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Edinburgh University Press Ltd
The Tun – Holyrood Road, 12(2f) Jackson’s Entry, Edinburgh EH8 8PJ

Typeset in Warnock by Biblichor Ltd, Edinburgh, and printed and bound in Great Britain.

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 4744 5071 3 (hardback)
ISBN 978 1 4744 5073 7 (webready PDF)
ISBN 978 1 4744 5074 4 (epub)

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For my daughter, Dahlia
and my wife, Nadine
Overture

Letizia Alvarez de Toledo has observed that the vast library is useless. Strictly speaking, *one single volume* should suffice: a single volume of ordinary format, printed in nine or ten type body, and consisting of an infinite number of infinitely thin pages. (At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Cavalieri said that any solid body is the superimposition of an infinite number of planes.) This silky vade mecum would scarcely be handy: each apparent leaf of the book would divide into other analogous leaves. The inconceivable central leaf would have no reverse.

Jorge Luis Borges, *Ficciones* (88)

In 1984 THE German avant-garde rock band Die Tödliche Doris (The Deadly Doris) released their fourth album, which was titled, somewhat ironically, *Our Debut*. When the follow-up album, released in 1986, was called *Six*, this didn't make things any easier. In 1987, the band published a note that explained the ‘missing’ fifth album. *Our Debut* and *Six*, the note read, ‘are constructed so that they correspond to one another in music, text and arrangement and comprise a unity if one plays them at the same time from the first piece on, on two record players with their respective A- or B-sides. The parallel pieces are the same length to the minute, from one track to the next, and offer a variety of textual, musical and semantic interactions. By playing both LPs together the invisible fifth LP, an immaterial LP emerges in the mind of the listener’ (Tödliche Doris 2019). I have tried to achieve a similar effect with Gilles Deleuze’s *Luminous Philosophy* and Félix Guattari’s *Schizoanalytic Ecology*. Although each book can be read as an individual text, the two correspond to one another in such a way that when they are read together, an immaterial book emerges in the mind of the reader. Within the overall field of structural and thematic resonances between the two books, I will mark specific conceptual overlaps and cross-references by: square brackets, arrow, Guattari, page number. Where I discuss co-written texts, I will reference them as Deleuze and Guattari in *Gilles Deleuze’s*
Luminous Philosophy and as Guattari and Deleuze in Félix Guattari’s Schizoanalytic Ecology.

While Gary Genosko noted in 2002 that when Deleuze and Guattari is ‘reversed as Guattari and Deleuze, it is a political reordering, an act of resistance, a dangerous heterodoxy’ (42), in light of the growing interest in Guattari, especially after the ecological turn, this is, fortunately, no longer necessarily the case today. As Franco Berardi notes, ‘there is a Deleuze without Guattari, and a Guattari without Deleuze, and then there is the rhizomatic machine put in motion by the encounter between the two’ (2008: 43). If I reverse the conventional order of names in Félix Guattari’s Schizoanalytic Ecology, therefore, I do so purely for reasons of symmetry.
Abbreviations

Abbreviations used throughout the text correspond with the key below.

AO: *Anti-Oedipus*
   B: *Bergsonism*
C1: *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*
C2: *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*
DI: *Desert Islands*
DII: *Dialogues II*
DR: *Difference and Repetition*
EP: *Expressionism in Philosophy*
ES: *Empiricism and Subjectivity*
F: *Foucault*
FB: *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*
LB: *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*
LS: *The Logic of Sense*
N: *Negotiations*
PI: *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*
PS: *Proust and Signs*
S: *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*
TP: *A Thousand Plateaus*
TRM: *Two Regimes of Madness*
WP: *What is Philosophy?*

All translations from German sources are my own.
INTRODUCTION: LIGHTNING AND CRYSTALS

... a lightning storm was produced which will bear the name of Deleuze: new thought is possible; thought is again possible.

Michel Foucault, ‘Theatrum Philosophicum’ (908)

Difference is light, aerial and affirmative.

Gilles Deleuze, Difference and Repetition (54)

To believe, not in a different world, but in a link [lien] between man and the world, in love or life, to believe in this as in the impossible, the unthinkable, which none the less cannot but be thought.

Gilles Deleuze, Cinema 2 (170)

When I talk about Gilles Deleuze's luminist philosophy, this luminism concerns two aspects of Deleuze's work. The first, conceptual aspect has to do with how Deleuze develops concepts from within registers of light, and with his use of both philosophical and scientific theories of light to position his philosophy within the overall philosophical field: his philosophy's conceptual light. The second aspect concerns the overall sentiment of Deleuzian philosophy. In this context, luminism stands for affirmation and for joy. For the warmth that, at all times and everywhere, suffuses Deleuze's thought. For a love of the world and of the living, and for a philosophy that aims, at all moments, to be adequate to the luminosity of that world: his philosophy's affective light. Although Deleuze's thought never shies away from coldness and cruelty, and although it knows pain, illness, suffering and death on a very intimate and personal level, it is never on the side of and it never celebrates negativity, or what Spinoza would consider to be bad encounters. It is a fundamentally positive thought. There is no dark romanticism in Deleuze's philosophy. No apocalypticism.

My intuition is that it is possible to develop a coherent image of Deleuze's philosophy from two of its conceptual leitmotifs: light and crystals. While each of these can function as an Ariadne's thread through Deleuze's work, if taken together, they
can be more than that. As a figure of the complementarity of the plane of immanence and of the plane of consistency, which I will also call the plane of consistencies [→ Guattari 11], they can become a figure of not only that philosophy’s conceptual architecture – its conceptual spine, that is – but also of its overall sentiment, mood or vibe; of the philosophical spirit I described above. Of its positivity and its affirmation of the world and of life. The notion of the complementarity of the plane of light and of the plane of crystals is one figure of this affirmation. As the complementarity of these two planes suffuses Deleuze’s thought from its beginning to its very end, it allows us to draw a line of light through his work: a line of white light refracted by crystals.

After introducing the two motifs, I delineate Deleuze’s theory of the crystal meeting of an actual with its virtual, as well as the crystallization of Deleuzian philosophy itself. Its dark precursors, perhaps. Having established the crystal spine of Deleuze’s work, I trace his conceptualization of time and space, in particular his use of the topology of the real projective plane as the adequate space of thought from within which to conceptualize the formal difference between, but ontological identity of, the luminous plane of immanence and the plane of consistencies. In a final step, I draw on the complementarity of the photon to show that, for Deleuze, the most comprehensive plane of immanence is the photonic plane. Although the three steps concentrate on different aspects of their relation, the conceptual complementarity of light and of crystals forms the central problematic of my text.

