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## Deleuze's Apocalypse

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Graduate Program in Theory and Criticism

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Arts

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Deleuze's Apocalypse  
(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Grant Dempsey

Graduate Program in Theory and Criticism

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada

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## Abstract

Deleuze refers to the apocalyptic both positively, declaring retrospectively that *Difference and Repetition* was apocalyptic in its purpose, and negatively, sharing the horror expressed in D. H. Lawrence's *Apocalypse*. Deleuze scholars, for their part, tend either to find in Deleuze a manner of living resistance that compels a certain apocalyptic appreciation, or to fear in Deleuze the very same and wonder how a philosophy that seems largely purposed for the promotion of disruption could be anything but escapist at best and socially-politically counterproductive at worst. This thesis is a Deleuzian investigation into the concept of apocalypse: how apocalypse can be constituted as a properly philosophical concept from Deleuze's reading of Lawrence's reading of the *Book of Revelation*, how that philosophical concept of apocalypse is transformed into an affirmative concept in Deleuze's thought, and how, as such, it reveals not only the importance of deterritorialization, but also that of reterritorialization, in the creative orientation towards the actual advocated by Deleuze.

### Keywords

Deleuze, Apocalypse, Revelation, Immanence, Utopia, Lawrence, Guattari, Politics, Aesthetics, Philosophy.

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Greg and Pam; to my grandmother, Barbara Williams; and to Sophie, my canine companion, who has spent hours with me during the writing process.

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## Preface

“Christianity, and above all John of Patmos, founded a new type of man, and a type of thinker that still exists today, enjoying a new reign: the carnivorous lamb,” remarks Gilles Deleuze, in his reading of D. H. Lawrence’s *Apocalypse*.<sup>1</sup> For Lawrence and Deleuze both, the apocalypse of the Book of Revelation, that one apocalypse which has so frequently taken for itself a capital A and so widely dominated the very concept and genre of apocalypse, reflects an entire way of thinking, a way of living. The “Apocalypse,”<sup>2</sup> they suggest, constitutes not one part of an ethics, but asserts itself as the very determination of ethics. The Apocalypse is a system of management of potential for living, and it is one which remains dominant in thought in many spheres of Western culture. This system is one Deleuze means for his whole philosophy to counter, and so Deleuze’s explicit interest in apocalypse is therefore not to be considered a marginal curiosity about an isolatable cultural genre, for there is much at stake for him in responding to it. And yet there is, as some scholars have observed, an aspect of the spirit of Deleuze’s own philosophy that can reasonably be called apocalyptic,<sup>3</sup> and Deleuze himself writes in the preface of *Difference and Repetition* that it—

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<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 38-39.

<sup>2</sup> It is not without great care that I have chosen to refer to the content of the Book of Revelation and its cultural reception together as the “Apocalypse,” despite the potential this choice has to generate confusion for the reader as the work of this thesis on the broader concept of apocalypse and on the explication of a Deleuzian mutation of that concept proceeds. I have decided it is necessary to use Apocalypse-with-a-capital-A in order to maintain in my text, for the reader’s sake, a ground for a livable effect of movement *within* the concept of apocalypse and not simply *between* it and another concept posited externally as an alternative. I will shortly discuss at length this effect of movement inside concepts, as well as what I shall call the *attitude* of concepts, in the body of the thesis. These will in turn prove important in the overall project of the thesis, and that importance, as it becomes clear, will, I hope, sufficiently justify this choice.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Gregory Flaxman, *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy: Powers of the False, Volume I* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

which is, according to him, his first properly philosophical work—“should have been an apocalyptic book.”<sup>4</sup> Deleuze has in fact been criticized as seeming to offer a way of thinking so dedicated to liberating creative powers that it provides only insufficient conditions for the formation of a concretely politically useful worldview. Such unworldliness could indeed be called apocalyptic, the character of a philosophy that purports simultaneously to reveal a creative power and, by revealing, to end the world or to go out of it. It would for this reason be philosophically counterproductive to receive the Deleuze-Lawrence-Nietzsche of this chapter of *Essays Critical and Clinical* as merely a critic of the apocalyptic; he is a critic of the Apocalypse, certainly, but the Apocalypse—the Book of Revelation, or perhaps more specifically, the dominant reception thereof, as described by Lawrence—does not exhaust the apocalyptic. Despite his containing it for the most part in just the one small piece of his oeuvre, Deleuze’s explicit thinking of the concept of apocalypse is very productively relatable to much of the rest of his philosophical and political thought. The question that compels the start of this investigation, then, is not why Deleuze would be interested in the Apocalypse, nor is it what insights he has to contribute to the reception of the Apocalypse or what criticisms he has to offer of that reception. The question that compels the start of this investigation is instead one that would hopefully liberate a Deleuzian potential of the concept of apocalypse: what happens when the apocalyptic is taken up as a conceptual theme in relation to which other major elements of Deleuze’s philosophy may be thought?

But why? What reason is there to pursue this question? It is not exactly that the concept of apocalypse appears to be central in Deleuze’s thinking; this investigation is not

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<sup>4</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), xxi.



meant simply to suggest that Deleuze ought to be considered “a philosopher of the apocalypse,” for any such proposition would neglect the movement that is inside the concept of apocalypse itself. Deleuze is not, after all, a philosopher of the Apocalypse. It is rather that very movement that this thesis is, in part, supposed to elucidate. The purpose of this thesis is, in other words, less to pin Deleuze to the concept of apocalypse than it is to enliven the concept of apocalypse through Deleuze and in Deleuze’s terms. A first reason for this work on apocalypse, then, presents itself: the concept of apocalypse serves well as a sort of case study, a fine opportunity to show what it means that thought itself is movement, that philosophy is creation and mutation. Accordingly, the first chapter of the following investigation begins with a section dedicated to an examination of the metaphilosophy Deleuze and Guattari offer in their final collaboration. This examination is concentrated on the elements of Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of the philosophical concept itself that insist on the occurrence of movement inside a philosophical concept, as the ground of the concept’s own repetitions with differences, and is aimed at the relation of those elements with one of Deleuze’s accounts of the genetic movement from the virtual through the intensive to the actual in *Difference and Repetition*. This groundwork is necessary in order to make as explicit as possible what this thesis is meant to do with the concept of apocalypse subsequently. It is, in effect, a methodological chapter.

The second chapter is focused on Lawrence’s *Apocalypse*. Adhering closely to the terms and the framework elaborated in the first chapter, this second chapter first extracts from Lawrence’s text and from Deleuze’s reading of it a properly philosophical concept of apocalypse, establishing a certain combination of components that seems to constitute it as such. The relations between these components are discussed with careful precision; this discussion leads then into an account of the transformation of the concept that results in an

approximation of the apocalyptic that Deleuze himself invokes as suitably descriptive of his work. In the end, it is proposed that the Deleuzian form of the concept of apocalypse is one that gives to thought a power of immanent revelation, one which serves to give thought the resources necessary for creation. Apocalypse, in this sense, turns out to be a concept adequate to the event of the revelation of the ontological machinery responsible for the genesis of real experience.

The third and final chapter compares this transformed concept of apocalypse to the transformed concept of utopia that appears in Deleuze and Guattari's *What Is Philosophy?*, ultimately proposing that apocalypse serves better to do what Deleuze and Guattari suppose utopia should, but doubt that it can: stand for the concrete effect of philosophy, for the impact of philosophy on the world. In the process, this chapter addresses certain perspectives in the field of Deleuze studies and argues for the distinction of concepts often conflated, most importantly *world* and *actual*, and *present* and *actual*. These distinctions clarify the Deleuzian meaning of apocalypse, which in turn reveals important aspects of the task of philosophy.

## Chapter 1

It is not only for his own sake that Gilles Deleuze, along with Félix Guattari, insists that philosophy is the creation of concepts. This definition of philosophy is itself a concept and, as such, one of Deleuze and Guattari's major contributions to the field. It is no simple platitude, for the creation of a concept is a complicated endeavor. There is movement in a concept, and to think philosophically, in the way Deleuze proposes, is to move with it—not to bring it to a halt, but to ride it. Moreover, to make a contribution to philosophy is not to complete a concept, but to set it in motion, that it may continue its mutations in the future. It would seem that a most faithful engagement with Deleuze's thought would be one that is itself conceptually creative, one that does more than observe and explicate or contextualize one or another of his philosophical lines of flight. The creation of concepts is ongoing and open, and it is a task that Deleuze urges all who would "do philosophy" to take up; he himself invites those who read him to think with and beyond him, more so than about and according to him.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of this first chapter is to offer a reading of the becoming of concepts that explicitly associates it with the "-plication" structure Deleuze formulates in *Difference and Repetition*. Such association emphasizes the looseness and the motility of

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<sup>5</sup> In conversation with Foucault, Deleuze says, "It is strange that it was Proust, an author thought to be a pure intellectual, who said it so clearly: treat my book as a pair of glasses directed to the outside; if they don't suit you, find another pair; I leave it to you to find your own instrument, which is necessarily an instrument for combat. A theory does not totalize; it is an instrument for multiplication and it also multiplies itself." See Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power," in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 208.

concepts. The movements that belong to concepts, the movements that occur inside concepts, seem sometimes overlooked among scholars whose greater interest is in affirming the composite structure of concepts, the relation of concepts to a full plane of immanence, or the power of strictly new concepts, the power of concept creation itself, to disturb existing conceptual relations. These various interests in Deleuze's concept of the concept tend to condition a way of engaging with concepts that nonetheless freezes them, holds them to identity. For doing so, they seem to emerge from a relative neglect of Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of one of the more complex characteristics of philosophical concepts: the traversal of a concept's components by the whole concept. This section will examine this relatively overlooked aspect of concepts in order to provide a detailed account of genetic difference inside the concept. This account describes the creative changing of existing concepts in terms that are consistent with Deleuze and Guattari's own. The section will then, finally, propose *attitude* as a new way of thinking of the impacts of all aspects of a given concept—endoconsistency, exoconsistency, self-referentiality, the plane of immanence, the conceptual persona, and the traversal of the components by the whole—on each other.

Deleuze and Guattari support their claim that philosophy is nothing other than the creation of concepts with a thorough discussion of what constitutes a properly philosophical concept. As they put it, "Philosophers have not been sufficiently concerned with the nature of the concept as philosophical reality."<sup>6</sup> Their account serves not only as

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<sup>6</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 11.

a static definition of concepts, but also as a guide for creative engagement of concepts. Deleuze and Guattari's explanation of the philosophical concept is much less concerned with the essence or mechanistic functions of a concept than with the mobile and self-multiplicative capacities of a concept. In keeping with the task of philosophical thought—"as Deleuze frequently asserts, to address not *what is x?* but *how much, how and in what cases?*"<sup>7</sup>—when Deleuze and Guattari ask and seem to answer what in fact a concept is, really the question that is of interest to them is, "Why, through what necessity, and for what use must concepts, and always new concepts, be created? And in order to do what?"<sup>8</sup> To explain what a concept is, is to elaborate what a concept does and what it can do, what is involved in creating one and how every concept creation produces the need for more creations.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, philosophical concepts are composite in nature. Every philosophical concept consists of other, component concepts. This is the case with every concept: "There is no concept with only one component. Even the first concept, the one with which philosophy 'begins,' has several components, because it is not obvious that philosophy must have a beginning, and if it does determine one, it must combine it with a point of view or a ground."<sup>9</sup> It is in its components that a concept has a history extending before its own creation, and it is as the combination of previously

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<sup>7</sup> Patricia Farrell. "The Philosopher-Monkey: Learning and the Discordant Harmony of the Faculties," in *Thinking Between Deleuze and Kant: A Strange Encounter*, ed. Edward Willatt and Matt Lee, (New York: Continuum, 2009), 24.

<sup>8</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 8-9.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

existing concepts—as an inspired selection of conceptual resources that are found to resonate with one another—that a new concept is capable of responding to philosophical problems that are beyond the capacity of any of the existing concepts. Deleuze and Guattari refer to this composite aspect of the philosophical concept as endoconsistency: “Components, or what defines the *consistency* of the concept, its endoconsistency, are distinct, heterogeneous, and yet not separable. . . . Components remain distinct, but something passes from one to the other, something that is undecidable between them.”<sup>10</sup> Endoconsistency is not a smooth unity. The components, insofar as they are components, certainly come together to comprise a single whole, but the components remain distinct within that whole, giving their own unique forces to the whole.

Every concept also presupposes something “prephilosophical,” something that emerges prior to the creation of the concept and thus prior to the philosophical task proper. This is the plane of immanence, “presupposed not in the way that one concept may refer to others [its components] but in the way that concepts themselves refer to a nonconceptual understanding.”<sup>11</sup> A plane of immanence gives the very image of thought that grounds the concept creations that take place on it. The plane of immanence offers up the logic and the set of values according to which, with respect to that one plane, philosophical thought is to operate. It is prephilosophical not because it is separable from philosophy or relevant to anything other than philosophy, but because it is the

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 40.

determination of philosophy. Philosophy itself is only the activity of concept creation. It needs a plane for its own determination, but it does not determine the plane. Philosophy does, however, “institute” the plane. To use other language equally resonant with Deleuze’s thought, philosophy proceeds like an unfolding from a plane. Every concept created on a plane is a sort of insistence on that plane, that image of thought.

