

we love becoming

*Deleuze's bodies,
philosophical diseases and the thought of illness*

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Introduction

The organizers of this event – *Philosophy on Stage 3* – set their contributors a difficult task: to seek out the bodies of philosophers themselves; to seek out the body itself within theories of the body; to examine the specificity of philosophers' bodies in the act of performing philosophy: thinking, lecturing, speaking, writing. Philosophers have specific bodies with which or through which they perform these acts. But all too often, the organizers suggest, these bodies are disavowed; they fail to make their presence felt in the various concepts of '*the* body' (as if there were only one) that philosophy creates. Our task, then, is to foreground that which has been put in the background, to articulate the ways in which the very practice of thinking or philosophizing is constituted by its relation to the body of the thinker; by a body that breathes, heats, eats, shits and fucks - to put the problem in the terms of the philosopher whose multiple bodies I will seek to stage here: Gilles Deleuze.

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It is hard to imagine that Deleuze was ever able to forget his body. It is 1947: 'Deleuze's health was already sufficiently poor that he did not receive the medical certificate required for taking the aggregation examination'; he experienced 'violent asthma attacks' and was 'having trouble breathing' (Dosse 2010: 98). It is 1968: Deleuze is working on his doctoral thesis, *Difference and Repetition*. He is 'often extremely tired' and consults a doctor who diagnoses 'the return of his tuberculosis, which had resisted antibiotics and made an enormous hole in his lungs' (ibid., 178). Tuberculosis: one of the mysterious diseases Susan Sontag described as problematically 'encumbered by the trappings of metaphor' and romantically understood to be 'apt to strike the hypersensitive, the talented and/or the passionate' at least in 19th century discourse. It is a very visible disease, Sontag suggests, which 'makes the body transparent'; 'The sufferer is wracked by coughs, then sinks back, recovers breath, breathes normally, coughs again' (Sontag: 11). TB is also the disease – surely not by coincidence - that Deleuze has in common with others he wrote about: Spinoza, Kafka and D.H Lawrence; the shared embodied experience of 'the body turning to phlegm and mucus and sputum and finally, blood – and of air, the need for better air' (ibid., 13).



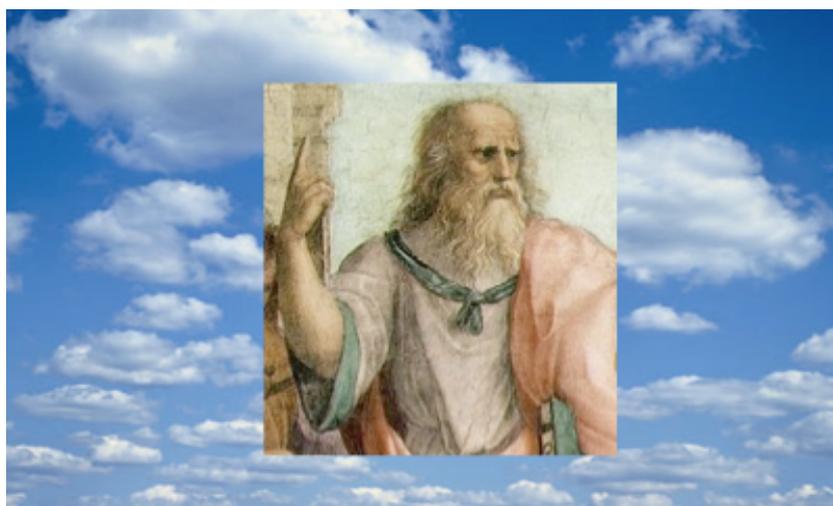
The idea of air, and particularly of the breath of fresh air repeatedly appears in Deleuze's thought, in the thought of a philosopher whose embodied experience was of the struggle to breathe. In *Dialogues*, for instance, he describes Jean-Paul Sartre as 'our Outside, he was really the breath of fresh air from the backyard... And Sartre has never stopped being that, not a model a method or an example, but a little fresh air – a gust of air even when he had just been to the Café Flore – an intellectual who singularly changed the situation of the intellectual' (D, 12). Likewise, in 1977, Deleuze describes working on Spinoza as giving him 'a feeling of a gust of air pushing you from behind every time you read him' (Deleuze in Dosse 2010: 143). In *Anti-Oedipus*, in turn, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that 'a schizophrenic out for a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on the analyst's couch. A breath of fresh air, a relationship with the outside world' – this is the image of the immanence of thought and the world. Or again, in *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari write of the need for the painter to erase the clichés that already inhabit her canvas before she begins to paint in order 'to let in a breath of fresh air from the chaos' (WiP, 204).