Although the notion of light and luminosity is already present in ‘Bergson’s Conception of Difference’ from 1956, and thus from the very beginning of Deleuze’s thought, and although it remains an important motif, for instance in Difference and Repetition, it becomes especially intense in his work from the late 1970s onwards: Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze: Spinoza (1978), Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation (1981), Cinema 1 & 2 (1983 and 1985), Foucault (1986) and The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque (1988). While this luminism pervades my text at all times, it suffuses in particular its third part, in which I follow Deleuze’s philosophical luminism into his work on painting and on the cinema. In the latter in particular, the crystal and the photonic series converge, not only in the sense that in the emulsion of celluloid film, light is caught by silver halide crystals.
Lightning


One image to which Deleuze returns repeatedly, from ‘The Method of Dramatization,’ *Difference and Repetition*, *Cinema 1 & 2* and *What is Philosophy?* to the very last minutes of *Gilles Deleuze from A to Z* (*L’Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*), is that of a lightning bolt. While the Etruscans read ominous, divine messages into a flash of lightning, already Epicurus, as well as Lucretius in his epic poem *De Rerum Natura*, is critical of such religious divinations. To do science means: ‘To investigate thorough the thunderbolt’s nature . . . | Not to unroll the mystical verses of Tyre for nothing, | So to search out the sure prescription of god’s hidden planning’ (1973: 207). Lucretius sets the poetry of empiricism against fate. ‘Fire’s phenomenon must be grasped and the system celestial | Meteorology must be versified, lightning electric, | What end results they effect, from whatever cause they are carried’ (199).

There is something in the air. You say this when you feel an electric charge in the atmosphere that affects your skin. Something makes the hairs on your arm stand up. Static. An initially diffuse electrical tension has built up. An electric potential. At a moment that is impossible to pin-point exactly, that electric charge has become perceptible. It has crossed the threshold from the unconscious to the conscious, which does not mean, of course, that it wasn’t there before. Not only that: no atmospheric condition is ever without electric charge. There is no situation without a given electric intensity. Always already, everything is a complex interaction of electromagnetic fields, forces and intensities: barometric pressures, temperatures and humidities. Sometimes, however, through what a Freudian would call processes of condensation and displacement, the charged elements create a field with immense differences in intensity that somewhere and at some moment can no longer keep itself in balance. Its electrostatic dynamics reach a critical point of what might be called an electric potentiality or, less positively, an electric crisis. (On lightning and electricity, see also Barad 2015.)

Lightning is the figure of such an electric tension that has become unbearable within a specific meteorological situation and that discharges itself, as Lucretius would say, ‘at an indeterminate place and an indeterminate moment’ (1973: 53). This unpredictable, sudden and spectacular discharge, which can happen either within a cloud, between clouds or between clouds and the earth, resolves the tension between the differently charged electric fields. Within these dynamics, the specific branchings and spasms of the lightning bolt result from the electric fields through which the
bolt finds the easiest way: the path of least resistance. In the case of a lightning bolt hitting the earth, the electric field builds up from the ground, which means that the bolt might be said to trace the path of least resistance quite literally in reverse.

To describe lightning as a part of and agent in highly unstable electric circumstances concerns first of all meteorology and physics, which measure and register electric fields down to the finest levels of technological perception. Today, it is a platitude to note that these registrations can never be infinitely precise, although the differences in intensity that make up the electric landscape are ultimately infinitely fine. In other words, they are continuous or analog. Every digital registration, therefore, is a reduction and a simplification that implies blackboxing. It reduces analog givens to digital data. It reduces the given to the given as given in order to make it scientifically manageable and mathematically countable. That both machinic and human perception are in themselves difference engines is something to which I will return.

The experience of being hit by lightning has been described as a discontinuity in the curve of life. As a differential. It is this affinity to questions of difference that makes lightning an interesting figure for a number of philosophies that not only have the notion of difference at their conceptual core, but that have also defined themselves as philosophies of difference. For good reason, Deleuze’s philosophy has been included in this group. Keith Ansell-Pearson calls Deleuze a difference engineer; Deleuze himself has written *Difference and Repetition*. Still, I will argue that although difference is a crucial aspect of Deleuzian philosophy, it is not a philosophy of difference. What I will propose, instead, is that it is a philosophy of the complementarity of difference and indifference. As Niels Bohr noted on his coat of arms, contraries are complements, ‘*contraria sunt complementa*’ (quoted in Capra 1982: 175).

In ‘Difference in Itself’, the first chapter of *Difference and Repetition* from 1968, Deleuze illustrates difference in itself by way of a sentence that has all the characteristics of a conceptual koan: ‘Instead of something distinguished from something else, imagine something which distinguishes itself – and yet that from which it distinguishes itself does not distinguish itself from it’ (28). The next sentence explains this logic by way of a lightning bolt that differentiates itself against the night sky, which does not, however, distinguish itself from the lightning bolt. ‘Lightning, for example, distinguishes itself from the black sky but must also trail it behind, as though it were distinguishing itself from that which does not distinguish itself from it. It is as if the ground rose to the surface without ceasing to be ground . . . Difference is this state in which determination takes the form of unilateral distinction’ (28): *luminous philosophy*.

How can different energetic potentials and disparate electric elements within an energetic landscape be made to communicate? How do they become related differences, like the night sky and the lightning bolt? Deleuze calls the ‘difference operator’
(DI: 97) that brings about this communication the ‘dark precursor’. (The French original, sombre precursor, is also translated as obscure precursor). ‘Thunderbolts explode between different intensities, but they are preceded by an invisible, imperceptible dark precursor, which determines their path in advance but in reverse, as though intagliated’ (the word means, among other things, ornamented with a sunken or incised design, as opposed to a design in relief) (DR: 119). In ‘The Method of Dramatization’ Deleuze uses the same image. ‘A lightning bolt flashes between different intensities, but it is preceded by an obscure precursor, invisible, imperceptible, which determines in advance the inverted path as in negative relief [intagliated], because this path is first the agent of communication between series of difference’ (DI: 97). ‘Intagliated,’ then, perhaps in the sense of invisible, indirect and dark, rather than in relief and clearly visible. Concave rather than convex. The French original’s stress on invisibility is difficult to translate – ‘en détermine à l’avance le chemin renversé, comme en creux’ (Deleuze 1968: 156), with chemin renversé as fractured path (an obscure, sunken road) and en creux as in the background (concave, discreet or imperceptibly) – ‘It determines, imperceptibly and from the beginning, the obscure path, the fractured path taken by the lightning bolt.