In addition to being a combination in itself, a philosophical concept is inherently inclined to connect with other concepts: it “has an exoconsistency with other concepts, when their respective creation implies the construction of a bridge on the same plane.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, the concept is not just capable of being fitted into connections with other concepts by a thinking subject according to that subject’s project; there are tendencies to resonate with other concepts that belong to the concept itself. On the other hand, it is necessary to avoid overstating this characteristic of the concept in order not to limit it. The concept is not bound to certain other concepts, not stuck to them by any necessity in thought. If it were, it would lack the integrity as a concept unto itself that is supposed to be given it by its own endoconsistency, and it would seem rather as though the concept had gone straight from its creation simply to serving another concept as a component. In the spirit of their philosophical pragmatics, Deleuze and Guattari allow the concept freedom in its relations. “As fragmentary totalities, concepts are not even the pieces of a puzzle, for their irregular contours do not correspond to each other. . . . Even bridges from one concept to another are still junctions, or detours, which do not define any

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 20.

discursive whole. They are movable bridges. From this point of view, philosophy can be seen as being in a perpetual state of digression or digressiveness.”<sup>13</sup>

The concept is also without reference: “it posits itself and its object at the same time as it is created.”<sup>14</sup> The concept is neither created nor used primarily to describe states of affairs. The creation of a concept is not a contribution to language to facilitate its capacity to reflect the world. The creation of a concept is also the creation of whatever it seems to be a concept “of”—or at least that would be the mark of a successful concept creation—for, in Deleuze and Guattari’s metaphilosophy, there is ultimately no hard distinction to be made between the concept and its object. The concept’s creation is precisely the addition of its object to the reality of thought. Deleuze and Guattari explain that the concept has both absolute and relative dimensions: “As whole it is absolute, but insofar as it is fragmentary it is relative.”<sup>15</sup> With respect to its creation as the combining of components, and to the work it does and can do by connection with other concepts thereafter, the concept is relative. It can change, mutate. It can achieve a new consistency. It can seem to become more or less able to function, *as though* perhaps according to an external standard such as if it were referential. But Deleuze and Guattari insist, of course, that the concept is absolute in its self-positing. Regardless of its relativity, it is self-referential. It is itself what it is supposed to show or describe. “The relativity and

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 21.



absoluteness of the concept are like its pedagogy and its ontology, its creation and its self-positing, its ideality and its reality.”<sup>16</sup>

And as inherent in the concept as those concepts it presupposes and these tendencies to resonate with other concepts is, finally, what Deleuze and Guattari call a conceptual persona. Conceptual personae are the very “powers of concepts.”<sup>17</sup> The conceptual persona is a sort of role that thought must adopt in order to create or even to think the concept; alternatively, in some cases, it may be that it is creating or thinking the concept that causes thought to adopt this role. Every concept presupposes not only components and a plane of immanence, but a persona. This persona is irreducible to the empirical person responsible for authoring the philosophical text in which the concept is created. Of course the concept requires a person to compose the text of its creation, but more importantly, it requires the person to become a conceptual persona. When I do philosophy, “I am no longer myself but thought’s aptitude for finding itself and spreading across a plane that passes through me at several places.”<sup>18</sup> A philosophical concept is therefore not neutral. A concept not only directs thought, posits itself as a way of thinking something, but also sweeps thought up in a certain way of feeling, a certain way of taking interest, a way of living. Like the plane of immanence, the conceptual persona exceeds the boundaries of philosophy. The conceptual persona is inseparable from philosophy,

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 64.

more so than the plane, since it is intimately involved in its concept, and yet it exceeds the very conceptuality of the concept, the ontology of the concept itself. The persona is that through which the force of thought must pass in order to create the concept, and it is in turn that through which the force of the concept itself must pass in order to affect life: “Possibilities of life or modes of existence can be invented only on a plane of immanence that develops the power of conceptual personae.”<sup>19</sup> The notion of the conceptual persona is very old in Deleuze. It appears already, unnamed as such, in the opening of *Difference and Repetition*, as a key element in Kierkegaard and Nietzsche’s achievement of “an incredible equivalent of theatre within philosophy,” their introduction of real movement into philosophy: “When Kierkegaard explains that the knight of faith so resembles a bourgeois in his Sunday best as to be capable of being mistaken for one, this philosophical instruction must be taken as the remark of a director showing how the knight of faith should be *played*.”<sup>20</sup> As well as contributing its object to reality, a concept makes personal demands on those who think it and thus contributes a sort of subjectivity.

These aspects of the philosophical concept account for how one is to be created, how one is to be used, and how one is to affect life. They do not, however, introduce difference in the concept, difference that is properly internal to the concept. Thus far, it would seem entirely as though a philosophical concept simply is what it is; the place of difference would seem only to be in the movement from one concept to another—the call

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>20</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 8-9.

for concepts, always new concepts—or in what a concept does for the thinking of reality, maximizing differences therein.<sup>21</sup> As for the concept itself, is there an internal difference? Is a single concept fixed with an identity? Is that what it means for the concept to be absolute as a whole? Does the concept's self-positing depend on identity? Is it because there is identity in the concept itself that thought must be selective, that some concept creations must be considered successful and others not, and that some established concepts must simply be had done with?

Daniel W. Smith argues that concepts' "only identity lies in experimentation—that is, in their intrinsic variability and mutations."<sup>22</sup> Concepts are capable of variation inside themselves, and so, Smith suggests, it is by experiment rather than judgment that even already existing concepts are most fruitfully engaged. An important question to pursue in the terms of Deleuze and Guattari's metaphilosophy is how it is that concepts already long established are capable of incredible change without quite becoming a new concept. Deleuze and Guattari explain sufficiently how one concept can be made into a new and other concept. "Suppose a component is added to a concept: the concept will probably break up or undergo a complete change involving, perhaps, another plane—at any rate, other problems."<sup>23</sup> But what is it that happens when a concept such as desire or

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<sup>21</sup> Deleuze claims, "What is interesting about concepts like *desire*, or *machine*, or *assemblage* is that they only have value in their variables and in the maximum of variables which they allow." See Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 144.

<sup>22</sup> Daniel W. Smith, *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 124.

<sup>23</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 31.

beauty shows itself capable of great mutation and yet does not quite give way to a new concept, but to its own rejuvenation? Answering this question requires careful discussion of one more aspect of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the concept.

The whole of a philosophical concept, that one concept which other concepts brought together as components thus comprise, is not merely the combination of those components. It is rather their point of coincidence, which, as Smith observes, is "consistent *in itself*."<sup>24</sup> Smith means simply that insofar as a concept is a proper concept, it has an ontological integrity in its own right, irreducible to the sum of its component concepts. This integrity is constituted by the way in which the components are made "indiscernible" in the concept, or in other words, by the way in which the components are made to relate to each other. The components remain distinct inside the concept, they *are* distinct inside the concept, and yet they must, to form the concept, *become* indiscernible. They blend without ceasing to be distinct. Certain of the components of a concept form distinct zones of indiscernibility with certain others, so that a concept may contain more than one such zone, but it is at the point where all of the components are indiscernible that the concept condenses into its whole form.<sup>25</sup> It is this point of blending that is the concept proper.

But a closer examination of Deleuze and Guattari's description complicates this. The concept is not merely a *static* point between its components. "The conceptual point

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<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 135.

<sup>25</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 25.

constantly traverses its components, rising and falling within them. . . . The concept is in a state of survey . . . in relation to its components, endlessly traversing them according to an order without distance. It is immediately co-present to all its components or variations, at no distance from them, passing back and forth through them.”<sup>26</sup> The point of coincidence of the concept’s components itself is capable of *relating back to the components*. The conceptual point moves over and among its components. This distinction of the whole and its components is associated with the distinction, previously discussed, of the concept as absolute whole and the concept as relative, fragmentary whole: the concept is “relative to its own components, to other concepts, to the plane on which it is defined, and to the problems it is supposed to resolve; but it is absolute through the condensation it carries out, the site it occupies on the plane, and the conditions it assigns to the problem.” Thus the concept is “*infinite [absolute] through its survey or its speed but finite [relative] through its movement that traces the contour of its components* [original emphasis].”<sup>27</sup> The relativity of the concept can also be considered the various dependencies of the whole of the concept, while the absoluteness of the concept is both the concept as that concept which it uniquely is—or, to phrase it differently, the concept as that one concept which is emergent from the combination of its dependencies rather than the concept *as* the combination of its dependencies—and the work in thought of which that concept is uniquely capable: the expression or positing of a

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 20-21.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 21.

certain pure event, the addition of that pure event to thought.<sup>28</sup> It is the absolute whole that corresponds to the pure event.

Because forming and giving to thought the absolute whole of a concept would seem to be the goal, per every concept, of philosophical activity, it seems also that the relative, fragmentary whole is, in a way, a means to an end. Deleuze insists frequently throughout his work that concept creation properly occurs as a response to a problem. The problem must be apprehended before components can be gathered to form a new concept capable of solving it. There appears to be a correspondence, however, between the problem and the absolute whole of the concept, such that although the absolute whole seems to emerge from the relative, the absolute whole must be apprehended along with the problem itself. The formation of the relative whole of the concept is then guided by this apprehension of the absolute whole as the necessary response to the problem. Even though the absolute whole requires the fragmentary whole, insofar as the former is emergent from the latter, the absolute whole nonetheless has primacy. Hence the statement already quoted above: the concept is “relative . . . to the problems it is supposed to resolve; but it is absolute through . . . the conditions it assigns to the problem.” The absolute whole comes into being as soon as the problem does. This is really the moment the concept is created. The formation of the relative whole—the elaboration of the relations of the components, of the relevance of the concept to other

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<sup>28</sup> For a very clear, concise, and useful discussion of the philosophical concept as the expression of a pure event, see Paul Patton, *Deleuzian Concepts: Philosophy, Colonization, Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 55-59. Whereas I will be turning to *Difference and Repetition* for terms with which to expand the account of the nature of the concept, Patton turns to Deleuze’s description of the pure event in *The Logic of Sense*, thus directing himself to the relation between the concept and its object.

concepts, and so on—is the uncovering of what the absolute whole needs in order to become available to thought.

There are, however, two ways of supposing difference inside the concept, using the terms of Deleuze and Guattari’s framework, that would challenge this notion that the relative whole of the concept is only what follows from the creative apprehension of the absolute whole and only what gives to the absolute whole its means of being fully thought. Both, though especially the second, of these will be important in the progression of the present study. The most succinct definition of the concept that Deleuze and Guattari offer, which will be helpful moving forward, is the following: “The concept is defined by *the inseparability of a finite number of heterogeneous components traversed by a point of absolute survey at infinite speed* [original emphasis].”<sup>29</sup>

First, this suggests that to analyze a concept is not simply to break it down into its components or to determine what its components are, but, further, to think the components *from* the point of absolute survey as from a certain point of view. To analyze a concept is to impose the whole of the concept onto its components, to think the components according to their implication of the whole. Components therefore bear their passage through the constitution of another concept as a mark in *their own* history moving forward. Deleuze and Guattari use the transformation of the Cartesian cogito into the Kantian cogito as an example of the creation of a concept by the addition of a component: Descartes creates his cogito with the concepts of doubting, thinking, and

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<sup>29</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 21.

being as its three components; Kant adds time as a fourth component. This moment in the history of philosophy is important to Deleuze not only because it accomplishes the creation of a new cogito, but also because it mutates the concept of time itself. The concept of time is made new by its use as a component in the new cogito.<sup>30</sup> Once placed in the constitution of a new concept, the Kantian cogito, the concept of time in turn becomes rethinkable through the cogito, through the demands made on it by the cogito. Accomplishing a totally transformative imposition of the new concept on its own components may even be precisely the measure of a great act of concept creation. It is ultimately the resultant transformation of time that makes Kant's intervention in the cogito great, and it is likewise the rethinking of desire itself that makes Deleuze and Guattari's creation and elaboration of the concepts of desiring-machines and desiring-production great. Is it not an indication of the tremendous power of a concept when some common component is itself made new in the history of philosophy as a result of that concept's creation, and when that concept is thus, by its implication in that component, capable of haunting even those who would wish to ignore that concept and use just the one component itself in their philosophical work? Such a legacy of a concept comes out of the *relative* whole of the concept. It may be the absolute whole that first causes the transformative imposition of the concept onto its own component, but it is nonetheless through its capacity to relate back to its own component—and not just to smother its component by inclusion—that the concept is ultimately capable of having this effect.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 32.



From the point of view of the whole concept, which is implicated in the components, this appears as the power of the concept. From the point of view of the components, however, it is a power inherent in them. It is a power to be changed, an openness that cannot be reduced to identity. Concepts do not just propel thought towards the creation of new concepts, the production of external differences; they are also quite capable of internal mutation. A component is changed by its serving another concept as such. It is for, and from the point of view of, the concept that serves as a component in another, that conceptual imposition of this sort shows that difference is at the very heart of a concept.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, Kant's rethinking of time involves the addition of components to the concept of time. The creation of the Kantian cogito places a demand on the concept of time to include simultaneity and permanence as components along with succession.<sup>31</sup> But there is a second way that difference is deep inside the concept, and this second way may allow for the internal mutation of a concept to occur under conditions other than the addition of a component. As previously mentioned, in a concept, there is not only the point of condensation where all of the components coincide, but also distinct zones of indiscernibility between certain of the components and excluding certain others. To use Deleuze and Guattari's example, analysis of the Cartesian cogito shows that in addition to the point of coincidence of the three components, doubting, thinking, and being, there are also a zone of indiscernibility

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

between doubting and thinking (“myself who doubts, I cannot doubt that I think”), and another between thinking and being (“in order to think it is necessary to be”). But, as the authors note,

doubt includes moments that are not the species of a genus but the *phases* of a variation: perceptual, scientific, obsessional doubt (every concept therefore has a phase space . . . ). The same goes for modes of thought—feeling, imagining, having ideas—and also for types of being, thing, or substance—infinite being, finite thinking being, extended being. It is noteworthy that in the last case the concept of self retains only the second phase of being and excludes the rest of the variation.<sup>32</sup>

What is interesting here is that in addition to insisting that components, as concepts in their own right, include whole fields of variations of their own, Deleuze and Guattari note that the variations of the components are retained in the concept only in some portion, not completely. Some of the variations are excluded, sometimes all but one variation. The concept of self does not, then, consist of doubting, thinking, and being, but, more precisely, of certain variations of doubting, thinking, and being. The components are frozen for their participation in the concept, determined by the precise relations with each other into which they are placed. In the terms of Deleuze and Guattari’s metaphilosophy, the absolute whole of the concept that is the Cartesian cogito is given to thought through a very carefully managed relativity. Perhaps a concept need not have a component added to it in order to be created anew, but could be mutated through a more complete infolding of the components it already has.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 25.