And, in this lecture, I want to suggest that there are four key concepts of what defines bodies within Deleuze's philosophy that let fresh air into the discourse of the body. 1. A body can be anything, not just a human body; 2. A body is the sum of its affects, a becoming not a being nor a mere container for the passage of immaterial thought; 3. The body is a body without organs or a material process of disorganizing and 4. A body forces us to think in the form of new thoughts that are irreducible to thought defined as rationality. In each case, the emphasis will be on bodies construed

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as becomings, and becoming as a complete process in itself, rather than as a dialectical operation between a duality of being and the void. Having expanded upon each of these concepts, I will then propose why these concepts resist the criticism that have been leveled at them, and at Deleuze more generally in recent years. Then finally, I will return to the question of ill-health, Deleuze's affirmation of which will not be understood as an affirmation of asceticism, but as part of a new way of thinking health, bodies and thought beyond their traditional humanist and anthropocentric formulations.

But before we embark on this trajectory, I will briefly describe the symptoms of 3 'philosophical diseases' as Deleuze calls them; Platonism, Cartesianism and the tendency within thought that Deleuze diagnoses as 'Interpretosis'. Because it is these ill-conceived images of thought, amongst others, that Deleuze's own theorisation of bodies attempts to treat.



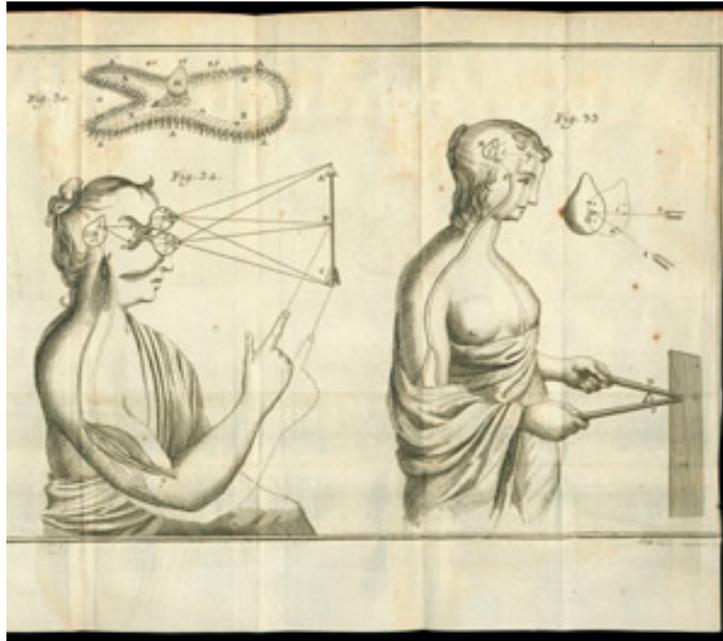
1. Behind the glass: philosophical diseases

For Deleuze, ontological dualism is an illness; the ill-thought notions of an immaterial mind and unthinking body register the persistence of Platonic and Cartesian ways of thinking. 'There are properly philosophical diseases,' he argues, congenital illness that are passed on from one generation of philosophers to the next. For Platonism, Deleuze suggests in *The Logic of Sense*, it is the disease of idealism that is congenital.

