with the recipient's name as "Filbert," the note does nothing to relieve the reader's puzzlement but demands, "don't ask" (*IJ* 1006, 1021). Note 216, keyed to the term "Coatlicue Complex" with which Dr. Rusk diagnoses Hal, does not define the obscure term as the reader would expect. Instead, it simply states, "no clue" (*IJ* 516, 1036).

There is ultimately no general rule for the arrangement of notes in relation to the main text (Tresco 117). Ira B. Nadel compares Wallace's use of notes to the axiom of choice in set theory. Wallace explained the axiom thus: "from any S you can construct a subset S' with a particular property even if you can't specify a procedure for choosing the individual members of S'" (*Everything* 288). Similarly, there is no way to specify how Wallace chooses to make certain contents notes rather than the main text. "The Axiom of Choice allows for the digression, divergence, and even humor in his notes" (Nadel 224).

As Toon Staes observes, the notes seem to come from disparate sources or authors, forming a "patchwork of different voices, much like the novel itself" ("Coatlicue" 70). In their lack of rules and unifying voice, the notes have a disruptive effect on the narrative, demonstrating a fractured experience of reality. Wallace explained in interviews that the notes fracture and jumble the texts just as experience is fractured and jumbled: "certainly the way I think about things and experience things is not particularly linear, and it's not orderly, and it's not pyramidical, and there are a lot of loops" ("David Foster Wallace" 86). For Wallace, consciousness is not unified but endless strings of digressions: "I often feel very fragmented, as if I have a symphony of different voices, and voice-overs, and factoids, going on all the

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time and digressions on digressions on digressions" ("To the Best of Our Knowledge" 132).

The notes also made the reading experience full of disruptions and recursions, as the reader is forced to look up the notes and then return to the main text. The endnote format, which Wallace adopted for the 1079-page *Infinite Jest*, is even more temporally disruptive than footnotes. While with the footnote, vertical movement of vision suffices for readers to take in the notes, "the endnote requires a physical negotiation with a (hefty and cumbersome) book" as they flip back and forth between pages (Benzon, *Poetics* 169). The temporality of the reading is further complicated by the possibility that readers may choose to read the main text uninterrupted, ignoring the notes all together. For Wallace, this presents another way to fracture the narrative: "I'm especially looking for a way to fracture the narrative. . . . You decide: Do you want to read the footnotes? All at the end? Do you want to flip back and forth? Do you use two bookmarks? There are ways to [play] with the reader that are benign, and a certain amount of [playing] with the reader seems to be extremely useful" ("Infinite Story" 78). Depending on how readers access the endnotes, *Infinite Jest* can be a polymorphous, polytemporal narrative, proceeding on multiple plotlines and temporal sequences at once.

The profusion of notes may be the first thing readers notice in Wallace's fiction, but Wallace is certainly not the first novelist to use the technique. There have been footnoted novels as early as the times of Laurence Sterne and Jonathan Swift. Some prominent examples among Wallace's immediate literary ancestors include what is known as the "Night Lessons" episode in James Joyce's 1939 novel *Finnegans Wake*, where the footnotes consist of the character Issy's comments, and Vladimir Nabokov's 1962 novel *Pale Fire*, which is composed mainly of the narrator Charles

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Kinbote's "Commentary" on his friend John Shade's poem that gives the novel its title. Among Wallace's contemporaries, Nicholson Baker is well known for using lengthy footnotes in *The Mezzanine*, published a decade before *Infinite Jest*. In Baker's novel, the footnotes provide a space for the narrator to present his observations and recollections complementary to the narrative proper.[51]

Nevertheless, Wallace's use of notes differs from his predecessors in its excessive degree of disorder. The enormous number and lawlessness of the notes force the reader out of comfortable, passive reception of information into a constant state of alertness and decision-making. For instance, when facing a lengthy note narrating an irrelevant episode, readers have to decide whether to pause one's progress in the main text or putting the note in suspension until one reaches a relatively complete unit in the main text, whether that is the end of a paragraph, an episode, or an entire chapter. When they come across the arcane notes on technical minutiae of tennis, film props, or Cantor's set theory, readers have to consult an encyclopedia or Wikipedia. The information they obtained in this way would then bear upon the story they get from the narrative.

Wallace's recondite vocabulary requires readers to include dictionaries in the reading process. The prevalence of medical terms, such as "depressor anguli oris" (*PK* 398); scientific terms, such as "C6H8(OH)6" ("Mister" 14); obscure words, such as "strigil" (*IJ* 832); and Wallace's neologisms, such as "contuded" (*IJ* 1060), forces the reader to consult dictionaries (Cioffi 168; Nichols 5; Benzon, *Poetics* 169). In the case of the neologisms, readers would never be able to determine the meanings of the words, a situation that would in turn destabilize the narrative as a whole.

[51] For a detailed analysis of the narrative device of footnotes in *The Mezzanine*, see Maloney.

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The notes and vocabulary in Wallace's novels engage readers in a "paratextual mode," which involves a large amount of active physical performance (Cioffi 162). Because of the active role the reader has to assume in the reading process, Frank Louis Cioffi characterizes Wallace's fiction as the "disturbing text" (163). Disturbing texts not only provokes active response from the reader but also elicits "worry," not in the word's everyday sense of "to trouble or annoy," but in the etymological sense of the word, which descends from the Old English "wyrgen," meaning "to strangle" (Cioffi 163). "For a few days they strangle normal life" (163). Contrary to normal reading practices, where literary works are interpreted, understood, and then separated from life, the performance and response that Wallace's fiction demands of readers draw them outside of their comfort zones.

On the level of syntax, Wallace's fiction also frustrates conventional reading. As Stephen J. Burn notes, the typical Wallace sentence is characterized by slightly ambiguous parts of speech which are clarified at the end of the sentence. However, the final clarification is "both semantically unnecessary and so syntactically awkward that the sentence becomes more sclerotic than it would have been" without the clarification ("Webs" 61). Burn's example of this kind of anti-teleological syntax is the second of the following two sentences from *Infinite Jest*: "Like most North Americans of his generation, Hal tends to know way less about why he feels certain ways about the objects and pursuits he's devoted to than he does about the objects and pursuits themselves. It's hard to say for sure whether this is even exceptionally bad, this tendency" ("Webs" 61; *IJ* 54). Such a sentence folds back on itself, making for recursive reading that can be considered part of the "critique of linearity" that pervade the novel ("Webs" 61).

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Wallace shows a distinctive "stylistic tic" where descriptions are sprinkled with what Don DeLillo calls "Dave's plainsong—*OK then* and *sort of* and *no kidding* and *stuff like this*," and such peculiarity happens not in dialogues but in third-person narration (Hoberek 214; DeLillo "Informal" 23). Colloquial filler words, such as "and but so" and "at like," abound in Wallace's already turbulent sentences to make them even more difficult to wade through (214). According to Andrew Hoberek, the style "does at the level of Wallace's sentences what the footnotes do at the level of *Infinite Jest* as a whole": giving the text a sense of awkwardness as opposed to "transparency and fluency" (214).

Because of the excess of apparently extraneous elements, Wallace's sentences are "churning and voracious, taking in every detail, aspiring to an ideal endlessness" (Phillips 677; see also Poole). The sprawling networks of parallel structures, multiple interrupting modifiers, parentheses, and absolute constructions lead one sentence into multiple directions. As D. T. Max comments, Wallace:

> was known for endlessly fracturing narratives and for stem-winding sentences adorned with footnotes that were themselves stem-winders. Such techniques originally had been his way of reclaiming language from banality, while at the same time representing all the caveats, micro-thoughts, meta-moments, and other flickers of his hyperactive mind. (Max, "Unfinished").

Rather than attributing Wallace's style to his unique individuality, as Max does, I suggest an impersonal conceptualization of style from the Deleuzian perspective, where style as something personal that belongs to the author is replaced by style as the deterritorialization of language. It is not a subjective quality but what emerges when majoritarian language becomes minoritarian.

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Writers deterritorialize language not semantically but syntagmatically, not through the meaning their works convey but through anomalous sentences. In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari associates style with a minoritarian use of majoritarian language: "The writer uses words, but by creating a syntax that makes them pass into sensation that makes the standard language stammer, tremble, cry, or even sing: this is the style, . . . the foreign language within language" (176). By making language inarticulate, style does not expose the writer's personal inadequacies but testifies to the constant becoming of language in general, as langue. "*When a language is so strained* that it starts to stutter, or to murmur or stammer . . . *then language in its entirety reaches the limit* that marks its outside and makes it confront silence. When a language is strained in this way, language in its entirety is submitted to a pressure that makes it fall silent" (*ECC* 113). By no means a static being, language becomes with its outside. As it is pushed to its boundaries and becomes incomprehensible, as if it's only noise, language transforms itself along with the shifting boundaries.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle sums it up well: "style means an original syntactic treatment of language, called stuttering or stammering, and the capacity to take language to its frontiers with silence" (222; see also Chruszczewska 64). An extreme syntax frustrates signification, rendering language opaque, no longer a means of communication. By pushing the limits of language, a stylish syntax acquires "a life of its own, a kind of excess, that is, a form of verve that constantly threatens to make it overflow into nonsense" (Lecercle 225).