This is the point at which a turn to *Difference and Repetition* is useful. It is in *Difference and Repetition* that Deleuze not only elaborates his rich theory of the ontological domains of the virtual, the intensive, and the actual, but also offers a handful of different ways of describing them. Each describes a different aspect of the processes by which each is produced and by which each contributes to the production of the others. In addition, for example, to virtual-intensive-actual, Deleuze offers problem-solution, differentiation-individuation-differenciation, and perplication-complication-implication-explication-replication.<sup>33</sup> The last of these best serves the present purpose. It is worth quoting Deleuze at length on this point:

*‘Perplication’* is what we called this state of Problems-Ideas, with their multiplicities and coexistent varieties, their determination of elements, their distribution of mobile singularities and their formation of ideal series around these singularities. . . . *‘Complication’* is what we called the state of chaos which retains and comprises all the actual intensive series which correspond to these ideal series, incarnating them and affirming their divergence. This chaos thus gathers in itself the being of the problems and distributes it to all the systems and fields which form within it the persistent value of the problematic. *‘Implication’* is what we called the state of intensive series in so far as these communicate through their differences and resonate in forming fields of individuation. Each is ‘implicated’ by the others, which it implicates in turn; they constitute the ‘enveloping’ and the ‘enveloped’, the ‘solving’ and the ‘solved’ of the system. Finally, *‘explication’* is what we called the state of qualities and extensities which cover and develop the system, between the basic series: it is here that the differentiations and integrations which define the totality of the final solution are traced out. The *centres of envelopment* still testify to the persistence of the problems or the persistence of the values of implication in the movement which explicates and solves them (*replication*).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Deleuze lists these and more. See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 284.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 280-281.

Deleuze and Guattari's dissection of the concept can be further elucidated by contextualizing it in Deleuze's ontological system, using these terms. As concepts are *responses* to problems—even the absolute whole of the concept, which, as previously discussed, must be apprehended along with the problem itself, is not identical to the problem itself—and intensive, it is clear that the states pertinent to concepts are those which are intensive, complication and implication. Concepts are certainly not perpllicated. They are not virtual; they are between the virtual and the actual.

But how should concepts be thought, in terms of the states of complication and implication? It may seem best to suppose that it is the absoluteness of a philosophical concept that should be described as complicated and that its relativity should be described as implicated. Surely it is the concept's absolute whole with its capacity for infinite movement or infinite survey that corresponds to the ideal, and the relative whole is implicated: its components implicate each other, it implicates other concepts and vice versa, it itself is implicated in its own components, and so on. However—and this is to be asked without challenging that the absolute whole is indeed complicated in this technical sense—is there complication at the level of the relative whole as well?

The relative whole of the concept is that which passes through its components precisely along the paths set for it by the zones of indiscernibility that the components form between each other. Thus, the concept's movement through the two zones in the Cartesian cogito—between doubting and thinking, “myself who doubts, I cannot doubt that I think,” and between thinking and being, “in order to think it is necessary to be”—constitutes the full but relative existence of the concept: “Myself who doubts, I think, I

am, I am a thinking being.”<sup>35</sup> This is the concept in its state of implication. Doubting implicates thinking, thinking implicates being, and so on. But these implications occur on the condition of a reduction of the variation of each component. Doubting implicates thinking in just one way, thinking implicates being in just one way. The concept must be capable of a state of complication in its relativity, such that each component brings into the concept its own full variation, even if only as untapped potential. If the components’ variations exist in the concept as potentials, this would suggest in turn that the components could implicate one another inside the concept differently, if caused to do so. The result might be the production of a new point of absolute survey, an entirely new condensation of the concept, not as a result of the addition of a new component, but as a result of the uncovering of the concept’s *relative* complication and an activation of other variations of the components it already has, so that new and different implications occur.<sup>36</sup>

This capacity of a philosophical concept to transform without gaining or losing components, by relating the components it already has differently, could make it difficult to describe such a transformation in concise terms. It is best to introduce a new descriptive notion: the *attitude* of a concept. The attitude of a concept is the form of the

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<sup>35</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 24.

<sup>36</sup> Smith asserts as much, writing that a concept can be revised at any level: “one can add, subtract, *or transform* the components, *or alter the relations between them* [my emphases].” See Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 341. He does not, however, offer a detailed account of how transformation of the components and their relations is possible, which is what I have tried to develop in this section, in order to improve the vocabulary for discussion of changes of a concept through such transformation.

concept in light of its being endoconsistent in one way rather than another, but with the same components.

To refer to this as the variation of the concept would result in confusion. Variation is something else: the scope of difference that belongs to one absolute conceptual whole. Paul Patton writes that “to describe current events in terms of . . . philosophical concepts is to relate them back to the pure events of which they appear only as one particular determination, thereby dissociating the pure event from the particular form in which it has been actualized and pointing to the possibility of other determinate actualizations.”<sup>37</sup> These determinations are the variations of a concept; they are the various determinations of the pure event that corresponds to the concept. The attitude of the concept would, in contrast, be a difference in the concept’s relativity—a difference in the way that the concept traces the contours of its components—that produces a different absolute conceptual whole. To introduce the notion of conceptual attitude, then, is to introduce into the Deleuzo-Guattarian vocabulary of the concept a term with which to discuss the productive variability of one combination of components. Smith wonders about “the possibility of what one might call *exhausted* concepts.” He continues, “If certain concepts can be taken up again and transformed within philosophy . . . it is because what the concept expresses (the ‘pure event’) is irreducible to its actualizations.”<sup>38</sup> If one considers

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<sup>37</sup> Patton, *Deleuzian Concepts*, 58.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, 344.

conceptual attitude, it becomes apparent that concepts have this potential for renewal also because every concept is irreducible to the expression of one pure event.

If the word *attitude* suggests a personal as well as postural or positional consideration, this, too, is for good reason. In addition to turning the concept towards a different pure event, the difference in the consistency of the concept, the different attitude, also produces a difference in the conceptual persona, or a different conceptual persona altogether. This, along with other aspects of what it means to think of the attitude of a concept, shall be demonstrated in the next section.

Before moving on, it is worthwhile to respond to a question Smith raises:

If Deleuze tended to ignore liberal concepts, or even certain Marxist concepts, was it because he deemed that such concepts had become exhausted, or were no longer relevant to contemporary problematics? Moreover, is this not why Deleuze defines philosophy as the creation of *new* concepts—new concepts that would constitute a response to changing conditions? Put simply, how does one assess the difference between the need to create a new concept in philosophy and the possibility of reactivating or transforming an *already-existing* concept?<sup>39</sup>

Must the question be posed in this way? Although it does in a way suit Deleuze's model of philosophy as always properly the creation of a concept in response to a problem, to discuss creating a new concept and inducing mutation in an existing concept as though they were alternative strategies available to a thinker, it seems, on the other hand, to reduce philosophy mechanically, to impose an expectation of symmetry on the *process* of philosophy. Deleuze, after all, often enacts both strategies, proposing entirely new

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

concepts and working creatively with concepts inherited from predecessors, even within single projects, seeming to show, in himself as a case, that philosophy often involves the simultaneous pursuit of both concept creation and concept transformation. Rather than that philosophy is *the creation of a concept* as compelled by an Idea qua problem, it seems better to assert that philosophy is *conceptual productiveness* compelled by an Idea qua problem. Thought is disturbed by Ideas, and such disturbance, the more important or insistent it is, is not likely to be calmed just by the creation of one concept. It seems less a question of strategy than a question of consequence, as long as the philosopher takes to heart Deleuze's claim that thought is "one of those terrible movements which can be sustained only under the condition of a larval subject. These systems admit only such subjects as these, since they alone can undertake the forced movement by becoming the patient of the dynamisms which express it. Even the philosopher is a larval subject of his own system."<sup>40</sup> Sometimes, the creation of an entirely new concept requires the mutation of existing concepts first; sometimes, the creation of a new concept results in a transformative imposition of that concept on its own components, as already discussed in the body of the thesis, or sweeps up other concepts and transforms them in the connections to which it inclines. A philosophical response to an Idea need not be an occurrence with only one dimension.

The notion of conceptual attitude should therefore serve also to expand the available vocabulary for tracing the results of problems in philosophy: not only in the

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<sup>40</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 118-119.



form of new concepts, but also in the form of new attitudes of previously existing concepts.

## Chapter 2

The concept of apocalypse is obviously an old one. Deleuze's relationship with it is, in the technical sense, complicated. He thinks of his own work as apocalyptic, and yet he definitively joins D. H. Lawrence in decrying "the Apocalypse" of John of Patmos as a cultural phenomenon. Before following Deleuze into Lawrence's Apocalypse, it is necessary briefly to analyze the concept of apocalypse according to what has been established. So, this section has two goals: first, to put Deleuze's reading of Lawrence's *Apocalypse* explicitly into the terms laid out in the previous section, thereby extracting a proper *concept* of apocalypse appropriate for philosophical treatment, and second, to relate Lawrence's critical method and the vitalism he describes—folding form and content—to Deleuze's ontology through an "attitude adjustment" of that extracted concept. In reality, there are already two attitudes of the concept of apocalypse to work with. There is, of course, "the Apocalypse": John of Patmos's apocalyptic vision and the reality it produces, the mode of thought it generates, its domination of life. Deleuze follows Lawrence in opposing this Apocalypse. There is, on the other hand, that attitude of the concept which is Deleuzian, that attitude by which Deleuze and his readers understand his own work. The purpose here, then, is not to invent a new apocalyptic attitude as though there were none already given to thought through Deleuze's work, but simply to trace the difference between these two attitudes, to expand the explicit account of the Deleuzian attitude of the concept of apocalypse, not unlike Deleuze and Guattari's own tracing of the genesis of the Kantian cogito from the Cartesian. This serves as an opportunity to put to the test the proposed notion of conceptual attitude, to begin the

process of decision over whether or not it is in fact useful, whether or not it does allow for more precise discussion of productive difference inside the philosophical concept.

If there is a properly philosophical concept of apocalypse, it must refer to other concepts as components. Without yet describing its consistency in terms of attitude, a simple list of its components must be established. An exact dissection may not be possible, given the limits of this thesis, and given the extensive history and study of the genre of apocalyptic literature and thought. This breakdown of the concept shall therefore not be proposed as complete, but as sufficient for the present study, for it shall be derived directly from Lawrence's and Deleuze's texts on the Apocalypse. This tracing of the concept of apocalypse shall lead directly into a discussion of their readings of the Apocalypse.

To begin with, the very etymology of apocalypse suggests one of the concept's components: revelation. What exactly this means will be discussed over the course of this section. It may seem inappropriate to include "revelation" among the components of a philosophical concept of apocalypse and not to treat it as identical with the concept itself. For this, however, there is precedence: Deleuze and Guattari analyze the concept of utopia—to which this thesis will return in its next chapter—as one that *includes* the notion of "no-where," as though the word itself were folded into the concept as one of its constituents rather than identical with or equal to the concept.<sup>41</sup> The word that stands for the concept contributes to the concept its history and its variety without limiting the

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<sup>41</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 99-100.

concept thereto; the word functions exactly like a component. An apocalypse is always a revelation, an uncovering of something previously hidden. But this is not all there is to it.<sup>42</sup> And the manner in which this revelation occurs, especially the kind of power by which it occurs or indeed the kind of power which revelation itself is, differs. This difference appears not only at the level of the *variation of the whole* of the concept of apocalypse, in the way that the absolute whole accomplishes its own variable self-positing through the range of variation to which it has limited revelation as its component, but also at the level of the concept's attitude, in that revelation brings into the concept's potential even those of its own variations that have been excluded in the formation of one posited whole. Plainly, revelation is a component in the concept of apocalypse, but what precise role it plays therein is not yet to be described, as long as other components remain to be listed.

Anticipating Lawrence and Deleuze, it may be supposed that power is another component. The concept of apocalypse seems to involve more than one notion of power. It is worthwhile to bring into the list of components both of the words in French that are frequently translated in English as "power": *puissance* and *pouvoir*. Revelation itself implies both terms, or it can, conceivably: to reveal is a power of action,<sup>43</sup> at least insofar

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<sup>42</sup> One might appropriate the statement with which Lawrence opens his *Apocalypse*: "Apocalypse means simply Revelation, though there is nothing simple about this one." See D. H. Lawrence, *Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation*, edited by Mara Kalnins (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 59. Apocalypse means simply revelation, though the concept for which it stands is certainly something greater.

<sup>43</sup> Although *puissance* and *pouvoir* are translated for the most part as "force" and "power" respectively in the English translation of *Essays Critical and Clinical*, I here follow the decision to translate *puissance* as "power of action," such as by Martin Joughin, in his English translation of Deleuze's *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, and Charles J. Stivale, in his translation of the *Abécédaire*.

as it is a mode of apprehension, an achievement in and capacity for bearing witness, and it is—or it entails entrance into, participation in, subjectivation under—power, *pouvoir*, in that revelation provides the seer a kind of possession of its truth, or vice versa, and thereby provides the seer a place on the side of the justice it represents. What justice? An apocalypse is nearly always a vision of some sort of retribution or violent redemption. There is a judgment and a carrying out of that judgment in punishment, and this punishment must be on the scale of a whole world's ending, for the sake of its replacement with another world, a new and different world, a world to come. These, then, are at least some of the components of the concept of apocalypse: revelation, power as *puissance* and as *pouvoir*, judgment, a world's ending, and a world to come.

This combination of components constitutes the fragmentary whole of a philosophical concept of apocalypse, which any posited point of absolute survey would traverse. What Lawrence and Deleuze confront as “the Apocalypse,” insofar as it can be put into the terms of a concept, is an attitude of the concept of apocalypse, a consistency of these listed components that is responsible for one of multiple absolute wholes that could be explicated from the same combination of components. The Apocalypse is not the concept of apocalypse, but an attitude thereof. The Apocalypse shall not here be taken as identical with the *Book of Revelation* as a text either. It is not another title for the book. It is a force of the book, which Deleuze endeavors to put into philosophical terms. And although Lawrence sometimes writes “the Apocalypse” in reference to the book, a major part of his project is to liberate the book from that doctrine for which he holds the fixation of the meaning of the book responsible. Lawrence writes, “When we come to read it critically and seriously, we realise that the Apocalypse reveals a profoundly

important Christian doctrine which has in it none of the real Christ, none of the real Gospel, none of the *creative* breath of Christianity, and is nevertheless perhaps the most effectual doctrine in the Bible.”<sup>44</sup> In order better to trace what happens to apocalypse as a philosophical concept when it is allowed to *pass through* Lawrence’s analysis of the *Book of Revelation* and be transformed by that passage, “the Apocalypse” shall here be held to refer to the conceptual attitude generated and perpetuated by the popular reception of the *Book of Revelation*, which is really Lawrence’s enemy more so than the text itself.<sup>45</sup> The concept of apocalypse is not exhausted and therefore not merely rejected in Lawrence’s critique of the Apocalypse and Deleuze’s. To make this claim is not to defend the Apocalypse, but to assert that what Lawrence and Deleuze do by criticizing the Apocalypse is, in effect, describe a reactive attitude of the apocalyptic concept and show the prospect of a new, active attitude.