The dark precursor is Deleuze’s name for the invisible, subtle and unconscious tensions that precede the visible, less subtle and conscious phenomenon of the lightning bolt. It is the figure of the pre-individual dynamics out of which the individual lightning bolt emerges. It operates in what Deleuze calls the diverse, the field of great variety or multiplicity, as opposed to the field of the different. While the different, as related difference, belongs to the individual, the diverse, or difference in itself, belongs to nobody. It is anonymous. In Kantian terms, it belongs to the world as a thing-in-itself (Ding an sich) rather than as a thing-for-us. Leaving aside the question of whether the diverse might also be imagined as being ‘in and for itself’ (an und für sich), which will interest me in my conclusion, I will maintain for now that it belongs to, or quite literally is, the world-in-itself. To express this complicated state of affairs, Deleuze provides a second koan-like sentence, or perhaps zentence, which is a variation of the first: ‘Difference is not diversity’; he notes. ‘Diversity is given, but difference is that by which the given is given, that by which the given is given as diverse’ (DR: 222). Again: Deleuze’s philosophy is not a philosophy of difference, but of the asymmetrical relation between difference and indifference or diversity.

The dark precursor operates infinitely fast, which means that it shows itself in perception only after the fact. It becomes visible only at the time of the phenomenon of lightning, although that phenomenon has started much earlier. As such, the dark precursor can only be deduced. It is, however, neither metaphor nor allegory. It is real and productive (see also, Lampert 2011: 66–9). In relation to the phenomenon of lightning, it is the name for the small, imperceptible degrees of tension from which
the perceptible lightning develops, or from which it emerges. In other words, the dark precursor is the energetic, intensive unconscious of lightning. The sky is the unconscious of the lightning bolt, not its difference. That is what Deleuze notes in the above passage. Lightning is that which differs, but, at the same time, that from which it differs, the sky, does not differ from it.

One might transpose the description of lightning onto what one calls, in the field of mental phenomena, a flash of insight – a lightning bolt or a flashing light bulb as the image of a sudden inspiration or intuition [→ Guattari 151]. From a diffuse ecology of psychic fields, a mental milieu develops that is far-from-equilibrium. Suddenly, at an indeterminate place and moment, and ‘in a period of time shorter than the shortest continuous period imaginable’ (DII: 148), the psychic tensions discharge themselves into a bright idea. Albert Einstein stirs milk into his coffee cup. August Kékulé discovers the ring shape of the benzene molecule after day-dreaming the image of a snake seizing its own tail (ouroboros). The result of such processes is what one calls a sudden inspiration or intuition, which Deleuze calls, in ‘Bergson’s Conception of Difference,’ ‘the joy [jouissance] of difference’ (DI: 33).

In analogy to the development of a lightning bolt, one should imagine the sudden, unexpected intuition to be the result of smaller, infinitely networked and recursively stacked micro-thoughts, in the same way that every perception is the result of smaller, networked and recursively stacked micro-perceptions. As with real lightning, for every flash of insight there are fields of disparate micro-thoughts and imperceptible dark precursors. For Deleuze’s philosophy, these pre-philosophical, pre-differentiated levels are of fundamental importance.

Although dark precursors bring disparate, not-yet-differentiated series into electric or intuitive communication, it is important that they are not synthetic. If they were, the ground of the world would not be a true multiplicity. In fact, Deleuze describes them as deterritorialized operators that create the potentiality for change. ‘Once communication between heterogeneous series is established all sorts of consequences follow within the system. Something “passes” between the borders, events explode, phenomena flash, like thunder and lightning’ (DR: 118). Yet, although there ‘is no doubt that there is an identity belonging to the precursor, and a resemblance between the series which it causes to communicate’ (119), this “there is” . . . remains perfectly indeterminate’ (119). Indifferent. In other words, in these dark dynamics there is neither a Hegelian sublation – in this context, Deleuze talks, in Difference and Repetition, of passive syntheses – nor predestination; neither teleology nor theology. Although ‘the dark precursor is sufficient to enable communication between difference as such, and to make the different communicate with difference: the dark precursor is not a friend’ (145). The heterogeneity and disparity that defines its beginning persists in the result of the process it brings about. Every harmony is a ‘discordant harmony’ (146).
The American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce deals with these problematics in his theory of abduction as the intuitive creation of a hypothesis. Peirce argues that the ‘first premiss [sic] of all critical and controlled thinking’ (1965d: 181) is what he calls the unconscious, intuitive perceptual judgement. A conscious abduction ‘shades into perceptual judgement without any sharp line of demarcation between them’ (181), so that the abduction is the making visible – the flash of insight – of the unconscious perceptual judgement. For Peirce, the beginning and the end of this process are not only connected, they are literally identical, or better: complementary. The perceptual judgement is the other side of the abduction and vice versa. Suddenly, again at an indeterminate place and moment and in a period of time shorter than the shortest period imaginable, from within a larger conceptual field, disparate elements orient themselves along a virtual axis of thought. As if the conceptual field was electromagnetically oriented, elements of thought gather along a mental vector, with intuition nothing but the name used to veil the existence of such unconscious perceptual and quasi-cognitive processes. The perceptual judgement brings about the seemingly intuitive flash of insight.

Man tends to guess right because the mind is immanent to nature and its operation. Drawing on a term he finds in Galileo, Peirce ascribes the natural sympathy or analogy between mind and nature to the *lumen naturale* (*il lume naturale*): ‘If the universe conforms, with any approach to accuracy, to certain highly pervasive laws, and if man’s mind has been developed under the influence of those laws, it is to be expected that he should have a natural light, or light of nature, or instinctive insight, or genius, tending to make him guess those laws aright, or nearly aright’ (1965c: 604).