An example of stuttering language through syntax in Wallace's works can be found in a sentence about the death and rebirth of the mute fringe Quebecois separatist Lucien Antitoi at the hands of A.F.R. terrorists in *Infinite Jest*. The

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one-and-a-half-page-long sentence consists of three independent clauses connected by semicolons, and each of these independent clauses is a convoluted structure in itself. The sentence begins with the subject, "Words," in a passive construction: "Words that are not and can never be words are sought by Lucien here through what he guesses to be the maxillofacial movements of speech" (*IJ* 487). A coordinating conjunction then introduces another independent clause:

> and there is a childlike pathos to the movements that perhaps the rigid-grinned A.F.R. leader can sense, perhaps that is why his sigh is sincere, his complaint sincere when he complains that what will follow will be inutile, Lucien's failure to assist will be inutile, there will be no point serviced, there are several dozen highly trained and motivated wheelchaired personnel here who will find whatever they seek and more, anyhow, perhaps it is sincere, the Gallic shrug and fatigue of the voice through the leader's mask-hole, (*IJ* 488)

This clause contains a relative clause with "A.F.R. leader" as the subject. The relative clause in turn contains an additional sentence, beginning with "perhaps that is why his sigh is sincere" and ending with "anyhow," that grammatically should have been in parentheses or em dashes. Inside the sentence is nested a shorter sentence, beginning with "perhaps it is sincere" and ending with "the leader's mask-hole," that is similarly an un-parenthesized interruption.

So far we have two independent clauses in a parallel structure, with the second one getting increasingly complicated, as it turns out to contain a subordinate clause that is itself a parallel structure connecting two independent clauses: "as Lucien's leonine head is tilted back by a hand in his hair and his mouth opened wide by callused fingers that appear overhead and around the sides of his head from behind and jack his writhing mouth open so wide that the tendons in his jaws tear audibly *and*

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Lucien's first sounds are reduced from howls to a natal gargle" (*IJ* 488, emphasis added). And then the second of these two independent clauses contains its own subordinate clause: "as the pale wicked tip of the broom he loves is inserted, the wood piney-tasting then white tasteless pain," which in turn contains a subordinate clause: "as the broom is shoved in and abruptly down by the big and collared A.F.R., thrust farther in rhythmically in strokes that accompany each syllable in the wearily repeated '*In-U-Tile*' of the technical interviewer, down into Lucien's wide throat and lower" (*IJ* 488).

This last subordinate clause is modified by an absolute phrase, "small natal cries escaping around the brown-glazed shaft," which is followed by two dangling appositives that are not joined by any conjunction: "the strangled impeded sounds of absolute aphonia, the landed-fish gasps that accompany speechlessness in a dream" (*IJ* 488). Placed immediately after "shaft" and far away from "cries," these appositives are ambiguous. Moreover, without a connective between the two appositives, the second one would grammatically be assumed to identify the first, which would be nonsensical.

After the second appositive comes a comma and then another absolute phrase, "the cleric-collared A.F.R. driving the broom home now to half its length, up on his stumps to get downward leverage" (*IJ* 488). This time it is unclear which clause this absolute phrase is supposed to modify. Compounding the solecism is the fact that the dangling absolute phrase itself contains a dangling modifier: "up on his stumps to get downward leverage."

Further convolution ensues, as the dangling absolute phrase houses a subordinate clause consisting of a parallel structure of two independent clauses: "as the fibers that protect the esophagal terminus resist and then give with a crunching pop and splat of

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red that bathes Lucien's teeth and tongue and makes of itself in the air a spout, *and* his gargled sounds now sound drowned" (*IJ* 488, emphasis added). The "his" in the second independent clause is an unattached pronoun, because, although its antecedent seems to be "Lucien," there was no "Lucien" as a noun in the preceding clauses, except 312 words ago, in the very first clause of the sentence. And even there, "Lucien" is part of the object of a passive construction, whereas an antecedent is grammatically the subject of a preceding clause.

After a semicolon, a new independent clause describes the visions Lucien is having as the murder proceeds:

> and behind fluttering lids the aphrasiac half-cellular insurgent who loves only to sweep and dance in a clean pane sees snow on the round hills of his native Gaspe, pretty curls of smoke from chimneys, his mother's linen apron, her kind red face above his crib, homemade skates and cidersteam, Chic-Choc lakes seen stretching away from the Cap-Chat hillside they skied down to Mass, the red face's noises he knows from the tone are tender, beyond crib and rimed window Gaspesie lake after lake after lake lit up by the near-Arctic sun and stretching out in the southeastern distance like chips of broken glass thrown to scatter across the white Chic-Choc country, gleaming, and the river Ste.-Anne a ribbon of light, unspeakably pure; (*IJ* 488)

Although not as grammatically illegitimate as the first independent clause, this one still involves much awkwardness. For example, the past participle "seen" in the phrase "Chic-Choc lakes seen stretching away from the Cap-Chat hillside they skied down to Mass," is either redundant or implies an unidentified agent who sees the Chic-Choc lakes at the same time as Lucien sees them.

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After the second semicolon of the sentence is the final independent clause, which opens with three subordinate clauses, all beginning with "as," in a parallel structure. The first one goes:

> and as the culcate handle navigates the inguinal canal and sigmoid with a queer deep full hot tickle and with a grunt and shove completes its passage and forms an obscene erectile bulge in the back of his red sopped johns, bursting then through the wool and puncturing tile and floor at a police-lock's canted angle to hold him upright on his knees, completely skewered, (*IJ* 488)

Already there are three dangling pronouns, two his' and one him. The second subordinate clause is: "and as the attentions of the A.F.R.s in the little room are turned from him to the shelves and trunks of the Antitois' sad insurgents' lives, and Lucien finally dies, rather a while after he's quit shuddering like a clubbed muskie and seemed to them to die" (*IJ* 488). This clause is also a parallel structure consisting of two independent clauses. The third subordinate clause goes: "as he finally sheds his body's suit" (488). The three as-clauses create a sense of tripartite simultaneity although the events described in these three clauses are clearly not simultaneous.

The main clause that follows describes Lucien's rebirth: "Lucien finds his gut and throat again and newly whole, clean and unimpeded, and is free, catapulted home over fans and the Convexity's glass palisades at desperate speeds, soaring north, sounding a bell-clear and nearly maternal alarmed call-to-arms in all the world's well-known tongues" (*IJ* 488-89). With its multiplying layers, parallels, and nested parts, not to mention the dangling elements, the sentence has the effects of a vertigo that threatens to push the reader over the cliff into incomprehension.

In Wallace, style as the stuttering of language also manifests itself in extreme proliferation of distracting parenthetical clauses. One instance is the 1,176-word

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sentence about IRS employee Claude Sylvanshine's arrival in Peoria in *The Pale King* (21-24). Beginning with "Part of what kept him standing in the restive group of men awaiting authorization to enter the airport was a kind of paralysis that resulted from Sylvanshine's reflecting on the logistics of getting to the Peoria 047 REC," the sentence comes to be interrupted by two parenthetical digressions within em dashes (21). The second of these, which takes up well over half of the original sentence, in turn contains three parenthetical sentences between em dashes, one of which has its own parenthetical digression.

As the sentence takes off along different paths that meander unto yet other paths, the kernel of meaning gets lost. Trying to summarize the sentence, the reader has difficulty knowing where to begin. Even when the sentence finally ends, there is a sense of it still going on, since any word could be a launch pad for more digressions. "Creative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome, instead of a tree, what puts language in perpetual disequilibrium" (*ECC* 111). The sentence spreads horizontally, escaping through the nodes between syntactic units. In excessively digressive sentences, "style as stuttering works against the determinacy and fixity, the teleology of meaning. It enforces the open-endedness of sense . . . . Language is pushed to its limit in that the sentence, like Zeno's arrow, never reaches its goal" (Lecercle 243). Solecistic and excessively digressing, Wallace's sentences deterritorialize language from its signifying function, affording readers the chance to encounter signs and renew their thinking and being.

Rhizomatic structure and anti-teleology also characterize Wallace's plots. As there is no hierarchical or even taxonomical division between the narrative proper and the notes, there is no privileged place given to what is traditionally considered the major parts of a plot. "Major plot points are deferred, held out of frame, or ignored

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altogether" (Phillips 677). A prominent example of this is the relegation of the entire episode of the disciplinary expulsion of Pemulis, protagonist Hal's closest friend and a prominent and sympathetic character in his own right, to an endnote (*IJ* 1073-76). Even more exacerbating is the missing year in *Infinite Jest* that leaves the outcome of A. F. R.'s ongoing plan to invade ETA and the whereabouts of the master copy of the lethal "Entertainment" unknown.

As critics have noted, the plot of *Infinite Jest*, for instance, requires readers for resolution. "Wallace's fiction attempts to present and explore incomplete fictional worlds . . . the completion of which requires the participation of his readers" (Mullins 238). Wallace himself agreed when he responds to the charge that the novel lacks a proper ending: "there is an ending as far as I'm concerned. Certain kinds of parallel lines are supposed to start converging in such a way that an 'end' can be projected by the reader somewhere beyond the right frame. If no such convergence or projection occurred to you, then the book's failed for you" (Wallace qtd. in Max, *Every Love Story* 321n19; see also Wallace, "Connection" 145). However, according to fellow novelist Jonathan Franzen, "Dave admitted, when I spoke to him on the phone, that the story can't fully be made sense of, but said that if I ever told anybody he'd admitted this he would deny he'd ever said it" (qtd. in Burn "Webs" 61). Whether Wallace intended to give the reader enough materials, the plot gaps and loose threads do keep the reader working hard to make sense of the story.