This section is not exactly about the *Book of Revelation*, then. This is about characterizing these two thinkers’ responses to it as amounting to an extraction of a philosophical concept, or the creation of one, a taking up of the Apocalypse as an enemy in the domain of philosophy. Deleuze always insisted that every work of his, even one devoted to literature, cinema, or painting, is a philosophical project, insofar as it makes of its ostensible object an occasion or point of departure for the production of a properly

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<sup>44</sup> Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, 66.

<sup>45</sup> “The Bible is a book that has been temporarily killed for us, or for some of us, by having its meaning arbitrarily fixed. We know it so thoroughly, in its superficial or popular meaning, that it is dead, it gives us nothing any more.” It is in this spirit that one must read Lawrence’s declaration that “the most detestable of all these books of the Bible, *taken superficially*, is Revelation [my emphasis].” See *ibid.*, 60-61.

philosophical concept. For the purposes of this study, apocalypse is a concept. “The Apocalypse,” too, is conceptual: an attitude of that concept. What the Apocalypse, in this sense, does in and to philosophical thought will be explored at length, but first, it—and its alternative—must be described.

The Apocalypse is productive of, in Deleuze’s words, “a religion of Power, that is, a terrible popular cult of the collective part of the soul.”<sup>46</sup> This collective soul “wants an ultimate power that makes no appeal to the gods, but is itself the power of a God without appeal who judges all other powers.”<sup>47</sup> Already, the tracing of the components that constitutes the attitude of Apocalypse becomes apparent. There is a precise movement across them that is indicated here, not unlike that movement across doubting, thinking, and being which constituted the Cartesian cogito. In the attitude of Apocalypse, two components, revelation and *puiissance*, are subordinated and even obscured by two others, judgment and *pouvoir*. This superiority of some components to some others produces a conceptual point whose survey of the components altogether is determined by that positioning. To think the Apocalypse is to follow the movement in thought by which the very concept of power of action is denounced and that of power of domination exalted, and the activity of judgment endorsed as the latter’s means and spirit. “On the one hand, it wants to destroy power, it hates power and strength (*puiissance*) . . . On the other hand, however, it also wants to penetrate into every pore of power [*pouvoir*], to

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<sup>46</sup> Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 49.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

swarm in its centers, to multiply them throughout the universe.”<sup>48</sup> The Apocalypse is not just the new image of power that it invents, but the process of this new image of power’s invention, the process that continually *sustains* it in thought, this “on the one hand/on the other hand” desiring with respect to power. In Lawrence’s words, “the mass must grant *authority* where they deny power [original emphasis].”<sup>49</sup> Love *pouvoir*, deny *puissance*. A conceptual analysis of the Apocalypse must maintain the importance of the obfuscation of *puissance* as part of the conceptual operation, such that *puissance* remains among the components and is not considered simply to have been removed.<sup>50</sup> If the concept of apocalypse includes *pouvoir* and *puissance*, the attitude of Apocalypse entails a preference of the one to the other, a selection of the one over the other. Judgment is the product of this relation and thus operant in the attitude as the attitude’s mode of expression: “With the Apocalypse, Christianity invents *a completely new image of power*: the system of Judgment. The painter Gustave Courbet (there are numerous resemblances between Lawrence and Courbet) spoke of people who woke up at night crying, ‘I want to judge! I have to judge!’ The will to destroy, the will to infiltrate every corner, the will to

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, 68.

<sup>50</sup> I suggested in the previous section that the wholes of concepts are often imposed on their components and that such imposition is one way that concepts can be transformed. Deleuze and Guattari write that a critique is often nothing other than the addition of a component to an existing concept. But perhaps there is also a way in which some concepts refer to those concepts which they are created in order to suppress as components; the suppressed concept must be presupposed in the created concept, if the created concept is to constitute the putting into action of certain other components against it.



forever have the last word—a triple will that is unified and obstinate: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”<sup>51</sup> Judge to serve.

Revelation itself is caught up along with *puissance*. It cannot be a power of action, it cannot be *the power to reveal*; it must be given over to *pouvoir*. Revelation must be merely the medium of *pouvoir*'s message, the medium of *pouvoir*'s promise and invitation. It must be supposed to be transcendent. It cannot be of immanent origin. “The Lion of Judah [which, of course, turns out to be the Lamb] is supposed to open the book.”<sup>52</sup> From the beginning, in the nature of the revelation itself, it is thus clear that the Apocalypse's image of power is one that insists on a distance between life and power. The guaranteed triumph of a power of domination, a transcendent power, is the validation of every lack of power of action, of immanent power, and the guarantee of such a triumph must itself be a demonstration of transcendent power. “Apocalyptic *vision* replaces the prophetic *word*, programming replaces project and action, an entire theater of phantasms supplants both the action of the prophets and the passion of Christ.”<sup>53</sup> Revelation is obviously a tremendously important component in the concept of apocalypse; apocalypse means simply revelation indeed, and so, fittingly, the attitude of Apocalypse is, in its most devastating aspect, such a mobilization of the concept's components against each other that places a limit on the potential of revelation itself as an activity of thought. In

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<sup>51</sup> Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 39.

<sup>52</sup> Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, 99.

<sup>53</sup> Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 41.

the attitude of Apocalypse, revelation is something received, not achieved; something gifted by an “unearthly power,” not something of the earth.

It is crucial to keep in mind Deleuze’s liking for the Spinozist notions of joy and sadness. What tends to concern Deleuze is the extent to which bodies are near to or cut off from their own powers of action, from *puissance*, joy and sadness being nothing other than those varieties of affection that bring bodies nearer to their powers and cut bodies off from their powers, respectively.<sup>54</sup> What is at stake in evaluating the Apocalypse, then, is whether, how, and to what extent it affects a separation of life from *puissance*. In a philosophy of pure immanence, there is no place for *puissance* other than life. It is the structure of transcendence in thought that continually denies *puissance* or evacuates being of *puissance*, so that power is determined as inherently inaccessible from the point of view of being, or from the point of view of a life, leaving only the circulation of *pouvoir*. The attitude of Apocalypse is transcendent thought par excellence: the conceptual point it generates posits itself as a revelatory vision—which can only be gifted from another domain—of the culmination of history in a terrible *unbecoming* instigated by unearthly powers and deliverance of the elect to a new earth, a sort of un-earth. It is apparent that if the relevant components are adequately expressed as *a world’s ending* and *a world to come*, these components are fixed, which is to say that their variations are limited, by the attitude of Apocalypse’s relation of *pouvoir* and *puissance*. In other words, what constitutes a world, and what it means for a world to end and for a new

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<sup>54</sup> See Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, translated by Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 240-244.

world to come, are determined by the purpose of the conceptual attitude with respect to the kinds of power. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze writes that “Pascal’s wager is *not* concerned with the existence or non-existence of God. The wager is anthropological, it merely concerns two modes of existence of man, the existence of the man who says that God exists and the existence of the man who says that God does not exist.”<sup>55</sup> It might likewise be asserted that the Apocalypse is primarily concerned with producing a mode of existence—in its case, a sad one, in the Deleuzo-Spinozist sense. Lawrence writes, “The Son of Man of the Apocalypse comes to bring a new and terrible *power* on to the earth, power greater than that of any Pompey or Alexander or Cyrus. Power, terrific, smiting power.”<sup>56</sup> Its concern is with power, or more specifically, with exalting *pouvoir* and vilifying *puissance* itself.

World is fixed as it must be for the sake of sustaining this precise zone of indiscernibility between *pouvoir* and *puissance*. Deleuze explains that “to establish its ultimate power and its celestial city, the Apocalypse needs to destroy the world, and only paganism furnishes it with a world, a cosmos. It therefore calls up the pagan cosmos only in order to finish it off, to bring about its hallucinatory destruction.”<sup>57</sup> World must be restricted to one of its variations, its comprehensive variation, as the totality of what is known, whatever is present, whatever is the space of life. World is such that it must take

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<sup>55</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Continuum, 2002), 37.

<sup>56</sup> Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, 81.

<sup>57</sup> Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 45.

the definite article—*the* world—or an indexical—*this* world—and it must be comprehensive, it must be total. It must be *the* world, *this whole* world, that is inadequate, that will have to end. It must be total, if it is to take an altogether unearthly power to accomplish its ending and the salvation of the elect. And so the world to come must therefore be unearthly as well, a new world delivered by that same unearthly power.

Lawrence writes, “If you listen to the Salvation Army you will hear that they are going to be very grand, very grand indeed, once they get to heaven. *Then* they’ll show you what’s what. *Then* you’ll be put in your place, you superior person, you Babylon: down in hell and in brimstone.”<sup>58</sup> *Then, then, then...* The mode of existence of the one who bears the attitude of Apocalypse is anticipatory. The denial of *puissance*, of power of action, is a denial that action is, or can ever be, sufficient. There is nothing to be done, nothing to do but wait, anticipate. *This world* cannot be saved. There is not a will to action, but a will to anticipation. Creative compulsion is turned towards anticipatory imagination. “Never before had men wanted to know the end of creation: sufficient that it was created, and would go on for ever and ever. But now, the apocalyptists had to have a vision of the end.”<sup>59</sup> Elaborating on joy and sadness, Deleuze writes, “Sadness, no less than joy, determines our *conatus* or essence. That is, out of sadness is born a desire, which is hate. This desire is linked with other desires, other passions: antipathy, derision, contempt, envy, anger and so on.” He continues, explaining that although sadness

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<sup>58</sup> Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, 63.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

motivates an effort to destroy the object that is its cause, sadness conditions that effort in such ways that it, too, will *contribute* to the diminishment of powers of action. “Thus affections rooted in sadness are linked one to another in exercising our capacity to be affected, and this in such a way that our power of action is further and further diminished, tending toward its lowest degree.” Out of sadness is born hate, and out of hate are produced other affections that maintain a preoccupation with the object that has been the cause of sadness, “so that the external thing’s power *is subtracted* from our own.”<sup>60</sup> In other words, the chain of sad affections perpetuates and even intensifies limitations on *puissance*. There is not a restoration of *puissance* that is accomplished by responding to sadness on sadness’s terms, but a continually exacerbated denial of *puissance*. Denying *puissance* more and more, one can only anticipate *pouvoir* and imagine vengeance. The desire for revolution directs itself into the repressive and *ressentimental* anticipation of its fulfillment by *another* power. Let it be by the sword of the slaying Lamb, by an unearthly power, that wickedness is ended. And let it be simply by receiving this vision that one can be assured invitation to participate in *pouvoir*. But cut off in this way from one’s own power to act, passing from sadness to hate and on through other related affections, one’s ever intensifying feeling of powerlessness must be matched inversely by the magnitude of the judgment imagined for the powerful and thus awaited. It “was not good enough for the brimstone apocalyptist and John of Patmos” to allow the powerful simply to disappear:

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<sup>60</sup> Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy*, 243.

They must have a marvellous, terrific lake of sulphureous fire that could burn for ever and ever, so that the souls of the enemy could be kept writhing. When, after the last Judgment, earth and sky and all creation were swept away, and only glorious heaven remained, still, away down, there remained this burning lake of fire in which the souls were suffering. Brilliant glorious eternal heaven above: and brilliant sulphureous torture-lake away below. This is the vision of eternity of all Patmoosers. They could not be happy in heaven unless they *knew* their enemies were unhappy in hell.<sup>61</sup>

Deleuze picks up on this, writing that

what is new in the Apocalypse is that this waiting now becomes the object of an unprecedented and maniacal programming. . . . All the details of the sufferings, the scourges and plagues reserved for the enemies in the lake, the glory of the elect in the city, the need of the latter to measure their self-glory through the suffering of others—all this will be programmed down to the minute in the long revenge of the weak. It is the spirit of revenge that introduces the program into the wait.<sup>62</sup>

This “spirit of revenge,” which Deleuze discusses more directly in his book on Nietzsche, is in this case the need for imagination to compensate for the loss of *puissance* in life with a promise of full *pouvoir*.

As previously discussed, a conceptual attitude is not just the consistency of a combination of components that produces one conceptual point, one conceptual whole, rather than any other that could be made from the same combination; the attitude itself includes that consistency, that conceptual point, and the unique conceptual persona that appears between them, through which the conceptual point is posited from the consistency. The Apocalypse is unthinkable outside of this persona, without the feeling of diminishment that compels merely anticipatory imaginings and of a need for that

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<sup>61</sup> Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, 112.

<sup>62</sup> Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 41.

diminishment to be compensated *in* those imaginings, for revolutionary wishes to be pictured without compromise. It suffices to retain for this conceptual persona the name of John of Patmos—not, of course, to identify it with the empirical author involved in the composition of the *Book of Revelation*, but to capture in the thinking of the conceptual attitude of Apocalypse the necessity to it of this process of affection.

Deleuze has less affection for John of Patmos than Lawrence has. Whereas for the latter, there is reason to be grateful to John of Patmos, as though John is to be appreciated for his bringing a certain vitality to light despite his own efforts to bury it,<sup>63</sup> for the former, John is only the destroyer and the emphasis is only to be placed on the burial.<sup>64</sup> This is simultaneously characteristic and uncharacteristic of Deleuze: it is characteristic in the way that it gives to the Apocalypse its own pure infinity, its pure event, without compromising it by its reliance on that which it covers up in thought, and yet it is

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<sup>63</sup> See *ibid.*, 79: “And now we must admit that we are also grateful to St. John’s Revelation for giving us hints of the magnificent cosmos and putting us into momentary contact. The contacts, it is true, are only for moments, then they are broken by this other spirit of hope-despair. But even for the moments we are grateful.” See also *ibid.*, 86: “And yet it is his curious fervid intensity which gives to Revelation its lurid power. And we cannot help liking him for leaving the great symbols on the whole intact.”