There are good reasons to criticize Peirce’s tendency to idealize the natural light that makes clear and distinct abductions possible, and Deleuze criticizes Descartes for his conviction, in ‘The Search for Truth by Means of the Natural Light’, that such a natural, in Descartes’ case religious, light exists. Against Descartes, according to whom the *lumen naturale* allows for clear and distinct perception, Deleuze, echoing his description of lightning, argues that Ideas ‘are not illuminated by a natural light: rather, they shine like differential flashes which leap and metamorphose’ (DR: 146). In fact, the philosophical question is inherently a question about light. ‘The very conception of a natural light is inseparable from a certain value supposedly attached to the Idea – namely, “clarity and distinctness”; and from a certain supposed origin – namely, “innateness”; both of which are instruments of ‘every orthodoxy, even when it is rational. Clarity and distinctness form the logic of recognition, just as innateness is the theology of common sense: both have already pushed the Idea over into representation’ (146). Already here, Deleuze stakes a philosophical *chiaroscuro* against the postulate of the clarity of thought. ‘The restitution of the Idea in the doctrine of the faculties requires the explosion of the clear and distinct, and the discovery of a
Dionysian value according to which the Idea is necessarily obscure in so far as it is distinct, all the more obscure the more it is distinct’ (146). I will come back to the fact that if the light of philosophy is refracted and diffuse, the faculties should be as well. For now, let me stay with light. ‘Underneath the large noisy events lie the small events of silence, just as underneath the natural light there are the little glimmers of the Idea . . . Problematic Ideas are not simple essences, but multiplicities or complexes of relations and corresponding singularities’ (163). As Deleuze and Guattari note in *What is Philosophy?*, ‘in the eighteenth century, what manifests the mutation of light from “natural light” to the “Enlightened” [sic!] is the substitution of belief for knowledge’ (53). Philosophy, Deleuze implies, must find the adequate light in which to think. This light of thought should be refracted and diffuse. It should include darkness not as its negative other, but rather as its unconscious. It should not emanate from a divine source or figure, as in the radiant, golden aureole or nimbus that emanates from the body of a God, or the halo that radiates from the heads of Gods or saints. Although the sun has often taken the place of such a superior being, and although the notion of an aureole, as the inner disk of a corona, is also the name of a meteorological phenomenon that is caused by the diffraction of light, for Deleuze, light is neither a divine, religious light, nor the light of a philosophical principle such as reason. From Cicero, whose *naturae lumen* denotes the intrinsic seed of an a priori knowledge, to Thomas Aquinas, who considers the *lumen intellectus agentis* as an inborn, a priori principle of knowledge and intelligibility whose origin lies in God, the notion of a *lumen naturale* has denoted a transcendental light that allows for and guarantees intelligibility and the clarity of philosophy. In opposition, Deleuze’s light is an immanent light; the given sunlight, but also moonlight or starlight. A light that suffuses reality, and that in its multiple diffractions, refractions and absorptions, scatters into all directions and creates, from within a given, pure multiplicity of light rays, the ordered multiplicities of illuminated objects. If there is a philosophical principle in Deleuze of which light is the figure, it is the principle of diversity and of difference: *light as the figure of multiplicity*.

At this point, however, Peirce’s reliance on a *lumen naturale* should not distract from the parallelism of Deleuze’s and Peirce’s overall figure of thought. The perceptual judgement is faster than conscious deliberation, which merely tries to catch up with it after the fact. Like the dark precursor, the perceptual judgement is faster than both thought and philosophy. It operates on the pre-philosophical level of intensive differences and thus forms the unthinkable ground of perception that even the finest threads and filters of conscious thought cannot catch. Its intensity comes as a shock to thought and produces a philosophical vertigo, which ‘reveal[s] to us that difference in itself that depth in itself or that intensity in itself at the original moment at which it is *neither qualified nor extended*’ (DR: 237, emphasis added). This state of pure,
intensive quantity makes up the vertigo of qualitative, differentiated thought, in and by which it is cancelled. ‘Difference of intensity is cancelled or tends to be cancelled out in this system, but it creates this system by explicating itself’ (228).

Let me pause to take a breath: Deleuze develops thought from within the unthought. Thought is not the difference of the unthought, it is its result. Its individuation. The unthought is not really unthought, in fact, in the same way in which the obscure is not really obscure. It is merely thought unconsciously, in the sense that the finer systems from which humans are assembled think and perceive in themselves. As Deleuze notes in *Cinema 1*, evoking an anonymous atomic perception, an atom ‘perceives infinitely more than we do and, at the limit perceives the whole universe’ (64). Similarly, in *The Fold* he stresses that ‘if life implies a soul, it is because proteins already attest to an activity of perception, discrimination, and distinction’ (92). The real lightning bolt is not an actual flash that stands in opposition to a flash of virtual thought. The chiasm that defines the logic of individuation is that every actual is always already virtual, and every virtual always already actual. Contemplations are operative in the actual, electric lightning bolt, in the same way that synaptic electricity is operative in virtual thought. Lightning is always already virtual, thought is always already electric: *flash philosophy*.

Deleuze stakes the level of an obscure unconscious out of which the conscious field emerges against the clarity of conscious thought. Despite his notion of the unconscious, nightly pit of the intelligence, Hegel sees the arbitrariness of the sign as heralding the absolute freedom of thought, while Deleuze sees it, in particular in *The Logic of Sense*, as a symptom of the closure of thought from the intensive world. Below the complexity of the discussion about difference and identity, Deleuze conceptualizes the complementarity of phenomenal world and noumenal thought. ‘Difference is not phenomenon but the noumenon closest to the phenomenon’ (DR: 222). Philosophy and art involve the purely quantitative phenomenon, because the phenomenal world is not their other; it is that out of which philosophy and art emerge in the first place. Their unconscious. If art and philosophy separate themselves from the world, they become irrelevant. Below difference, there is always complementarity: the resonance between phenomenon and noumenon.

The luminosity of the philosophy of lightning will suffuse Deleuze’s theory and practice of philosophy, but also his practice of life. *Gilles Deleuze from A to Z*, the long interview with Claire Parnet, ends with a wonderful passage about ‘Z as in Zigzag’. Deleuze connects the letter Z to the genesis of the world and to the emergence of thought from the unthought. Once again, Deleuze describes electric currents in relation to the phenomenon of lightning. How does a communication develop between different potentials within an energetic landscape? ‘And once the journey of the dark precursor takes place, the potentials enter into a state of reaction, and between the two the visible event flashes, the bolt of lightning. So, there is the dark
precursor and then a lightning bolt.’ The relation between philosophy and world, Deleuze proposes, is similar to that of lightning and sky. Although philosophy distinguishes itself from the world, the world does not distinguish itself from philosophy. To be adequate both to itself and to the world, philosophy must trail the world behind: *the lightning of philosophy*.


In Cinema 1 (1983), Cinema 2 (1985), ‘The Actual and the Virtual’ (1996, posthumous) Deleuze notes that ‘life will no longer be made to appear before the categories of thought; thought will be thrown into the categories of life’ (189). From within the Deleuzian terminology that forms the structural spine of my text this reversal concerns the relation between the virtual and the actual, the metaphysical and the physical. The immediate reference of Deleuze’s statement is the demand of what he calls ‘physical cinema’ (204) to ‘give me a body’ (189). For that physical cinema, ‘the categories of life are the attitudes of the body’ (189), its affects, dispositions and postures in a larger ecology of the living. As such, the implications of its demand for a body go beyond the cinematic field. Ultimately, to throw thought into the categories of life is a ‘formula of *philosophic* reversal’ (189; emphasis added) that stakes physical philosophies against idealist philosophies that repress the body not only as a material matter-of-fact, but, more importantly, as a biophysical medium. (On the relation between materialisms and idealisms see Olkowski 1999: 103–4, 129.)