The lack of plot coherence also characterizes *The Pale King*. Facing an almost chaotic assortment of information, readers have to find and sort relevant elements themselves. The epitome of the strategy is Chris Fogle's monologue that makes up Chapter 22. As Boswell notes, the chapter's lack of "fact pattern" is typical of the novel as a whole (*PK* 214; Boswell, "Author" 35). The randomness of the narrative

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cannot be explained away by *The Pale King* being an unfinished novel. According to Michael Pietsch, "David planned for the novel to have a structure akin to that of *Infinite Jest*, with large portions of apparently unconnected information" and that Wallace intended for the novel to be "'tornadic' or having a 'tornado feeling'—suggesting pieces of story coming at the reader in a high-speed swirl" (viii). Chapter 36, which tells the story of a boy whose "goal was to be able to press his lips to every square inch of his body," is a prime example of the "tornadic' disruption, as it seems completely unrelated, in terms of themes or characters, to the other episodes in the novel (*PK* 394).

The aggregate effect of the chaotic plots and barely comprehensible sentences is to nudge the reader out of the normal mode of reading as understanding. One consequence of readers' frustration with Wallace's fiction is the intensified search for meaning and coherence. The publication of *Infinite Jest* guide books, including William Dowling and Robert Bell's *A Reader's Companion to* Infinite Jest, which provides a 57-page plot summary, and Greg Carlisle' *Elegant Complexity: A Study of David Foster Wallace's* Infinite Jest, which includes a detailed chronology of plot events, answer to readers' demand for comprehension tools. On the Internet, many scholars and fans of the book have provided plot timelines to help readers read the novel chronologically rather than endure temporal incoherence.[52] Also prevalent are readers' theories that help to fill in the plot gaps and delineate a denouement.[53]

These interpretative efforts, especially the publicly accessible resources on the Internet, are commendable in promoting a sense of connection among individual readers that Wallace would have desired (see Fitzpatrick). However, it represents only

[52] For examples, see O'Neill and Cordes.

[53] For examples, see Swartz and Schmidt.

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one way of reading; that is, reading as interpretation or reading for meaning. There is a more creative way of reading that goes beyond the book. In "Letter to a Harsh Critic," Deleuze wrote:

> There are . . . two ways of reading a book: you either see it as a box with something inside and start looking for what it signifies, and then if you're even more perverse or depraved you set off after signifiers. And you treat the next book like a box contained in the first or containing it. And you annotate and interpret and question, and write a book about the book, and so on and on. (*N* 7-8)

The goal of this way of reading is comprehension, the discovery of meaning. This may allow for multiple meanings, personal interpretations, or inconclusive analysis (Baugh 37). However, its foundation on the liberal humanist idea of subjectivity means that it is unable to occasion change in the world or bring about ontological creativity. Furthermore, it issues form the desire for truth as correspondence, for the interpretation to reflects the book faithfully. As such, it forecloses the possibility of experiencing a book's creative power of the false.

The interpretive reading needs to be complemented by a different kind of reading: reading as experimentation:

> We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it makes its own converge. (Deleuze and Guattari, *ATP* 4)

Conceiving the book as a literary machine, the reader only cares about "what is the relation . . . of this literary machine to a war machine, love machine, revolutionary machine, etc.—and an *abstract machine* that sweeps them along?" (4). They would

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test how literary works function differently in different connections: "you see the book as a little non-signifying machine, and the only question is 'Does it work, and how does it work?' How does it work for you? If it doesn't work, if nothing comes through, you try another book" (*N* 8). The results vary from assemblage to assemblage, from individual to individual.

It is reading as accessing intensities. "This second way of reading's intensive . . . . It's like plugging in to an electric circuit" (*N* 8). While in the interpretive approach, "problems of exegesis prevail over problems of use and efficacy," in the experimental reading, it is the pragmatics that is of the most concern (*AO* 206). "This intensive way of reading" is "in contact with what's outside the book, as a flow meeting other flows, one machine among others, as a series of experiments for each reader in the midst of events that have nothing to do with books, as tearing the book into pieces, getting it to interact with other things, absolutely anything" (N 8-9). A book in this method of reading is a becoming and it becomes with the reader and their assemblages, be it social, economic, political, or artistic. In its experimental mode, reading is an encounter with signs which unforeseeable outcomes.

Reading experimentally means more than treating the book as a Barthesian writerly text, where readers co-produce the text with the author, because such an approach still considers reading as meaning-making.[54] It is still reading as representation, which reterritorialzes deterritorialized language. "An interpretation based upon representational assumptions was able to reterritorialize the poem and to assimilate it into a conventional understanding of what a poem might mean, but it was only able to do so by failing to account for the poem's 'excess', and most deterritorializing, elements" (Clay 49). Jon Clay's comments here, though specifically

[54] See Barthes 4-5.

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concerning poetry, also apply to literature in general. When a literary work has a language so deterritorialized that it thwarts comprehension, a reinforced attempt at interpretation serves to domesticate the excess and restore language to its majoritarian standards.

To read Wallace's *Infinite Jest* experimentally is to accept the encounter with the signs released by the book, with the possible result of forming new machinic assemblages and effectuating ontological creation. An example of this is how Germany-based Italian composer Clara Iannotta wrote her 2013 piece, "A Failed Entertainment," a 17-minute piece for string quartet. In her artist's statement, Iannotta talks about the connection between her work and Wallace's novel:

> Last October, I was on a four-day train trip from San Francisco to New York when I started reading *Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace.
>
> Over the last year, I have been looking for a way—my personal way—to deal with form and time, and this book helped me, giving me a new, different perspective on them. I am not saying that my piece is related to *Infinite Jest*—although 'A Failed Entertainment' was Wallace's working title for his novel—but that this was the impulse which led me here, a starting point for a search that will probably take me several years.

Iannotta's musical composition does not seek to interpret the novel, but evolves out of her own attempt to rethink "form and time." The novel provides the "impulse" for her work, a flow of energy that she linked up with the flows of form and time, and the piece "A Failed Entertainment" is just one assemblage within a new network of assemblages. Also important is her recognition that the new assemblages are open-ended and ongoing—becomings that will not stop with the completion of any particular piece of music.

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"A Failed Entertainment" is also the title of a 2015 photographic series by Italian photographer Alessandro Calabrese. Consisting of layered composites generated by uploading his own works unto the Google' search engine Reverse Image Search, the series is not an exegesis of *Infinite Jest* (Fantom). Instead of visually representing *Infinite Jest*, Calabrese read the novel intensively, parsing its flows—the flows of addiction, television, entertainment, the mathematical concept of fractals—and reconnecting them into new assemblages. Fractals, which provided the structure for an early draft of *Infinite Jest*, is used by Calabrese as a technical concept in building up his composite images (Wallace, "David Foster Wallace: Infinite Jest"; Calabrese). The addictive quality of television as entertainment, one of *Infinite Jest*'s themes, is fused with the addictiveness of the Internet in Calabrese's work (Calabrese). Bringing the novel's intensities into interaction with those of his own material culture and artistic practices, Calabrese reads experimentally and creatively. Iannotta's and Calabrese's experimental readings of *Infinite Jest* make the novel, and literature as a whole, become with music, photography, and the artists themselves.

Wallace's fiction is saturated with random notes, arcane words, chaotic syntaxes, and incoherent plots. These characteristics thwart conventional reading and deterritorialize language, driving readers to experience literary works' power of the false. While readers may respond by increasing their efforts at interpretation, the ontologically creative approach to literature is to experiment and see what the works can do in different environments and connections. Having discussed crystalline narration and style as the deterritorialization of language in this chapter so far, I will turn to Roth's novels in the next section to show the third aspect of the aesthetics of immanence—fabulation as the creation of a missing community.

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Section Four

Roth's Aesthetic of Creative Fabulation

"Fiction for him was never representation. It was rumination in narrative form," said Nathan Zuckerman of his literary hero, E. I. Lonoff, in *Exit Ghost*, the concluding volume of Philip Roth's Zuckerman books (*EG* 200-1). These words also sum up Zuckerman's own, and Roth's, aesthetics. Starting with *The Ghost Writer*, the first book of the Zuckerman series, the writer protagonist has taken a non-representational stance on fiction in opposition to biographical interpretations. For Zuckerman, fiction-writing is experimenting with the actual world, not mirroring it.

Zuckerman's idea of writing expresses the aesthetics of immanence, where art exercises the power of the false instead of representing higher truths. Through what Deleuze terms fabulation, or story-making free from the conditions of truth, the artist or writer achieves transformation, in oneself and the world, creatively. In this section, I will take a thematic approach to the Zuckerman books to show how Zuckerman experiences the renewal of subjectivity through creative fabulation in *The Ghost Writer* and *The Anatomy Lesson*, but first of all, I am going to elaborate on Roth's non-representational aesthetics, articulated most clearly in three of his later novels: *American Pastoral*, *The Human Stain*, and *Exit Ghost*.