<sup>64</sup> Deleuze acknowledges Lawrence’s bit of fondness for John: “Here we see Lawrence, with all his horror of the Apocalypse, through this horror, experiencing an obscure sympathy, even a kind of admiration, for this book, precisely because it is sedimented and stratified.” And then he opens the following paragraph, “But Lawrence soon recovers all his distrust and horror for John of Patmos. For this reactivation of the pagan world, sometimes moving and even grandiose in the first part of the Apocalypse—what is it used for, what is it made to serve in the second part?” See Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 43-44. I suggest, within the scope of this effort to deal with apocalypse as a concept, that this is because John must be closely associated with that particular attitude of the concept of apocalypse of which one *should* be horrified. It is not just that the empirical author John cannot be credited with the pagan world and only with its use, and that the pagan world belongs to those whose works were appropriated in the composition of the *Book of Revelation*; it is also that the conceptual persona John must be the force of the attitude of Apocalypse, the affective reality by which the attitude of Apocalypse can be considered and the potential of the concept of apocalypse itself thus released from it, opened to the prospect of other conceptual personae altogether.

uncharacteristic, if merely in the way that it makes more difficult a buggering of John of Patmos, a production of a pagan John to match the clean-shaven Marx and bearded Hegel in whom Deleuze would be most interested.<sup>65</sup> This seems only resolvable with the notion of conceptual attitude. In its attitude of Apocalypse, the concept of apocalypse corresponds indeed to a certain pure event, has formed a certain point of survey over its components that it should not be possible to reduce to vagueness. This is in part because of John, as conceptual persona. It is John, the conceptual persona, whose desire is to destroy, to bury; it is John whose power is the destruction that would satisfy the collective soul. One can uncover the paganism in John of Patmos, but because it is the persona of the apocalyptic that is in question more than the authorship of the *Book of Revelation* anyway, it is proper to pin John of Patmos to the attitude of Apocalypse and to elaborate the uncovering of the book's preservation of vital forces as the discovery of “someone” else in the text, “someone” other in the forces that inhere in the book, one “who” desires differently and whose power is to live rather than judge. John of Patmos must be the enemy, if an alternative apocalyptic is to be thought. It is John of Patmos who destroys; it is another who is to be liked for gathering and preserving the great symbols.

In summary, “the Apocalypse” stands for an attitude of the philosophical concept of apocalypse, the concept itself being complicated, in the Deleuzian sense of the word, so that only attitudinally does it become implicated. The attitude begins with the relation

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<sup>65</sup> See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, xxi.



of the concept's components to each other inside the concept. In this case, it has been established that a philosophical concept of apocalypse consists at least of the following components: revelation, *puissance*, *pouvoir*, judgment, a world's ending, a world to come. The attitude of Apocalypse entails the subordination of revelation to the purpose of *pouvoir*, the obfuscation of *puissance* in favor of *pouvoir*, the obligation to judge and to be judged, and the determination of world so that it takes the definite article, and so that its ending and replacement is comprehensive, uncompromised. The attitude of Apocalypse entails these relations among the apocalyptic concept's components, but it also includes the conceptual whole that is produced at their point of condensation, as well as the conceptual persona. The conceptual attitude is not just a configuration of conceptual components, but that configuration's productive results too.

This is the point at which the discussion must turn to “attitude adjustment.” Establishing this way of thinking of concepts has prepared the way in turn for thinking explicitly about the difference of the Deleuzian apocalyptic—*another* attitude of the concept of apocalypse, a joyful one. Lawrence's *Apocalypse* and Deleuze's reading of it continues to serve as a productive stage. What is most interesting about Lawrence's *Apocalypse* is that despite his “horror of the Apocalypse,” Lawrence does indeed endeavor to renew the *Book of Revelation* itself—not simply to criticize it so as to reject it, but to reconfigure and empower it. Lawrence's piece is a treatment of—a *clinical* response to—the text.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> I am thinking here of Daniel W. Smith's powerful articulation of the purposes of Deleuze's “critique et clinique” project, in his introduction to *Essays Critical and Clinical*. This will be discussed in more detail below.

Lawrence writes, “Once a book is fathomed, once it is *known*, and its meaning is fixed or established, it is dead. A book only lives while it has power to move us, and move us *differently*; so long as we find it *different* every time we read it.”<sup>67</sup> The death of the *Book of Revelation* is what seems to disturb Lawrence most; it is the tragedy that drives him more even than the doctrine that results, more than the Apocalypse per se. As Mary Bryden puts it, “In Deleuzian terms, its entity was molar.”<sup>68</sup> What is devastating, what kills the text, is not the content of its popular interpretation--though of course that is certainly, as has been discussed, very worrying to him--as much as it is the *form* of its popular reception. The text has been made lifeless; it does not inspire. Its creating has ceased. Although much could be written now about the content of Lawrence’s alternative reading, as indeed Deleuze demonstrates, what is of greater interest for the moment is the fact that Lawrence’s primary purpose is to restore the openness of the text so that new readings can be drawn out of it. What is most at stake for Lawrence here is what, in a draft writing, he calls true religious experience: “Once you have a real glimpse of religion, you realise that all that is truly *felt*, every feeling that is felt in true relation, every vivid feeling of connection, is religious, be it what it may, and the only irreligious thing is the death of feeling, the causing of nullity; the frictional irritation which, carried far, tends to nullity.”<sup>69</sup> The Deleuzian term for this feeling of connection would of course

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<sup>67</sup> Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, 60.

<sup>68</sup> Mary Bryden, “Nietzsche’s Arrow: Deleuze on D. H. Lawrence’s *Apocalypse*,” in *Deleuze and Religion*, edited by Mary Bryden (New York: Routledge, 2001), 102.

<sup>69</sup> Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, 155.

be affection. By taking this desire for connection, for freed affection, into his confrontation with the *Book of Revelation*, Lawrence means to show the book's complication and allow it all its intensive potency. In this way, his *Apocalypse* gives a *Book of Revelation* of which Deleuze can write, "If we are steeped in the Apocalypse, it is . . . because it inspires ways of living, surviving, and judging in each of us. It is a book for all those who think of themselves as survivors. It is the book of Zombies."<sup>70</sup> A profoundly ambivalent statement by Deleuze, and yet a strong statement of what it is about the book that pulls even Lawrence back to it. It is the book that has generated the system of judgment and yet also a book through which to seek release from that very system.

Lawrence aims not just to offer a new reading of the *Book of Revelation*, but to uncover it, to complicate it, really to make apprehensible its inherent complication. Lawrence does more than form a reading, an alternative interpretation; he does not simply show that one can find a pagan world captured in it. More importantly, he tries to make the text "unfathomable," unknown, to unfix its meaning and thus make of it a stage for experimentation. His alternative reading, his endeavor to discover specifically pagan material that is opposed in spirit to the text's Jewish and Christian layers, is an extraction from the virtual excess that he himself reveals. To reveal, to uncover: Lawrence's own critical method here is primarily apocalyptic. He achieves a revelation of the book's virtual dimensions, which far exceed the limits of its popular reception, its frozen

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<sup>70</sup> Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 37.

actualization. The *Book of Revelation* is affirmed as an occasion for experimentation rather than interpretation. Deleuze and Guattari often assert this difference of interpretation and experimentation. In this case, the reading that Lawrence offers, the excavation of the pagan cosmos that lies buried in the book, is not best received as an interpretation, as an answer to the question, “What does it mean?” but rather as an experiment, as both an answer to the question, “What has it done?” and an answer to the question, “What can it do now, what can it be made to do?” There are two dimensions to that last question. On one hand, it suggests a new explication of the *Book of Revelation*, a new actualization, different from that inherited explication which haunts Lawrence painfully. On the other hand, it suggests the broad revelation of the text as potential, the revelation of its open productive capacity, of its unfathomability. An achievement of revelation of this sort, or a capacity for it, may be a precondition for experimentation; every experiment—if it is really an experiment and not a reading that would solidify itself as interpretation—makes use of the intensive resources that come as a result of some revelation.

We approach, through this point, the way to overcome the Apocalypse as a conceptual attitude: to reclaim *in the concept of apocalypse* itself what the Apocalypse squanders, what the Apocalypse suppresses; to reconfigure the apocalyptic concept, to make with the same components a charged apocalypticism that is truly the opposite of a mysticism, capable of revealing forces in life and not of concealing them in favor of reference to a transcendent other-life. Lawrence’s work in his *Apocalypse* can be taken, through Deleuze’s philosophy, as a work on the very concept of apocalypse itself. Lawrence’s treatment of the *Book of Revelation*, his effort to break down its

comprehension in the popular religion of the collective soul and make it apprehensible as a stage for creative thinking, shows the reversal of the Apocalypse in thought: it is no longer judgment, but revelation itself that is posited as the great power and fulfilling activity of thought.

The object of revelation in Lawrence's *Apocalypse* is the layered nature of the text. That is to say, it is not simply the pagan world captured in the text, not the pagan material preserved and put to use by its Judeo-Christian authors. Rather, the text as an entity that exceeds itself is what Lawrence strives most to show, why perhaps it holds his interest in its own right and does not simply lead him to abandon the *Book of Revelation* in favor of other, pagan material directly. In the end, he appreciates not the work of John of Patmos, but the clashing of the work of John of Patmos with the pagan material that undergirds it, though only as long as that clashing is made apparent. There is a great wealth of substance in the text, out of which more than one reading is producible, but that wealth is only productive if those tensions that fascinate and ultimately inspire Lawrence have been revealed as such.

The form of Lawrence's criticism and the content of his reading do in fact fold into each other. The vitalism that he finds in the book, beneath the layers built on it by the Judeo-Christian authors and finally John of Patmos himself, involves what Lawrence calls "the pagan manner of thought,"<sup>71</sup> a thought that is open to connection with the earth:

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<sup>71</sup> Lawrence, *Apocalypse*, 96.

Today, it is almost impossible for us to realise what the old Greeks meant by god, or *theos*. Everything was *theos*; but even so, not at the same moment. At the moment, whatever *struck* you was god. If it was a pool of water, the very watery pool might strike you: then that was god; or the blue gleam might suddenly occupy your consciousness: then that was god . . . or you felt the sudden chill of the water as you touched it: and then another god came into being, “the cold”: and this was not a *quality*, it was an existing entity, almost a creature, certainly a *theos* . . . Even to the early scientists or philosophers, “the cold”, “the moist”, “the hot”, “the dry” were things in themselves, realities, gods, *theoi*. And they *did things*.<sup>72</sup>

Deleuze approaches this manner of thought by contrasting the symbol to the allegory.

The symbol, he writes, is on the side of *puissance*:

It is a dynamic process that enlarges, deepens, and expands sensible consciousness; it is an ever increasing becoming-conscious, as opposed to the closing of the moral consciousness upon a fixed allegorical idea. It is a method of the Affect, intensive, a cumulative intensity, which merely marks the threshold of a sensation, the awakening of a state of consciousness: the symbol means nothing, and has neither to explained nor interpreted, as opposed to the intellectual consciousness of allegory.<sup>73</sup>

Setting aside Lawrence’s language of religiosity, it is apparent that Lawrence himself is concerned with keeping thought in motion, with turning thought against the tendency of states of intellectual consciousness towards degrees of experiential stagnation and finding some way for it to challenge that tendency with the resources afforded by the forces of transition between states of sensible consciousness, the resources afforded, in other words, by affects, intensities. What Lawrence *uncovers* in the *Book of Revelation*, what draws him to it, its singularity, is the way it brings the intensive into direct contact with another, the way it unleashes this form of consciousness on the collective soul, as long as one is capable of apprehending all of the book's layers in order then to experiment with

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 95-96.

<sup>73</sup> Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 48.

their combination. Let the pagan world show through John of Patmos's effort to destroy it. Let it survive John of Patmos. And as a result, let it be apparent not only what it is in itself, but what it is in its triumph over the Apocalypse. Let it be, in its content, a testament to the greater importance of experimentation than that of interpretation.

The pagan manner of thought might well be called apocalyptic, especially if allowed to pass into the terms of Deleuze's philosophy most fully. It is helpful to return to the long passage excerpted from *Difference and Repetition* in the previous chapter, on the “-plication” system. As Deleuze explains, perplication is the state of Ideas: their multiplicities, their determinations, their singularities. On the other end of the series is explication: “the state of qualities and extensities which cover and develop the system, between the basic series.”<sup>74</sup> It is fortunate for us that Lawrence himself distinguishes between a “quality,” on one hand, and his notion of *theos*, on the other. It is neither for him, nor for Deleuze, that what must be revealed in order to sustain continuous and creative affection—Lawrence retains the word “feeling,” though Deleuze, for his part, draws a terminological line between feeling and affect<sup>75</sup>—are qualities. Qualities cannot truly “strike.” Qualities are objects for judgment. As Deleuze puts it, they *cover* the system that generates them, they cover the singularities and they cover the intensive forces of dynamic repetition, and they constitute a phenomenon that previously seemed to require the logic of representation to be accounted for.

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<sup>74</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 280-281.

<sup>75</sup> See Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 164.

To say that *Difference and Repetition* should have been an *apocalyptic* book is not idly to say that its impact on the history of philosophy should have been great or, hyperbolically, that its intervention should have upset the whole “world of philosophy.” Rather, it is very precisely to say that its ultimate achievement should have been to *uncover*. Joe Hughes offers, in his book *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation*, a strong account of the way that Deleuze cleaves to rather than from certain principles of phenomenology and accounts for the production of representation, and certainly Deleuze does strive to include in the system he elaborates in *Difference and Repetition* terms that explain static repetition, static repetition more or less being representation put into other terms: Deleuze writes in his essay “The Method of Dramatization” that differentiation, for which explication is to be understood as another term for another context, “expresses the actualization of these relations and singularities in qualities and extensions, species and parts, as objects of representation.”<sup>76</sup> Hughes picks up on this, arguing that “quality and extensity are characteristics not of physical objects independent of consciousness but of *represented objects* [original emphasis]. Conversely, representation . . . has the same form as objects, so that we can say with Deleuze in *Bergsonism* that actualization produces psychological consciousness or what he calls in *Difference and Repetition*, ‘the perceptual world’.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974*, edited by David Lapoujade, translated by Michael Taormina (New York: Columbia U.P. Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series, 2004), 102.

<sup>77</sup> Joe Hughes, *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 118.



However, putting representation into other terms is crucial to the purpose. What Deleuze offers is not just a thinking of the genesis of representation, but a rethinking of representation itself. This rethinking involves new concepts that include in their self-positing what *was previously* sustained in the self-positing of the concept of representation, but, in these new concepts, has a very different context and makes different demands on thought. By re-termining representation static repetition, Deleuze empowers thought to bring the fullness of repetition, the dynamism of repetition, to bear on it. Thus: “The ultimate element of repetition is the disparate, which stands opposed to the identity of representation.”<sup>78</sup> More than providing a static account, *Difference and Repetition* is supposed to have affected a dynamic shift in thinking through the uncovering of complex repetition, of the “system” that includes virtuality and intensity as well as the actual; this is its apocalyptic purpose. Christian Kerslake writes, “In his taking up of the thought of the ‘end of the world’, Deleuze never goads on a real apocalypse, but rather engineers a revelation of the means by which the world can be ‘counter-actualized’ and made immanent through acts of creation.”<sup>79</sup> Whereas world was identified with cosmos in John of Patmos’s Apocalypse so that judgment could encompass all in life in service to transcendent power, the rescue of revelation itself as an immanent power severs that identity of world and cosmos. Writing on Kostas Alexos, Deleuze explains, “Planetary thought is not unifying: it implies hidden depths in space, an extension of deep

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<sup>78</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 69.

