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***Love's Political Potential: Critical Reflections
from a Deleuzian Perspective***

By Lewis George Bloodworth

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of PhD in Political and Social Thought
School of Politics and International Relations**

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*'The weight of the world
is love.
Under the burden
of solitude,
under the burden
of dissatisfaction

the weight,
the weight we carry
is love.'*

Allen Ginsberg – Song (2009, p.30)

Abstract

Love has often been regarded as merely a private affair occluded from the public domain of the political – love supposedly fostering only an expanded individualism. However, the first essential argument of this thesis is that love is already coextensive with politics – that love is an inescapable force that underpins subjectivity and as such it cannot be excluded or marginalised from discussions of the political – and since it is inescapable, we must grapple with the way it functions at level of subject formation. Therefore, this thesis's central aim is to apply a Deleuzian conceptual framework to challenge the false separation of love and politics that has been established within political theory. Through Deleuze's philosophy of difference we can understand love as process not beholden to identity, we can say that is in fact pedagogical to the degree that love must always navigate the problematic, that which does not fit in love or when love fails the event as the return of desire is fostered. Disappointment in love is central to this process for Deleuze.

To radicalise love, we must also confront two central principles of identity and cyclical repetition that ground subjectivity and limit its capacity to embrace alterity: *Pleasure* and *Memory*. These subjective modes are derived from the Freudian conception of love vis-à-vis his "*pleasure principle*", a principle Deleuze works through and challenges, this principle ultimately rendering desire and love as dependent upon a cyclical movement of retroactivity and recollection – love becomes beholden to the return. Deleuze coupled with Freud exposes this essential tension within the core of love and the means for its overcoming.

The claim that I defend in this thesis is that love may typically serve as both a conservative force subjectively and politically, but that through a Deleuzian perspective we can see that in fact love's tendency towards repetition as recollection, which is driven by lack, need not sediment identity but rather offer the means for both overcoming love as it is constituted and the means for rethinking what love can do. By applying a Deleuzian perspective we can challenge the existing image of love, which only emphasises its operation at the level of identity and unification, by a repetition of sameness which can lead to love's most violent and traumatic excesses - and we can see love as a process that not only sediments the subject but also fractures it, leading to new potentials and possibilities. Love therefore functions at a micropolitical level beyond the segmentations of molar or macropolitical negativity and conflictual identities, love being a means to undermine identity from within.

Introduction

What would it mean to reconceptualise love and politics from a Deleuzian perspective? And how can this reconceptualization lend itself to fostering a new set of conditions and ethical possibilities for praxis, relationality, and theory in both love and politics? This thesis attempts to answer these two questions by adopting an explicitly Deleuzian metaphysics and epistemology which problematises the fixity of the subject, recognising becoming as primary relative to being, and as such leading us to a processual understanding of love and politics. It will be argued that Deleuze sees love as a problem, one which when navigated by the subject of love, offers us a means to understand love as immanent to politics just as politics is immanent to love. The subject is always a loving subject, but love is itself socially not individually determined – love's separation from politics is predicated on a theoretical failure to properly engage with the question of subjective genesis – or how we come to be, and how we become, how we shift and change as subjects both determined within and without, by internal psycho-somatic processes, and by cultural-social forces. Vital to this argument is Deleuze's indebtedness to Freud which has been side-lined due to the influence and acceptance of the anti-psychoanalytic bent of many Deleuzians. Love in Deleuze's account has also been neglected since the deterritorializing impetus of Deleuzian scholarships led many to fall foul of the hubristic accelerationist disposition of an antihuman emphasis that assumed all things must be sublated into the great vortices of desiring production, including love. Deleuze is indeed against love, but only so that love can be thought of differently – the horizon of absolute deterritorialization offering impetus to relative deterritorializations, the returning not of love but of desire, which opens the subject of love to new ethical and political possibilities.

Brian Massumi's *A user's guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia* is indicative here of this maximalist trend: 'not the singles scene, not divorce, but as yet unimagined ways of bodies moving together, beyond boredom, beyond religion and taxes, maybe even beyond "love" (that most potent of all Western order-words)' (1992, pp.40-1). But there is not in Deleuze's writings any such desire to do away with love as such, if anything the problem of love for Deleuze is essential, if not fully engaged with in Deleuzian scholarship. As a supplement to Massumi there is also John Protevi who articulated a more positive conception of the possibility of love within a Deleuzian ethical imaginary. For Protevi we can identify two metaphysical tendencies outlined by Deleuze and Guattari; there is

Oedipal Love which is 'personal, exclusively differentiated, fixed in meaning, guilty and familial' and Schizo Love 'that is material (not representational), social (not familial) and multiple (not personal)' with both being predicated on two corresponding operations of desire, *sick desire* and *revolutionary desire* respectively (Patton & Protevi; 2004, p.188). This is helpful in recognising love as not purely a personal affair but rather as entering into the social permutations of desire, identity, and representation, but it nonetheless does not do enough to fully account for the genesis of love within the subjective matrix of desire, and it also tends to replicate the false presumption that Deleuze is obsessed with the Schizophrenic over the Oedipal – Deleuze, particularly in *Difference and Repetition* and *Proust and Signs* does not suggest this, for he is seeking to reformulate or apprehend the transcendental conditions of the subject in their becoming. Only by understanding us as determined beings, can we ethically effectuate a transformation of ourselves, uncovering how we (alluding to Spinoza, a central influence on Deleuze) might no longer be ruled by inadequate ideas, superstitions and the confusion of cause and effect, thus recognising our potential in adequate ideas that situate us within affective histories and common notions not mired in prejudice and obscurity. The false separation of love and politics leads us to misidentify the ways in which power operates affectively, and so Deleuze's conception of love allows us to refound the political in the dynamic between the macro and the micro, between identity and difference, between being and becoming. It is only by tracing the genesis of the subject that can we fully recognise this dynamic at play and thus effectuate a new freedom – and this freedom leads us to develop a new image of love, a new set of possibilities.

Paul Patton does a commendable job of recognising that although Deleuze is not typically a thinker of the political, he nonetheless offers a conceptual toolkit that can overcome the static and identitarian conceptions of the political that widely proliferate within political philosophy – Deleuze challenging the sovereign subject as the foundation for political thought, nor does Deleuze rely on Habermasian premise of communication as fundamental nor a Schmittian premise of negativity and conflict as essential. Patton rightly identifies in Deleuze that *Politics is prior to Being*. what separates Foucault from Deleuze is that whilst Foucault remains more inclined to distance himself from politics and the realm of polemics and state functions, Deleuze nonetheless wishes to return politics to ontology, to apply immanent critique to the very nature of politics and thus reformulate what it means to do politics. In this sense Deleuze is indeed a political thinker but one which cannot be considered part of the canonical tradition of political philosophy. As

Patton writes 'It is a political ontology that provides tools to describe transformative, creative or deterritorializing forces and movements' (2000, p.9). Patton sees in Deleuze a utopian vocation, armed with the impetus of a deterritorializing inclination – this can be interpreted as a normative imperative, but realistically just as Foucault applies a genealogical method to understand the genesis of power within discourse and dispotif, and to see the changes that occur within through the inherent tendency towards resistance, Deleuze is merely recognising the inevitability of becoming, and in his writings tracing the contours, or transcendental conditions under which such becoming occurs. Change is inevitable, and we can recognise where such change is opposed by reactive forces, by inadequate ideas, by modes or hierarchies of identity and representation. Therefore, tracing the genesis of the subject of love is also a tracing of the subject of politics, and through charting the tendencies found there we can see where those lines of flight, moments of fracturing, and becoming most productive of new possibilities, and also where they are inhibited – what is done with that knowledge is up to those who seek it.

However, we need to also understand a tension that haunts any attempt to rethink love and politics; the issue of a normativity or prescriptivism. Is there a right way to love? are institutionalised or what might be considered inherently conservative monogamous heteronormative relationships bad? It is not the purpose of this thesis to moralise or legislate, since this is often akin to the superstitious inclination that assumes people actively choose to love badly or deploy fascism. Love is not a personal force, it is social, we seldom choose how we love or who we love, circumstance emerges, and we take the opportunities that present themselves. However, if we understand our habits, inclinations and tendencies, if we unpack our personal and collective histories, we can recognise that what is given was not always destined to be so – that what is fixed is not permanent, and that the loss of love or its “failure” is not inherently a bad thing. The language of morality supposes that we must place the blame somewhere, when what matters, and this is the ethical puzzle that we all face, what do we do when all that we held dear or presumed to be constant falls apart? Love is defined by tendencies towards constancy and tendencies towards change – when we recognise where those tendencies exist, we can make decisions not as dupes to the determinates and imperatives of an external structure of power, but rather as agents able to decide for ourselves our fate or at the very least we can learn to love the history given to us, learn to acknowledge what it is that has made us who we are, to embody amor fati. Or as Jason Read highlights in his explorations of Spinoza:

'The plurality of different essences is not simply given, it is not a 'spiritual animal kingdom' of different natures, but it reflects the way in which these different natures have been determined, affected. All striving, all desire, is doubly determined: determined to preserve and maintain itself, and determined by its particular affects, its objects and history.' (2016, p.28)

We are all objects of history, crystallisations, individuations of experiences and processes – the *Ego* is a manifestation of history, both individual and collective. Through Deleuze we can see that this history is not however the end but just the beginning, that although we are determined subjects, there is not only the possibility for change but rather change is inevitable. Our love is not purely personal but a consequence of historical determination, it is desire trapped, and when we encounter others, or when our love is disappointed, we realise that love is not a static thing but rather a process, one which often effectuates itself in ethical negotiations with ourselves and others. Love can lead us to desire our repression as if it were our salvation, but if love is properly charted, if the tensions it throws up for us extracted, then we can rethink what it means to love, we can love differently.

Deleuze, Freud, and Love

To properly contextualise how this thesis develops its argument, we must understand that what connects Freud and Deleuze is the problem of subjective genesis. Deleuze was not really an enemy to Freud but rather to psychoanalysis as it had been institutionalised, Deleuze taking Freud's insights and cutting them away from the dead end that is desire as lack, and recollection as a returning sameness rather a simulacral returning of difference. Some of the best accounts of love within Deleuzian scholarship have been provided by feminist scholars such as Hannah Stark (2012) who rightly sees the consistency of love as an ethical and post-phenomenological category in Deleuze, and Chantelle Gray (2018) who recognised the potentials of Deleuze's metaphysics and ethics for problematising love *vis a vi* the problematisation of materialism in the movement between corporeal and incorporeal becomings. Although what persists within scholarship on Deleuze and his development of love within his metaphysics and ethics, is the neglect of the importance of Freud. This is something that more psychoanalytically sympathetic scholars of Deleuze have acknowledged such as Henry Somers Hall and Aaron Schuster. Schuster for instance distinguishes between the Lacanian and Deleuzian connection to Freud, with Freud being formative for both. For Lacan, Schuster sees a deep indebtedness to Freud's early works

on the unconscious such as the *Interpretation of Dreams, Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* all of which were published between 1900-1905. Lacan of course was interested in the symbolic realm, the ways in which meaning was developed between the unfolding relationship between unconscious and conscious psychic development vis-a-vis language. In contrast to the Freud of the unconscious and symbolic, there is the Freud of the drive, the materialist Freud, the Freud of sensation and experience. This is the Freud found in *the Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905)* and the later papers on *Metapsychology*. In these writings the parallel between the unconscious and language is not developed, and rather the problem of the psyche as a seemingly machinic apparatus is adumbrated – the psyche becomes a means of processing stimuli and regulating psycho-somatic behaviour – or in essence the relationship between Id, Ego, and Superego as a machinic assemblage. Here we see the psyche as driven by a pleasure economy which proliferates cathexis (attachment and disinvestment of libidinal energy). This dual legacy of Freud is summed up as such by Schuster: ““all begins with sensibility”, writes Deleuze; “in the beginning was the Word, which is to say signifier,” states Lacan” (2016, p. 48).