American Pastoral is a framed narrative about Seymour "the Swede" Levov and his fraught relationship with his daughter, Merry. Instead of presenting the story as what really happened, Zuckerman tells the reader that, though based on the factual figure of Levov, the story is mostly his own imagination. Zuckerman's statement differs from those of unreliable narrators in that Zuckerman does not proclaim to

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relate facts despite occasional lack of objectivity or full knowledge on his part. Although Levov is an acquaintance of Zuckerman's in the universe of *American Pastoral*, Zuckerman plainly states that his Levov is a work of imagination. Levov serves as a figure Zuckerman "disappear into," not someone whose biography he dramatizes from an observer's perspective (*AP* 74).

In Zuckerman's high school days in Newark, New Jersey, 50 years ago, Levov was the older brother of his schoolmate Jerry. A local sports star, Levov was idolized by his Jewish community for his athletic achievements and Aryan good looks. In their limited encounters over the decades, Levov always seemed to Zuckerman "perfection" incarnate leading a charmed life and his air of "mystique" continued to fascinate the writer (*AP* 20, 15).

At a high school reunion, Zuckerman meets with his old schoolmate and Levov's younger brother Jerry, from whom he discovers that Levov, who has recently died, was the father of the "Rimrock Bomber," a terrorist who blew up a local post office in the exurb of Old Rimrock in protest of the Vietnam War. However, Zuckerman does not learn much about Levov, about the misguided bombing, and how it impacted the Levovs's lives, as the conversation between Zuckerman and Jerry was cut short by other party guests. With the snippets of Levov's life that Jerry revealed, Zuckerman decides to make a story on his own: "That was as far as we got, . . . anything more I wanted to know, I'd have to make up" (*AP* 74). As Zuckerman said, "I was working with traces" of Levov's life (76). The paucity of materials doesn't prevent Zuckerman from writing because he is not going to tell the story of Levov from his teenage memories or Jerry's factual account, but in the manner of a dream. "To the honeysweet strains of 'Dream,' I pulled away from myself, . . . and I dreamed . . . I dreamed a realistic chronicle. I began gazing into his life. . . . I found him in Deal,

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New Jersey, at the seaside cottage, the summer his daughter was eleven . . .” (89). Thus Zuckerman’s story segues into Levov’s story, which makes up the bulk of *American Pastoral*.

Anticipating the objection to his non-representational fiction from readers intent on biographical readings, Zuckerman decides not to show the finished book to Jerry. After reading Zuckerman’s depiction of Levov and his family, Jerry would be “giving me, item by item, the bad news”: “The wife was nothing like this, the kid was nothing like this;” “That’s not my brother. . . . My brother couldn’t think like that, didn’t talk like that;” and “nothing bears the slightest resemblance to” the real-life family (*AP* 74-75). Jerry would deliver the verdict, “You’ve misrepresented him” and the story is “Absolutely off” (74, 75).

The sharp contrast between Jerry’s and Zuckerman’s approaches to writing is also the difference between medicine and art. As Jerry, a cardiac surgeon, tells Zuckerman, “The operating room turns you into somebody who’s never wrong,” so much so that “being wrong . . . was unendurable to me. Absolutely unendurable” (*AP* 63). Surgery relies on correct representation and judgement, but fiction-writing is the opposite kind of endeavor. Therefore, to Jerry’s remarks, Zuckerman responds, “Writing turns you into somebody who’s always wrong,” since his fiction never aims to represent truth (63). For a writer, whose subject is other people, living is not about discovering the truth about them: “getting people right is not what living is all about anyway. It’s getting them wrong that is living” (35). This does not mean that Zuckerman sets out to uncover facts and then distort them; he simply refuses to allow facts to dictate his writing.

Jerry’s insistence on biographical interpretation makes him what Deleuze calls the “truthful man,” who upholds the model of truth to suppress art’s power of the false

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(*C2* 137). "The truthful man in the end wants nothing other than to judge life; he holds up a superior value, the good, in the name of which he will be able to judge" (137). The adherent of truth subjects the immanent creativity of art and life to transcendent moral doxa. While Jerry could have written a truthful biography of Seymour "the Swede" Levov, Zuckerman's interest is in art as the Deleuzian simulacra, an "act by which the very idea of a model or privileged position is challenged and overturned" (Deleuze, *DR* 69). Unrestrained by the model of truth, art as simulacra takes on a life of its own as art. The "Swede was concentrated differently in my pages from how he'd been concentrated in the flesh," Zuckerman reflects, but he doubts it would be "lacking entirely the unique substantiality of the real thing" or that "the Swede and his family came to life in me any less truthfully than in his brother" (Roth, *AP* 76-77). The immanent power of the false that makes a story come to life is the new meaning of truth in art.

As Andrew Bennett points out, "Roth's novels . . . consistently propose that it is the work of the author, in fact the very definition of an author, not to know—and therefore to imagine" (Bennett 215). In *American Pastoral*, "there is almost nothing of Levov here," and "it is all Zuckerman" and his imaginings (215). A similar aesthetic practice is evident in *The Human Stain*. In this later novel, Zuckerman begins writing about Coleman's life after learning about his deceased friend's racial passing from his sister, Ernestine. As in *American Pastoral*, a scanty supply of facts was enough for Zuckerman to write a book of imaginings. The story of Coleman is what "I imagine. I am forced to imagine. It happens to be what I do for a living" (Roth, *HS* 213).

Zuckerman contrasts his book to *Spooks*, the book Coleman planned to write to clear his name, tarnished over the Spooks incident. To fight back against his enemies,

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whose "deliberate misinterpretations" "misrepresented a professional career," Coleman wanted to write the truthful version of the events that led to his forced resignation (Roth, *HS* 12, 11). Zuckerman's story of Coleman, on the other hand, is not a corrective to history, but a bringing-back-to-life of the dead. The story begins to take shape when Zuckerman visits Coleman's grave: "that is how all this began: by my standing alone in a darkening graveyard and entering into professional competition with death" (338). At Coleman's grave, Zuckerman "waited and waited for him to speak until at last I heard him" (338). Thus Zuckerman's book seeks not to set the record straight but to imagine a voice from beyond the grave telling a story free from truth value and established history.

In *Exit Ghost* as in *The Human Stain*, non-representational art and its affective power are central to writing. In the 2007 novel, the septuagenarian Zuckerman writes two kinds of books. Due to memory decline, Zuckerman began keeping a chore book. Since meeting Jamie Logan, a house swap partner with whom he has become obsessed, Zuckerman has been writing "He and She," a book consisting of a series of imaginary dialogues between him and Logan:

> My chore book recorded what I did do and what I was scheduled to do as an aid to a failing memory; this scene of dialogue unspoken recorded what hadn't been done and was an aid to nothing, and yet, . . . it had seemed terribly necessary to write the instant I came through the door, the conversations she and I don't have more affecting even than the conversations we do have, and the imaginary "She" vividly at the middle of her character as the actual "she" will never be. (Roth, *EG* 147)

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Despite its inspiration by real-life persons, Zuckerman's art as Deleuzian simulacra has its own vital power that can be more "affecting," more transformative than actuality.

The writer's is the art of "fictional amplification" that draws from life but is, strictly speaking, "evolving entirely out of nothing" from lived experience (Roth, *EG* 147). Art is inspired by but is not a shadow of lived experience. In fact, it can have "an intensity that is ephemeral in life and sometimes even unseen" in experience (147). Its vitality lies in its impact on the world, the world of the author or the reader. That is why for Zuckerman, "the unlived, the surmise, fully drawn in print on paper, is the life whose meaning comes to matter most" (147).

Zuckerman's non-representational conception of art finds its precedent in Franz Kafka, whose idea of writing amounts to a form of "creationism," the belief that art is able to create a world in itself (Flaxman 235). In his diaries, Kafka wrote, "When I write without calculation a sentence like the following: 'He looked out the window,' this sentence is already perfect" (qtd. in Flaxman 235). Gregory Flaxman explains that the written world is perfect in itself because of art's power to create "the possibility of an event, which in a single stroke have set the 'real world' ablaze, burning it to the ground, removing the ground, and then creating an entirely new one in its place" (235). For Zuckerman and Kafka, fictional worlds like that of "He and She" do not lack anything. They are to be considered not as embellishments or alterations of the real thing but as possible new worlds that are real in their own right.

With the belief in art as the creation of new worlds free from the constraints of lived experience, Zuckerman maintains a non-representational reading of his literary hero E. I. Lonoff's unfinished novel, which centers on an incestuous relationship between a young man and his older sister. Since Lonoff's death from leukemia four

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years into writing the novel, Amy Bellette, Lonoff's partner before his death, has believed the novel was autobiographical and it was the resuscitation of guilty memories that killed the writer. A young literary journalist, Richard Kliman, is even trying to gather evidence to prove that Lonoff's unfinished work is "a tormented confession disguised as a novel" (Roth, *EG* 267). In opposition to their claims, Zuckerman contends that Lonoff must have adopted the rumored affair between Nathaniel Hawthorne, a writer who lived in the same Berkshires countryside a century earlier, and his sister, as the starting point of a narrative contemplation on "his own improbabilities" (200). In other words, the novel was an experiment in which Lonoff tried to imagine a life totally improbable for him. Contra Amy's and Kliman's autobiographical interpretations, Zuckerman asserts that "writing about a possibility that *wasn't* a reality was the force that drove this book" (267). It was not revisiting memories of incest but the failure of imagining incest, the failure of writing non-representationally, that drove Lonoff to his premature death. Lonoff should have told Amy that the book "is driving me crazy because I have set myself to imagining what I cannot imagine" (198).