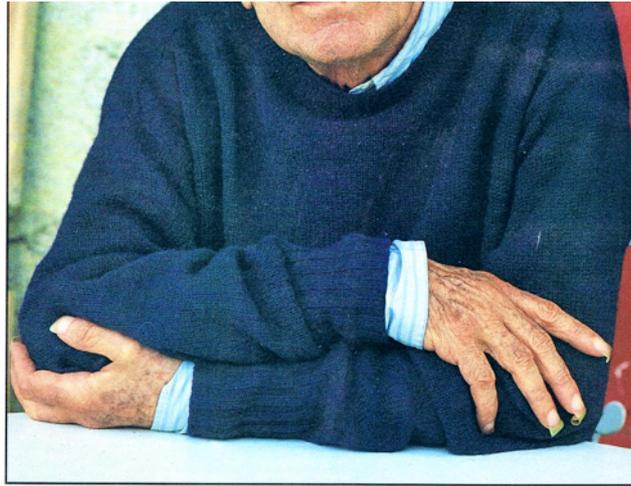
The philosopher is a being of ascents; he is the one who leaves the cave and rises up. The more he rises the more he is purified... The popular image of the philosopher with his head in the clouds depends upon it (LoS, 145).

And indeed it is this image of the upwardly oriented philosopher's body that is put on stage in Aristophanes' comedy *The Clouds*, first performed in 423 BC, which famously satirizes Plato's teacher, Socrates as the archetypal other-worldly philosopher: 'If I turned my mind to lofty things,/ but stayed there on the ground, I'd never make/the least discovery' (Aristophanes 2008: lines 279-281).

So, for Deleuze, Platonism orients thought in an upward movement away from the body and from earth. But he also argues that all forms of thought, all attempts to perform 'what it means to think' (LoS, 148), contain some kind of bodily orientation: ascending to the heights, diving into the depths, remaining on the shore. 'The philosopher is... the animal which is on a level with the surface – a tick or louse' (LoS, 150). The Stoics, for instance, Deleuze says, 'establish themselves and wrap themselves up with the surface, the curtain, the carpet, and the mantle' (LoS, 150); whereas Cartesian thought constructs a clear frame separating observer and observed in a manner echoed in traditional proscenium arch theatre. Indeed theatre historian David Wiles has emphasized the extent to which transcendent philosophy and transcendent approach to theatre impacted upon one another in this regard. For instance, Wiles calls the divide between active actor and passive spectator 'the Cartesian theatrical dichotomy' since it was Descartes who 'cultivated the detached scientific gaze: reality viewed from a non-place somewhere on the margins' (ibid., 4). Descartes' philosophy conceived of the mind as somewhat like a 'miniature theatre' in which an ego or self 'could contemplate reality and decide how to deal with it, before sending appropriate messages down... to the body' (ibid.). Human thought was not understood as *in* the world, or as *part of* the world but as a separate representative system that produced and responded to its own images of reality. (Wiles 2003: 7)



In turn, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that 'transcendence is a specifically European disease' (ATP: 18): we suffer from 'interpretosis' – a Western philosophical disease that manifests itself in the ceaseless search for some beyond that might found, ground or otherwise justify *what is*. Freudian psychoanalysis has a particularly bad case of this. As Deleuze points out in *Letter to a Harsh Critic*: interpretation isn't really a productive way to relate to bodies; for instance, to a specific aspect of Deleuze's body, his fingernails 'which are long,' he says 'because I don't cut them'. Deleuze continues: "One might say that my mother used to cut them for me and it's to do with the Oedipus complex and castration (a ridiculous interpretation but a psychoanalytic one). One might also note, looking at my fingertips, that I haven't got the normal protective whorls, so that touching anything, especially fabric, causes such irritation that I need long nails to protect them' – a teratological interpretation, meaning one that is inspired by the study of physiological deformities. Alternatively, Deleuze suggests, 'one might say, and it's true, that I dream of being, not invisible, but imperceptible, and the closest I can get to the dream is having fingernails I can keep in my pockets, so I find nothing more disconcerting that somebody looking at them (a social psychologist's interpretation' (Negotiations, 5).