<sup>79</sup> Christian Kerslake, *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 255.

universes, incommensurate distances and proximities, non-exact numbers, an essential opening of our system, a whole fiction-philosophy. This is why the planetary is not the same thing as the world, even in Heideggerian terms: Heidegger's world is dislocated, "the world and the cosmos are not identical."<sup>80</sup> The cosmos exceeds the actual world; the "cosmic" resources available to thought exceed the world. There is a whole cosmos—rather, a whole chaosmos—in which there are the virtual and intensive, and of which the *actual* "world" is only part. The challenge is to become capable of uncovering, which is the same as becoming really capable of connection, of overcoming the gap implied by the concept of representation and gaining the intensive, *productive* intimacy of the system of complex repetition. As Kerslake puts it, "The apocalypse in its *transcendental* sense is. . . connected to a re-grounding of the subject in a properly ontological and creative 'life'."<sup>81</sup>

We can follow that last word. Describing the meaning of "Life" for Deleuze, Smith writes,

These are precisely the two paradoxical features of Life as a nonorganic and impersonal power: it is a power of abstraction capable of extracting or producing singularities and placing them in continuous variation, and a power of creation capable of inventing ever new relations and conjugations between these singularities. The former defines the vitality of life; the latter, its power of innovation. . . . This is the "vitalism" to which Deleuze lays claim: not a mystical life force, but the abstract power of Life as a principle of creation.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974*, 157.

<sup>81</sup> Kerslake, *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy*, 255.

<sup>82</sup> Daniel W. Smith, introduction to *Essays Critical and Clinical*, xxiii-xxiv.

Before there can be creation, there must be abstraction; before there can be experimentation, there must be revelation. Creation must have its resources. Thought must discover these resources. It is easy to be swept up in discussion of creation in Deleuze. What is often most difficult is to describe the way that thought must first make apprehensible what cannot be claimed to belong in consciousness as such. What here is called abstraction is what has gradually been approached in this chapter as revelation, which is proposed now as an alternative term. What happens is less “abstraction,” which is at odds even with Deleuze’s tendency to describe the virtual with the Proustian phrase “real without being actual, ideal *without being abstract* [my emphasis],” than *revelation*. But thought cannot take up such a notion of revelation without that notion’s passing through a concept that could charge it with this new purpose of empowerment, a concept in which revelation is not the vehicle for a *message* of power, but an activity of thought that is itself *a power*, immanently so.

Here, then, is the attitudinal revision of the concept of apocalypse. The combination of components is effectively the same. The relations between the components, however, are changed. Investment in *pouvoir* is replaced with restoration to *puissance*. Revelation is itself revealed, no longer subordinated in the combination as a mere means; this new apocalyptic attitude gives revelation to thought, as opposed to judgment, as thought’s task. “Herein, perhaps, lies the secret: to bring into existence and not to judge.”<sup>83</sup> Indeed, much as the attitude of Apocalypse suppresses *puissance* and

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<sup>83</sup> Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 135.

subordinates revelation, this new attitude does not exclude judgment from the combination of components. It includes judgment so as to suppress judgment. Like the Apocalypse, this new attitude of the apocalyptic concept must fix the variation of world. How it does this, and how the new and different conceptual whole produced by this revision in the consistency of the concept of apocalypse proves useful in its own right, are for the next chapter to detail. It suffices to say in closing for now that we have, if nothing else, shown some of the broad stakes for Deleuze in Lawrence's grappling with the *Book of Revelation*, and that we have held to the philosophical tasks of concept creation and concept renewal in investigating those stakes, in order to show in close detail the difference—as an event in thought—of a Deleuzian apocalyptic from the Apocalypse.

## Chapter 3

The purpose of this third and final chapter is to put the new attitude of the concept of apocalypse to use, in an investigation into what it means, concretely, for thought to take on this power—and this task—of revelation, this apocalypticism. In the *Abécédaire*, Deleuze offers a simple but certainly very useful comment on concreteness in philosophy: “If you haven’t found the problem to which a concept corresponds, everything stays abstract. If you’ve found the problem, everything becomes concrete.”<sup>84</sup>

The attitudinal revision of the concept of apocalypse has already begun to touch on the issue of the concreteness of Deleuze’s thought. I have already proposed revelation as an alternative term for what Smith elaborates through the term “abstraction”—the latter being, of course, a difficult one to grapple with while endeavoring to show the concrete value of concepts. But further, if, as creation requires abstraction, the power of revelation that the Deleuzian apocalypse—or, as Kerslake calls it, the transcendental apocalypse—gives to thought is necessary for experimentation to proceed, because experimentation requires those pre-conscious resources which must be revealed, then there is much that hinges on the concept of apocalypse’s being made concrete for thought. It is not only this power of revelation itself that is at stake, but also the prospect of any experimentation that would follow from it. The creativity that Deleuze would like to open in philosophy depends on very careful investigation of the ontological inextricability of revelation and creation. There are two threads that will run through this chapter. On one hand, the

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<sup>84</sup> *Gilles Deleuze: From A to Z*, directed by Pierre-André Boutang, translated by Charles J. Stivale (Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2012), DVD.

concept of apocalypse will be compared throughout to another concept that Deleuze and Guattari take up, despite some wariness of it, and revise to suit the problems they confront: the concept of utopia. On the other hand, the concept of apocalypse will be used to respond to concerns raised by Deleuze scholars regarding whether or not Deleuze's thought indeed has concrete relevance at all, especially with respect to politics. These two threads together will demonstrate the potential of the concept of apocalypse to clear up some murky spots in Deleuzo-Guattarian, though especially Deleuzian, thought, and thus ultimately to shed more light on the problem, or problems, to which this renewal of the concept of apocalypse corresponds.

I will begin with the concept of utopia. Scholars are often interested in the question of whether or not Deleuze's thought is appropriate to call utopian. The pieces written on this are many, and it is far from a settled matter. Deleuze and Guattari's explicit assessment of the concept of utopia in *What Is Philosophy?* is of surprisingly little help in the effort to establish definitively a Deleuzian perspective on utopian thought. Deleuze and Guattari assert, after all, that utopia "designates *that conjunction of philosophy, or of the concept, with the present milieu*—political philosophy [original emphasis]," though not without adding immediately thereafter that "in view of the mutilated meaning public opinion has given to it, perhaps *utopia* is not the best word."<sup>85</sup> Their doubts about the effectiveness of the concept of utopia relate to the extent to which they must transform it in order to bring it into correspondence with the problems that

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<sup>85</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 100.

concern them, problems of which the common conception of utopia is in fact symptomatic. They distinguish utopias of transcendence and utopias of immanence. Transcendent utopian creativity directs thought to the prospect of an entirely other world, a different social order, in such a way that an anticipatory and judgmental dreaming takes hold of thought—much as transcendent apocalyptic creativity does, as discussed in the previous chapter. The same need to program, to envision systematically, takes over in thought that proceeds through this common, transcendent utopia as that which does in the attitude of Apocalypse. As Millay Christine Hyatt puts it, transcendent utopia is “invested in the efficient functioning of a state that, by permeating the socius, guarantees its ability to block the contingency and unpredictability seen as anathema to equality and political stability.”<sup>86</sup>

In contrast, the revolutionary, immanent utopia that Deleuze and Guattari propose is a utopia in which such contingency and unpredictability would be maximized, and its challenge to political stability augmented rather than managed or neutralized. They affect this transformation of the concept of utopia largely by asserting an effective synonymy between utopia and deterritorialization: “etymologically it stands for absolute deterritorialization.”<sup>87</sup> The Deleuzo-Guattarian utopian concept thus mainly posits deterritorializing revolution: not a utopian *plan*, not utopia as goal, not utopia as perfected political order, but a utopian *event*, whereby release from the constraints on

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<sup>86</sup> Millay Christine Hyatt, “No-where and Now-here: Utopia and Politics from Hegel to Deleuze” (PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 2006), 41.

<sup>87</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 99-100.

creation imposed by the present milieu is achieved. Utopian action would be, it might seem, whatever action produces an effect of escape. In such a sense, the utopia of immanence, the utopia of absolute deterritorialization, seems to entail a kind of empowerment that is only accomplished *at the expense of* the present milieu; to become freely creative, one must abandon the world. Although Deleuze and Guattari warn of a “risk of a restoration, and sometimes a proud affirmation, of transcendence” even in ostensibly immanent utopia,<sup>88</sup> it might seem that they themselves turn out to be guilty not of affirming transcendence, but of what they purport to avoid doing by avoiding affirmation of transcendence: offering a disempowering philosophy.

This, anyway, is one reading of Deleuze’s utopia, indeed his political philosophy at large, that has been recurrent in recent years, most notably proposed by Peter Hallward, especially in his book *Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation*. According to Hallward, Deleuze must be recognized as a philosopher whose appreciation of creating and creativity is at the expense of any sustainable regard for *creations*, for *creatures*. Hallward insists that in Deleuze’s thought, the world as such is opposed to the genetic forces from which it is produced and those forces are what Deleuze cares about. In other words, he argues that the actual and the virtual are ontological enemies of sorts, that actualization occurs only as a kind of defeat for the virtual, and that the purpose of philosophy, for Deleuze, is to support the virtual *against* the actual. Hallward, writes that if “actualisation or effectuation confines a creating

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 100.



within a creature,” then “counter-effectuation restores it to its fully creative potential or virtuality.” He continues, “The counter-actualisation (the deterritorialisation or destratification, the dis-organisation of the organism) liberates the creating and makes it *consist* in the purity of its own dimension.”<sup>89</sup> Hallward sees no way out of this spiritualist escapism in Deleuze's thought: always it is creating that is valorized, always it is the creature that seems warned against. It is as though in proposing the dichotomy of history and becoming in *What Is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari mean to declare the end of history as such, the end of this world and its replacement with an unfathomable being-without-beings. Deleuze's philosophy, Hallward argues, cannot be concrete, because what is concrete in it is the actual and the actual is like a trap, to be avoided.

It is not exactly my intention to respond to Hallward's overall critique of Deleuze; others have done so sufficiently.<sup>90</sup> What I would like to do is consider a very particular point that must, in the context of this study, stand out. The title of Hallward's book cannot but be striking now, after the previous chapter's examination of the conceptual attitude of Apocalypse. World takes the same totalizing indexical—and therefore, implicitly, the definite article. For Hallward, philosophical concreteness is a matter of commitment to “this world,” *the* world, and the terms of “creating” and “creature” into which he interprets Deleuze's philosophy leads him to equate “this” world, “our” world, with the actual: “As Deleuze understands it, living contemplation proceeds at an

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<sup>89</sup> Hallward, *Out of This World*, 143.

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, Vernon W. Cisney, “Becoming-Other: Foucault, Deleuze, and the Political Nature of Thought,” *Foucault Studies* 17 (2014): 36-59.

immeasurable distance from what is merely lived, known or decided. Life lives and creation creates on a virtual plane that leads forever out of our actual world.” Therefore, “those of us who still seek to change our world and to empower its inhabitants will need to look for our inspiration elsewhere.”<sup>91</sup>

Interestingly, responses to Hallward intended to defend the relevance of Deleuze to the thinking of social change perpetuate this, accepting that Deleuze’s political relevance depends on the extent to which his thought is committed to the actual as “this world.” Gregory J. Seigworth, for example, writes in his review of Hallward’s *Out of This World* that “the act of creation never arrives as if outside this world but must always begin again, as a second beginning, in *this* world [original emphasis].”<sup>92</sup> The spirit of the statement is true to Deleuze’s thought in a way, in that creation certainly does not occur merely outside of or as an escape from the actual. But in another way, it is misleading: here, there is a conflation of the actual and the worldly, a confusion of the boundaries of “this world” for those of the actual.

There is good cause for insisting on a distinction whereby the actual is not precisely “this world,” and it is a terminological distinction that I suggest is important to maintain. Drawing on Deleuze’s essay on Axelos, Kerslake writes, “Planetary immanence in principle guarantees the coexistence of a plurality of worlds, in utopian contrast to the annihilating plane of capitalist immanence, perhaps now most perfectly

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<sup>91</sup> Hallward, *Out of This World*, 164.

<sup>92</sup> Gregory J. Seigworth, “Little Affect: Hallward’s Deleuze,” *Culture Machine* (2007), <http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/article/view/166/147>.

symbolized in the false, representational monadology of the internet and YouTube, in which the single computer terminal can be connected to an entire, specious ‘world’ of representation.”<sup>93</sup> It is not only that the world is not—as was established in the previous chapter—identical with the whole cosmos any longer because virtuality and intensity are revealed as ontological realities in addition to the actuality of representation. It is, further, that the world is no longer that *in* which we are; the world *becomes along with us*. But this point requires some explanation.

Hallward is mistaken in his reading of actuality itself as only static. Actuality, too, can be described as in process, so that it is not merely the level of “creatures” in which “creatings” come to a halt. There is, in Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction of science as a creative practice—as a proper chaotic—and logic as something rather less than that, a doubling of actuality: science, they say, “constitutes or modifies states of affairs or bodies,” following *actualization*, and logic deals only in *actuals*, in “already constituted states of affairs or bodies, in established scientific propositions or in factual propositions (Napoleon is the one who was defeated at Waterloo) or in simple opinions (‘X thinks that...’).”<sup>94</sup> John Protevi, in his response to Hallward, argues that there is not a dualism of virtual and actual in Deleuze, but also, between them, the intensive as an “independent ontological register,” because there is a clear difference between individuation as process and the actual as result. However, he also suggests that if one refuses such an

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<sup>93</sup> Kerslake, *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy*, 254.