"Creative fabulation has nothing to do with a memory," Deleuze and Guattari wrote when commenting on Proust's story-telling in *In Search of Lost Time*. "It is said that the monumental novelist is himself 'inspired' by the lived, and this is true: M. de Charlus closely resembles Montesquiou, but between Montesquiou and M. de CharIus there is ultimately roughly the same relationship as between the barking animal-dog and the celestial constellation-Dog" (*WP* 172). There is no inferring from a story about incest to the conclusion that the author has personal experience of incest. For Zuckerman as well as "For Deleuze, art is not a way of representing experiences and memories that we might 'recognise': it does not show us what the world is, but rather

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imagines a possible world" (Marks 230). Art dissociates itself from memory and manages to "leave the personal behind" (Roth, *EG* 200). Non-representational writing is actualized out of impersonal forces in an encounter with signs whose inexplicability to the writer compels him or her "to abandon the safe haven of subjectivity and go beyond the division between observer and observed world" (Wiese 6). No longer an observer transcendent to the passively observed, the artist "lets some of her or his forces connect to other forces. The artist will give this intermingling and interaction of different forces a new form and expression in literature" (Wiese 6). In what follows, I will look at *The Ghost Writer* and *The Anatomy Lessons* as two examples of how creative fabulation brings about the renewal of subjectivity and creates new ways of existing in the world.

In Philip Roth's 1979 novel, *The Ghost Writer*, set in 1956, Zuckerman is paying his first visit to Lonoff. At the time, the 23-year old aspiring Jewish writer has written only four short stories but shows great promise. However, his family is not happy with his latest story, "Higher Education." Since showing his parents the story, which he plans to publish, Zuckerman has been in bitter conflict with his father, Victor.

Based on a feud in his clan over inheritance money, the story, Victor claims, would be seen by gentile readers as all about "Kikes and their love of money" and thus fuel anti-Semitism in the American society (Roth, *GW* 94). Victor tells Zuckerman that readers tend to treat novels as representation: "People don't read art—they read about *people*. And they judge them as such" (92). A more fundamental reason for Victor's objection is that Zuckerman's story is not a truthful representation of the Jewish community. Frustrated with Nathan's recalcitrance, Victor seeks the intervention of Judge Wapter, an old family acquaintance and a prestigious figure in the local Jewish community. Wapter sends Zuckerman a letter advising him to write

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only stories that "represent a fair sample of the kinds of people that make up a typical contemporary community of Jews," a representational conception of literature that Zuckerman refuses to accept (103).

While at the Lonoffs's, Zuckerman cannot stop agonizing over the dispute with his family. Torn between artistic integrity and familial loyalty, Zuckerman had approached Lonoff in an effort to seek "patriarchal validation" from a father to whom he believes he bears more "family resemblance" than to his own father (Roth, *GW* 10, 47). Being in the presence of Lonoff, Zuckerman said, "released in me a son's girlish love for the man . . . who understands the son, and who approves" (57). At Lonoff's house, Zuckerman met Amy Bellette, a child Holocaust survivor and Lonoff's protégé, who, Zuckerman discovers when he sleeps over at the Lonoffs's that night, has an affair with the married writer.

During the night made sleepless by the shocking discovery, Zuckerman considers the art he wants to pursue and how it would impact his family relationships:

> If only I could invent as presumptuously as real life! If one day I could just *approach* the originality and excitement of what actually goes on! But if I ever did, what then would they think of me, my father and his judge? How would my elders hold up against that? And if they couldn't, . . . just how well would I hold up against being hated and reviled and disowned? (Roth, *GW* 121).

Zuckerman's way of considering these questions is story-telling in the manner of Deleuzian fabulation.

In Deleuze's philosophy, fabulation is a way of truth production, the transformation of the present state of affairs, through story-telling with other individuals. For Deleuze, "truth isn't something already out there we have to discover, but has to be created," and "the production of truth involves a series of operations that

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amount to working on a material—strictly speaking, a series of falsifications" (*N* 126). Fabulation falsifies established ideas and, in the process, brings about something new. To fabulate, it is necessary to connect with other individuals, or mediators—"intercesseurs" in Deleuze's original French which some critics have translated as "intercessors."[55] Using his collaboration Guattari as an example, Deleuze said:

> When I work with Guattari each of us falsifies the other, which is to say that each of us understands in his own way notions put forward by the other. A reflective series with two terms takes shape. And there can be series with several terms, or complicated branching series. These capacities of falsity to produce truth, that's what mediators are about. (*N* 126)

Only when falsifying mediators can one bring about the new. The story-telling involved in this process produces neither fiction nor fact but something free from the model of truth.

As Rodowick points out, Deleuze defines fabulation as the telling of stories, and the original French word Deleuze used was *récits*, which can refer to both real and imaginary stories (Rodowick, *Time Machine* 156-57). The semantic ambiguity means that fabulation disrupts representational schemes, giving it the creative power of the false. To fabulate is an act to "project . . . —into things, into reality, into the future, and even into the sky—an image of himself and others so intense that *it has a life of its own*: an image that is always stitched together, patched up, continually growing along the way, to the point where it becomes fabulous" (Deleuze, *ECC* 117-8). The creativity of fabulation lies in whether the stories told take on a life of their own, regardless of their truth value.

[55] For some examples, see Rodowick, Brott, and Bogue (*Deleuze's Way*).

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Looking again at Roth's *American Pastoral*, *The Human Stain*, and *Exit Ghost*, one can see that Zuckerman's emphasis on the coming-to-life of the written characters comes from an aesthetic of literary art as inherently fabulatory. "Fabulation names the capacity to tell a story that outstrips the criteria that would decide on its truth or falsity" (Barber 200). Stories outstrip such criteria when they assume a life, an affecting power, independent of the characters or incidents that inspired them.

As Bogue notes, fabulation is future-oriented. "Fabulation commences with resistance, since 'to create is to resist' . . . the present in the hope of a better future" (Deleuze and Guattari, *WP* 110; Bogue, "Future" 81-2). Fabulation involves challenging accepted truths in one's social environment, thus falsifying them, and producing the new, thus exercising the creative power of the false (Bogue, *Deleuze's Way* 100).

Creation through fabulation requires mediators or intercessors. Almost anyone or anything can be a mediator. "They can be people—for a philosopher, artists or scientists—but things too, even plants or animals," as long as it is able to serve as a "conduit of expression" (Deleuze, *N* 125; Manning 231). Mediators provide a means of escape from one's own established subjectivity, one's own present. "The intercessor's address is . . . what Deleuze calls the *ligne de fuite*, or 'line of flight,'" "a loophole that allows one to create" (Brott 18). To illustrate the creative power of the intercessor function, Simone Brott references the words of John Rajchman, the author of *The Deleuze Connections*, who quoted Deleuze's qualified assent to his plan to write the book: "as long as [in] writing about me you satisfy two criteria: one, that you are accurate; and two, that I will be unable to recognize myself in the result" (qtd. in Brott 17). That is to say, intercessors facilitate the creation of the radically new, something unrecognizable from the perspective of the present state of affairs.

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In *The Ghost Writer*, Zuckerman's overcomes the inner conflicts between filial bond and artistic aspiration in a creative way through fabulation. He spends the sleepless night writing a story about Anne Frank, which makes up the third chapter of the novel. In Zuckerman's story, Frank survived typhus in the Bergen-Belsen camp and is living incognito in the United States as Amy Bellette. When she recovered from typhus, Frank decided to change her name to "forget her life," now that all her family were dead, as she assumed (Roth, *GW* 125). After the war, she was adopted by a British family and began a new life in Britain. Although she was given the opportunity to realize her ambition to become a great writer, she was at the same time burdened by her identity as a Holocaust survivor. The reason for her literary brilliance, her schoolmates believed, was not talent or hard work but that she simply had a "great subject": her Holocaust experience (136).

To assert her artistic autonomy, Amy tried to eliminate her past by burning off the concentration camp ID number tattooed on her arm with a clothing iron (Roth, *GW* 131). "If she was going to be thought exceptional," she thought, "it would not be because of Auschwitz and Belsen but because of what she had made of herself since" (132). One year after enrolling in a college in the United States with Lonoff's help, Amy discovered the publication of her diary, *Het Achterhuis*, by Otto Frank, her beloved father.[56] When she was younger, "she wanted more than anything to be his only love" (149). A daughter longing for reunion with her father, Amy was also "a very young writer . . . dreaming a very young writer's dreams," and these dreams have come true with the publication of her diary (141-42).

She was keenly aware that the power of her diary came from readers' belief that she was dead. "Were *Het Achterhuis* known to be the work of a living writer, it would

[56] "*Het Achterhuis*" is the original Dutch title of *The Diary of a Young Girl*.