Idealisms tend to develop their conceptualizations from what Slavoj Žižek calls, taking up Hegel’s concept of the ‘immanence of the notion [Immanenz des Begriffes]’ (1894: §451), the ‘immanence of our thought’ (2004: 53), while materialisms tend to share the belief that thought is a direct emanation of biophysical operations. Classic idealisms as well as more recent non-idealist idealisms have developed two ingenious figures of thought to negotiate the matter of the body. The first is inspired by Freud’s topological figure of the unconscious as an inner exclusion (*inneres Ausland*), the second by the chronological figure of belatedness (*Nachträglichkeit*), which is captured by the expression ‘always already’. The conceptual beauty of the image of an inner exclusion is that it relegates the material body to the space of the unspeakable; the conceptual beauty of a retrospective logic is that it considers the body as always already integrated into the fields of perception and cognition.

At moments when Deleuze becomes polemical, his polemics are often directed against the idealist tradition that disregards the ways in which our thought is attributed to life and vice versa. It is tempting, therefore, to read Deleuze as leaning towards
INTRODUCTION: LIGHTNING AND CRYSTALS

the physical logic of corporeal production. Towards what Deleuze and Guattari call, in *Anti-Oedipus*, the factory as opposed to the theatre. Deleuze’s physicalism, however, is not a simple materialism. Deleuze is equally critical of any materialist reduction of consciousness to a physics of thought and of its reliance on the hard sciences, in particular the neurosciences, to implement these physics. If there is a habit of thought in idealisms to repress the body, there is a complementary habit of thought in materialisms to repress the field of consciousness, which tends to evaporate within the logic of a pure physics. As Brian Massumi notes, materialisms set a ‘natural a priori’ against the ‘cultural a priori’ of idealisms (2002: 68). While idealisms celebrate the beauty and intricacy of thought, materialisms celebrate the beauty and intricacy of the body. Thoughts are complex firing patterns of neurons, images are complicated patterns of optical stimulation. There is no freedom of and in the mind because every thought is predetermined by physical operations. Ideas are purely electric, feelings merely chemical. For Deleuze, a shift from an idealist to a materialist logic is not an alternative to the idealist logic of an immanence of thought. If it were to promote the belief in a smooth, continuous progression from the physical to the metaphysical, considered for the moment as any realm that transcends the purely physical, Deleuzian philosophy would be nothing but a weak version of the philosophy of nature (*Naturphilosophie*).

One way for Deleuze to evade the impasses of the dualism of idealism and materialism is to conceptualize what I propose to call an intelligent materialism, in that such a materialism extends processes of perception, cognition and consciousness infinitely deep into the physical phylum. (Later, I will explain why the term infinitely, like the terms idealism and materialism, should be read within invisible quotation marks.) According to such an intelligent materialism, the world is pervaded, down to its infinitely small levels, by perceptual and cognitive machines, and thus by processes of discrimination and differentiation. As such a living, intelligent phylum forms the ungrounded conceptual ground of Deleuzian philosophy, Deleuze opposes any logic that takes matter to be an inherently lifeless material to be formed and animated by the virtuality of the spirit. There never was a time when matter was purely matter. The planes of life and of a philosophy that aims to be adequate to life have always been filled with machines that are simultaneously extensive and intensive or, in Deleuzian terms, simultaneously actual and virtual: *with crystals*.

This complementarity is why, a number of pages later in *Cinema 2*, Deleuze sets against the physicalist demand for the ‘cinema of bodies’ (198) an equally pressing demand – ‘give me a brain [*cerveau*]’ – that defines an ‘intellectual cinema’ as ‘the other figure’ (204) of mid-twentieth-century movie-making. It is never a question of choosing one position over the other, but of finding an adequate figure of thought
to describe their complementarity. (Lynn Margulis notes that Descartes’ fault was precisely ‘splitting reality into human consciousness and an unfeeling, objective, “extensive” world that could be measured mathematically’ (Margulis and Sagan 1995: 38, see also Ruyer 1952: 80).) Actual cinema and virtual cinema, actual philosophy and virtual philosophy: transcendental empiricism.

Deleuze’s refusal to choose between the two sides implies that although he is deeply critical of the reduction of a logic of immanence to Žižek’s immanence of our thought – both in the sense of the contention that immanence is purely of the mind, and in the sense that thought is in essence our thought – he never argues against the power and the importance of that field of thought, nor against the fact that the psychic reality of human beings is constructed within that field. What he is deeply critical of is the conceptual reduction of life, and of philosophy as a mode of conceptualizing life, to the operations of human thought and, more specifically, to the operations of the natural light of reason, as for instance in the philosophical and more generally cultural project of the Enlightenment. Invariably, Deleuze argues against the exclusion of a presumably obscure and dark physics from a clear and luminous metaphysics. Not in order to celebrate that darkness, however, but in order to show that this darkness is not at all dark. The paradox of Deleuze’s luminism is: the more light, the darker; infinite darkness equals infinite light. The project of Deleuzian philosophy, one might say, is to complicate the common philosophical distribution of the registers of darkness and light.

At the same time, Deleuze invariably differentiates conceptually, or, as he will also call it, formally, between a physical and a metaphysical series that together make up the machinic plane of life, between the actual and the virtual. The question is what exactly is meant by together and by simultaneously. How exactly to think the alignment of the actual and the virtual? What does it mean when Deleuze notes, in Difference and Repetition, that ‘every object is double without it being the case that the two halves resemble one another, one being a virtual image and the other an actual image. They are unequal odd halves’ (209–10)?

I use the term crystal as one of my text’s conceptual refrains because it is fundamental in Deleuze’s conceptualization of the complementarity of the actual and the virtual. Deleuze takes the term from Gilbert Simondon, who uses it as a figure of the beginning of the individuation of living beings. Although it resonates in many ways with other Deleuzian terms, such as germinal life or larval subject, these latter highlight the chemo-biological aspects of individuation, while crystals and precursors highlight its more abstract aspects. The term is complicated, not least because its connotations are ambiguous. Sometimes, as when Deleuze refers to a crystal ball, or to the snow globe in Orson Welles’s Citizen Kane, the crystal is a medium of either prescience or remembrance. (On the crystal of time, see Deleuze’s lecture ‘Image
Deleuze also relates it to the precious, elusive ruby glass in Werner Herzog’s film *Heart of Glass*. At other times, it is a jewel whose complex cut figures the fractures of the Kantian faculties that Deleuze stakes against the *lumen naturale*. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari talk of minorities as ‘crystals of becoming whose value is to trigger uncontrollable movements and deterritorializations of the mean or majority’ (106). For Alain Badiou, Deleuze himself ‘appears as a fine point or a crystal that is at once translucent and timeless – just like the crystal ball of clairvoyants’ (2000: 95).

