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De-signing Deleuze^a

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This essay shall begin with a hyphenated re-turn; a return to a turn that remains an always singular, yet plural twist. We will, then, re-turn to an *only on(c)e*—

“*Only one time: circumcision takes place only once*”^b, as Derrida had put it, “[s]uch, at least, is the appearance given to us” Here, in this beginning, and here we want to commence at once with such one, here the appearance given to us with, in the new and trans-disciplinary “Deleuze Studies” is that of *one* Deleuze that is made *several* Deleuzes, thereby continuing well-established binary encodings such as plural: singular or one: many. All too evidently, there is not one Deleuze (he *himself* is always already quite a crowd^c); all too evidently, there are no several Deleuzes either. Consequently, it is not about a distinction between the “*One and the Multiple but of a fusional multiplicity that effectively goes beyond any opposition between the one and the multiple.*”^d

^a This essay is a slightly modified version of the paper „Being (with/out) Deleuze”, delivered at the First International Deleuze Conference (Cardiff, August 11-13, 2008)

^b Derrida, Jacques. *Sovereignities in Question. The Poetics of Paul Celan*. Edited by Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005, 1

^c Deleuze Gilles/ Guattari, Félix. *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London/New York: continuum 2004, 3: “Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd.” Or: “There is always a collectivity, even when you are alone.” *Ibidem*, 169

^d Deleuze/Guattari 2004, 170

Deleuze, becoming beyond himself, has become a sign—

Thus the intention here is to seek an *ethics of disappearance* rather than of appearance (which, in the end, is always a co-appearance^e)— not as a moral instruction, but as a way (and a praxis, maybe) to make him anOther, always an Other.

Bearing these in-esse-ntial ontic differences, the following lines are going to abstain from applying previously set identities (i.e. in the form of poly- or even dialogues between the different Deleuzes), but will rather argue towards an encounter, perhaps similar to the one proposed by Žižek^f, which “*cannot be reduced to symbolic exchange: what resonates in it[...]is the echo of a traumatic impact. While dialogues are commonplace, encounters are rare.*”

Avoiding dialectical pretensions (after all it is the AND, not the OR that is relevant here), let us then re-turn “*to the story of multiplicity.*”^g— a substantive created in order to escape the “*opposition between the multiple and the one, to escape dialectics,*

^e Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Being singular plural*. (Editors: Werner Hamacher & David E. Wellbery). Stanford: Stanford University Press 2000, 12

^f Žižek, Slavoj. *Organs without Bodies. Deleuze and Consequences*. New York/London: Routledge 2004, xi

^g Deleuze/Guattari 2004, 36 (“to the story of *multiplicity*, for the creation of this substantive marks a very important moment. It was created precisely in order to escape the abstract opposition between the multiple and the one, to escape dialectics, to succeed in conceiving the multiple in the pure state, to cease treating it as a numerical fragment of a lost Unity or Totality or as the organic element of a Unity or Totality yet to come, and instead distinguish between different types of multiplicity.”)

to succeed in conceiving the multiple in the pure state, to cease treating it as a numerical fragment of a lost Unity or Totality or as the organic element of a Unity or Totality yet to come, and instead distinguish between different types of multiplicity.”ⁿ And this “multiplicity must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather an organisation belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system.”ⁱ

And each of us is multiple, for, to re-call Jean-Luc Nancy, “Being is singularly plural and plurally singular”^j; let us, then, “say we for all being, that is, for every being, for all beings one by one, each time in the singular of their essential plural”^k, let us follow D&’s slogans: “Don’t be one or multiple, be multiplicities! [...] Don’t bring out the General in you!”^l

Let us, eventually, be singular and, at the same time, multiple crowds.

To make a long introduction short, the aim of this essay is not to give an overview about different embracements of Deleuze, but rather to embrace the different Deleuzes—to say Deleuze is to say them in a different way. Far from trying to re-animate phenomenological monism^m—for these days Deleuze IS treated as a phenomenon—, the childish slogans to be proposed here are:

Forward to the Deleuzian multiplicities themselves! Forget Deleuze in order to remember them!