<sup>94</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 138.

independence of the intensive, one ought to associate the intensive with the actual rather than the virtual.<sup>95</sup> I propose that in addition to the distinction of the intensive from both the virtual and the actual, there is also a difference between actualizing and actualized. Deleuze and Guattari write, “From the virtual that [a state of affairs] actualizes it draws a potential that it appropriates. The most closed system still has a thread that rises toward the virtual, and down which the spider descends. But knowing whether the potential can be re-created in the actual, whether it can be renewed and enlarged, allows us to distinguish states of affairs, things, and bodies more precisely.”<sup>96</sup> This potential *in the actual*—the variability of the actual according to whether and how much it is capable of renewing its individuation, of giving itself back up to the intensive and the virtual—is the reality of an openness of the actual itself. The actual is not just the terminus of creative forces, not just where creatings go to die. It is, as actualization, a process as well, and a phase of the process that encompasses the three registers and repeats productively, differentially, through them all. The actual participates, so to speak, in the system, and does not merely interrupt it. There are differences of degree within the actual, not only the intensive, according to the degree of potential retained in it—and therefore the degree to which actualization keeps itself as a process capable of passing over into other processes.

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<sup>95</sup> John Protevi, “Review of Peter Hallward’s *Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation*,” *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (2008), <https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/23058-out-of-this-world-deleuze-and-the-philosophy-of-creation/>.

<sup>96</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 122.

But in order that this potential in actualization be maximized, the actual must not be thought of as closed. The actual is not a trap to avoid or a prison from which to escape. To become capable of creation in Deleuze's sense is not to move beyond the actual, never to return. Hallward is, however, right that it is to go out of *this* "world." This degree of openness of the actual suggests also the capacity of the actual itself to differ, of the actual to differ in itself. The actual is not static, and nor is it monotone. The denial of a simple opposition of the virtual and the actual rests also on the fact that genetic difference carries itself to and through the level of the actual. Deleuze is perhaps most clear on this point, especially in relation to why avoiding even a casual categorical conflation of "the actual" and "the world" is wise, in his early book *Proust and Signs*. Therein, he explains, "Each subject expresses the world from a certain viewpoint. But the viewpoint is the difference itself, the absolute internal difference. Each subject therefore expresses an absolutely different world . . . (what we call the external world is only the disappointing projection, the standardizing limit of all these worlds expressed)."<sup>97</sup> A world appears in the actual, even as the actual. But it is not prefigured, and so it is not exactly shared. It unfolds from each process of intensive individualization, continuing creation into and through actualization. In contrasting Proustian to Platonist reminiscence later in the book, Deleuze further writes, "It is no longer a matter of saying: to create is to remember—but rather, to remember is to create, is *to reach that point where the associative chain breaks, leaps over the constituted individual, is transferred to the birth of an individuating world*

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<sup>97</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, translated by Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 42.

[original emphasis].”<sup>98</sup> Read with the full elaboration of his ontology through his career thereafter in mind, this seems not simply to say that *the actual* must be passed over, but that the actual *as actualized* must be passed over as thought’s way of rethinking the actual *as actualization*. As subject, the individual is thought to ground the world; as monad, to express it. The actual, being identical with the world, is thought to be shared by subjects, given that subjects have world-grounding subjectivity in common; and by monads, given that monads are bound by logic to express the same world. This is the sense of the actual that seems to be held onto by those who, like Hallward and even Seigworth, suppose it is right to identify the actual as *this* world, *our* world, *the* world that we all share as one. Deleuze argues that a world is something rather like the state of creation as it passes through the actual. Thus, a world is produced in the actual from the virtual and the intensive, as a kind of closure, but opens back onto them in turn. Creation does not cease, is not caught in the actual in principle, but only slowed by degree. And absolute difference is not eliminated either; the actual is not bound to the logic of convergence. Rather than *the* world or *this* world, there is always *a* world, among worlds.

The concrete relevance of Deleuze’s thought should largely depend on this point. Hallward says that, in Deleuze and in Deleuze and Guattari, “the emphasis . . . is on escape, deterritorialisation, disruption, breaking apart, getting out, scrambling the codes,” and believes there cannot be a very effective answer to the question, “What is this for?” because social change requires instead principles for the coming together of people, the

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 111.

coming together of *actual* people.<sup>99</sup> But deterritorialization is not a merely destructive abandonment of the actual, nor the solitary escape of a beautiful soul into the absolute difference of pure virtuality. Let us return to Deleuze and Guattari's description of utopia. As they say, utopia stands for absolute deterritorialization. But to say this, and to say that this is revolution, "is to posit revolution as plane of immanence, infinite movement and absolute survey, but to the extent that these features connect up with what is real here and now in the struggle against capitalism, relaunching new struggles whenever the earlier one is betrayed."<sup>100</sup> This is not to insist that one must never think towards or in terms of the actual, that one must only escape the actual and *dwell* thereafter in the virtual, as though revolution is betrayed by actualization in principle. This is the trouble, however, with the concept of utopia, even given that it is transformed in Deleuze and Guattari. In the way that it stands for deterritorialization, it is difficult not to think that ending up without territory, outside of any territory, out of this world and on the earth of pure creation, is the Deleuzo-Guattarian utopian wish. To be no-where, to be capable of life in no-place. "Utopia is not a good concept because even when opposed to History it is still subject to it and lodged within it as an ideal or motivation."<sup>101</sup> There is, ironically, a sense of dwelling lodged in the concept of utopia, which perhaps thought cannot quite avoid when taking up that concept—a sense of interest in settlement that is opposed to "Life" and yet, by its association with deterritorialization, makes the virtual seem to be

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<sup>99</sup> Éric Alliez et al, "Deleuzian Politics? A Roundtable Discussion," *New Formations* 68 (2010), 144.

<sup>100</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 100.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

where Deleuze and Guattari mean to say that we are supposed somehow to settle. This sense is misleading with respect to the point Deleuze and Guattari really make. The point is not that pure creation is without the actual, but that pure creation is to be *unleashed on* the actual. If it seems that deterritorialization must be pure, that there is an imperative in Deleuze and Guattari here to “escape” as completely as possible, without compromise, it is precisely because there is a literal sense in which creation must be *unleashed*, renewed in and from the actual. This renewal is actual, but not of “this world.” The very spirit of this renewal is of overcoming “this world” as such, of rethinking the actual so as to recover actualization from what is actualized. But it is also of, again and again, returning to and passing through the actual, creatively, and not only ever of leaving it.

“Absolute deterritorialization does not take place without reterritorialization.”<sup>102</sup>

There is a difference between absolute and relative deterritorialization, which Patton explains concisely in the following way: “relative deterritorialization concerns only movements within the actual—as opposed to the virtual—order of things. In contrast, absolute deterritorialization takes place in the virtual—as opposed to the actual—order of things. In itself, absolute deterritorialization remains an unrealizable or impossible movement, manifest only in and through relative deterritorialization.”<sup>103</sup> That absolute deterritorialization continues in order to ensure that revolution is not reduced into the narratives of relative deterritorializations does not mean that in order to be properly

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>103</sup> Patton, *Deleuzian Concepts*, 52.



revolutionary, thought must somehow shun the actual. The actual is not to be escaped and thereafter avoided, but to be thought of as unsettled. It is a part of the process, a necessary and important part, as long as it is thought as that and not as result, not as destination. The potential it has drawn into itself opens it again to deterritorialization. Relative deterritorialization ends in reterritorialization. Absolute deterritorialization carries on through relative deterritorializations, compelling the unceasing occurrence thereof, but it does not do so without reterritorialization or even as though it should ideally carry on without reterritorialization, as though it does not need or is purposed to evade reterritorialization. It is not only relative deterritorialization, but reterritorialization, too, that is the means of absolute deterritorialization. “Deterritorialization and reterritorialization meet in the double becoming.”<sup>104</sup> In fact, it may be truer to the spirit of Deleuze and Guattari’s thought to suggest that it is rather absolute deterritorialization that is the means of reterritorialization. It is absolute deterritorialization that ensures there is always reterritorialization, that relative deterritorialization always occurs again in order to make new territories possible, so that no reterritorialization produces the last territory, that there is no final capture in and by a territory. Such a final capture, including any that is ostensibly in and by a “perfect” territory, is a utopia that Deleuze and Guattari utterly reject. But it is not the case that what they suggest is to avoid any territory, to find a way of being forever without territory. There is no being simply without territory. The goal is rather to give reterritorialization the full resources of creativity *by means of* deterritorialization, precisely so that “this” world can be broken onto the creation of new

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<sup>104</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 110.

worlds. This is yet another variation on world: not only is the world no longer identical with the cosmos, but it is no longer identical with the actual either; there is not simply “the actual world.” The actual is irreducible to the world. Thus, “Revolution is absolute deterritorialization even to the point where it calls for a new earth, a new people.”<sup>105</sup> Revolution is the repeated renewal of that potential in the actual for creation that would eventually produce a new world therein, the destruction of *the* world for the creation of *a* world—not departure from actuality for residence in virtuality.

Notably, Deleuze and Guattari write “terre”—“earth”—here.<sup>106</sup> I use “world” rather than “earth” in order to uphold another important, useful distinction, which I take from Elizabeth Grosz. Grosz holds “the earth” to those “invisible, unheard, imperceptible forces . . . beyond the control of life that animate and extend life beyond itself.”<sup>107</sup> As Grosz puts it, “The earth can be *infinitely* divided, territorialized, framed.”<sup>108</sup> I suggest, then, that whereas world is a production at the level of the actual, though one to which the actual itself is irreducible for its own capacity to be different—indeed to be different worlds—earth is the ontological machinery of the virtual and the intensive. Earthly forces are thus not worldly forces and yet always in life; earthly forces are immanent forces. It is convenient for this reason that in *Apocalypse*, Lawrence often refers to the divine power

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>106</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie ?* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1991), 97.

<sup>107</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 23.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 17.

that accomplishes the end of the world in John of Patmos's Apocalypse as "unearthly." There is a gap in the attitude of Apocalypse: only unearthly power is capable of affecting the transition from world to world, of accomplishing the end of this world and the installation of the new. There is no earth, only the world and that which is other than life, that which is transcendent. The Deleuzian attitude of the concept of apocalypse fills this gap with immanent, *earthly* forces, suppressing the dream of an unearthly power. Again, this is the way of reconfiguring the apocalyptic concept so as to restore rather than suppress *puissance* and combat rather than long for *pouvoir*. There is ontological machinery with which to join one's own forces and become participant in the ongoing creation of worlds. This machinery may be "beyond the control of life," but it is in life, not outside of it. One may not be able to program creation—as one would through the conceptual attitude of Apocalypse and the common concept of utopia—but one can become creative, one can become creatively. One can open *the* world to earthly forces and then join them as they create *a* world anew. World thus indeed has a different variation in the Deleuzian attitude of the concept of apocalypse.

It seems that apocalypse is the better concept than utopia, to posit as the conjunction of philosophy with its present milieu, the conjunction of philosophy simultaneously with its world, on one hand, and the earth, on the other hand. It is apocalypse that enables us to say that philosophy is "unworldly" as well as untimely, but not, for that, unearthly. Revolution is better thought as an apocalypse of immanence than as a utopia of immanence.

Acting counter to the past, and therefore on the present, for the benefit, let us hope, of a future—but the future is not a historical future, not even a utopian history, it is the infinite Now, the *Nun* that Plato already distinguished from every

present: the Intensive or Untimely, not an instant but a becoming. . . . The actual is not what we are but rather, what we become, what we are in the process of becoming—that is to say, the Other, the becoming-other. The present, on the contrary, is what we are and, thereby, what already we are ceasing to be.<sup>109</sup>

Revolution, revelation: apocalypse reveals the actual as such, and reveals the virtual and the intensive. Utopia cannot cease to be subject to the world's history, but apocalypse can. It can make thinkable the sweeping away of *the* world and the becoming in every case of *a* world. The political task is to accomplish in every case the discovery of *puissance* that can create *a* world.

At this point, then, I would like to shift my focus onto Philippe Mengue's essay "People and Fabulation." Some of the assumptions about the actual and the virtual that inform Mengue's critique of Deleuze's politics resonate with Hallward's, though Mengue is certainly more optimistic about the prospect of redeeming Deleuze's thought for political use. Like Ronald Bogue,<sup>110</sup> Mengue observes that in Deleuze, there is already an opposition of utopia and fabulation, a concept inherited from Henri Bergson. Is there a need for apocalypse to take utopia's place, when utopia already has a conceptual opponent in fabulation?

Mengue compares Deleuze and Heidegger, arguing that they share an interest in basing politics on an artistic kind of creation. They differ, for Mengue, in for whom and what they consider such creation should occur. For Heidegger, it is necessary in the

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<sup>109</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 112.

<sup>110</sup> See Ronald Bogue, "Deleuze and Guattari and the Future of Politics: Science Fiction, Protocols and the People to Come," *Deleuze Studies* 5 (2011), 77-97.

formation of a nation, to establish for the community the spirit on which it must center. The creation of myth and the making of art serve to pull together a people, to cultivate a unity. Deleuze, of course, places political hope in fabulation as a force capable of *disturbing* anything that would purport to be a finished or sufficient unity of “the people.” Fabulation is not on the side of the collective, but always minoritarian, always on the side of those who have no place in the collective. The purpose of fabulation is to break open the collective, even to break it apart, to free creation from the bounds imposed on it by the collective’s interest in maintaining itself as it is. The collective, after all, is not in fact the social sum of all individuals. The collective is a representation, a concept. It is that very limited range of identity which has been exalted as the proper average, the image to which all individuals in the community are expected either to conform or submit. Fabulation is a means of resistance of the collective and is therefore importantly political for precisely the *opposite* reason, according to Mengue, that it is in Heidegger’s thought.