2. An open window, a breath of fresh air: What is a body?

With the association of philosophy and illness then, Deleuze firmly repositions thought in the body and in life. Deleuze's thought presents us with a number of conceptualizations of bodies and embodiment that stand in fairly stark contrast to this reduction of the body to the state of mere appearance, dumb matter or the material stand-in for a meaning elsewhere. In what follows I will attempt to outline 4 of these concepts.

2.1 A body can be anything

First Deleuze's philosophy is characterized by a thoroughly expanded definition of what counts as a 'body', an inclusive approach to what can be understood to belong to the category of things we call 'bodies'. 'A body can be anything' Deleuze says; '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' (Deleuze 1988: 127). Language is a body (LoS 146); the duality of 'body/language, to eat/to speak – is not sufficient' for Deleuze; rather, we eat our words. Likewise, "A concept is a brick. It can be used to build a courthouse of reason. Or it can be thrown through the window". And Deleuze's concept of the body is just this: a brick that can be thrown through the window of Platonism, Cartesianism, and psychoanalytic interpretation; it can be used to shatter any philosophy that consigns us to view the world at a difference, from behind the glass. So whereas the announcement for this event – *Philosophy on Stage 3* – argues that philosophical

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theories of bodies 'put a concept of it in the place of the body itself', Deleuze would argue that the concept *is* a body.

To say everything can be a body is not to render the term 'body' meaningless. To say Deleuze's lungs, the concept of the BwO and the University at Vincennes and are all types of bodies is not to say that they are all the same. Ontologically speaking, an idea is a body in the 'single and same sense' as my body is a body, but it is also the case that each body has individuated differently and come to be organized differently (ibid.). For Deleuze, in contrast, a body is that which has individuated itself from 'the chaos of pure difference', a set of relations at a degree of organization but always also shot through the forces of disorganization. A body is a relatively open and relatively closed instance of organization in a field of forces.



As Anna Cutler and Iain MacKenzie have recently discussed, this expanded definition allows us to consider not only knowledge *of* the body, but knowledge *as* a body, or in other words, a body of knowledge: such as knowing how to swim. Conventionally, they suggest, the 'physical' bodies of the swimmer and the water are understood as qualitatively different from the 'ideational' body of knowing how to swim. They are understood to belong to different categories of things because 'it is usually assumed that the latter is organised by way of conscious conceptual construction whereas the former are the result of unconscious, physical processes' (Cutler and MacKenzie 2011: 55). My physical body just happens, whereas my bodies of knowledge are the outcome of a conscious decision. But this just isn't how

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things work for Deleuze, nor indeed for Bergson who discusses the example of learning to swim in *Creative Evolution*. How can we learn how to swim without already knowing how to swim? Surely I will drown if I don't know how to swim before I throw myself into the water?

In response to such dilemmas, Bergson argues that philosophy has developed an 'exaggerated confidence... in the powers of the individual mind' (CE, 201), leading to an overemphasis in the role of the intellect with respect to how we learn to live in the world. But we cannot learn on the basis of conscious knowledge; or to put it in the terms of Gilbert Ryle no amount of consciously *knowing that* 'the mechanism of swimming is connected with that of walking' (ibid., 204) will produce the know-how I need not to drown when I jump in the water. And vice versa, I don't really need to *know that* the butterfly stroke involves 'an emphasis on the back trunk and lower limb muscle groups' in order to *know how* to do it. Bergson says:

If we had never seen a man swim, we might say that swimming is an impossible thing, inasmuch as, to learn to swim, we must begin by holding ourselves up in the water and, consequently, already know how to swim. Reasoning, in fact, always nails us down to the solid ground. But if, quite simply, I throw myself into the water without fear, I may keep myself up well enough at first by merely struggling, and gradually adapt myself to the new environment: I shall thus have learnt to swim (CE, 203).