^h ibidem

ⁱ Deleuze, Gilles. *Difference and Repetition*. London/New York: continuum, 2004, 230

^j Nancy 2000, 28

^k ibidem, 3

^l Deleuze/Guattari 2004, 27

^m see also Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Das Sein und das Nichts. Versuch einer phänomenologischen Ontologie*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt 1995, 9

Before yielding to the question of communicability, let us first think about different Deleuzes.

Difference by different means

How did the thinker of difference, these different thinkers become *one and the same*? Why are the different Deleuzes still referred to in terms of pre-supposed identities?

The one has to be subtracted, always, and, we remember, from [time immemorial](#) there “has only ever been one ontological proposition: *Being is univocal*.”ⁿ Subsequently, and to quote Alain Badiou, since “its Parmenidean organization, ontology has built the portico of its ruined temple out of the following experience: what presents itself is essentially multiple; what presents itself is essentially one.”^o

All too easily applicable to the way Deleuzian multiplicities are most generally dealt with, we might state that while their works are presented as as being multiple, these very multiplicities are denied the person Deleuze themselves. Thereby, the death of the author has been sealed once more.

As it was stated above, there is not one Deleuze, nor are there several. Rather, they are as and through their differences, relating to each other as *such*, as becoming-in-differences that is. No

“mediation whatsoever by the identical”^p; all there is is anOther, always anOther, Other to themselves.

ⁿ Deleuze 2004, 44

^o Badiou, Alain: *Being and Event*. London/New York: continuum 2007, 23

^p Deleuze 2004, 143

Thus our Shibboleth may be: one for all—no One for one.

For the One is not; the One is nothing but a *becoming—Other* (to itself). Following Badiou^q, the one “solely exists as operation. In other words: there is no one, only the count-as-one. The one, being an operation, is never a presentation. It should be taken quite seriously that the ‘one’ is a number.”

It is only through and as differences that identities can be ex-posed. No identity without differences; no Deleuze without Deleuzes. Certainly, the same is only “on the basis of the different”^r, with “difference having its own concept.”^s

Each time unique, Deleuze cannot be thought *differently* with, in re-presentation. Representation, as it is now commonplace, is defined by the primacy of identity^t, hence entailing the very possibility of an essence, of an origin. Yet, as Nancy has shown us, such origin “doesn’t signify that from which the world comes, but rather the coming of each presence in the world, each time singular”^u.

Each time singular, these origins origin-ate only once, are different, always.

Implying a former unity, a quantitative measurement (=not coincidentally, its antonym is “few”), the term “several” does not *make a difference*. Neither does diversity, for “[d]ifference is not diversity. Diversity is given, but difference is that by which the given is given, that by which the given is given as diverse.”^v

A slippery ground, unable to serve as a(nother) ground for deduction; the multiple Deleuzes cannot account to “one Deleuze”.

After all, differences in themselves introduce “a new type of distinction into these relations[...]; instead of coexisting, they enter states of simultaneity or succession.”^w

But, to start from scratch, we might ask: What do we mean by saying Deleuze? What does it mean to re-call Deleuze? It might be appropriate to re-call the chapter “One or Several Wolves?” in “A Thousand Plateaus” and its affirmation that, “when there is no unity in the thing, there is at least unity and identity in the word[...]. The proper name can be nothing more than an extreme case of the common noun, containing its already domesticated multiplicity within itself and linking it to a being or object posited as unique.”^x And to name means to identify, which is why “it is always a question of bringing back the unity or identity of the person or allegedly lost object.”

Homo homini lupus, as the wolves “will have to be purged of their multiplicity.” A more romantic and less Hobbesian attitude would be “to find that person’s own packs, the multiplicities he or she encloses within himself or herself which may be of an entirely different nature”^y.

Yet Wolf-Men are not always werewolves. They are, always, as and through their *becoming (of) a werewolf*—once a month or, rather, on an hourly basis. As differences, they must leave their cave and cease to be seen as a monster^z.