At other times, the connotations of the crystal are more sinister. D. H. Lawrence maintains in ‘Poetry of the Present’ that ‘there is no plasmic finality . . . Life knows no finality, no finished crystallization’ (1998: 76). This observation is mirrored in *A Thousand Plateaus*, where Deleuze and Guattari describe such a terminal crystallization in terms of the solidification of a ‘representative’ unconscious that has ‘crystallized into codified complexes’ (12). In the same book, however, they compare the function of the crystal in terms of interactions that living beings maintain with their sonorous and luminous environment to that of the crystal pick-up of a record-player, which ‘acts upon that which surrounds it, sound or light, extracting from it various vibrations, or decompositions, projections, or transformations’. In these interactions, it ‘has a *catalytic function*: not only to increase the speed of the exchanges and reactions in that which surrounds it, but also to assure indirect interactions between elements devoid of so-called natural affinity’ (348, emphasis added; see also Ansell-Pearson 1999: 177).

Perhaps the most important structural characteristic of the crystal, however, is that crystallization denotes the process of ‘taking on consistency’ (TP: 433). This concerns both actual and virtual processes, as when a face ‘crystallizes out of “different varieties of vague luminosity without form or dimension”’ (168), or when Guattari talks about the ‘crystallization of desire’ (DI: 269). (On the crystal, Deleuze and Guattari also reference Olivier Messiaen and Paul Klee (TP: 551).) In *The Logic of Sense* from 1969, Deleuze talks of the processes of the individuation of singular events that are ‘like crystals’ in that ‘they become and grow only out of the edges, or on the edge’ (9). The last three examples, one might argue, already imply a first crystal series: *extraction, catalysis, consolidation*.

The references to consolidation and consistency evoke the image of a crystal as the figure of a specific aggregate state, or, in the case of the process of crystallization, as a figure of the shift from one aggregate state to another. From the amorphous to form; from anonymity to the individual. As in the case of a representational unconscious, however, there is always the danger of a ‘too much’ of crystallization. The crystal and processes of crystallization stand for the potentialities of individuation, but also for its dangers. (See also Jacques Lacan’s reference to a ‘crystalline style’ in *Television* (1988: 45) as well its use in *Radiophonie*.)
A first link between the crystal and light is that the crystal is a medium of the refraction of light. It functions as a prism that turns white light into the spectrum of colours, like the liquid crystals of White Pond and Walden Pond in Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*, which are ‘great crystals on the surface of the earth, Lakes of Light’ (1906: 136). At the same time, Ralph Waldo Emerson describes the universe as ‘a gigantic crystal, all whose atoms and laminae lie in uninterrupted order and with unbroken unity, but cold and still’ (1850: 133). If the crystal is so ambiguous, why would Deleuze choose it as a figure of individuation?

The notions of the crystal and of crystallization are particularly prominent in *Cinema 2*, in which Deleuze develops the notion of the crystal-image, and in ‘The Actual and the Virtual’, a short text written shortly before his death and added in 1996 as a fifth chapter to the second edition of *Dialogues II*. In both texts, Deleuze relates the notion of the crystal and of crystallization directly to the relation between the actual and the virtual. Deleuze had envisioned ‘The Actual and the Virtual’ as the second chapter of a ‘small book with very short chapters’ (Dosse 2011: 455) to be entitled *Ensembles and Multiplicities*, of which ‘Immanence: A Life’ would have been the first chapter. It is a text that has all the hallmarks of a legacy. In crisp, telegrammatic sentences Deleuze draws up, from within the framework of individuation, a conceptual diagram of the twofold trajectory of the virtualization of the actual and of the actualization of the virtual. The text does not bother to develop its conceptual backgrounds or to argue its philosophical positions. At this stage of Deleuze’s career, all of this has been done. In its almost staccato rhythm, the text is a fast-forward version of Deleuzism; a recapitulation that delineates in broad conceptual strokes the nucleus of Deleuzian philosophy. Perhaps, in that it describes its fundamental figure of thought, it might even be said to delineate its essence. (The term figure of thought should not be confused with Deleuze’s term image of thought, which has mostly negative connotations, especially in opposition to ‘a thought without image’ (DR: 167). For diverging readings of the image of thought, see Beistegui 2004 and Bryant 2008.) To write about ‘The Actual and the Virtual’ is difficult, because every commentary runs the risk of violating its conceptual rigour and rhetorical austerity. Complicated arguments have given way to short statements that resonate conceptually with earlier texts. Written at the end of Deleuze’s life, its simultaneously ascetic and bold style are the hallmarks of a late work. Much like ‘Immanence: A Life’, it is a complex conceptual echo chamber: *escrituras blancas*.

The manuscript of ‘The Actual and the Virtual’ is written in the same handwriting that, according to Badiou, Deleuze used in his correspondence: ‘Long slanted, slashed letters that were trembling and determined at the same time’ (2000: 4–5). The text begins with a refrain, a *nomos*, which Deleuze and Guattari describe in
*A Thousand Plateaus* as ‘a prism, a crystal of space-time’ (348). In the manuscript, this refrain, which aligns the three most fundamental elements of Deleuzian philosophy, is set off on the first, for the rest empty, page. Its melody forms both the conceptual kernel of the text that will follow, and of Deleuze’s philosophy in general. Perhaps, it is this philosophy’s most concise conceptual frame: ‘philosophy is the theory of multiplicities, each of which is composed of a series of actual and virtual elements, there is no . . .’ (DII: 148). On the second page, the end of the sentence is repeated before it is completed: ‘there is no . . . purely actual object’. As Emerson noted, ‘the soul is wholly embodied, and the body is wholly ensouled’ (1950b: 218).

Setting out to be as comprehensive and abstract as possible, Deleuze talks, at the beginning of the text, of actuals and virtuals in the same way that he has talked, throughout his work, of multiplicities. They are not so much specified actuals and virtuals of something as they are actuals and virtuals *tout court*: material and immaterial elements. There is nothing else. The world’s plane of consistency is made up of these pure actuals and pure virtuals: actual elements that show the characteristics of particles, and virtual elements that show the characteristics of waves, matter and memory, bodies and souls. Against the backdrop of this anonymous ground of the world, the text sets out to describe how this plane can be simultaneously both purely material and purely immaterial by tracing the process of the virtualization of actuals and the actualization of virtuals. While pure actuals and pure virtuals are the formally distinct elements that make up the plane, they are invariably collected into larger assemblages, each of which is, as Deleuze notes in ‘On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature,’ ‘a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them . . . Thus, the assemblage’s only unity is that of co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a “sympathy”. It is never filiations which are important, but alliances, alloys . . . contagions, epidemics, the wind’ (DII: 69). Such assemblages do not operate by way of natural affinities if these imply, like the *lumen naturale*, the idea of a natural or a metaphysical order, but according to the logic of elective, but also of forced affinities and resonances: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Elective Affinities*, but also Witold Gombrowicz’s infernalized version *Pornografia*. (On assemblages, see TRM: 179; on the replacement of the term ‘desiring machines’ by ‘assemblages’, see TRM: 177; on Gombrowicz and Deleuze, see my ‘Fluchtlinien: Deleuze liest Gombrowicz’ (2006).) If, as I noted, the conceptual challenge posed by Deleuze’s philosophy is to think the mode of the alignment of the actual and the virtual series, then how to conceptualize living beings as assemblages of elements that are simultaneously purely material and purely immaterial? Is there a point where the two registers converge? Deleuze’s philosophical rigour lies in refusing to accept such a point except at infinity. The crystal is the figure of this
refusal of a convergence up to, but not at infinity, and thus of what I take to be the conceptual paradox that lies at the heart of Deleuzian philosophy.