In this way the connection of Freud to Deleuze becomes quite important, since the notion of desire as being a part of a broader proliferating process of connection, crystallisation, and subjectivation (a subjectivation which rests upon a restless sea of persistent desire). Deleuze sees in Freud a problem – how does the subject of sensation come to be? Why do we seemingly follow certain tendencies, behaviours, and habits? In Freud, Deleuze sees a vital schema of subjective genesis, and it is the notion of polymorphous perversity that defines infantile development that seems to suggest something about subjectivity more broadly – that whilst there are principles that seem to determine subjectivity, i.e. the pleasure principle and reality principle, these are mere residues upon the original polymorphous subject of desire, the subject and the drives which determine them are merely the consequence of amalgamation, the aftermath of all the larval subjects that form the molar subject (of love). In Lacan the subject speaks, in Deleuze there is not really a subject, but rather a shadow of a subject, a thing which serves as the visible manifestation of the drive machines that constitute the subject. What then becomes crucial here is the notion of repetition – before the pleasure principle, before the reality principle, there is merely bare repetition, repetition in its primitive form. As Schuster formatively highlights for this thesis

'Repetition is the name of this primitive synthesis, it is what first creates and sustains a psychic continuum by collecting together disparate and scattered excitations and giving to them a more or less stable rhythm. However – and this is key to Deleuze's interpretation of Freud – this constitutive activity is never fully accomplished. Though the reign of the pleasure principle covers all, it contains fissures and weak points that betray its "unbound" origins.' (ibid, p.51)

These unbound origins persist however despite the subject – the origin echoes in the psychic life of the subject. It is this echo that resonates throughout Deleuze's early works, hence why Henry Somers-Hall laments its occlusion in the overzealous repudiation of Freud found in much of Deleuzian scholarship. By ignoring Freud in Deleuze's accounting of subjectivity, we ultimately fail to trace the origins, the genesis of subjectivity, and as such we are unable to fully apprehend the ways in which subjectivity becomes sedimented at the transcendental level. This is most fully articulated in the seldom discussed section within *Difference and Repetition* on Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). What is articulated are three essential principles. These can be defined as Deleuze's transcendental schema of the subject (or the non-subject of desire): *Habitus* (Habit or the binding synthesis, the present), *Mnemosyne* (Memory or repetitious realm of the drives and their shifting virtual objects, the returning past or recollection), *Thanatos* (Death instinct, the fracture in psychic life, the realm of the future). Deleuze draws on Freud to rethink the transcendental in its material permutations within biopsychic life, thus providing a more novel accounting of subjectivity.

What this also means is more properly accounting for the role of repetition, something Freud was obsessed with, and something that becomes essential to this thesis' understanding of love. As Hall notes 'Deleuze's introduction of a discussion of Freudian biopsychic life highlights that the Kantian elements of his thought are to be understood within the context of a materialism, albeit a materialism that radically reconfigures our understanding of the nature of matter' (2017, p.298). By identifying this materialist linkage to Freud, Deleuze essentially materialises the Kantian schema. Both Freud and Deleuze latch on to repetition, but what separates them is that repetition can also be the mode of liberation – for no repetition is a true repetition, rather it is always simulacral, difference expressing itself. Repetition without acknowledgement of the simulacral is merely representation, this representation attempting to defer the difference contained in the repetition. As Hall quotes in Freud 'the patient does not remember anything at all of

what he has forgotten and repressed, but rather acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory, but as an action; he repeats it, without of course being aware of the fact that he is repeating it.' (Ibid, p.299). For Freud, the object of psychoanalysis is to offer the patient a means to represent their repetitions in a way that is intelligible, whilst for Deleuze the point is to recognise that this representation merely solidifies the repetition, converts the repetition into a principal that defies difference – love as recollection leads us forever to love being defined by lack, but if we embrace the returning of love as simulacral, we embrace the return of difference, and we open love to the future. Only by recognising that the subject is merely a residuum defined by repetition, that we as subjects are inherently amalgams of larval subjects, that desire is without principal at its core, are we truly liberated to imbibe in repetition without the necessity of representation.

If we explicitly address what love is, we can see that it takes many forms historically, the Greeks for instance giving many names to variations of love: *Eros* (erotic love), *Philia* (friendship love), *Storge* (familial love), or in the Christian heritage love as *Agape* (spiritual love). This thesis however draws on the Freudian account of love as a sublimation of desire (which is primarily sexual) – the infant is Freud's starting point, and in the infant Freud saw a conflict occurring between the appetites of a desirous being (a multitude of drives) and the determinates of a symbolic universe of meaning, morality, and ritual that placed restrictions upon the developing child. Love is the result of this conflict, as children we desire the affection, attention, and care of our parents – but as we grow and develop, we realise that our appetites cannot always be met, and as such we learn to defer our desires lest we be confronted by disappointment. Desire is pre-personal and non-subjective, whereas love is of the subject it is defined by habits and repetition. Or as Freud states 'Not without good reason has the sucking of the child at the mother's breast become the model for every loving relationship. The discovery of the object is in fact a rediscovery' (2005, p.200). Recollection is thus love's ultimate motor; we seek to reclaim the first instance of true affection we ever experienced, the *Other* (beloved) being merely a surrogate, a copy that placates the echoes of our infantile anxieties, the fear of being alone, or unwanted, of being harmed. Love as recollection is suffused with lack, a lack that the subject of love seeks to fill with new objects of love. Love is thus defined by a strong attachment to and an overvaluation of an object, and this strong attachment is guided by the identification of an object which is idealised as reflecting certain qualities that return us (whether consciously or unconsciously) to the first instance of care that was psychologically important. This kind of love can be discerned in the rhythmic unfolding of pleasure and

memory, which psychically (and somatically) operate as habits, conservative patterns that give solidity to our subjectivity. However arguably these tendencies are not purely found in amorous encounters, they are found in friendships, in pedagogical relations, in spirituality, in political projects – something Freud also recognised in his later works *Mass Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921) and *Civilisation and Discontents* (1930). Love is therefore not purely an individual feeling but something that grounds us within collectives – the nation or the Fuhrer, all stand in for the mother or father in this schema of love, within political and social discourses the family becomes the unconscious model, a socius is saturated with Oedipus.

This is where Deleuze lends us a useful supplement to Freud's account of love supposing that subjects may find themselves in situations that do not neatly fit the conservative tendencies of subjectivity. Deleuze opens love to the possibility of the event, which is akin to a problem with no fixed solution (1990, p.56). The event is that which cracks up the patterns which sedimented the subject of love and of thought – it is beyond intelligibility. The event is akin to death. Subjects of thought, of experience, of love will inevitably encounter that which does not fit into their subjective matrix of intelligibility and this will present them with a set of problems that defy their existing repertoire of solutions – in this way they end up in what I will term a situation of subjective misrecognition since from a Deleuzian perspective that which is recognisable or conforms to recognition must be part of the readily established terrain of molar (dominant) identities or common sense notions (doxa or image of thought). A Deleuzian account of love provides an examination of the material-libidinal economy of desire of a subject that no longer can rely on its embodied habits to ground it any longer, a new trajectory is conjured both materially and symbolically (the two being immanent to one another) – love and the subject are merely a residuum upon the plane of immanence, a vessel on shifting seas. In this way Deleuzian love is akin to the polymorphous perversity Freud identifies in infants, this love touches again upon the real kernel of the subject of desire, which is not a void but a recombinant assemblage, a shifting contingent mass that may be able to re-found itself if it moves beyond the repetitious movement of the symptom, psychic wound, trauma that was the first individuating instance of love in the history of the subject. A Deleuzian account of love thus offer us a question: what if instead retreating from disappointment in love we embraced it? We might even ask would the fascist persist if they stopped resisting disappointment, if they stopped displacing their anxieties on some scapegoat, on some other that deprives them of their fulfilment and enjoyment? If every love is simulacral, then difference is

inevitable. Embrace the simulacra, embrace disappointment – this is love returned to desire, a love of the future and not the past.

Many Politics

The liberal tradition has tended historically to emphasise the public over the private, and the individual over the collective, these ramified binaries leading to the misguided assumption that love is somehow not a political, public or collective phenomenon. One might interject that more critical perspectives have already superseded such a set of assumptions, these being the various strands of radical thought tied to a broader philosophical negativity that is associated with Hegel and Marx – this is unfortunately not the case. Through virtue of the very contours of negative critique and its reliance on a broader normative agenda, there is a tendency to become beholden the very contours of the liberal tradition which had set the terrain for political consternation – they recognise the ways in which the existing political contours of the present occlude or restrict a diversity of political identities but fail to properly account for subjective genesis and relationality as a fracturing medium – the subject is always managing the trauma of its residual status in a territorialised and deterritorializing field of desire . Two key emblematic instances of this include the broader tradition of recognition thinkers exemplified by Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth, and on the other end of this spectrum the evental and postfoundational thought of Alain Badiou. The politics of recognition remains reliant on a prefixed and essentially intersubjective notion of the political subject, whilst also prioritising public sphere as opposed to the private sphere – thus political subjects realistically only effectuate their agency by contesting their misrecognition by established political institutions. At the level of subjectivity, there is an assumption amongst recognition thinkers of a ‘primal dyad’ through which agents of politics essentially measure themselves relative to the coordinates of communication, self-expression, or a need for acknowledgement – the subject of politics being one who in large measure does not feel adequately recognised (McNay; 2008, pp.8-9). The politics of recognition is deeply normative supposing that justice and equality are obtainable by focusing on the greater distribution of rights and economic privileges amongst differing identities. Badiou differs in this regard, deferring prescription in favour of a commitment to events as the upsurge of the real into the symbolic space of political consternation – but what renders Badiou in line with these thinkers is that he rather arbitrarily segregates love from politics since love for him is simply a personal truth and not defined by conflict, whilst politics strives towards collective

equality against the limitations and inhibiting effects of what he refers to as the state of the situation that renders only that which can be counted within the discursive and symbolic coordinates of the existing regime of power as permissible. Both positions render love as a marginal affair and subordinate to politics – and so whilst they do not rely on an entirely liberal illusion of a possible consensus politics abstracted from the vicissitudes of power relations, they nonetheless fail to give proper place to love as a central feature of politics.