To create new concepts may indeed be the purpose of philosophy^{aa}; certainly also philosophers have to be created. Each of us creates and appropriates Deleuze, there might be no “pre-existent” Deleuze who could be unveiled and/or repeated.

^q Badiou 2007, 24

^r Deleuze 2004, 51

^s *ibidem*, 50

^t *ibidem*, xvii

^u Nancy 2000, 15

^v *ibidem*, 280

^w *ibidem*, 314

^x Deleuze/Guattari 2004, 31

^y *ibidem*, 39

^z Deleuze 2004, 38

^{aa} As stated by Deleuze, Gilles/Guattari, Félix. Was ist Philosophie?, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 2000, 9

Deleuzes have to be re-imagined, again and again:

“The role of the imagination[...]is to draw something new from repetition, to draw difference from it. For that matter, repetition is itself in essence imaginary, since the imagination alone here forms the ‘moment’ of the vis repetitiva from the point of view of constitution: it makes that which it contracts appear as elements or cases of repetition. Imaginary repetition is not a false repetition which stands in for the absent true repetition: true repetition takes place in imagination.”^{bb}

“True repetition” being the only identity, this identity is of course to be seen as a “secondary power: the identity of difference, the identical which belongs to the different, or turns around the different. Such an identity, produced by difference, is determined as ‘repetition’.”^{cc}

Becoming another *one* while becoming one self, while repeating these selves, each time different, Deleuze *is* as his own repetitions, is as his own differences. Never the same, always becoming *someone* else, whereas (t)his supposed Sameness can only be said of that which differs^{dd}. Consequently, it is not the Same or the Similar which returns; rather, the Same is the returning of the Different and the Similar is the returning of the Dissimilar^{ee}.

An eternal circle, no straight lines; all truth is crooked: time itself is a circle, as Nietzsche’s dwarf reminds us. And this is precisely why these truths, these differences are to be concealed rather than unveiled, thereby preserving the concealment of the original, yet always-already different difference.

^{bb} Deleuze 2004, 97

^{cc} Deleuze 2004, 51

^{dd} Deleuze 2004, 69

^{ee} Deleuze 2004, 374

Differences are to be left alone; once they are de-fined, once they are explicated, they tend to be cancelled. *“For difference, to be explicated is to be cancelled or to dispel the inequality which constitutes it.”^{ff}*

Indeed, it seems as if they were thinkable *“only when tamed– in other words, when subject to the four iron collars of representation: identity the concept, opposition in the predicate, analogy in judgement and resemblance in perception.[...]Ceasing to be thought, difference is dissipated in non-being.”^{gg}*

Ceasing to be *made*, difference is made a *one*; differences are to be differentiated by and as themselves.

Deleuze must be no longer subject to the requirements of representation (of *ousian* reduction, that is), always-always already originating with, in singularly plural differences, they are not to be re-presented.

Becoming each time different, they ought to be thought *differently*, that is, as *such*, as (them)selves, as ideas, not as a representative concept derived *from* a supposed identity, not as being-subject(ed) to baroque re-presentation, but as ever-transient and eluding presents.

And the(se) elements of multiplicities *“are not even actually existent, but inseparable from a potential or a virtuality. In this sense they imply no prior identity, no positing of a something that could be called one or the same. On the contrary, their indetermination renders possible the manifestation of difference freed from all subordination”*; they have *“neither sensible form nor conceptual signification, nor, therefore, any assignable function”^{hh}*. Rather, it is about an eternal re-naissance: about an eternal birth of differences that are never the Same.

^{ff} Deleuze 2004, 287

^{gg} Deleuze 2004, 330

^{hh} Deleuze 2004, 231

What does it mean, then and *after all*, to bring these different Deleuzes into communication?