Going beyond intelligence cannot be done through intelligence, Bergson argues; only through action. 'You must take things by storm; you must thrust intelligence outside itself' (204). Likewise for Deleuze, we need to shift our focus from knowledge to learning, to liberate the process from the product, or better to see the process as an end in itself, in order to articulate the embodied nature of ideas. Learning is a corporeal experiment in relation to other bodies, like a body of water. Learning to swim, he says 'means composing the singular points of one's own body...with those of another... which tears us apart but also propels us into a hitherto unknown and unheard-of world of problems. To what are we dedicated,' he asks 'if not to those

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problems which demand the very transformation of our body' (DR, 241)?



Learning, Deleuze says, is not the result of pre-meditation but an 'involuntary adventure' (Deleuze 1994: 165); it 'always takes place in and through the unconscious' (205); and again, 'we never know in advance how someone will learn... what encounters make them a philosopher' (DR, 205). But this is not to position the learner as entirely passive; we can choose to embark on an apprenticeship, to set out on the treasure hunt. Indeed, we might suggest that performance is one way to stage the 'involuntary adventure' that is the process of embodied learning; a site in which bodies unlearn old habits and learn new ones, including unlearning the old Cartesian thinking habits which doubtless die hard.

2.2 A body is the sum of its affects

Secondly, whereas 'Descartes claims that we can know the nature of the body (*res naturans*) as that which thinking being (*res cogitans*) is not' (Cutler and MacKenzie 2011: 61), Deleuze and Guattari ventriloquize Spinoza:

We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into compositions with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body (*ibid.* 257).

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That is, Deleuze and Guattari define a body 'dynamically' in terms of 'the sum total of intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential', as well as by its speeds or in terms of its relations of movement and rest (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 206). The body is not merely a vehicle for the passage of immaterial thought as immaterial, nor the creaturely aspect of a more vital process of creation going on elsewhere. Rather, it is a perpetually self-differing, self-creating assemblage of processes affecting and being affected by the other bodies it encounters. And given that, for Deleuze, thought just is creation; we can also say that this affective body is doing its own kind of thinking alongside the traditional notion of thinking as something that only rational human minds do.

2.3 The body is a body without organs



Thirdly, Deleuze and Guattari conceive bodies in terms of the processes of organization and disorganization, and famously, in terms of what they call the body without organs' – an image first created by Antonin Artaud. In his 1947 radio play *To have done with the judgment of god*, Artaud suggests that man thinks as he is made. As Catherine Dale describes, Artaud 'throws both mind and body into consternation accusing man of thinking along the organized lines of the organism, that is, of thinking in the same way as he is constructed and vice versa' (Dale 2002: 87). Likewise, Deleuze and Guattari argue that bodies are, at the most fundamental

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ontological level, processes of disorganization, chaotic matter which is only secondarily subjected to processes of organization, and particularly to those processes that order matter into the form of 'organisms'. 'You will be organized, you will be an organism, you will articulate your body – otherwise you're just depraved' (ibid., 159). Another way that Deleuze thematises this organizational operation is as a process of judgment – a oppressive, top-down force that serves to stultify creativity 'at the level of the body' (Deleuze 1998: 130). In turn, Deleuze and Guattari argue that 'The way to escape judgement is to make yourself a body without organs, to find your body without organs' (ibid., 131) – understood as a process that involves to learning to *think*, as a body, differently; to think differently with and through the body by reorganizing oneself other than according to organic prescription.