This thesis will dedicate a chapter to discussing Badiou since he represents a central critic of Deleuze and one that has directly engaged with love – even if he wrongly segregates love from politics and fails to see the central role of disappointment in opening the way for transformation. We shall therefore here in the introduction quickly problematise the politics of recognition to show how it does not hold up to a Deleuzian conception of the political – tackling Badiou later. Firstly, what does a politics of recognition entail in embryo? As Charles Taylor formulates it ‘our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence... Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being’ (1994, p.25). Taylor’s essential thesis derives its impetus from the context of multicultural struggles for political legitimacy, autonomy, and integrity against the exclusive universalism of essentially liberal and broadly secular narratives of political rights. In liberal thought there has existed an assumption that universal rights and goods should be the cornerstone of modern democracies – and that these universal qualities can easily be deduced through the application of reason. We can also see that Taylor’s thesis also premises itself upon the notion that human beings are fundamentally dialogic, reliant upon language, in how they construct political identity thus rendering our subjectivity as reliant upon others. However as an immediate concern, we need to acknowledge that language is not prior but rather coeval to power relations: ‘language is a form of symbolic power, it is a medium through which individuals are accommodated to social hierarchies in a process that is neither forced or freely assumed’ (McNay; 2008, p.73). We cannot assume that language is simply a neutral tool for the communication and expression of individual identity concerns when language often reinforces the binaries of self and other, whether they be sexist, racist, ableist, Eurocentric and orientalist etc. As such love under the auspices of recognition can become a means to perpetuate existing relations of power rather than undermine them.

Honneth in contrast to Taylor, proposes a typology recognition which includes love (as emotional concern for others), respect (acknowledging the right to autonomy of others), and esteem (acknowledging the shared goals and appreciating of unique qualities of others). These are also paired with their opposite, which includes the violation of the body, the denial of rights, and the denigration of other ways of life (Leeuwen; 2007, p.182). Honneth like Taylor essentially supposes the primacy of recognition as the fundamental question of politics, in a sense supposing the quest for recognition as an ahistorical motor within the unfolding of human history – recognition serving as the normative basis for historical development (Kelly, 2018, p.116). In a sense we can thus derive from Honneth a sense of teleological progression which defines historical development, with emotional sentiment being at the centre of intersubjective movement between political subjects – we in a real sense feel our exclusion from the institutions of politics, of work, of public life, and thus through this feeling strive to surmount our subordination through engaging in concrete acts and asserting real demands for change. This positing of recognition as the emotional motor of history however sets us upon the wrong course for understanding how subjectivity functions in relation to power since the subject is never truly outside of power. Subjects are made, they do not exist in some prior form in an essentialised fashion as human or citizen. To say I recognise the other in an intersubjective sense is not what is being challenged here, but we are failing to see the role of genesis in this scenario – a subject has a history which is determined in a relational context, they are determined by discourse, by relations of the family, economy, culture and society, but nonetheless they always chafe against these determinations, for individuation does not end at identity, for identity is a simplification. If Honneth supposes recognition as the fundamental motor of historical development, why does he see fit to suppose that love is lesser in the struggle for recognition? Simply put, he does not believe love relations can be generalised beyond the family, and that the conflict within love is merely existential and thus not political (Connolly; 2010, p.420). This position is not defensible and considering the last century of feminist activism rather absurd – love is not a purely existential or romantic relation, it is inherently tied to wider political and public issues. Love in the family is embryonic of wider political issues, not just surrounding gender and sexuality, but also pertaining as we will see in later chapters to nationalist narratives around the nation as an object of love investment whereby the subject of politics finds their identity reinforced through loving the nation as if it were another person, the notions of love prevalent within existing narratives and discourses have a patently political and collective dimension.

In Deleuze's vocabulary, we need to situate politics within the varied lines of molar identitarian segmentation, of molecular flux, and lines of flight. In relation to our theme we can immediately apprehend that love and political relations are imminently imbricated in both the operations of binary machinic cutting which viscerally segregates identities (man/woman/worker/capitalist/citizen/denizen) putting them into a relationship of negativity but also in a constitutive relationship of recognition – it forces a situation of identification and internalisation which situates or roots the subject within a hierarchy of competing forces, a hierarchy which is itself situated upon a plane of organisation to use Deleuze's parlance that gives the wider totality a sense of cohesion in the form of a concrete assemblage of disparate particulars. The second line of molecularity is more supple and operates at the periphery of identity. The molecular operates *visa vi* thresholds, it works at the edges of each segment and is defined by movement, intensity, slippage, and vacillation – or more pointedly, mutation. At the level of subjectivity the molecular does not operate in a transparent and discernible perceptibility, but rather manifests, effectuates, and proliferates itself in the forms of affects and sensations, in the intensities of passion and emotion, in the vagaries of the distortions that may impact our understanding of space-time – in this regard love has its segments (marriage, ritual, the family etc) but these segments are always being undermined from within – desire resists segmentation, and in a sense it is desire that prompts us to misrecognise ourselves within the segments of identity – our uncertainty prompting us to ask “who am I?” However, these slippages or drifts away from dominant identities does not necessarily suppose some radical transformation. The deterritorialization that molecularity allows for may thus also allow for an even more drastic reterritorialization, the revolutionary movement might devolve into a cult of personality guided by the patriarchal strictures of a leader-father complex, the movement of free love might actively disavow the family yet nonetheless expect women to remain subordinate to men, or feminist and queer communities might themselves become invested in neoliberal hierarchies and nationalist fantasies. The molecular thus can carry us into a fascistic black hole that replicates and intensifies the worst excesses of domineering identity and segmentarity. And on the third line, we find a point of departure or velocity that completely cracks up the other two lines and in so doing allows for something entirely new or unexpected to occur, and we can never truly foresee this line of maximal velocity, of flight – we might attribute it to calamity and catastrophe, such as the death of a father, to a break up with a long loved partner, to the crash of the world market and its associated fallout, to our own collapses into states of madness or

delirium. A line of flight forces us to become nomads. To emphasise the point, on the supple line what often occurs in those small slippages is a relative deterritorialization that although remaining within conditions of the actual and possible, nonetheless pushes against them opening fissures which allow for the virtual or unforeseeable to take form. Relative deterritorialization swings like a pendulum between the two determined kinetic points of identity. Paul Patton highlights that absolute deterritorialization, in contrast to relative deterritorialization, 'refers to a pure event, which takes place in the virtual, as opposed to the actual, order of things. As a pure event, it remains an unrealisable or impossible figure, manifest only in and through relative deterritorialization. It is nevertheless the condition of all forms of actual or relative deterritorialization' (2003, p.170). And so, we should see that from a Deleuzian perspective, we need to trace those points which demonstrates relative deterritorialization, those moments when recognition fails and show identity in crisis, but we should also be wary of pushing to far towards absolute deterritorialization lest we push to far and end up producing a reterritorialization that undermines the new possibilities that had been conjured in the breakdown of identity.

From Deleuze, we can see that through charting these lines we can construct for ourselves a path, an operation of movement and navigation that threads the course between lines and as such politics becomes a pragmatic cartography that diagrams the fluxes of subjectivity, of power, and of chaos – politics becomes multiple just as there are multiple lines, and as such radicality becomes coterminous with reflection, with the act of critique that defines the terrain and with the judgment upon which course to take. A pragmatics or cartographic politics does not valorise stability or chaos in dualistic negativity, it works in the middle, it builds bridges of connection and disjunction thus creating the space for new alternatives beyond the suffocation of stable identity and beyond the dissolute barrenness of utter chaos. Politically this leads us, or at least it leads Deleuze and by extension Guattari, to recognise that politics must be thought of always as operating in two valences of macro or molar politics – the politics of the segments defined by identities, by recognition, by negativity, a politics of class and parties, of states and institutions (which also operate within us) – and a politics that is always interstitial, operating between segments, more imperceptible and more vigorous, a micropolitics of becoming, fragmentation, and flight. Love is not defined by either the macro or micro – it works between them, it loses itself in the segments, it invests itself in national projects, in fascistic fantasies, in the flows of the masses and their leaders. We can desire our own oppression because in many ways we fall in love with the segments that define us, we love

them and feel obligated to them, love becomes our law, the State or Identity being like our Father to which we are beholden, and out of love we are doomed to render ourselves beholden to the dictates of some Big Other that we hope will love us in turn. Conversely, a love returned to desire, operates at the micro or molecular level and tends to carry us somewhere else, it ravishes us, it impersonally traverses us like a force of gravity, it casts down the segments, and demonstrates that certainty is an illusion.

In Deleuze and Guattari's parlance, quite often the key to politics is charting the tension between the State Apparatus (segments and sedimentations orbiting this overcoding nexus) and the War Machine (not a literal instrument of war but rather that quantum flow that breaks out onto a line of flight, thus cracking up those points of State Capture) – love is not implicitly a war machine, but it certainly can be reimagined and engaged with to enhance the capacity for it to operate in such a fashion. The task of politically reimagining love and deriving from it a political potential is thus consonant with a need to chart its relation to the abstract machines of overcoding, which functions geometrically to orientate the various segments of identity and identification, and on the other hand to find those abstract machines of mutation, which allows for the movement of deterritorialization and lines of flight. That is the in essence the task of this thesis – to chart the ways in which love is captured by different molarising forces, and to chart the ways in which it might be liberated from those apparatuses of capture and thus be allowed to instantiate itself into a politics that is less inclined to become beholden to the destructive tendencies of nationalism, familism, capitalism, and fascism. Not because these forces are moralistically bad, but because from an ethical vantage they are inadequate, limiting, sclerotic, and ultimately stupefying.

A Normative Love?

From a Deleuzian perspective we must be wary of supposing that there ever can be a perfect love, nor can we regard love as some purely revolutionary force – love is situated within a web of social, historical, cultural and political relations which define its potential at every turn. In the elegiac tradition of what it is to love, there is a sense that love is beyond the travails of the world, this is not the case however, this is too romantic a conception of love and one which often abstracts love from the vicissitudes of power that permeate it. Contrary to this, there is also an unfortunate tendency to potentially divest love of any radicality or transformational potential – to construe love as utterly determined by the

world or by forces that defy the agency of the subject (instinct as opposed to desire rules love in this conception). A Deleuzian perspective cuts between these two positions, that love is indeed determined but not entirely beyond our control. What we might say is that often love is conditioned in the way of Spinoza's notion of the inadequate idea which in short means a love guided by superstition, unable to fully apprehend its causality and thus rendering the subject as beholden to love, rather than able to be active in the shaping and transformation of love. By unpacking the conditions that determine love or the subject of love we can in effect convert or reevaluate love in such a way that positions it away from inadequacy and superstition, beyond the circularity of recollection, of pleasure and memory, and instead find a love that it is adequate and able to understand its own causality, embrace its determinations, and in a sense does not leave itself beholden to Oedipal repression or stultifying identity. Paul Patton offers us the concept of critical freedom, which encapsulates in part a Deleuzian ethical standpoint in relation to understanding love. As he writes 'in contrast to the traditional concepts of negative and positive freedom, critical freedom thus concerns those moments in a life after which one is no longer the same person. It is the freedom to transgress the limits of what one is presently capable of being or doing, rather than just the freedom to be or to do those things' (2000, p.85). A Deleuzian perspective offers us the means to see how a critical freedom possible, or how love might allow for a new subject to be formed beyond its sedimentation in conservative patterns of subjectivity that reinforce relations of power and domination.