To begin with, the Latin “communicare” means no-thing but to share, to im-part; in accordance with Nancy, there is no meaning if meaning is not shared: meaning is itself the sharing of Beingⁱⁱ. To bring the multiple Deleuzes into communication, then, is to bring them into communication with themselves, whilst at the same time trying to (violently) re-present him. Being-with others, Deleuze is also with the Other in his own; it is, again, differences that constitute their identity, they are always different from himself, are their own, different, self-fulfilling prophecies.

And Deleuze is and was not: Deleuze is still becoming Deleuze. Still origin-inal, Deleuze is still coming into his own presence. As every origin is “irreducibly plural”^{jj}, as the “*origin of the world occurs at each moment*”^{kk}, Deleuze is always an-other, he has no single origin. Being singularly plural, becoming plurally singular, he repeats his differences; and (t)his “*origin is affirmation; repetition is the condition of affirmation*.”^{ll} There is no pure and simple ‘one’^{mm}, there is no simple I, Deleuzes have to be with/out Deleuze, always n-1.

The plurality of beings is at the foundation of Beingⁿⁿ; Being is always being-with (“*ego sum = ego cum*”^{oo}). Hence it is “*the ‘with’ that constitutes Being; the with is not simply an addition*.”^{pp}

ⁱⁱ Nancy 2000, 2

^{jj} ibidem, 12

^{kk} ibidem, 83

^{ll} ibidem, 6

^{mm} ibidem, 7

ⁿⁿ ibidem, 12

^{oo} ibidem, 31

^{pp} ibidem, 30

The ground of their differences (as every difference is rooted in difference), their different grounds are, evidently, multiple themselves, are an *I* that cannot be named. Without having an essence, without a *Wesen* that could be appropriated, the task is “[t]o reach, not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I”^{qq} or, in other words, “[a] single and same voice for the whole thousand-voiced multiple[...]: on condition that each being[...]*has reached the state of excess—in other words, the difference which displaces and disguises them and, in turning upon its mobile cusp, causes them to return.*”^{rr}

And while avoiding to bring another Deleuze into play, Deleuze manifests himself as.. the thinkers of transience, the thinker of the TRANS: beyond himself, always already. In order to become, Deleuze must root out, must re-claim his rhizomatic origins that have been made arborescent ones.

Dis-embodiments

It is not only because of Žižek’s (rather heavy-handed) attempt that Deleuze has been made some organs without body, sentenced to bare death. Rather, it is the multiple organs that divest him of any bodily, im-posed meaning, it is the lack of a body that resists embracement, that cannot be subsumed and standardized, that cannot be named, as we have seen: “*The proper name[...]*does not designate an individual: it is on the contrary when the individual opens up to the multiplicities pervading him or her, at the outcome of the most severe operation of depersonalization, that he or she acquires**

^{qq} Deleuze/Guattari 2004, 3f.

^{rr} Deleuze 2004, 378

his or her true proper name. The proper name is the instantaneous apprehension of a multiplicity.^{ss}

It is only through these multiple organs (those inconsistent lines of flight) that the so-called Self can *virtually* become— for a Self lacks substance, consistency. There is no “*central controlling element*” in the body^{tt}; this Self is always a virtual becoming. Having “its originarity in the loss of self”^{uu}, its only substance are nonsubstantial differences. For the “*identification of the self as such[...]*can only take place once the subject finds itself or poses itself originarily as other than itself”.^{vv}

Post mortem organs still don't inhabit a body. While Deleuze and Guattari stick to their Body without Organs, their dream has long been realized: Organs without Bodies do take “*that organization of the organs called the organism*”^{ww} ad absurdum. Maybe this finally abets the dismantling of our self demanded by Deleuze and Guattari^{xx}. Let us, therefore, not become bodybuilders again. Instead, let us conclude with Artaud's "To Have Done with the Judgment of God:

*Because they were pressing me
to my body
and to the very body* and it was then
that I exploded everything
because my body
can never be touched.

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^{ss} Deleuze/Guattari 2004, 42

^{tt} Žižek 2004, 117

^{uu} Nancy 2000, 78

^{vv} ibidem, 77

^{ww} Deleuze/Guattari 2004, 175

^{xx} ibidem, 167