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never be more than it was: a young teenager's diary. . . . But dead she had something more to offer than amusement for ages 10-15; dead she had written, without meaning to or trying to, a book with the force of a masterpiece" (Roth, *GW* 145-46). Therefore, she decided for the moment to refrain from disclosing her identity. Her decision was reaffirmed when she saw the Broadway play based on her diary. Surrounded by an inconsolable audience crying for the character Anne, Amy became convinced that only by remaining dead to the world could her work maintain the power to touch the public (123). Amy's sentiment, Daniel L. Medin notes, echoes that of writer Dencombe in Henry James' short story, "The Middle Years," that Zuckerman is reading during the night at Lonoff's house: "The thing is to have made somebody care" (James 182; Medin 57).[57] The biggest achievement for a writer is to move the reader. To that end, Amy is willing to renounce the relationship with her family forever.

In telling Amy Bellette/Anne Frank's story, Zuckerman falsifies both Amy and Frank, telling a story through them as mediators in an experiment on his current impasse. Before resorting to story-telling as fabulation, Zuckerman kept writing letters to his father to justify himself and then tearing up the half-written letters (Roth, *GW* 109). Trying to explain himself and to persuade his father to see things his way is an exercise of ego, the antithesis of creativity. "You don't write with your ego, your memory, and your illnesses. In the act of writing there's an attempt to make life something more than personal, to free life from what imprisons it" (Deleuze, *N* 143). Only when writing ceases to be personal can the author engage in creative acts. Zuckerman needs Amy and Frank as mediators to fabulate because when an

[57] However, Medin seems to have erroneously attributed the quote to the character Doctor Hugh instead of Dencombe.

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individual speaks alone, he or she can never escape the established discourse (125). As Deleuze states:

> Creation's all about mediators. . . . Whether they're real or imaginary, animate or inanimate, you have to form your mediators. It's a series. If you're not in some series, even a completely imaginary one, you're lost. I need my mediators to express myself, and they'd never express themselves without me: you're always working in a group, even when you seem to be on your own" (125).

The plurality of subject positions provided by mediators frees the author from the unified ego and its restricting preconceptions.

Zuckerman's story of Amy/Anne is not created ex nihilo but by experimenting on Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*. In his censorious letter to Zuckerman, Judge Wapter urges the young writer to see Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett's 1955 Broadway adaptation of Frank's diary, suggesting that the play exemplifies the right way to represent the Jewish community. Ironically, the Broadway production of *The Diary*, unlike the original book, is hardly a story about Jews. According to David Gooblar, the play tends to "downplay the Jewishness of the attic's inhabitants in the pursuit of a more universal 'message' to attract a bigger audience," choosing "the universal instead of the particular (and particularly Jewish)" (81). The result of the generalization is that "throughout the play, such vague ideas of tolerance and understanding trump historical specificity" (82). Judge Wapter similarly ignores the historical specificity of Anne Frank's story (84). By comparing Zuckerman to Julius Streicher and Joseph Goebbels in his letter, Wapter generalizes the conditions of the Frank's story as if they obtain in the 1950s Newark. The generalizing attitude typical of the representational interpretation of literature is what Zuckerman will challenge in his fabulation through story-telling.

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As Cynthia Ozick argues, the 1955 play epitomizes the "sentimentalized" and "Americanized" popular literature on Anne Frank (77). In extolling the Broadway play, Wapter wants Zuckerman's writing to conform to the doxa of his ethnic community, as "it is identification with the martyred innocence of Anne Frank that seems to provide the ticket of admission" to the "Mainstream Jewish America" (Rothberg 59).

In revolt against Wapter and the mainstream version of Frank's story, Zuckerman makes his own adaptation of *The Diary* by weaving actual quotes from it into in his story of Amy/Anne. In doing so, Zuckerman does not aim to put forward a truer interpretation of *The Diary*. Fabulation seeks not to "eliminate fiction but to free it from the model of truth which penetrates it, and on the contrary to rediscover the pure and simple *story-telling function* which is opposed to this model" (Deleuze, *C2* 150). Zuckerman simply wants to tell a story that helps him access art's creative, transformative power of the false unbound by the representational model of truth underlying the dichotomy between fact and fiction.

The sentimentalization and universalization of Frank's story, Ozick notes, relies on the convenient fact that the original diary was truncated by the Gestapo's capture of the Frank family (Ozick 77).[58] Had Frank been able to continue writing in the camps, the optimism popularly attributed to *The Diary* would hardly be possible. To challenge the dominant sentimental reading, Zuckerman chooses to continue Frank's story where it was left off to see how Frank's supposed optimism would have fared when it encounters the horrors of the camps. In Zuckerman's fable, Amy/Anne reads her own *Het Achterhuis*, and came across the sentence, "*I still believe that people are really good at heart*" (Roth, *GW* 146; cf. Frank 233). Now a college student in

[58] See also Gooblar 82-83.

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Massachusetts, she has long lost the naïve optimism behind these words, and in its place is a sober understanding of the atrocities human beings are capable of. "She had not come to hate the human race for what it was—what could it be but what it was?—but she did not feel seemly any more singing its praises" (146).

Zuckerman's story falsifies Frank in the sense that it refuses to render her "the ideal Jewish girl," as she is conventionally characterized onstage and in cinema in the United States (Pozorski 98). The protagonist of Zuckerman's story is not just Amy/Anne but Amy/Anne/Zuckerman as it serves as a means of "projection for all of his hopes and fears" (98). The quotes from *The Diary* express what Zuckerman was unable to express before. Frank believes "*the time will come when we are people again, and not just the Jews*" (Roth, *GW* 142; cf. Frank 184). These words speak to Zuckerman's resistance to the representational interpretation of "Higher Education" as strictly a story about Jews. However, the Jewish identity cannot be escaped but only embraced: as Frank wrote in her diary, "*We can never become just Netherlanders, . . . we will always remain Jews, but we want to, too*" (Roth, *GW* 143; cf. Frank 184). These words also articulate Zuckerman's attitude toward writing as a Jew.

Frank's questioning of family ties to define her—"*I used at times to have the feeling that I didn't belong to Mansa, Pim and Margot, and that I would always be a bit of an outsider. I sometimes used to pretend I was an orphan*"— expresses Zuckerman's sense of independence from family or ethnic bond (Roth, *GW* 135; cf. Frank 121-22). Frank deeply adores her father and wishes him to not just love her but also understand her so that he will be able to love her "*not only as his child, but for me—Anne, myself*" (Roth, *GW* 137; cf. Frank 40). It is the same desire that drove Zuckerman to try to write to his father to make him understand his voice as a writer, a

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voice that "begins at around the back of the knees and reaches well above the head," as Lonoff approvingly describes (*GW* 72). Frank declares to her father her independence from the family—"*I don't feel in the least bit responsible to any of you . . . I don't have to give an account of my deeds to anyone but myself*" (Roth, *GW* 140; cf. Frank 199). When she realizes how deeply her impertinence hurts her father, she regrets her act and reconciles with her father. By incorporating this episode into his story, Zuckerman may be reflecting on his own rebelliousness and how it distresses his father.

Contrary to the idealization Frank received in popular imagination, Amy/Anne in Zuckerman's story has a passionately vengeful character. The uncompromising grit she shows is something Zuckerman, idealized as a good son by his clan, has been unable to express. As his father, Victor, tells him, "You are a loving boy. . . . You are a good and kind and considerate young man. You are not somebody who writes this kind of story" (Roth, *GW* 94-95). Zuckerman's Amy/Anne is far from "good and kind." She is filled with "murderous rage" for the deaths of her fellow Jews, a rage so strong that she wants to wield an ax and "draw blood" from her enemy (147). However, "what she had been given to wield was *Het Achterhuis, van Anne Frank*" (147). With Amy/Anne as a mediator, Zuckerman is finally able to move beyond the ideal image his community imposes on him.

Writing through Amy/Anne also allows Zuckerman to consider what he has refused to all along: the emotions his writings would provoke in the audience and the impact he would have on the public. Amy/Anne's realization of the power of her story when she was seated among the tearful audience at the Broadway performance is Zuckerman's acknowledgement of the real-life influence that stories such as "Higher Education" can have.

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After a feverish night composing Amy/Anne's story, Nathan comes to the realization the following morning that "the loving father who must be relinquished for the sake of his child's art was not hers; he was mine" (Roth, *GW* 168). The child who chooses to be "fatherless and all on her own" is Zuckerman himself (147). The story turns out to be a "useful fiction" that takes him on a line of flight into a future he was unable to contemplate on his own.[59] Zuckerman's fabulation "opposes the presently associated elements through the creation of new relations," thereby producing change and releasing the story-teller from his entrenched subjectivity (Barber 202). In *The Ghost Writer*, "Writing becomes a technology of undoing self and subjectivity, through which the writer is able to confront, sense, and register that which is unfamiliar and new" (Wiese 14).

Having experienced the renewal of subjectivity through fabulation, Zuckerman no longer seeks the imprimatur for his art from authority figures, be it Lonoff or his father. This is evident in the next Zuckerman book, *Zuckerman Unbound*, where Zuckerman has become the famous author of *Carnovsky*, an explicitly sexual comic novel whose focus on a Jewish family is even less tolerable for his elders than "Higher Education."

Ultimately, fabulation is not an individualist enterprise but always social, political, and ethical. From the Deleuzian perspective, the "depoliticised individual" is "a fiction that helps solidify the dominant power structures of the society" (Bogue, *Deleuzian Fabulation* 7). "To catch someone in the act of legending is to catch the movement of constitution of a people. A people isn't something already there. A people, in a way, is what's missing" (Deleuze, *N* 125-6). In fabulating or legending,

[59] The term "useful fictions" is the title of the first section of Roth's 1974 novel *My Life as a Man*. The two stories in the section are later revealed to have been written by the book's writer protagonist, Peter Tarnopol, as tools for thinking.