In 'La Parole Soufflée' (1965) Derrida argues that Artaud's concept of the body without organs constitutes an appeal to simple, or metaphysical presence without difference. For Artaud, Derrida says, it is the division of the body into organs which introduces difference into the body and 'opens the lack through which the body becomes absent from itself' (Derrida in Bell 2006:157). In turn, given their appropriation of the concept of the body without organs, one might wonder whether Deleuze and Guattari's account might be equally deconstructed. But as Jeffrey Bell has also emphasised, the enemy of the body without organs is not the organs or organisation *per se*, as what divides and differentiates an otherwise supposedly unified body, but the *organism* as the '*organic* organization of the organs' (ibid., 158 – emphasis added). The organism inserts itself into the BwO in order to prescribe to bodies a distinct and restricted function, molar identity, or specific, fixed strata. For Deleuze and Guattari,

The BwO is not undifferentiated, but has its own inner differentiation, its composed and positioned "true organs", and it is in this manner, then, that Deleuze and Guattari can read Artaud's call for a BwO as not being a call for a One in opposition to the multiple (ibid., 159)

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nor, indeed, for presence as opposed to difference. In this sense, the concept of the BwO plays a central role in Deleuze's effort to re-think the process of creation (whether as thought, art or nature) without the need to posit a transcendent, organizing Law, or what Artaud called 'the judgment of God,' as that which controls the creative process from a position outside of it. Conjoining Artaud with Spinoza, the BwO constitutes a refusal of any distinction between worldly products and a transcendent producer, between organizing mind and organized matter, in favour of a univocal notion of being as a processuality 'immanent in whatever manifests it' (Deleuze 1990: 16). To make yourself a body without organs is both to find and to construct that immanent processuality as it is manifested in the processes of thinking, living, philosophizing, performing.

2.4 A body forces us to think

Fourthly and finally, Deleuze conceives the body as defined by the power to think the unthought:

'Give me a body then: this is the formula of philosophical reversal. 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. Life will no longer be made to appear before the categories of thought; thought will be thrown into the categories of life. The categories of life are precisely the attitudes of the body, its postures. 'We do not even know what a body can do': in its sleep, in its drunkenness, in its efforts and resistances.'

For Deleuze, thought does not begin with the categories of language but with 'something in the world' that presents itself to sensation: difference. Thought is not the product of language but of what Deleuze calls a 'fundamental encounter' (Deleuze 1994: 139). Here, he makes a clear distinction between what he calls 'objects of recognition' and those of *encounter*. Objects of recognition, Deleuze argues, 'do not

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disturb thought' insofar as they provide thought with 'an image of itself'; they reaffirm for thought, in other words, what it already thinks it knows. For Deleuze, instances of recognition do not involve genuine thought. We only 'truly think' when we have difficulty in recognizing something (ibid., 138). Such things produce encounters as the forcing of thought, or as Deleuze puts it:

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*. What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that *it can only be sensed*. In this sense it is opposed to recognition (ibid., 139 – first emphasis original, second emphasis added).

The object of encounter, then, presents itself to affect or sensation alone, rather than to conscious thought or recognition. Indeed, the encounter 'defies consciousness, recognition and representation' (Bogue 1989: 78). Conceived in terms of its power to be affected, Deleuze also argues that the body can think in ways from which consciousness would do well to learn. Difference in itself is that which 'can only be sensed', since consciousness works with identities.

3. Problems with Deleuze's bodies

So, we have looked at four concepts of bodies created by Deleuze. But is it misleading to frame his thought in this way; namely, as thoroughly but not simplistically materialist and as immanent rather than dualist or transcendent in its approach to the mind-body problem? Well according to Peter Hallward - in his 2006 book *Out of the World* – it is; and Deleuze's philosophy, on the contrary, is best summarised as a call for a dissolution of the material self in order to become the adequate vessel for the passage of a dematerialised thought. Hallward's opening contention is that Deleuze 'assumes that the most creative medium of our being is a form of abstract, immediate or dematerialised thought' (ibid., 2). Dematerialised, Hallward says, because Deleuze invokes a separation between thinking and the world.

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Genuine thinking as creation can only be 'out of this world', since any connection to reality constitutes a distortion of its pure form.