This then leads us to the terrain of normativity – should love and politics be rendered normative or changed under normative assumptions? Normativity in its most general sense merely implies 'prescription' as Kelly asserts (2018, p.2), but love in its connection to politics does not have to be prescriptive. Love is not a neutral force, it must be unpacked and critiqued – it has tendencies which run counter to historical shifts such as being tied to sex and being defined by strong feelings of attachment – but it also constantly shifts in its institutional and ritualised formations, along with how we apprehend what loving entails between genders and within genders. To try and pointedly prescribe what form love should take is risky and problematic because it may merely end up inculcating a new arrangement of power – human beings do not need to be told how to love, but often we can benefit from understanding the conditions that lead us to love in a variety of ways, and once we understand that terrain perhaps we can find for ourselves a love that more readily imbibes in a form of critical freedom that Patton mentions. Love is risky and problematic, but can

also be freeing, it can bring happiness, it can undermine regimes of power just as it is imbricated in those very regimes. Fascist love, patriarchal familial love, love as possession, love as heteronormative and amatanormative (romantic love), love as nostalgia, love as nationalism etc. are all forms of love that can be problematised from a Deleuzian perspective, although not because they must be overcome or supplanted with a new norm i.e., a communist love, an anarchist love, a nomadic love. Rather as Foucault and Deleuze previously articulated, we can critically relate to these regimes or arrangements of love because they tend to be close to existing apparatuses of power – they form the existing territory which defines the field of possibility for love. By breaking down how they work we might find for ourselves other possibilities – this is not prescription but cartography in the Deleuzian rhizomatic sense – chart the territory so that we can see the limits of the map as it is presently constructed and thus find other avenues of exploration. In this way we might follow Kelly who has written in relation to Foucault that the alternative to prescriptivism is ‘simply to analyse things in order to undermine them’ (ibid, p.9) and thus employ a tactical rather than grand strategic model of resistance to forces of power.

However, we still must answer the problem posed by Habermas of cryptonormativity (1990, pp.275-6) which posits that post-structuralist thinkers, particularly Foucault, are actually normative thinkers but ones who disguise their normativity with a gesture of critical sleight of hand. Habermas suggests that post-structural critique in effect leads us to maximalist subjectivism that enables a kind free flowing justificationism – all forms of moral turpitude can be justified under the premise that they are merely the effect of historical processes and to delegitimize them is in effect to engage in another form of unjustifiable coercion or repression. The initial impulse by those of a post-structural inclination might be to reject Habermas’ challenge as merely misreading Foucault or Deleuze – but there is some legitimacy here. If we problematise existing normative systems as being merely systems of power, then we may end up indirectly justifying a kind of nihilistic-anarchist normativity which allows agents to act without qualification. In later excursus on the Hippies we can see why this criticism has importance, in that for instance some individuals might style themselves as post-monogamic and post-heteronormative but nonetheless continue to disregard the feelings, harm or consequences that their actions can have on others. Nihilism does not immediately entail radicality.

Against normativity and prescriptivism, we can advocate for a certain kind of deterritorialization – a critical one. If change occurs, what Deleuze referred to as relative

deterritorializations, trace the ways in which it does occur, what resistances were effectuated to this change, examine what the change has produced, and chart the areas this change has not only enhanced your capacity to create and act but also the capacity of those around you. Acknowledge the causal linkages that have led to this change, form an adequate conception of yourself and those around you – find for yourself a kind of love adequate to life and its capaciousness, without superstition, effectuate your will with a fuller knowledge of the web of determination that have led you to this point. As Daniel W. Smith highlights ‘A truly ‘normative’ principle must not only provide norms for condemning abuses of power, but also a means for condemning norms that have themselves become abuses of power (e.g., the norms that governed the treatment of women, slaves, minorities, etc.). An immanent process, in other words, must, at one and the same time, function as a principle of critique as well as a principle of creation (the ‘genetic’ method)’ (2003, p.308). In this way norms from a Deleuzian perspective immanently undermine themselves, are constantly put to review, and as such they cease to be transcendent universals but rather ones that are immanent to the processual flux of desire and its latent potentials. Such a normativity is paradoxical rather than crypto-normative as Habermas suggests, and in a sense this thesis aligns with Paul Patton against Todd May who suggested that Deleuze can be essentially read as an anarchist thinker (See Smith, 2003). Marriage can be revolutionary in the world of the serial dater; just as non-monogamy can be radical in the world of the monogamist whose long-term relationship has failed. It is not the codification or ritual that necessarily is important for Deleuze when it comes to love, but rather how love can change the world of those who experience it – when we open ourselves to the vulnerability of disappointment and dissatisfaction. However, if love becomes fascist, conservative, or capitalistic then this inevitably leads us away from a love capable of effectuating becoming, and it also ethically diminishes the individuals captured by such sedimented or moralised conceptions of love – since all three render the subject of love as beholden to superstition, to inadequate ideas, to the relegation or expulsion of difference over the inclusion of that which is different all in the anxious hope of preserving love coupled with identity.

In a sense we can see that the particular way one practises love is not necessarily important, what is important is the degree to which we can say that our love is not guided by imperatives which obscure the possibility for difference – if we return to the fascist for instance, we can see that they have internalised a love that renders them beholden to imperatives which attack those outside the web of accepted love relations, their love is not

their own but rather guiding by a whole external matrix of fascistic circularity which eats itself. Fascist love is indeed love, it has attachments, it has a history, it is suffused with positive feelings and identifications, what is problematic from a Deleuzian perspective is that it ultimately resists the latency of polymorphous desire and the event, it re-localises this experience within a preestablished subjectivity matrix of intelligibility. We return to the question of what becomes of fascist that did not resist difference but rather accepted the validity of that which is different, did not flee in fear from disappointment but rather embraced it as something that could foster new possibilities for happiness? For change and transformation? In many ways a Deleuzian approach to love recognises its shifting transcendental character, its shifting relation to apparatuses of power – some of these questions being further problematised in the last chapter of this thesis. A Deleuzian ethics, an ethics of love, is in touch with the personal necessity for negotiation, a negotiation with the self and with the other, a negotiation that navigates history, desire, pleasure, and memory. It is only by opening ourselves to vulnerability, to the navigation of ourselves as the amalgamation of habits and memories that we can effectuate a new self that is not beholden to determinations which are purely regarded as external. We cease to see ourselves as sovereign in our own house, the house of the subject, but this is also freeing since we can at least see the territory for what it is, and in so doing move beyond it. By going beyond love, and its conservative tendencies, its dependency on lack and fulfilment, we might see that becoming or ethical negotiation must always be a mutual process – that opening ourselves to desire can only occur when we go beyond ourselves as subjects and work through love with others, co-becoming in the process.

This thesis will chart the territory of love, it will map out the contours which define the residuum that is the subject, and in so doing it will recognise the possible contours that might allow for lines of flight, of becoming, of difference. The claim that I defend in this thesis is that love may typically serve as both a conservative force subjectively and politically, but that through a Deleuzian perspective we can see that in fact love's tendency towards repetition as recollection, which is driven by lack, need not sediment identity but rather offer the means for both overcoming love as it is constituted and the means for rethinking what love can do. In Deleuze, we can see the necessity behind assessing and understanding the conditions that constrict love's potential, this thesis diagramming and charting through a Deleuzian approach those constrictions and ossifications that often manifest in the modes of representation, identity, pleasure, and memory, whilst also simultaneously drawing a new image of love which is itself against love. This image will be

predicated upon the idea that love is implicitly a process without finality, it is a differential pedagogy that can fracture the world of the subject, and that it must always remain an ethical negotiation between subjects who are in the process of becoming other to themselves, this self-othering fostering the potential for new ideas, new practises, new experiments, new projects. Love when coupled or returned to desire is a line of flight from the already given territory of the subject – it is disappointment in love which for Deleuze represents the event as the problematic, that which returns love to desire and thus allows us to love differently. We can indeed become what Spinoza articulated, and Deleuze also affirmed, a human *ad infinitum* through love if we are against love, if we think about and practise it differently, if we deconstruct the conditions which undermine its radical potential to change the world. A politics without love is fundamentally an impossibility – and as such the real question becomes: what kind of love shall we embody?

Part 1 – The Trouble with Pleasure

Chapter 1 - Freud and Love

In this chapter we will grapple with the Freudian legacy pertaining to the formation of subjectivity, Freud's account of the genesis of subjectivity during the infantile stages of development having a direct purchase upon Deleuze's later accounting of how pleasure becomes a principle, but in contrast to Freud, desire is in fact not beholden to pleasure – and thus love is not purely a systematised form of desire but one which cut between the valences of pleasure and desire (this will become more clear in chapter 2). In what will follow, we will endeavour to explore Freud's conception of love – it will serve to outline a problematic field of ideas that pertain to how love comes to be or is subjectively understood. Firstly, we will begin with the Freud seminal writings on sexuality that form the foundation of his developmental picture of human subjectivity, the ways in which we as individuals develop from infancy to become functioning adults. What is clear from Freud, is that the past, our subjective past and its experiences deeply invest the present, we are in a sense always traversed by our past experiences that linger in the unconscious – ideas, feelings, and associations determine our present through psycho-somatic process of *recollection* whether conscious or subconscious. Freud's thought establishes pleasure as a principal of repetition that invests all subjective activity – and as such it forms the limit of what it means to be a subject. This section will thus allow us to foreground a much broader problematisation of pleasure as a conservative principle that inhibits subjective productivity and creativity, one which as we will later see actually inhibits the ability of love to proliferate towards a more politically efficacious set of possibilities – the subject of pleasure must become a subject of love which is something Deleuze is concerned with in his reading of Freud.

1.1. Freud's Three Essays on Sexuality – The Pleasure Principle and the Drive

Freud considered his 1905 work *Three Essays on Sexuality* to one his greatest contributions to psychoanalytic thought, second only to his *Interpretation of dreams* (1900). The work itself seeks to understand, as its title suggests, human sexuality in both its origins and the myriad of ways in which it manifests. What we find in this text is a much more nuanced, and, if taken in new directions, productive insights into the fragmentary nature of sexuality – its inherent obscurity. Typically, the common sense view of sexuality either locates it as a primarily biological imperative derived from the sexual organs and

associated hormones, or in the more sociological lens, as a by-product of certain cultural determinants via morals, norms, and accepted rituals¹. There is some truth to both these views, but both miss a great deal of the perilous path that sexual formation takes in its own development – a biological account being unable to account for so called perversions, and cultural account giving too much privilege to social apparatuses as they exist and not how they might be developed at the level of the subject. Freud agrees partially with the popular account of his time that sexuality can be in part derived from a fundamental drive, akin to that of hunger, through which humans seek sexual relations in order to fulfil this fundamental need – the sexual drive is thus dependent upon a lack, although unlike his contemporaries, he does not see this drive as being something only apparent in adults of the species, but in actuality is manifest in childhood – this sexual drive being also referred to as the *libido*. Although perhaps Freud's most important claim, or distinction, found in the first essay on *Sexual Deviations*, is that sexuality must be understood in a dual fashion, whereby the *sexual instinct* (or goal) is differentiated from a *sexual object*. As he writes 'if we call the person exuding the sexual attraction the sexual object, and the action towards which the drive urges the sexual goal, scientifically examined experience reveals numerous deviations in relation to both sexual object and sexual goal' (2006, p.118). Human sexuality is too varied to be narrowly confined to the classic understanding that the normal or correct goal of all sexual union is purely procreation – under this understanding we could not account for homosexuality, for fetishisms, for perversions.