In the text, the figure of the crystal defines the specific assemblages of in and of themselves unspecific, in Deleuzian terms, pure actuals and virtuals. ‘This perpetual exchange between the virtual and the actual is what defines a crystal; and it is on the plane of immanence that crystals appear’ (DII: 150). Parts of what Deleuze will later define as the luminous, informal plane of immanence, as the plane of pure light, are formed into crystals. At this moment, we are still far away from any human level. Crystallization should be imagined as happening between elementary particles in the sense that these denote, at specific scientific moments, the smallest elements possible; elements that are, ultimately, imperceptibly but not unthinkably small.

To define the very first moment of crystallization, Deleuze differentiates between three processes. Two of these describe movements that take place within already assembled crystals. Singularization describes the vector from actuals to virtuals and denotes the virtualization of actuals. Individuation tracks the opposite vector of the actualization of virtuals. As I will later argue, in relation to Cinema 1 and Cinema 2, the first vector stresses the actual series in and of assembled crystals, while the second stresses their virtual series. Or: the first vector stresses processes of deterritorialization, the second those of territorialization. In the same way in which the actual never stops becoming virtual, ‘the virtual never stops becoming actual’ (DII: 150).

The third process, crystallization, concerns the first genesis of crystals sui generis. The creation of the field of potentiality that lies at the very beginning of individuation. It denotes the process of the very first conjunction of an infinitely small or faint actual, not just with any other infinitely faint virtual, but with its infinitely faint virtual. This moment I take to mark the beginning of Deleuzian philosophy. What specific, singular form does a field of moisture take on when the temperature drops below the freezing point? Crystallization is ‘an individuation as process, the actual and its virtual: no longer an actualization but a crystallization’ (150; see also C1: 81). The beginning of life is defined by such moments and processes of crystallization in which actuals are aligned with their virtuals and vice versa.

‘The relationship between the actual and the virtual takes the form of a circuit, but it does so in two ways’ (151), Deleuze notes. While all circuits run between actuals and virtuals, some run between a specific actual and other virtuals. ‘Sometimes the actual refers to the virtuals as to other things in the vast circuits where the virtual is actualized’ (151–2). In these cases, the relations between virtuals and actuals are those between different systems, as when a thought relates to a body in which it is not itself incarnated. In such cases, there is no crystallization. Sometimes, however, a particle-in-construction relates to a thought-in-construction in such a way that the
thought is being incarnated in the body even while it virtualizes that body. In this case, ‘the actual refers to the virtual as its own virtual, in the smallest circuits where the virtual crystallizes with the actual’ (152). At such moments the two series converge towards or within one consistency to the point of becoming indiscernible.

Crystal convergences describe the genesis, but also the ongoing life, of living entities in that each lived moment is, quite literally, a new genesis. While one can conceptualize a superposition of the two series, in a formal sense, they must never, except at infinity, converge to a point of complete identification. Formally, the virtual never is the actual or vice versa. The two series converge only to the point of indiscernibility, never to the point of identity. There will always be infinitely small circuits between the two series, feedback loops by way of which they begin to assemble into crystal machines. The processes of crystallization, then, define processes of the genesis and the consistencing of living entities or, as Guattari calls them, consistencies [→ Guattari 14]. (On ‘The Actual and the Virtual’ see also Toscano 2006: 190–1; Olkowski 1999: 122.) Towards the end of his life Deleuze notes that he would be content to be remembered as a vitalist. This vitalism is already present in Deleuze’s early work. As he notes in ‘On Nietzsche and the Image of Thought’ from 1968, ‘we’re looking for “vitality”’ (DI: 142). Even earlier, in ‘The Method of Dramatization’ (1967), Deleuze writes that ‘in systems of nature as well as artifice, we find intensive organizations, precursors, larval subjects, every sort of vitality, a vital character’ (DI: 103). And, in Nietzsche and Philosophy, he notes that ‘a thing, an animal or a god are no less capable of dramatisation than a man or his determinations. The method of dramatisation surpasses man on every side’ (1983b: 79).

One might say, then, that Deleuze’s philosophy rests on a sharp formal distinction between the categories of mind and the categories of matter – the virtual and the actual, the intensive and the extensive – and that it refuses to philosophically smooth out the differences between these series. As each series consists of a multiplicity of crystals, both are in themselves multiplicitous. As Deleuze and Guattari note in What is Philosophy?, ‘it seems to us that the theory of multiplicities does not support the hypothesis of any multiplicity whatever . . . There must be at least two multiplicities, two types, from the outset. This is not because dualism is better than unity but because the multiplicity is precisely what happens between the two’ (152). The complexity of Deleuze’s philosophy lies in how it aligns the two series despite their formal distinction; in how it creates a space of thought within which they can be superposed onto each other without being conflated.

In Cinema 2, Deleuze evokes such an inherently chiastic conceptual space by treating the body in idealist registers and the mind in materialist registers. ‘There is as much thought in the body,’ he notes, ‘as there is shock and violence in the brain
[cerveau] (205). In other contexts, Deleuze calls this chiastic relation the ‘reciprocal presupposition’ (TP: 503; C2: 69) of two seemingly oppositional registers. On the one hand, ‘the brain gives orders to the body which is just an outgrowth of it,’ on the other, ‘the body also gives orders to the brain which is just a part of it’ (C2: 205). Ultimately, the Deleuzian question recapitulates Spinoza’s parallelism, of which more later. How to maintain a conceptual difference between the registers of mind and of matter even while maintaining that both series operate simultaneously, together and to an equal degree, not only within individual living beings, but within the world at large? If Deleuze is critical of both idealist represenations and materialist reductions, it is because both fail, although for exactly opposite reasons, to capture the specific form of inherent grace that belongs to both living movement and living thought. They are not adequate to conceptualize the way sentient matter expresses itself in both its material and mental aspects, and to the way it probes its way through the constantly changing set of circumstances that we call the world. If there is graceful movement in the body, there must be an equally graceful thought: graceful philosophy.