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the enunciator turns into a multiplicity through transverse connections, the kind of connections that does not totalize differences but affirm and "intensify differences and bring forth new possibilities for life" (Bogue, *Deleuze's Way* 3). Tearing through hierarchical structures and drawing together discrete elements, transversals bring into "communication incommunicable worlds and durations," so that individuals previously sealed in their respective space and time begin to resonate and relate, forming a new assemblage of collective enunciation (3). Transversality is what makes the aesthetic practice of fabulation also an ethics.

Through transversality, the fabulation of Amy/Anne/Zuckerman connects the historical diarist and the living writer while intensifying their differences. Instead of homogenizing Anne Frank's Nazi Germany and Zuckerman's 1950s Newark, as Judge Wapter does, or making Frank's Jewish experience yield universal moral lessons, as the Broadway adaptation of her diary does, Zuckerman's Amy/Anne story brings out the specificities of her life as it connects particular texts in her diary to Zuckerman's own situation. The product of this process is more than just a short story; it's a "minority discourse," not the discourse of an existing minority group but an as yet unrecognizable collectivity, that of "people who were still missing" (Deleuze, *N* 125, *C2* 217; see also "One Less Manifesto" 254). It is a "virtual community," "a community whose conditions haven't yet been established" (Deleuze, *K* 84, 71). The transverse connections of fabulation beckon a virtual collectivity that may be actualized, if given propitious conditions. With this virtual community arises "a possibility of life" (Deleuze, *ECC* 4). This new possibility might "dislodge the dominant ways she [Frank] is understood in American culture" or lead to wider, political changes (McLennan 43). Because of its power to create a virtual people, a

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"people to come," literature as fabulation is always ethics politics, even when its subject matter is the individual (Deleuze, *ECC* 4).

In *The Anatomy Lesson*, set in 1973, fabulation brought about new possibilities of living and writing for the then 40-year-old Zuckerman. Since the death of his parents, and the gradual relocation of his Jewish community from his hometown, Newark, "Zuckerman had lost his subject. . . . What he'd made fiction from was gone" (Roth, *AL* 39). "Without a father and a mother and a homeland, he was no longer a novelist" (40). Having long been a rebel against ideals of communal solidarity upheld by his clan, Zuckerman is now left with nothing to fight or challenge. "Everything that galvanized him had been extinguished" (40). His aesthetic crisis is aggravated by an inexplicable upper body pain, which literally keeps him from writing, and an excoriating reappraisal of his body of work by a formerly approving literary critic.

The critic is Milton Appel, "a leading wunderkind of the Jewish generation preceding" Zuckerman's and whose writings on the generational struggle between Jewish immigrant fathers and their sons used to comfort the then twenty-something writer in his familial plights (Roth, *AL* 70). Zuckerman admired Appel as a literary father figure just as much as he did Lonoff in *The Ghost Writer*. For that reason, Appel's charge that Zuckerman displays "willful vulgar imagination largely indifferent to social accuracy and the tenets of realistic fiction"—the type of accusation the novelist has gotten used to by now, feels particularly hurtful (69). Appel's disapproval means that Zuckerman has lost both of his father figures. These losses plunge Zuckerman into a solipsistic limbo where he fixates on the memories of his parents as he confines himself in his apartment, unable to write a word. Zuckerman thus decides to give up writing altogether.

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On the trip to Chicago to try to enroll in a medical school, Zuckerman begins taking a "little holiday from Zuckerman" (Roth, *AL* 183). First with a fellow airline passenger, a hired chauffeur, and then with himself, or Zuckerman the writer, as his audience, he takes on an invented persona, a "revolutionary" pornographer tellingly named Milton Appel (182). Appel the publisher of the fictional magazine *Lickety Split* sets himself apart from his middle-brow colleagues, such as *Playboy*'s Hugh Hefner, by refusing to dress up sex in something legitimate: His magazine "doesn't have Jean-Paul Sartre in it to make it kosher" (173). He also rejects psychoanalysis for its pathologization of sex: "the analyst tells me that all I've done is institutionalized my neurosis" (223). Instead of trying to be respectable in the eyes of the decent society, he asserts, "I'll never be the good acceptable Jew, never" (219).

Before taking the holiday from himself, Zuckerman was imprisoned in his own subjectivity. He tried to write a letter to Appel to criticize the critic's works, which proved just as futile as writing to his father in *The Ghost Writer* (Roth, *AL* 92). It only mired him deeper in his pain. This is because, in arguing with the critic, he is speaking from his established mode of thinking. As Deleuze and Guattari wrote, "to think is to experiment" (*WP* 111). Zuckerman begins experimenting when he puts on the extemporaneous "mischief" of using Milton Appel the literary critic as his mediator and fabulating through the ensemble of Appel/Zuckerman (Roth, *AL* 236). Importantly Zuckerman is not impersonating Appel. The persona of Appel the revolutionary pornographer is clearly not Appel the literary critic, a "mandarin moralist," but neither is he Zuckerman (Posnock 41). It is an in-between, a becoming. "Fabulation's invention of a self entails a 'becoming-other,' a metamorphic passage *between* identities" (Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* 153). Fabulating through Appel the literary critic allows Zuckerman to get out of himself into the interstice between

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Appel and Zuckerman, which launches him onto a line of flight toward an unexpected future.

Zuckerman also uses his father as a mediator. As Appel the pornographer tells his chauffeur, he has a seven-year-old son, Nathan. By giving the imaginary child his own first name, Zuckerman places himself in the position of his father. As a father, Appel the pornographer provides the best education for Nathan and tries to raise him to be an acceptable member of the society. Unfortunately, because of his notoriety, his efforts are frequently frustrated by discrimination against the little boy. The story falsifies Zuckerman's relationship with his parents, who suffered mockery due to Zuckerman's infamy for *Carnovsky*. The multiplication of discourses—the father's and the son's, the writer's and the critic's—in Appel the pornographer creates "a manyness of expression," a discursive assemblage that has never existed in Zuckerman's world before (Manning 231).

Appel the pornographer's concern for his son's welfare and his question, "must I change my entire life for him?" provide a way for Zuckerman to address "the dilemma of owing allegiance to one's tribe or to one's art" and to test whether it's better for him to give up writing altogether (Roth, *AL* 224; Safer 34). At the end of *The Anatomy Lesson*, Zuckerman has ceased to wish "he could unchain himself from a future as a man apart and escape the corpus that was his" (*AL* 291). The simplistic conditional statement, "No longer a son, no longer a writer," that obsessed him in the beginning of the novel has been refuted (40). As the later Zuckerman books, especially the American trilogy—*American Pastoral*, *I Married a Communist*, and *The Human Stain*—shows, the novelist has overcome bereavement and made "other people," not just his own family, his new subject.

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In *American Pastoral*, *The Human Stain*, and *Exit Ghost*, Roth demonstrates the ability of art to acquire its own life, a creative power of the false. In *The Ghost Writer* and *The Anatomy Lesson*, Zuckerman finds himself in the paradoxical situation where "I am not what I am—I am, if anything, what I am not!" ("Art of Fiction" 182). It is a situation that belies representational art and the model of truth. Only through art in the form of fabulation is Zuckerman able to experience "vivid transformation or radical displacement," or, in Deleuzian terms, the territorializing line of flight that allows the new to emerge (182). The falsifying power of fabulation induces ontogenesis, creating the world anew. In the voice of Zuckerman, Roth expresses an immanent aesthetics, "the utilisation of that which already is (what else is there?) and "the production of new and specifically *different* combinations" (O'Sullivan, *Art* 155). Art shows life an immanent way toward change.

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Conclusion

Ethics of Immanence

The foregoing chapters can be seen as a long detour that is now leading back to the starting point of this research project, namely, the ethics of immanence in Roth and Wallace. With Deleuze's philosophy of immanence as the theoretical framework, I have shown that Roth's and Wallace's works examined in this dissertation replace the traditional transcendent, humanist subjectivity with the processual subjectivity as a shifting network of relations. The renewal of subjectivity is an embodied process triggered by the individual's encounter with the sign, something that defies representational thinking and yet paradoxically compels thinking as the creation of the radically new. The insensible and unthinkable forces the individual to think viscerally and immanently, that is, to think the immanent outside of thought, which leads to ontological regenesis.

The modern humanist approach to self-creation as based on autonomous subjectivity and individualism tends to result in stasis and entropy. On the other hand, reckless and total dissolution of one's existing network of relations, as in the case of addiction portrayed in *Infinite Jest*, forecloses future possibility of ontological renewal. Ontological creation consists in living experimentally without transcendent telos. Bold yet cautious experimentation on material forces immanent in this world keeps one in a constant process of becoming with the world as the medium and catalyst for change. Creation in any field requires resisting the impulse to categorize and apply clichés and opening oneself to the pre-personal, sub-molecular forces of matter. Only with such openness and attentiveness can one navigate the stultifying deluge of information that characterizes contemporary life.