We are thus inclined from this fundamental observation to pursue a line of inquiry that divests us of any overly biological conception of human sexual relations, or by extension love relations. Freud thus hits upon a problem at the core of sexuality – that sexuality is always riven from the start, it is always an unruly realm at the heart of our subjectivity which imbibes within us a motive, a drive, but without an explicit or teleological end – that end must be formed, crystalised, developed at some later point – or as Freud will elaborate, the sexual object is developed from an indeterminate foundation, a polymorphous perversity at the core of infantile subjectivity, and in the course of our

¹ Such a difference of accounting for sexual difference became important for Second Wave feminism, which attempted to dismantle or critique the categories of sex and gender – however as Judith Butler identified in *Gender Trouble* (1990), many feminist authors ended up resorting to a kind gendered nostalgia whereby they supposed an original femininity or, in more anthropological accounts, a matriarchal society prior to patriarchal corruption. Ultimately for authors like Butler, there is no original feminine or masculine sexual position, for sexuality is always an iterative performance that situates itself through repetition – if there is an essence, it is always in motion, every repetition shifting the barometer of gender so to speak (See Butler; 1990, p.46).

development this set of ramified attachments is lost, only to be recollected or reawakened in adolescence, albeit in a reworked or reconstructed form². Sexual fetishes also meet this criteria, as obsessive fixations upon some specific quality, sensation, erotogenic locality of the body (mouth, skin, eye, anus etc.) - they may be, for Freud, the after effect of some compulsive or obsessive behaviour found in early childhood. Furthermore, Freud acknowledges that very rarely does sexuality solely produce attachments or libidinal investments (*cathexis*) in the partner's sexual organs, but rather the sexual object becomes an object of *overvaluation*, whereby the whole body and "psychical" qualities of the object, its' supposed perfections, become intertwined with the sexual goal – and so we cannot, again, reduce sexuality to something crudely localised at a genital level. Our sexuality thus always incorporates within itself an excess, it is always beyond the purely physical – and enters the realm of the ideal. And of course, it is because sexuality is always marked by its own excess, that we find another tendency, the tendency or attempt to repress this excess through the joint forces of internalised morality or social sanction, and thus the excessive may be repulsed or disavowed, or in the extreme case of the hysteric, sexuality may be entirely rejected thus establishing within the psyche an oppressive puritanism that is often not entirely understood by the subject of repression itself. Freud makes a further distinction that is illuminating, between the "Drive" and the "Partial Drive". As Freud states, and it worth quoting him in full:

'At first the word 'drive' suggests nothing but the psychical representation of a continuously flowing, internal somatic source of stimuli, in contrast to 'stimulus', which is produced by individual external excitements. 'Drive' is thus one of the terms that separate the mental from the physical. The simplest and most obvious assumption about the nature of the drives would be that they have no inherent quality of their own, and only come into consideration in so far as they give work to the mental life. What distinguishes the drives from one another and gives them specific qualities is their relationship to their somatic sources and their goals. The source of the drive is a process of excitement in an organ, and the immediate goal of the drive lies in removal of that organic stimulus' (ibid, p.142).

² Alenka Zupančič even highlights the tension at stake in any discussion of sexuality: 'it would also be a big mistake to consider that, in Freudian theory, the sexual... is the ultimate horizon of the animal called "human," a kind of anchor point of irreducible humanity in psychoanalytic theory; on the contrary, it is the operator of the inhuman, the operator of dehumanization' (2017, p.7).

We are thus again confronted with the open-ended nature of the drives – the drives are never pre-given in their teleology but rather purely relational³. Partial drives by contrast to the grander understanding of the Drive, are affiliated with specific zones, or in Freud's terminology, the erogenous zones – the mouth for instance. However, there are two crucial things to highlight here, firstly a drive is constituted through repetition – it must constantly re-express itself through the pursuit of a release of tension that is constituted by the classic Freudian concept of the *pleasure principle* (not given explicit form in the *Three Essays* but nonetheless clearly there). The principle as it is most clearly expressed in Freud's later essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) asserts that 'We have decided to relate pleasure and unpleasure to the quantity of excitation that is present in the mind but is not in any way 'bound'; and to relate them in such a manner that unpleasure corresponds to an increase in the quantity of excitation and pleasure to a diminution' (1984, p.276). The pleasure principle is economic in orientation, it preserves the smooth functioning of the subject by containing stimulus within the confines of pleasure – too much excitation disorients the subject, it is felt as painful, and so in essence the pleasure principle is conservative and preservative. This is a point of tension that renders the drives unstable in relation to their object – they insist on their fulfilment even despite potential risks

This of course creates a traumatic contradiction within the psychical domain – a conflict between the drive and its constant pursuit of pleasure or the overcoming of that which is unpleasurable. In his later writings Freud would elaborate the drives are the effect of the Id (*It*)⁴ the pre-personal self or that which remains unconscious, whilst morality and taboo are cultural or sociological fabrications implanted (or introjected) within the psyche creating a dam or Super-ego that obstructs the drives – the Ego or sense of self being the third position that sits atop this conflict. Nevertheless, we must assert, based on Freud's understanding, that repetition is essential to the drive, and it cannot be totally denied, or put otherwise the drive if repressed can produce neurosis, or neurotic symptoms that are the expression of this repression; conflict between the insatiable drive and the constricting Super-ego subsist continually. However, we are still left with the place of the partial drives

³ We might also remark, as Alenka Zupančič does, that "Normal," "healthy" human sexuality is.. a paradoxical, artificial naturalization of the originally denatured drives (denatured in the sense of departing from the "natural" aims of self-preservation and/or the logic of a pure need as unaffected by another supplementary satisfaction).' (2017, p.9)

⁴ Although in Freud's formulation the Id or It stresses the pre-personal, we can see in latter psychoanalysis a recognition of the Id as that which always exists in excess of the determinations of the social, or that which defies the symbolic structure which determines the Ego and Superego. The Id manifests itself at the limit of the social and in sense operates as the social's Other, or from Badiou we might say that Id is aligned with the real – it is the truth latent to every situation.

in the psychical drama – and how we even come to differentiate the overarching drive from that of the partial drive. We must actually recognise that the drive itself does not really express itself in an immediate or tangible way, it is always manifest only in its partial form – if anything the drive is a plane upon which the partial drives situate themselves, it is their home, but it has no distinct borders⁵. This is why sexuality is so fundamentally problematic in a Deleuzian sense – at its core sexuality is related to the work of a transcendental empiricism, it is the work that occurs beyond the image of sexuality as it is typically construed, it is an affirmative negativity to the degree that it has no fixed organic principle, it cannot function via the sex/gender binary, but must in fact work itself out through its enforced expression – it affirms itself in order to differentiate itself, and in this way sexuality will forever remain beyond the realm of the cultural or the biological, it is a fundamentally weird category that transcends the limits of subjectivity⁶. It must also be emphasised that by reading Freud, we find the concept of repetition also operating between the categories of pleasure and pain, between love and loss, between life and death – although in later elaborations upon this theme, whether it be Lacan or Deleuze, we find a great emphasis on death as the greater category, for death is the core of repetition as release and the refoundation of new potentials. Ultimately what must be stressed here is that pleasure is the ground for the residuum that is subjectivity, it is the operative principle that orientates the drives which underpin psycho-somatic processes within the subject. There would be no subject if there were not pleasure to operate as its ground, and this ground does not pre-exist the subject categorically, it must be found, and it is repetition which is central to this grounding, pleasure only existing in repetition. Pleasure thus constitutes a problem for subjectivity – it is both its point of stasis, its home, but this home is not pre-given, and as such it remains in excess of itself. Freud thus we can see provides a fruitful problematic for recognising that the subject of love is always a

⁵ Freud does say that in later infantile development the genitals take privileged place relative to the partial drives – but still, is it really that the genitals become privileged in relation to the partial drives or is it that they become over invested, that they become the most tangible expression of the nexus in which the various drives vie for dominance? Genital sexuality determines only in the last instance (ibid, p.174).

⁶ We must however remain sensitive to the way sexuality as a concept is itself historically constructed and modulated through discourse – if sexuality is a problem, it is because it exceeds its determination in a supposed “solution”, it remains in flux in relation to power, but this flux is in part an effect and a possibility because of its imbrication in systems of power. As Foucault emphasised ‘sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or an obscure domain which knowledge tries to gradually uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct: not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power’ (1978, pp.105-106).

vicarious creature – there are no true givens, not teleological certainties in love, for desire as the pre-personal or “perverse” core of the subject defies its totalisation – this is the Deleuzian challenge to Freud. Pleasure is a principle indeed, but there is always its beyond looming round the corner.