...To claim that purely creative thought becomes abstract or immaterial is not to say that such thought is then simply empty or 'non-extended', so much as *liberated from any constituent relation to anything external to itself*... A thinking that proceeds independently of any reference to or mediation through a world or reality external to itself will prove to be our most adequate means of expressing an absolutely creative being or force (Hallward 2006: 2 – original emphasis).

For Hallward, Deleuze creates a hierarchy between the virtual and actual, where the former is conceived as the source of creativity and difference, and the latter is often conceived – almost Platonically – as an inadequate manifestation of this greater vitality elsewhere. More problematically still, Hallward argues that Deleuze's orients thought away from the world in a manner that reduces it to an apolitical practice.

More than a hundred and fifty years after Marx urged us to change rather than contemplate the world, Deleuze, like so many of his philosophical contemporaries, effectively recommends instead that we settle for the alternative choice (Hallward 2006: 7).

But from a Deleuzian perspective, Hallward's critique seals off politics purely into the realm of human bodies as well as restricting thought, after Badiou, to rational process of deduction and calculation. In contrast, while Deleuze and Guattari *do* suggest that we disorganize our bodies, and do invoking the idea of reducing oneself to 'an abstract line' or a 'trait' as a prerequisite for locating 'one's zone of indiscernibility with other traits', this is *not* a process of dematerialization or disembodiment. Becoming a body without organs for instance should be understood as form of *participation* – as adding to yourself, rather than subtracting from yourself, or as the subtraction of that which prevents us from taking part in the life of the world. Whereas Hallward arguably still thinks in terms of a dialectic between being

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(presence) and the void (absence), human politics or no politics – Deleuze allows us to think in terms of a body-politic involving the extension of both human and inhuman bodies' powers of acting.