In his essay ‘On the Marionette Theatre’ Heinrich von Kleist defines grace as caught between the extremes of a pure materialism and a pure idealism. Between physics and metaphysics. In the text, the two positions are embodied by a puppet and a God respectively. As the narrator’s acquaintance argues, in terms of grace, ‘it would be almost impossible for a man to attain even an approximation of a mechanical being. In such a realm only a God could measure up to materiality, and this is the point where both ends of the circular world [der ringförmigen Welt] would join one another’ (1972: 24, modified translation). The paradoxical meeting of the grace of God and that of a marionette. Humans, however, are neither puppets nor Gods, although, as both actual and virtual, they partake of both physics and metaphysics. Kleist negotiates these registers by way of unconscious and conscious movement, as the two series between which the game of grace plays itself out. In his fable about the inherent grace of the movements of the marionette, he describes the complicated relations between the puppeteer’s consciousness, the puppet’s body and the system of strings that quite literally mediate between them: consciousness, bodies, relations. (On Kleist’s text, see DII: 125; TRM: 11–12.)

Humans lose their inherent grace when self-reflection intervenes in their unconscious, automatic corporeal movements. The narrator’s acquaintance illustrates this loss of innocence by way of a young dancer’s natural charm. He recounts that ‘a short time before in Paris we had seen the statue of the youth pulling a splinter from his foot’. Later, after a swim, the young dancer was reminded of this statue when ‘he placed his foot on the footstool to dry it and at the same glanced into a large mirror’. From ‘that very moment on, an inexplicable change took place in this young
man . . . An invisible and inexplicable power like an iron net seemed to seize upon
the spontaneity of his bearing, and after a year there was no trace of the charm that
had so delighted those who knew him’ (Kleist 1972: 25).

While materialisms and idealisms attempt to locate grace in the physical or the
metaphysical extremes respectively, Kleist maintains that for humans, pure grace can
only be regained at a conceptual point-at-infinity at which materialism and idealism
become identical. In fact, Kleist might be said to evoke the one-sided topology of
the real projective plane that will form Deleuze’s plane of philosophy: ‘We can see
the degree to which contemplation becomes darker and weaker in the organic world,
so that the grace that is there emerges all the more shining and triumphant. Just as
the intersection of two lines from the same side of a point after passing through the
infinite suddenly finds itself again on the other side – or as the image from a concave
mirror, after having gone off into the infinite, suddenly appears before us again – so
grace returns after knowledge has gone through the world of the infinite, in that it
appears to best advantage in that human bodily structure that has no consciousness
at all – or has infinite consciousness – that is, in the mechanical puppet, or in the
God’ (25, emphasis added). In the return of a grace that has gone through infinity,
infinite unconsciousness equals infinite consciousness. Infinite actuality equals
infinite virtuality. ‘Therefore, I replied, somewhat distracted, we would have to eat
again of the tree of knowledge to fall back into a state of innocence? Most certainly,
he replied: That is the last chapter of the history of the world’ (26, modified trans-
lation): Kleist with Deleuze.

While Kleist finds an ideal grace in the figure of a young male dancer, Deleuze
finds moments of pure grace in the unreflected, light movements of children through
their various milieus that he describes in ‘What Children Say.’ Girls especially embody
a smooth, soft and elastic, dispersed elegance and plasticity. A dispersed essence, like
the one Deleuze describes when he notes in Proust and Signs that ‘there is, in the
group of young girls, a mixture, a conglomeration of essences’ (74). For Deleuze, both
philosophy and art should not only celebrate but in fact embody the wild charm and
grace of young girls, such as Pearl from Nathaniel Hawthorne’s The Scarlet Letter or
Priscilla from The Blithedale Romance. In the latter, Hawthorne’s description of girls’
light movements, which he opposes to the heavy clumsiness of boys, might in fact
be read as an allegory of the relation between a minor and a royal philosophy. Priscilla
is ‘running and skipping, with spirits as light as the breeze of the May morning, but
with limbs too little exercised to be quite responsive; she clapped her hands, too,
with great exuberance of gesture, as is the custom of young girls when their electricity
overcharges them’ (1852: 72). As Hawthorne notes, ‘girls are incomparably wilder
and more effervescent than boys, more untamable and regardless of rule and limit,
with an ever-shifting variety, breaking continually into new modes of fun, yet with
a harmonious propriety through all. Their steps, their voices, appear free as the wind, but keep consonance with a strain of music inaudible to us. Young men and boys, on the other hand, play, according to recognized law, old, traditionary games, permitting no caprioles of fancy, but with scope enough for the outbreak of savage instincts. For, young or old, in play or in earnest, man is prone to be a brute’ (88). As Deleuze states in *Dialogues II*, 'charm is the source of life just as style is the source of writing . . . those who have no charm have no life, it is as though they are dead. But the charm is not the person' (5).

The probably most frivolously serious, and at first sight extremely unphilosophical Deleuzian provocation to philosophy is that it should install a becoming-girl in its conceptual heart because ‘the girl is certainly not defined by virginity; she is defined by a relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness, by a combination of atoms, an emission of particles: haecceity. She never ceases to roam upon a body without organs. She is an abstract line, or a line of flight. Thus girls . . . produce $n$ molecular sexes on the line of flight in relation to the dualism machines they cross right through . . . It is not the girl who becomes a woman; it is becoming-woman that produces the universal girl . . . Knowing how to age does not mean remaining young; it means extracting from one’s age the particles, the speeds and slownesses, the flows that constitute the youth of *that* age' (TP: 266–7). (On haecceity and Duns Scotus, see Toscano 2006: 7; Ansell-Pearson 1999: 181; on haecceities as ‘subjectless individuations’, see TRM: 310, 351.)

At the centre of Deleuze’s crystal alignment of the categories of thought and of life lies his belief that ‘the identity of world and brain . . . does not form a whole, but rather a limit, a membrane which puts an outside and an inside in contact, makes them present to each other, confronts them or makes them clash’ (C2: 206). In this paradoxical alignment, the body is ‘no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself, that which it has to overcome to reach thinking. It is on the contrary that which it plunges into or must plunge into, in order to reach the unthought, that is life. Not that the body thinks, but, obstinate and stubborn, it forces us to think, and forces us to think what is concealed from thought, life’ (189). One might object that these are merely the playfields of philosophy and of aesthetics. Marx and Engels, however, proposed a similar reversal when they noted that ‘life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. In the first method of approach the starting point is consciousness taken as the living individual; in the second method, which conforms to real life, it is the real living individuals themselves, and consciousness is considered solely as *their* consciousness’ (1983: 15).