1.2. Freud’s Three Essays on Sexuality – The Diachronological Subject

This then leads us to the second essay on *Infantile Sexuality* which elaborates upon the set of travails that the infant must undergo over the course of their development, how the relations between the infant and their surroundings, between the infant and their own personage, and between the infant and their parents sets the stage for how their individuality, their sense of self will develop and concretise. Freud makes a curious observation – why is it that so many of us seem totally at a loss to remember these formative years? Often being only able to recollect traces, flashes of imagery, the occasional memory of our primordial state. Freud understands this phenomenon as *infantile amnesia* – and speculates that this fundamental forgetting is in part due to the sheer excess of sensory impressions that a new born experiences overwhelming the capacity of the new brain to fully integrate every experience, but more importantly, it is likely according to Freud, that what occurs is repression – that our infantile years are marked also by a certain trauma, the process of subjective formation in itself being traumatic and thus the split between the unconscious and conscious takes shape. Or as he writes, impressions leave ‘the deepest traces in our mental life, and have become defining factors in all our subsequent development. It cannot, then, be a matter of real decline in childhood impressions, but only an amnesia like that we observe in relation to later experiences among neurotics, the essence of which consists merely in keeping them from the consciousness (repression)’ (2006, p.155). What we can see here at work in Freud’s understanding is that the subject in childhood in actuality must confront the fundamental instability of the sexual relation itself – that our relationship to the Other, and even to ourselves, is fundamentally problematic. There is also the important caveat here, if the child is impressionistic then its construction of the unconscious/conscious divide might be derived from elsewhere, from the split already contained in parental figures. For as Zupančič states ‘The unconscious... enters our horizon as the unconscious of the Other; it does not start with the first thing we repress, it starts (for us) with repression as the signifying form pertaining to discursivity as such... The unconscious comes to us from the outside’ (2017, p.11). Infantile sexuality is thus retroactive application of adult sexuality

modulated through the vagaries of language and symbolic divisions that structure social reality – infantile libidinal connectivity being converted into sexuality proper through its encounter with adults who come already bearing the weight of other associations and cultural or linguistic biases. Sexuality becomes a problem for the child, and it is the pursuit or overcoming of this problem and the work of understanding what it is to love, to feel desire, to engage in relations (in a metaphysical sense) that forces us to the limit of our being (in infancy) – we are propelled by a seemingly spontaneous force within us, to engorge ourselves upon the flowing matter of the world and its relations, but also driven to find a site of situatedness, to find a sense of home within the core of being which is already pre-given in its established relationality. This in Freud plays itself out in the mythologised drama of the Oedipal triad – mummy, daddy, me – and in Lacan takes on a new guise in the form of the mirror stage where not only must the child recognise itself in relation to the imperatives of the triad but must also confront itself as an object of otherness, the subject is thus cut off from the primordial infantile scene in which it had understood itself in an almost godlike or cosmic fashion. The subject finds itself only by losing that which it had felt sure of – and in this separation the unconscious takes its place in the ruins of the old. The infant's development is thus traumatic because it is always caught between the internal overflowing force of connection that propels its own being, and the overwhelming gravity that is the world, or the worlds constituted by the hierarchies of relations that entrap it and constrict its motion until its being can no longer overflow, but must rather be channelled and directed into specific tributaries – or at least this is a more Deleuze-Guattarian reading of infantile development, refracted through the pertinent and important advances made by Freud himself.

The course of this development is however not smooth, it is marked with interruptions, deferrals, and frustrations – it is during this period that mental dams begin to take shape, and these take the form of disgust and shame which Freud construes as the by-product of the civilised world's emphasis on education (2006, pp.156-7). It is also through this education that sexuality takes a new direction, it becomes *sublimated*, and thus directed away from typical sexual goals to those of a more varied and rarefied nature. As Freud says 'Cultural historians seem to agree in their hypothesis that distraction of sexual energies from sexual goals and their redirection towards new goals, a process that is called *sublimation*, represents a massive gain for all cultural achievements. We would therefore add that the same process is involved in the development of the individual, and shift its beginning to the childhood period of sexual latency' (ibid). The child thus converts its own

frustration, its impotency in achieving sexual fulfilment into a deferred goal – the child ceases to strive for sexual union with the mother (or father) and rather converts this inner feeling into love, affection, and creative striving. We can thus assert that the sexual is the foundation of the cultural proper – it is the heart of sociality, it is the motive force for civilisation with the cultural filling the lack at the centre of “nature”, the sexual void⁷. It should be noted here that Freud in many ways is making a rather important distinction – for in the history of philosophical speculations about sexuality and love, one finds either a moral disparagement of the sexual in favour of some transcendent ideal that is love (for instance Plato), or a rather pessimistic view of love as simply being only a disguise for sexual avarice (avec Schopenhauer). Freud by contrast seems to point us in the direction that neither can be separated from the other, they are mutually dependent, for sexuality without love would be aimless or lost, and love without sexuality would be passionless. It is only by taking the difficult road of continual development (which is constantly diverted) that sexuality and love gain a sense of purpose – they are mutually co-constitutive. Freud goes on to add another layer to this developmental picture by highlighting the role of repetition. He elaborates upon the very typical habit of young children – thumb sucking – which for Freud is clearly a pleasure-seeking activity, it stimulating the erogenous zone of the mouth. What function does thumb sucking serve? Certainly not the need for food. What it does is repeat in a deferred form the pleasure the child derives from breast feeding, it directly expresses the urge of the child to reobtain this pleasure that may have been lost with weening. Thumb sucking as an auto-erotic activity is an activity that repeats in order to *recollect*, or as Freud writes ‘Neither is it difficult to guess on which occasions the child had its first experiences of this pleasure, which it now seeks to recover. The child’s first and most important activity, sucking on the mother’s breast (or its surrogate), must already have made the child familiar with this pleasure’ (ibid, p.160). For Freud, the image of the child that is satisfied, red cheeked, falling into blissful sleep, actually mirrors in many ways the image of a sexually fulfilled adult – pleasure or enjoyment is thus the guise in which sexuality expresses its presence – but what is more important to recognise here is that sexuality is fundamentally wedded to repetition. Hence why children who had been avid thumb suckers may in later life become ‘connoisseurs of kissing’ and also develop other

⁷ Alenka Zupančič makes this point quite clear ‘In this precise sense culture is not simply a mask/veil of the sexual, it is the mask or, rather, a stand-in for something in the sexual which “is not.” And it is also in this precise (indirect) sense that culture, civilization, is— as the classical Freudian stance goes— sexually driven, “motivated.” It is not driven by that in the sexual which is, but rather by that which is not.’ (2017, p.23).

orally fixated habits such as smoking or drinking (ibid). The sexual life of the present thus finds its home in the past sexual life of the infant – Freudian time is thus not chronological but diachronological, whereby past and present coexist⁸. Although we might be willing to deviate from Freud here, or at least question his seeming emphasis on repetition as repetition of the same through the guise of surrogates, for surely there is repetition, but the very forms he alludes to are not direct mirrors of the past but are rather different, they may be repetitions which in fact produce difference, and there is the added question of whether these differences satisfy, fail to satisfy, or satisfy in excess of the drive that produced them.

For Freud, Children must undergo repression to find their sexual expressivity perverse – their habits perhaps may represent a form of bodily pedagogy, of a recognition of the problematic nature of their own sexual impulses and the pursuit of a learning to be, to be sexual beings, of the ways in which pleasure is a part of being human – repression thus constitutes their sexuality rather than their sexuality immanently constituting repression. Although we must always acknowledge that the ways in which sexuality manifests in infancy can hardly be compared to adult sexuality in a parallel fashion – both contain mirrored reflections of the other, but they are nonetheless divided by Freud through the prism of latency, a latency that occurs through infantile amnesia. It could even be said that this forgetting frees sexuality to a degree, that it allows itself to find itself again in a reconstructed but assuredly different guise, although Freud remains caught under the principle of repetition which may obscure these differences rather than adequately account for them. We must not here see the identification of the problematic feature of sexuality as being purely negative, but rather the problematic is negative in an affirmative sense, it generates the conditions for learning, for seeking, for pursuing further the vexed questions of lived existence – and in a sense Freud here is actually superseding Plato, because not only does he recognise that the sexual constitutes a pedagogical problem, but that this problem is persistent, never ending, it is the negative core of subjectivity which must constantly rework and affirm itself in relation to this problem, rather than assuming a neat teleology guided by a fictitious ideal or readymade answer awaiting to be found. These reflections show a deep resonance with Deleuze's own postulates around the libidinal-economy of the subject, and demonstrate that love is always in many ways a

⁸ Juliet Mitchell emphasises that this new conception of time is better expressed in Freud's later works, since his early writing tends to present too linear a picture of infantile development (2000, p.22).

residual outgrowth of a particular subjective history, where the genesis of the subject becomes a nexus, or hub for the intersections of desiring machines both internally within the individuating subject and externally with social, cultural, economic machines at play – the subject remaining transindividual, or immanent to the relations which constitute it.

1.3. Freud's Three Essays on Sexuality – Oedipus, Castration and Sexual Difference

It follows from these observations that the infant will begin to pursue sexuality as also a path to knowledge, a knowledge of that fundamental but contested distinction: the split between the two sexes. Freud towards the end of the Second essay tells us that the sexual development of an individual operates in two phases, it is *di-phasic*, divided between infancy and puberty, the former progressing through three stages, the oral, the anal, and the phallic – the last being the stage of Oedipus which is perhaps the most important for psycho-sexual development principally because it establishes the foundation for love (See Santas; 1988, p.107). For Freud, the male child will assume that everyone has genitals like his own, that the phallus is universal. A young boy will, according to Freud, maintain this belief even when it is beset by the contradictions of wider observation – thus inaugurating the confrontation with the *Castration Complex*. The penis becomes invested with a whole web of associated anxieties that the young boy must navigate – seeing that the female genitalia is missing a penis precipitates an anxiety that castration is a possible fate of the young boy. Male subjectivity for Freud is thus defined by a fundamental anxiety, and although female subjectivity also bares the mark of anxiety (fear of attack by the mother for loving the father), it also is for Freud marked by a form of envy, the phallus is recognised as an object of power, through its association with the father, and thus *Penis Envy* becomes part of the infantile drama for young girls – an envy which is only potentially abated through the consolation of pregnancy, the new child acting as a surrogate for the penis. Setting aside the inherent bias towards male subjectivity constituted by this distinction, and the rather roundabout nature of this fabulation, we can still recognise that sexual difference again puts into motion a set of problems that are productive for thought – sexual difference is a problem that propels each child towards a new territory of intellectual development, of problem solving, or possibly transgression. Sexual difference becomes a key component of otherness, and it demonstrates a dramatic conflict that will mark future manifestations of subjectivity whilst also through its very excess (for sex and gender are always in excess of themselves) allows for transformations, permutations, and ruptures in future travails of subjectivation. We must also assert that the castration

complex is a cultural principle – it only comes to be due to the patriarchal biases of the family structure.

The Oedipal drama, of which the castration complex is a central part, thus establishes the conditions for the unconscious, subjectivity becomes split, and a new subject is born, the subject of Oedipus that segregates the psychological field into the famous Id, Super-ego, Ego triad. Freud throughout his own analyses constantly returns to this drama, but it quite often inhibits his theses pertaining to sexuality – it becomes too deterministic a schema for understanding both love and sexuality, since firstly it renders female sexuality as always subordinate to the Phallus, and secondly it seems to suggest that the boy has no means of escape from Oedipus (the Girl also being caught here as well). Or as Juliet Mitchell writes ‘Everything Freud writes confirms that there is no important psychological sexual differentiation in this pre-Oedipal situation. But this situation is not a stage, not an amount of time, but a level. At another level, the culturally determined implication of the sexual difference is always in waiting’ (2000, p.52). These problems remain important, and they have informed later feminist and anti-psychoanalytic thought. Nonetheless, for Freud it is only through Oedipal relations that the sexual goal can be ‘moderated’ and thus the libido diverted upon a more ‘affectionate’ direction (2006, p.175). What the castration complex does is moderate the child’s desires through the incest taboo⁹, the Oedipal sexual impulse towards the mother is thus rebuked, the child acknowledges their social role within the family and that they may one day inherit the rights of the father – this development follows a different course for girls however¹⁰. From this love enters the stage of psychical life, and although the sexual inclinations of the child persist in the unconscious, they are through repression recognised as unusable – and so the adolescent, must begin again ‘the object-choice made in puberty must renounce the infantile objects, and start over again as a sensual current’ (ibid.). Such a new beginning is only possible through infantile amnesia,

⁹ Judith Butler has argued that the incest taboo is not actually the primary prohibition that operates through the Oedipus complex, the first taboo being against homosexuality. As they write, the taboo against ‘homosexuality must precede the heterosexual incest taboo; the taboo against homosexuality in effect creates the heterosexual “dispositions” by which the Oedipal conflict becomes possible. The young boy and young girl who enter into the Oedipal drama with incestuous heterosexual aims have already been subjected to prohibitions which “dispose” them in distinct sexual directions’ (1990, p.82).