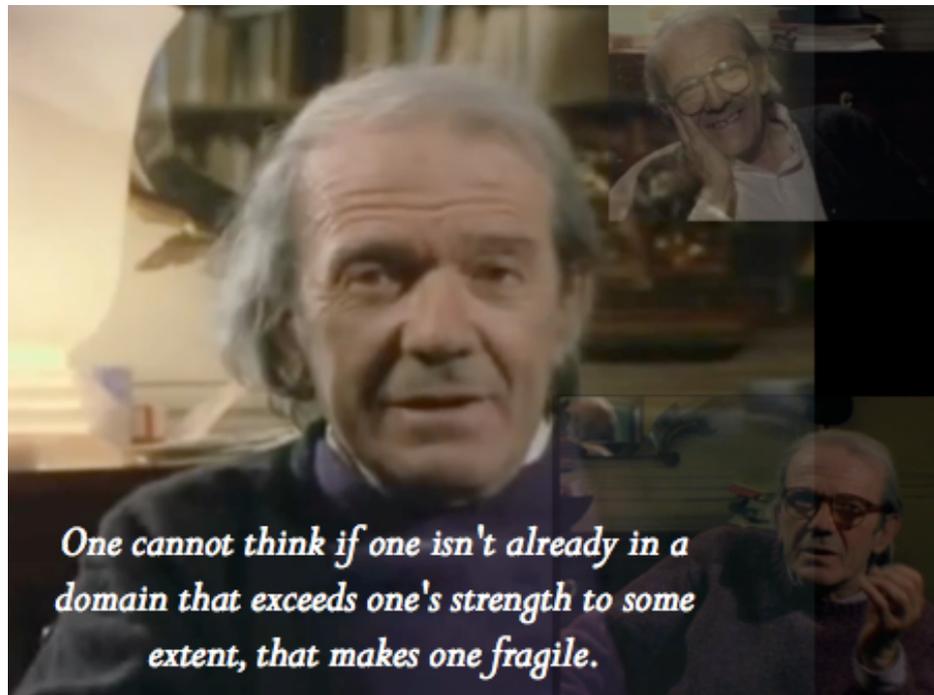
4. Il-thought / The thought of illness



So to conclude, let us return to the the issue of illness with which we began. Like those who inspired him – Spinoza, Nietzsche & Artaud – Deleuze experienced a poor state of health during much of his working life: beginning in 1968 with the first major episode of the pulmonary illness that would dog the philosopher's body until his fatal defenestration in 1995. But what was the relationship, for Deleuze, between philosophy and illness, between thought and the body in poor health? In 1988 Deleuze took part in the eight hours of interviews with Claire Parnet that constitute the film project called the 'ABC of Gilles Deleuze', including a discussion of the subject of illness under the letter 'M for Maladie'. Filmed in the apartment that would later serve as the setting for his suicide, a clearly frail, sixty-four year old Deleuze proposes that illness is not a mere object of thought. Rather, 'a fragile state of health' might have a secondary benefit of endowing us with a greater capacity to attune to the differential forces of life. He continues, clarifying: "illness is not an enemy, not something that gives the feeling of death, but rather, something that gives a feeling of life, but not in the sense that 'I still want to live, and so once I'm cured, I'll start living'" but rather in the sense that "illness sharpens a kind of vision of life or a sense

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of life". "It's not that one is tuned in to *one's own* life," Deleuze says "but for him, it did seem like he was tuned into *life*" – per se, to *a* life or impersonal Life.



But why might this be? One answer comes from the link Deleuze goes on to establish between thought and excessive affect. Drawing from the examples of D.H. Lawrence and Spinoza, whom Deleuze describes as having seen "something so enormous, so overwhelming that it was too much for them", Deleuze then suggests that a degree of fragility might be what forces genuinely creative thought upon us. He argues: "One cannot think if one isn't already in a domain that exceeds one's strength to some extent, that makes one fragile". That is, whilst there are clearly degrees of fragility and ill health that have a disabling effect, there are others that can enable. Or as Deleuze implies in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* – summarized here by Paul Patton: 'The *same* physiological state may weaken *some* powers but also open up new possibilities of feeling or bring about new capacities for acting and being acted upon' (Patton 63); varying from case to case, illness can operate as both an active and a reactive force to different degrees. As reactive force, illness 'narrows my possibilities and condemns me to a diminished milieu to which I can do no more than adapt myself. But, in another way,' Deleuze suggests 'it reveals to me a new capacity' (61); as active force, illnesses can also 'bring us new feelings and teach us new ways of being affected'.

Here and in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze reveals the complexity of affective experimentation and the difficulty of the task of coming to know what our bodies can do. It is not simply that another body is good or bad for me; the so-called "same" body 'can agree with us in one respect and disagree with us in another' and/or what I once found disagreeable about a particular body can later come to agree with me as I age, as I become ill (SPP, 33). The discussion of illness' positive effects also allows Deleuze to emphasise the distinction between power as physical force and power as *puissance* or capacity; the physically weak are not necessarily weak, on the contrary they may live more at the limits of their power to affect and be affected than the physically strong. On the one hand then, we can conclude that it depends on the one who is ill, on how we react 'having experienced too strong an excitation', as Deleuze puts it. The man of *ressentiment* reacts to illness by wishing 'for those in good health to become sick'; or, if bad conscience takes over, my illness becomes my fault (123). But on the other hand, we can also conclude that any given illness is never the same; that illness is itself a body that is defined differently in each singular context.

To affirm some philosophical benefits of illness in this way may well be deemed as romanticism or indeed, asceticism by some. But as Deleuze reports, it was another sickly philosopher, Nietzsche, who exhorted us to 'make of sickness an exploration of health' and to contemplate not one but many *healths* with respect to bodies. 'Is this not the Great Health...? Is this not what permits Nietzsche to experience a superior health at the very moment when he is sick?' (LoS). As Leen De Bolle puts it, for Nietzsche and Deleuze 'sickness and health are not contradictions that exclude each other... sickness is a[n embodied] point of view, an exploration of health and vice versa' (141). In their perpetual transformation – even in becoming-breathless, in a lung-oxygen-tank conjunction – bodies provide us with new ways of thinking and tune us in to the other human and inhuman bodies thinking alongside us.