On this point, however, Mengue diverges from and criticizes Deleuze as well. “Heidegger, by his positive consideration of the people in its actual and ethnic reality, opens up a problematic that is properly political but slides towards the politically dangerous, whereas Deleuze, who is not politically dangerous and to whom no suspicion of fascism attaches, slides towards a danger of a different kind: by investing the concept of the people with a reality that is merely virtual, he misses the central and proper object of politics.”<sup>111</sup> The issue, for Mengue, is that Deleuze is so committed to fabulation as a

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<sup>111</sup> Philippe Mengue, “People and Fabulation,” translated by Anna Bostock, in *Deleuze and Politics*, edited by Ian Buchanan and Nicholas Thoburn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 230.

means of aesthetic resistance that he thwarts its ever occurring for the benefit of any real person at all. If the power of fabulation as creative resistance is to be maximized, it must never have a “present” object and subject. It must give up the world it would serve. Fabulation can never resolve itself in a complete creation, nor can it resolve itself with any empirical people’s victory. This concern is similar to Hallward’s and has therefore, to an extent, already been addressed in the response to Hallward above, but there is a sufficient difference that makes Mengue’s worth addressing more precisely. Mengue worries not broadly about whether or not Deleuze’s philosophy is even capable of producing concrete results within the scope of the actual, but specifically about for whom those results should be thought to serve. To speak of John of Patmos as a conceptual persona again, what is most horrifying about him is his desire to inflict suffering, the hate from which John of Patmos’s Apocalypse is inseparable, the malicious partiality. In a late essay on Hume, Deleuze writes that “the basis of passion is not egotism but *partiality*, which is much worse,”<sup>112</sup> and we see this same concern about the problem of partiality in the horror Deleuze shares with Lawrence, of John of Patmos, who conditions thought to long for a self-glory that is for the most part dependent on the utter ruin of any not included in an existing *we*. Mengue concludes that Deleuze’s desire to release thought from this tendency—which has certainly appeared in philosophy as anywhere else—brings Deleuze only to another troubling position: thought must throw itself into the pure potentiality of the future in order to escape partiality. Mengue is not concerned that Deleuze’s thought allows no way of affecting the actual as such; he is concerned that it

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<sup>112</sup> Deleuze, *Pure Immanence*, 46.

allows no way of serving really existing people, that it cannot permit thought to become attached. When, with Guattari, Deleuze writes that as absolute deterritorialization, revolution does not exactly direct itself to any accomplishment in the actual, is not itself reducible to the terms of empirical goal-setting, Mengue takes this to mean in effect that even though creation passes through the actual, does not abandon *the actual* itself, it must give itself only virtual goals in order to protect its movement, in order to prevent stoppage. Deterritorialization does not take place without reterritorialization, and so it calls for a world and a people. “But for [Deleuze], since this question is absorbed or concentrated in that of thought, with its purely ‘spiritual’ modes of registration or actualization (reterritorialisation), such a people and such a land can only be absent in history and always yet to come.” Mengue continues, writing shortly after that in his reading of Deleuze, the people to come “has a right to exist only insofar as it is sure to be absent.”<sup>113</sup> Revolutionary creativity must perpetuate itself by perpetuating *the need for* revolutionary creativity.<sup>114</sup> To avoid the partiality that might carry thought into fascistic tendencies, Deleuze seems to Mengue to hold thought back from any partiality at all—from egotism and partiality *both*. Thought is denied not only a subject or an ego, but a *real people on whose behalf* to create.

Mengue offers his own solution, which would retain Deleuze and Guattari’s framework, their set of “chaoids,” rather than reject it altogether. Sharing Hannah

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<sup>113</sup> Mengue, “People and Fabulation,” 233-234.

<sup>114</sup> Revolution “‘inspires’ or ‘blows on the embers of discontent,’ or offers us absence as a gift.” See *ibid.*, 229.

Arendt's interest in defending the autonomy of the political sphere, Mengue proposes that politics be added among philosophy, science, and art, as a fourth chaotic unto itself, with a plane entirely its own, a plane of transversality on which creation is directed precisely to the making of an actual and political people, a *populus*. It is not my intention only to evaluate Mengue's solution as such. Rather, I want to consider the concern that he raises, the problem that he has with Deleuze's philosophy as it stands: if, even in light of the necessity of reterritorialization, creative thinking only passes over, and is never itself concerned with, goals that are expressible in terms of the actual. I believe this is a problem to which one can find a solution within Deleuze. But Mengue's expression of the problem—even if it is one to which Deleuze himself responds in his way and not one that Deleuze ignores—does help tremendously to make the problem apparent either way. I mean, in closing this chapter, to show it as one part of the greater problem that compels the “attitude adjustment” of the concept of apocalypse and thus to make apparent the use of that concept's new attitude for describing the political effects of philosophy itself. As established in the previous chapter, world is doubled in the concept of apocalypse: one ends, another comes. So far, this chapter has considered the former, in terms of why it ends and how. What can be said about the latter? What can be said about the world to come, other than that it, too, ends? And whose world is it?

Mengue seems, like Hallward, to commit a conflation of categories. Whereas Hallward conflates the actual and the world, which leads him to regard the revelation of the virtual and intensive as a resistance of the actual—in Mengue's case, the conflation is of virtuality and absence, and therefore, implicitly, of actuality and presence as well, which Mengue follows to his conclusion about Deleuze, that in resisting the present,



Deleuze is affirming *absence* as such, the absence of something that will never give in and become present. In effect, the people to come consists only of the ghosts of who never lived. It is a legion of merely imagined beautiful souls. With the difference between actuality and presence—established in the block quote above—in mind, however, it is plain that for Deleuze and Guattari, the distinction of actuality and virtuality does not simply map onto one of presence and absence. Deleuze and Guattari allow no simple synonymy of the actual and the present, instead explicitly opposing the actual to the present. A better association is of the distinction of the actual and the present with the distinction I made above of actualization as process and that which has already been actualized. And surely, if the actual is different from and opposed to the present, the virtual is likewise different from and opposed to that which should be described merely as “absent.” Actuality is a challenge to presence, and virtuality, to absence. The virtual is not absent; it cannot be, according to Deleuze’s description of pure immanence. The virtual is not removed from what is produced from it, though it does not resemble what is produced from it either. The virtual is not accessible to consciousness, but it is not outside of life. As productive force, the virtual is real and even, because it is real, associable with real people. There is no need to suppose that regard for a new people, a people to come, is opposed to regard for real people.

It is the virtuality of the people to come that guarantees not only its reality as concept, but also the reality of people to whom the concept of “the people to come” might in any case refer. Deleuze and Guattari write that “the race summoned forth by art or philosophy is . . . an oppressed, bastard, lower, anarchical, nomadic, and irremediably

minor race.”<sup>115</sup> Mengue reads that the people to come are outside of history because they are necessarily, categorically so—because history is actual, becoming is virtual, and the virtuality of the people to come must be protected from the actuality of history and thereby kept pure. But Deleuze and Guattari do not seem interested in this kind of purity, in this kind of preservation of virtuality. It is not the purity of virtuality that they wish to defend, but the unceasing repetition of creation that is capable of resisting the tendency of worlds to become fixed and final in the actual, without resisting the actual itself. The actual itself can be raised, can be “the now of our becoming” and not merely identical with the present.<sup>116</sup> With respect to the people to come, then, it is important to take in all that Deleuze and Guattari propose: “The thinker . . . becomes Indian, and never stops becoming so—perhaps ‘so that’ the Indian who is himself Indian becomes something else and tears himself away from his own agony. We think and write for animals themselves. We become animal so that the animal becomes something else. . . . Becoming is always double, and it is this double becoming that constitutes the people to come and the new earth.”<sup>117</sup> What exactly is meant by this double becoming?

This double becoming is Deleuze and Guattari’s response to the problem of partiality—not their way of evading it, not their hiding from it. They do not disregard the actual, nor regard it only distastefully, but wish to accomplish the expansion of the actual

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<sup>115</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 109.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

such that we become capable of affirmation of the divergent plurality of worlds within it, including in such ways that inform our social-political evaluations. The thinker becomes by thinking, not simply to revel in the privilege of thought, but so as to reveal more and more the immanent forces that are themselves political insofar as they are capable of disrupting *and then re-creating* the actual—again and again. In the aforementioned essay on Hume, Deleuze writes, “The problem [of society] is no longer how to limit egotisms and the corresponding natural rights but how to go beyond partialities, how to pass from a ‘limited sympathy’ to an ‘extended generosity,’ how to stretch passions and give them an extension they don’t have on their own.”<sup>118</sup> Such enlargement of the passions, such achievement by artifice of *compassion*, is one task held in common by Deleuze and Guattari’s three chaoids, their conceptions of philosophy, science, and art. The goal is to expand actualization, to reveal what lies outside of the already actualized, what is not and cannot be merely included in *the* world to which there is always the danger that the actual will be illusorily reduced. To say that the people to come is always a “missing” people, then, is to say not simply that it is a people excluded from the world, but to say that it is a people whose very reality is largely obscured by the world, by the frozen state of the actual. It is not to say that the concept can never refer to a real people or that it does not lead towards the actualization of a people. It is a concept of relation. It is a people *to come*: it is a people that must, from the point of view of any world that posits itself as *the* world, be revealed and allowed, with its own creative potential, to disturb that world. In this way, the coming of this people and a new world is the reverse of the coming of the

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<sup>118</sup> Deleuze, *Pure Immanence*, 46.

divine world posited in the conceptual attitude of Apocalypse. It is not to glory in one's place and partiality through the judgment and punishment of all those who are beyond that partiality, but to break one's place open, to reveal those who are beyond it, to reveal the extent to which they are harmed not by their exclusion from it, but by its effects of obfuscation—to deterritorialize in this way so that reterritorialization may follow, and to reterritorialize in such manner that it is *a* world that is produced and not *the* world again: not indeed *the* world of capitalism.

## Conclusion

In the *Abécédaire*, Claire Parnet asks Deleuze what does it mean to him to be on the political left. Deleuze responds that “being on the Left has nothing to do with governments. So if one asked me, how to define being on the Left? In two ways: first, it’s a matter of perception.” Not being leftist, he goes on to explain, means that perception—“a little like a postal address”—extends from a center, a personal center. Every social element in relation to which one stands stretches perception. But even in stretching, perception only grows from that center, so that it becomes thinner and thinner as it does. One perceives oneself, one’s street, one’s city, one’s country, other countries, in such order. Indeed, the problem of society is not egotism; perception rarely tends strictly inward, into the personal center alone. However, it is obviously limited. The problem of partiality is rooted in this fact. One already brings others into one’s perceptive reach, but one cares according to the limits of comfort in that reach. One who lives in privilege—and who is not leftist, who perceives from the inside out, who prioritizes one’s own subjectivity—is likely to find that the most compelling political question is, “What can we do to make this situation last?” It is not that one is unaware of dangers, both in terms of threats to “this situation” from within and without, and even in terms of ways “this situation” could be found out to perpetuate the suffering of those who are for the most part unreachable to perception. It is that if one insists that the direction of thought is from the inside out, from the privacy of the mind and the autonomy of the body out in increasing circles, one’s priorities will always be close to that center. On the other hand, Deleuze explains,

Being on the Left is the opposite: it's perceiving . . . first the periphery . . . the world . . . the continent—let's say Europe—France, etc., rue de Bizerte, me: it's a phenomenon of perception, perceiving just the horizon, perceiving on the horizon. . . . First, you see the horizon. And you know that it cannot last, that it's not possible, (the fact that) these millions of people are starving to death, it just can't last, it might go on a hundred years, one never knows, but there's no point in kidding about this absolute injustice. It's not a matter of morality, but of perception itself. So if you start with the edges, that's what being on the Left means.

As a matter of perception, it is a matter of the directionality of thought, even a matter of where thought locates itself, its origin. Does thought begin in the person, in the subject? Or does it begin on the horizon? "(Being on the Left) is really finding arrangements, finding world-wide assemblages that would. . . . Being on the Left is knowing that Third World problems are closer to us than problems in our neighborhoods." This is what it means, "first of all," to be leftist, Deleuze says.<sup>119</sup>

Deleuze continues, explaining that being leftist is, further, to be becoming-minoritarian, to resist the majority, to resist the collective and the world as it is, even in all the ways it would hold itself to be *our* world, *the* world. This second point is well-known; Deleuze's great proposals for resistance are often said to be deterritorialization, becoming-minoritarian, and so on. It is this second point, doubtless, that tempts Deleuze and Guattari to think of political philosophy through the concept of utopia. Although it is my belief that these proposals truly are potent, it has been my aim in this thesis rather to approach, and highlight the importance of, the first point, the way in which thought must first give itself resources with which and direction in which to become. I have suggested

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<sup>119</sup> Every quote in this paragraph is selected from *Gilles Deleuze: From A to Z*.

and tried to demonstrate that a renewed concept of apocalypse serves well as an alternative to utopia in the thinking of philosophy's concrete effects, its own concrete orientation.

This attempt has been far from comprehensive; there is much more to say, much more to think. But offered here is a thinking through of three major concerns.

First, I have pursued the question of how there can be movement, difference, inside a philosophical concept, and the question of how a certain combination of components can generate more than one conceptual point, more than one conceptual "whole," so that we need think of changes in concepts only through the potentially reductive supposition that a component has been added or subtracted from the combination. The notion of conceptual attitude is offered as a way of thinking of such genetic difference inside the concept, without recourse to the assumption of a change in the combination. And it was, of course, the concept of apocalypse—determining how to approach the concept of apocalypse, in light of Deleuze's reading of Lawrence's *Apocalypse*—that gave the occasion for this.

Thus, second, I have traced the transformation of the attitude of the concept of apocalypse, by extracting from Lawrence's *Apocalypse*, and through Deleuze's reading thereof and Deleuze's thought at large, a properly philosophical concept of apocalypse, in an attitude of Apocalypse. The Apocalypse was shown to be a suppression, in thought, of *pouissance* in favor of *pouvoir*, or the dream of *pouvoir*, and effectively an injunction to judge, and it was shown how a Deleuzian apocalyptic attitude can be produced from the same combination of components.

Third, I have used that new attitude of apocalypse to shed light on certain disputed elements of Deleuze's thought that have been considered to impede rather than enhance philosophy's power to affect "the actual world." Through apocalypse, the very notion of "the actual world" was put into question, not so as to dismiss or overcome an interest in affecting change at the level of the actual, but so as to argue that "the actual world" is itself in fact a conflation discouraged, challenged, by the terms of Deleuze's philosophy, a conflation that disempowers thought.

In the end, apocalypse seems more adequate than utopia, precisely because it is capable of being affirmative in the Deleuzian way to an extent that utopia ultimately cannot be. Whereas utopia certainly highlights the deterritorializing mode of resistance proposed and elaborated by Deleuze, apocalypse better integrates reterritorialization therewith, giving to thought—in the concept of revelation that, from out of the combination of apocalypse, also emerges fresh and charged—the power to think of Deleuzian resistance not just in terms of escape and breakdown, as flight out of this world that we care so much to affect, but in terms of increasing expansion, as the breaking of *this* world onto the plurality and potential from which there can always be *a* world.

Being leftist, as Deleuze says, is first of all a matter of perception. As such, it is a matter of revelation. It is apocalyptic.



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