¹⁰ The castration complex is therefore fundamental to perpetuating the patriarchal order within the family. It should also be said that whilst the castration complex, for Freud, allows the overcoming of the Oedipus Complex for the little boy, does not do so for the little girl. Girls are left, through the castration complex, in a state of abject inferiority and dependency on the father – they are already castrated and as such they can only fulfil a partial sense of mastery through dependency on male figures or the barring of children (penis surrogates). Women are thus rendered perpetually stuck in an Oedipal relation.

but such an amnesia is never a true forgetting for Freud, it is merely an amnesia through which the contents of infantile psychical life are deposited in the reserve that is the unconscious, the unconscious being constituted through repression – the failure of castration complex producing a cyclical return of anxiety. The past never really allows for true beginning, but merely a returning.

The libido has no central source however, it is not localisable within the genitalia, but must be a force which invests the whole body – Freud makes this explicit with his concept of the *ego-libido*. He clarifies that ‘This ego-libido only becomes comfortably accessible to analytic study, however, once it has discovered its physical application in the investments of sexual objects, and thus become an *object-libido*’ (ibid, p.196). The libido can only become tangible through its relationality, through the objects that it invests – the ego-libido is narcissistic, it acts as a reserve, it props up and sustains the ego, and it mirrors or re-enacts the primal scene of infantile sexuality which was once so obvious in its narrow fixation upon its own desires rather than those of the Other. The ego-libido, acting as the well source of the libido, must thus be channelled outwards, become object-libido, but this process is recurrent due tensions of pleasure, pre-pleasure and final-pleasure, between all the contingencies of sexual life. Sexual release often leads to a divestment, like the receding tides, and the object loses its investment, its lustre, and so libido returns to its home so that it might replenish itself, only to spill forth again. Such defines the sexual drama of adult life. If the libido is universal, marked by activity rather than passivity – then bisexuality, as Freud notes, becomes even more central to understanding sexuality. For fundamentally the libido undermines and pushes towards the abolishment of the binary between sexes – it proliferates without recourse to a teleological or formalistic principle, and thus the sexual overflows – it is excess, it is beyond the binary of sexual difference whilst, nonetheless, also being in many ways traversed by it. All children for Freud exhibit a bisexual disposition – and as such it is only later that sexual difference emerges, the binary between sexed positions being more an effect of cultural, political, and ideological determinations that subjectify children as they enter adolescence, such determinations working to undermine and constrict the excesses of the original bisexual tendencies or polymorphous nature of infantile sexuality. A child therefore becomes a boy and a girl, rather than being pre-ordained to be either/or.¹¹

¹¹ Alenka Zupančič regards the “mythology” of an essentially female essence as a fundamental to female subordination and oppression – only by recognizing that there is no “real woman”, that woman does not exist, is emancipation possible.’ (2017, p.36).

We must round off our discussion of the Three essays, by hitting upon the last of its key theses. Freud recognises that in his schema of sexual relations – love is already predefined by the infantile sexual scene or as he says ‘Not without good reason has the sucking of the child at the mother’s breast become the model for every loving relationship. The discovery of the object is in fact a rediscovery’ (ibid, p.200). Our early object attachments thus come to completely overdetermine our adult sexual life. All love is recollection – a repetition of the same. This is the *anaclitic* form of love relationship, whereby every newfound love object serves as a surrogate for the infantile relationship between the infant and their mother, father, or caregiver (Santas; 1988, p.127). In a sense then, we learn to love in a didactic fashion from our parental figures – our vulnerability paired with their concern forms the territory upon which the edifice of love makes its home – and if that territory is not formed, perhaps through neglect, then the child will fail to find love in adulthood. This dimension may be marked by gender, mothers and fathers may have very different approaches to their children, and these approaches will impact the love relations of their children, who may end up revering or despising the opposite sex, and vice versa with the same sex. Nevertheless, through the incest taboo, love of the anaclitic type must always be deferred and reworked.

What is important to highlight is that Freud has through his studies of sexuality provided us with an image of love, a drama of lack and its fulfilment which is a movement defined by repetition and disavowed recollection, and it is this image which permeates his later works. Pleasure in this drama of sexual life is the operative principle of both development and conservation, and as such it is pleasure that defines the limits of the subject – the tendencies of repetition and recollection being foundational to the operation of pleasure within the subject, a relation between self and the network of bodily feelings, thoughts, and associations, and the relation between the self and the Other. Combine this with an acknowledgement that subjects are also embedded in cultural, social, political and economic webs of discourse, segmentation, and power – and we can see that this dimension of repetition comes to be further permeated by a whole broader array of determinations that will impact how we love into adulthood.

Excursus - Hebert Marcuse: Eros unchained?

In a society defined by the inculcation of desires for this and that commodity, politics seems to be totally grounded in pleasure, the pleasure of the product, the pleasure of identity, the pleasure of faux resistance. Resistance becomes a product, a slogan, bought and sold, worn, and stylised by the virtuosos of the market. Sexuality was once considered a radical terrain of resistance, the counterculture taking up free love as slogan to demolish the old order, but can we say that sexuality is truly radical today? In consumer society sex is everywhere, and only religious puritans' rail against it in the cul-de-sac of the culture wars. A litany of thinkers have articulated a scepticism of what could be broadly referred to as pleasure politics - Alain Badiou (2012) , Slavoj Zizek (1989), and Benjamin Noys (2008) having argued that sexuality today is intimately wedded to a contemporary nihilism and is thus fundamental to capitalism's continued reproduction. In the previous discussion of Freud, we saw how the subject of love develops, how attachments and sexual preferences are formed through repetition, idealisation and familial attachment – sex and love become conservative through the pursuit of pleasure as recollection, for pleasure is that which is familiar, which confirms and gratifies the subject, that which is regarded as permissible and acceptable to the subject of pleasure. Love as pure pleasure could be regarded as inherently conservative since it does not seek pleasure outside of the confines of the possible or the recognisable – in this way racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, and xenophobia can all be understood as having a connection to pleasure at the level of love relations, since that which is different cannot be accepted by the dictates of pleasure as recollection. On the other hand, the clinging to a faux sexual radicalism is perhaps grounded in the pleasures it entails, both the pleasure of the act and the identity that comes with it - for perverse pleasures can be disruptive only until capitalism appropriates them within the confines of its axiomatic to enjoy. As Noys argues 'what is blocked by this regime of enjoyment is the possibility of forming other relations to the self and to others, of forming 'new forms of subjectivity' that would be in revolt against enjoyment' (2008, p.113). Pleasure if not sufficiently problematised thus leads to a narcissistic subjectivity that can only invest itself in that which is regarded as compatible to existing sedimented patterns of desire and love. We are thus presented with a problem which this section will aim to engage with, the problem of pleasure and if it has any purchase in undermining the capitalist-sexual regime that currently grounds all activity, even resistance, within the confines of enjoyment as an all-encompassing principle. Foucault famously outlined in his

Introduction to the History of Sexuality, how power through the gaze of reason codified what was to become established sexuality in the form of a *Scientia Sexualis* (1978, p.58). Power was everywhere, and it was constituted through the resistances that would alter its operation. In the realm of sexuality this would present the quandary of pleasure - for pleasure not only resisted the operations of power but was also uplifted by it, the new sexualities constituted by power conferring the possibility for new pleasures. Foucault thus finds something radical in pleasure as the articulation of a passion that exceeds the rigid confines of coded identity - practises of BDSM, writing, drug taking or even suicide leading to a transformation of subjectivity beyond the subject. The question however remains, if these practises when understood from the position of pleasure can be truly radical?

In the radical tradition, few have attempted to turn pleasure into an actionable force for social criticism - the figure of Herbert Marcuse representing one of those few, whose writings blended the pessimism of Freud with the economic and political doctrines of Marx. Marcuse's work attempted to uncover the hidden critical potential of psychoanalysis, which had become increasingly conservative with Freud's death. Marx's understanding of *Alienation*, man's estrangement from nature derived from Hegel, was articulated in conjunction with the ontogenetic (individual) and phylogenetic (social/historical) analyses of Freud's metapsychology, in an effort to surmount the spectre of guilt that provided the ground for domination (See Robinson; 1972). Crucial to this excursus into Marcuse is acknowledging how desire and love are not purely personal or familial affairs but rather have wide reaching consequences at the social and historical level - hence the phylogenetic rather than purely ontogenetic. Freud only in his later works supposed this connection - but his own works tended to emphasise only the conservative potentials of desire and love, he could only see Oedipus, guilt, and repression on a grand scale. However, Marcuse believed that society was contained and contaminated by a prevalent totalitarianism of facts which ensured that society would remain captivated by false spectres of freedom, happiness, and self-fulfilment - such spectres were contingent aberrations of history, repetitions of past failures to overcome Oedipus, and as such desire and love could be thought of and practised differently if given the chance. What was needed was an unpacking of the conditions that determine culture, supplanting one system of reason with that of another - a sensuous rationality was needed to transcend this system of alienation, unburdened by guilt and one that would enable the unleashing of man's capacity for creation, in work, play, and aesthetics. It is therefore in his work that

we shall find a systematic attempt to radicalise pleasure, desire and love, but also see the failures of such a project - Marcuse's reliance on an inverted psychoanalytic framework, his reliance on an essentialist subject of freedom, and a negative or dialectical figuration of Eros and Thanatos failing to confront to possibility that pleasure (which for him underpinned both desire and love) as a category of resistance must be done away with, so that we might escape the circular confines of the capitalist-sexual regime. Foucault was correct to suggest, in what is a clear attack on Marcuse, that 'there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead, there is a plurality of great resistances, each of them a special case' (1978, p.95-6). Moving beyond the subject who claims to know, to know themselves and what they want is a necessary step in breaking out of our present predicament. This elaborated upon in proceeding section on Deleuze and pleasure.

As Frida Beckman has written 'The problem with all these forms of pleasure, Deleuze argues, is not only that they offer transcendent and unproductive modes of desire, but also that they fix the subject, turn it into an organism and submit it to the cogito' (2013, p.3). To move beyond such an understanding of desire requires a breaking away from the traditions of representation that fix desire into a negative condition of lack, defined either by the rational subject or more importantly the Oedipus complex which came to be the dominant logic of the family under capitalism. Marcuse clings to the repressive hypothesis of desire stipulated by Freud - this was productive to the degree that Marcuse socialises desire, love, and pleasure seeing them as co-terminus with broader repetitive and circular patterns of domination and resistance, but in doing so he also misses the vital productive capacity of desire freed from the *subject of desire* - Deleuze and Guattari even recognise Marcuse as having made the right gesture but as having not gone far enough (1983, p.142). This section will examine the movements with Marcuse's thought that both problematise the notion of pleasure and take the repressive hypothesis to its limit - in Marcuse we see the exhaustion of pleasure, the ways in which its social or cultural determination shift, and how pleasure can become amenable to structures of power and conservatism at the subjective level. This section will therefore serve to situate pleasure as a problem - which will then be developed further in the next section that explicitly focuses on Deleuze's shift towards a politics of *Desire rather than Pleasure*.