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When it is unconstrained by the criteria of truth and representation, art has the effect, for those open to the vital matter, of triggering the regenesis of subjectivity. Art releases signs when the narrative function of stories breaks down or when language stops signifying. The creation of art and the regenesis of subjectivity become one and the same when one takes anything in the world and engages in story-making with it, as Roth's Zuckerman does, in ways that breaks down the model of representation of the object by the subject and the dichotomy between truth and falsity.

In the beginning of this dissertation, I argued that Roth's writerly ethics shown in the Zuckerman books—his reply to the question "what are we to do about this terribly significant business of *other people*?"—is "to get them wrong" (Roth, *AP* 35). Zuckerman gets people wrong by imagining their stories, as he does with Amy Bellette, Anne Frank, Coleman Silk, and Seymour "the Swede" Levov. Wallace takes a similar stance when he suggests in "This is Water" that the ethics of everyday life lies in imagining other people's lives. An important aide in such imaginings, Wallace believed, is fiction: "a big part of serious fiction's purpose is to give the reader . . . imaginative access to other selves" ("Expanded Interview" 21-22).

Imagination for Roth and Wallace is not the traditional, elitist, and idealist concept that originated with Romanticism, which is in turn inspired by Kant.[60] It is more akin to the interpretation of signs. It is embodied experimentation provoked by the thought-frustrating signs from real persons and situations and unguided by transcendent principles or preconceptions. For Roth, this imagination sets literature apart from politics, which generalizes specific, singular circumstances in order to appeal to abstract ideals. As Zuckerman recalls the words of his mentor, Leo

[60] For discussions on Kant and imagination, see Wiltsher and Meskin.

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Glucksman: “Politics is the great generalizer, . . . and literature the great particularizer” (*IMC* 223). To the then aspiring young writer, Leo advises, “Literature disturbs the organization . . . because it is not general. The intrinsic nature of the particular . . . is to fail to conform. . . . Particularizing suffering: there is literature” (223). Imagining the particularities of the persons or things we encounter frees them from preconceived truths and abstract ideals. By particularizing Anne Frank, Zuckerman—and by extension, Roth—re-creates her immanently without representing her once again as an icon of Jewish victimization

From the perspective of the reader, literature is the “generalization of suffering,” not in terms of suppressing singularities but in terms of opening the subject up to other subjectivities. As Wallace comments, “Since an ineluctable part of being a human self is suffering, part of what we humans come to art for is an experience of suffering, necessarily a vicarious experience, more like a sort of generalization of suffering” (“Expanded Interview” 22). Reading is not seeking to understand someone else’s suffering but to connect with others through the node that is literature.

Wallace’s “Good Old Neon” shows that such connection can be built through the interpretation of signs. At the end of the story, the narrator reveals that the story is the creation of one David Wallace, who “in the midst of idly scanning class photos from his 1980 Aurora West H.S. yearbook and seeing my photo and trying, through the tiny little keyhole of himself, to imagine what all must have happened to lead up to my death in the fiery single-car accident he’d read about in 1991” (“Good” 180). Such creation originates from a meeting of intensities free from the dictates of representational truth.

In thus creating imaginary worlds lies Roth’s and Wallace’s ethics of immanence. Deleuze touches on this immanent, creative ethics when, concluding his theory of

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individuation in *Difference and Repetition*, he argues that the mechanism of continual individuation in the psychic organism consists in the Other. "In the psychic system of the I-Self, the Other . . . functions as a centre of enwinding, envelopment or implication. It is the representative of the individuating factors," or intensities (*DR* 261). There cannot be regenesis of subjectivity without the Other, which is "*the expression of a possible world*" (261). For instance, a terrified face expresses a terrifying world in the sense that it implicates the intensities of such a world, that this intensive world is enveloped in the face and exists nowhere else (260).[61] The Other provides the structure or mechanism for the implication and envelopment of intensities.

Viewers of the face can respond to the face in different ways. They can deny the terror, attribute the terror to some previously known cause, or imagine the story surrounding that terror. The first two approaches fail to recognize that "epistemology does violence to ontology," as they close off the creative, connective flow of other individuals as well as oneself (Stark 108). Individuation consists in the last approach, in explicating the intensive world implicated in the face. In other words, ontological

[61] Deleuze's discussion of the face of the Other sets his ethics in sharp contrast to Emmanuel Levinas's. For Levinas, the face represents a radical alterity: "The expression the face introduces into the world does not defy the feebleness of my powers, but my ability for power. The face. . . speaks to me and thereby invites me to a relation incommensurate with a power exercised, be it enjoyment or knowledge" (*Totality* 198). In its refusal to be contained or comprehended, the face manifests a transcendence over being and yet demands response and responsibility from it (Tahmasebi-Birgani 72; Levinas, "Paradox" 169). Therefore, Levinas argues, "preexisting the plane of ontology is the ethical plane" (*Totality* 201). It is the responsibility for the transcendent Other that grants essence to being. As Levinas argues, "subjectivity . . . is . . . a subjection to the other" ("God" 178). For Deleuze, the Other has no transcendence but is what expresses the univocal Being in other ways. When Being is univocal, ethics is itself ontology (Smith 41). Moreover, the face for Levinas marks a limitation or resistance to one's power, whereas in Deleuze, the face marks the opportunity for increasing one's affective power.

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creation happens only when "That face serves as a sign, not as signifier to signified, but as the moon's visible surface to its dark side" (Bogue, *Deleuze's Way* 13).

The ethical response to the face is to encounter its intensities. To do so, one has to move beyond the Other as structure, the "Other-structure" (Deleuze, *DR* 281). Instead of attributing the signs emitted by the other to commonsensical, readymade possibilities, one needs to proceed along a path of counter-actualization beyond the concrete face "in order to rediscover the individuating factors as they are in the intensive series along with the pre-individual singularities as they are in the Idea" (282). In this way, one reaches "something wholly other (*un tout-autre*) than the Other," that is, the virtual and the originary pure intensity (Deleuze, *LS* 317). The radical, "otherwise Other" that subtends representation is the only source of true creation (319).

Only after reaching the intensive state can the individual re-actualize oneself, the face, and the world. This is Zuckerman's art as ethics when the writer allows himself to encounter, for instance, the signs of Anne Frank's diary and let the intensities implicated in Frank, Amy Bellette, and himself relate to each other as pre-individual, pure intensities and induce the ontological creation not only of Zuckerman but also of Frank and Bellette. Ethics as creation abandons moral concepts, such as right and wrong, good and evil, as morality is the "effort to rejoin man's essence, to realize one's essence," which only constrains creation (Smith 41).

Ethics deals not with essence but with power, or affective capacity, which can be explored only in explicating and developing the possible worlds expressed by others. "[B]odies create by actively and more importantly affectively engaging with a multiplicity of moving bodies and spaces in such ways that it extends a body's ability to affect and be affected" (Moreno 222). Using a medical metaphor, Deleuze

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considers such "affective Athleticism" as "great health" (Deleuze and Guattari, *WP* 172; Deleuze, *PI* 58). The healthy individual ethically engages with others by retaining "an openness to *interaction*," a willingness to experiment with the unforeseen (Bogue, *Deleuze's Way* 12).

Ethics as ontological creation is treating life as a work of art.[62] As Surin points out, there is ultimately no distinction between ethics and aesthetics in Deleuze (151-52). Art is not only the production of works but the creation of renewed subjectivities (O'Sullivan, "Aesthetics" 206). A "style of life," "inventing a possibility of life, a way of existing" is as much artistry as a style of writing, painting, or composing music (Deleuze, *N* 100). Conversely, for any individual to "no longer be bound to a fixed identity and therefore be free to create . . . , it has to become 'art' first" (Liao 6).

As one encounters others and makes art and become art with them, one has to keep in mind that all the explications of their possible worlds are provisional and can never amount to definitive knowledge about them. The only proviso in the ethics of immanence is "not to explicate oneself too much with the other, not to explicate the other too much, but to maintain one's implicit values and multiply one's own world by populating it with all those expresseds that do not exist apart from their expressions'' (Deleuze, *DR* 261). By keeping intensities alive, ethics allows the world to continue its becoming.

Imagining others' lives is an aesthetic, ethical, and ontogenetic practice. In all three of these discourses, there is a continuity, because life itself is immanence and there is nowhere else to seek creation but in this world. As Deleuze argues, when art ceases to represent accepted opinion or reinforce clichés, it makes us "believe in this

[62] See Deleuze, "Life as a Work of Art."

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world" in the sense of "simply believing in the body" (*C2* 171, 172). This belief obviates religious, humanist, or any other transcendent justifications for what we are, do, and create. One thing that restores this belief is literature. As Roth argues, "Reading novels is a deep and singular pleasure, a gripping and mysterious human activity that does not require any more moral or political justification than sex" (Roth, "Art" 186). By showing that, in Roth's and Wallace's novels, aesthetic, ontological, and ethical creation comes from an attentiveness to this vitalic material world of ours, I hope to have provoked readers to believe in this world and the life-affirming pleasures and creative potential it offers.

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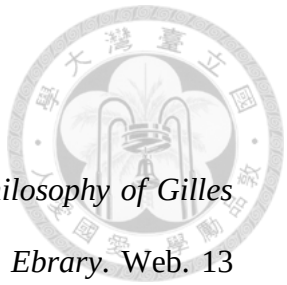

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