A.1. Eros and Civilisation

Now it is time to delve into the thesis of *Eros and Civilisation* (1956), which provides the most explicit engagement Marcuse ever made with Freud. In this text, Marcuse is pursuing the project that he had initially taken up in his earlier writings on *Affirmative Culture* (1937) and *On Hedonism* (1938), although he subtly integrates Marx's understanding of historical development, propelled by antagonism, with Freud's theses pertaining to culture and primal crime - most pointedly expressed in *Civilisation and Its Discontents* (1930). Marcuse is therefore directly working to propose a sociological account of Freud, but unlike Neo-Freudians such as Erich Fromm, he does not wish to remove Freud's emphasis on the fundamentally libidinal character of life and civilisation. Marcuse goes on at length reiterating Freud's insights into the development of civilisation and begins his analysis with the foundational insight that 'Civilisation begins when the primary objective - namely, integral satisfaction of needs - is effectively renounced' (1987, p.11). Marcuse traces the development of the instinctual drives within the determinations at the ontogenetic (personal) and phylogenetic levels (social-historical), recognising their mutual co-dependency in the development of human subjectivity. As Douglas Kellner highlights 'Marcuse sees subjectivity not as a natural and metaphysical substance, pre-existing its social gestation, but as a product of societal normalization, whereby the individual is subjected to rationalizing forms of thought and behaviour' (LibCom, 2009). The individual, for Marcuse, is therefore socially determined but with a Marxian twist recognising the primary importance of material social relations as they manifest at the level of production, and drawing on Marx's earlier works, sees that there are traits or characteristics of human subjectivity that could be latent or possibly uplifted through a shift in the psycho-social terrain. This means directly coming to grips with the way instinctual development is shaped through the frames of morality and rationalisation - both at the level of the family and at the level of society. Marcuse thus we might argue shows how the way we love in the family, the way we are repressed and directed in the family, is also extrapolated outwards towards the social structure - and this structure then likewise comes to determine us at the level of the family in a mutually determining movement. This might also lead us to question what comes first, for instance, the capitalist family? Or capitalist social structure? Or the fascist family versus the fascist social structure? For Marcuse this kind of question to a degree misses the point - both emerge conterminously, since society is the amalgam of a myriad of families, of oedipal social arrangements - and thus the point is to unpack what

principles underpin the familial-social matrix and are replicated consistently across the ontogenetic and phylogenetic levels.

Firstly, to reiterate some aspects of Freud, we must highlight the pleasure principle – the tendency to replace unpleasurable tension with pleasurable satisfaction or tensional release, which can either occur through the satisfaction of needs i.e. hunger or erogenous stimulation. This principle is primary at the infantile stage, but it will later become subsumed under the auspices of the reality principle - the acquisition of reason and its conditions: good and bad, true and false, reasonable and unreasonable, with the added faculties of memory, attention, and judgement (ibid, p.14). The two principles are fundamentally at odds, for the pleasure principle is guided by the Id, and at the infantile stage, it is *polymorphously perverse*, in that it has no sense of morality, no sense of inhibition. Marcuse goes on to state ‘The replacement of the pleasure principle by the reality principle is the greatest traumatic event in the development of man - in the development of the genus (phylogenesis) as well as the individual (ontogenesis)’ (ibid, p.15). Reality is thrust upon the infant through the *Oedipal Complex* that implants guilt and aim-inhibition into the cycle of the drives, interrupting their ability to achieve satisfaction, whilst the institutions of society such as the church and education system or the rationalised bureaucracies of the state and business further reinforce the subordination of the individual as they mature – love come into being within this traumatic implantation of reality (we might even say here that pleasure is itself the outgrowth of trauma, since it ceases to pursue alterity and becomes a principle which contains subjective development). It should, therefore, be noted Marcuse is quite explicit in rejecting a purely familial interpretation of repression, recognising the a-personal dimension of repression within modern or administered society (See Robinson; 1972) - repression being a social phenomenon rather than primarily reducible to the triad Child, Mother, Father. The Oedipal complex is inextricably derived from the phylogenetic implantation of a primordial guilt into the very foundation of civilisation. It is civilisation which is repressive for Marcuse, and this repression stems from the imperatives which material necessity place upon man¹² - in his need to reproduce and subsist. The pure and unrestricted pursuit of pleasure would inevitably within conditions of scarcity lead humanity to destruction, and so the repression

¹² Marcuse uses the gendered language of Man to denote humanity more generally – this however is indicative also of the fact that Marcuse tends to subsume gendered difference within his schema, something which undermines his overall critical project since it struggles to grapple with specificity of women’s oppression (See Kellner; 1984, p.189).

of pleasure became built into the phylogenetic matrices of society and culture, so that humanity might continue to persist. But Marcuse makes the interesting emphasis on the “*return of the repressed*” in Freud, on the constant return of pleasure to the field of reality - perversion being a constant curiosity in the Freudian project. The truth of pleasure, the primacy of the pleasure principle returns to haunt the mind of civilised man: ‘The past continues to claim the future: it generates the wish that the paradise be re-created on the basis of the achievements of civilisation’ (ibid, p.18). Marcuse is thus calling for a return to the potentials of the polymorphous perversity found in infancy, the explosion of erotic energy that continues to resist totalisation by the reality principle. It is also worth noting here something Marcuse expresses, which in many ways prefigures our later discussion of desire in Deleuze & Guattari - the utter indifference of the Id, and by extension desire, to the values externally imposed upon it: ‘It is neither affected by time nor troubled by contradictions; it knows “no values, no good and evil morality”’ (ibid, p.29). Marcuse is arguing that, against the repressive hypothesis, civilisation would indeed benefit through a return to the repressed, its erotic compulsion, that civilisation would garner a means to overcome the totalising forces of domination, and the perennial conditions of unhappiness that have alienated humanity from its capacity to find fulfilment in pleasure, in play, and the bounds of the imagination.¹³ Therefore, whilst Freud sees repression as essential to humanity, Marcuse sees repression as rather a deforming limit on the potential of humanity to pursue alternative modes of social organisation.

Taking this forward, we can see that the implantation of the reality principle is coterminous with the formation of the ego (the individual’s conscience that mediates the Id) and is constantly reinforced by the superego (the guilt implanted by the familial triad and the Oedipal complex). But the reality principle becomes for Marcuse a bigger issue, taking on a distinct form in his analysis: *The Performance Principle*. This principle represents the prevailing historical form of the reality principle, Marcuse wedding Freud’s concept to the permutations of class society; the Performance principle embodies the spirit of the antagonistic society and its cultural evolution. However, this principle is nothing without

¹³ It would be wrong to assert that Marcuse denies the necessity of sublimation or basic repression – what he asserts however is the necessity of a non-repressive sublimation or self-sublimation that is not predicated on guilt but the urge to combine aesthetic and sensuous feeling into a resource for eroticised creativity. We would, in a society that has overcome surplus repression and the performance principle, be able to actively create for ourselves and others, our labour would be erotic and relations with others allowed to proliferate – this does not equate to unbridled sexuality, but rather a sexuality that can imbibe both the erotic and artistic in equal measure (See Bowring; 2012, p.15).

the second principle Marcuse develops which is *Surplus-repression* ‘the restrictions necessitated by social domination. This is distinguished from (basic) repression: the “modifications” of the instincts necessary for the perpetuation of the human race in civilisation’ (ibid, p.35). Society is therefore guided by a particular moralistic framework, which regulates behaviour at the very level of the drives and instincts, but this regulation is no longer necessary and is thus perpetuated under the imperatives of a class society which has overcome scarcity, but nonetheless continues to enforce a surplus of repression beyond the needs for society’s continued functioning apropos basic repression. It is scarcity which teaches humanity that it cannot imbibe in the freedom of pleasure. Marcuse identifies in Freud an inability to recognise alternative possibilities, the reality principle operating a-historically ‘To him, there was no higher rationality against which the prevailing one could be measured’ (ibid, p.80). The performance principle is thus infused with a Marxian understanding of social relations, that has extended repression beyond the rational imperatives of scarcity. Marcuse elaborates that ‘The performance principle which is that of an acquisitive and antagonistic society in the process of constant expansion presupposes a long development during which domination has been increasingly rationalized: control over social labour now reproduces society on an enlarged scale under improving conditions’ (ibid, p.45). Therefore the repression of sexuality, of libido, of desire which in its essence can also express togetherness, imagination, and play is a historical cruelty which is not necessary but rather something which suits the continued domination of one group over another – Freud’s repressive hypothesis instantiates hierarchy at the very level of our being, and thus for Marcuse the point is to recognise that we are more than this repression which is a historical contingency rather than necessary law.

What Marcuse is elaborating upon throughout this text is a dialectic of civilisation - defined by the poles of *Eros* and *Thanatos* - whereby the instincts and capacities of human beings are refracted through the established domains of repression. Rationalisation in Freud’s general hypotheses, according to Marcuse, works to allay the worst or most destructive impulses of humanity through the act of deferral and aim-inhibition. Sexuality and aggression must be sublimated through the joint spheres of culture and technics, one combining the life instincts with ever larger spheres that are far removed from the initial sexual impulse, and the other aim at domination over nature. Sexual or libidinal drives are therefore deferred so they might allow for *Poesis* - creative activity beyond simple reproduction. Marcuse innovates on Freud by repurposing the notion of the *Nirvana*

principle - a principle that implies the relief of tension both in its erotic and destructive potentials establishing a peaceful equilibrium - suggesting that 'The death instinct is destructiveness not for its own sake, but for the relief of tension. The descent towards death is an unconscious flight from pain and want. It is an expression of the eternal struggle against suffering and repression' (ibid, p.29). Freud does not make this connection in *Beyond the pleasure principle* (1920), but for Marcuse it is essential that the Nirvana principle is recognised as a potentially liberatory concept at the level of the drives. The removal of tension take the form of a displacement, sex becomes love or a secondary process such as artistic and aesthetic cathexis, whilst the death drive which pushes outwards towards others and the world, lest it become introverted and thus lead to self-destruction, is deprived of its potency - the enhancing of love diminishes the urge to destroy. In a society of imposed scarcity, the balancing of the instincts takes on a domineering role, leading to alienated relations in work and nature, but Marcuse wishes to demonstrate that this is a false situation and a rationalisation without basis.

As noted earlier, sublimation manifests in Freud's account as the primary means for the creation of civilisation. Sexuality is sublimated through the intervention of the father, who defers the gratification of the child from obtaining full cathexis (union with the mother or father), and thus the libido must become aim-inhibited, converted into love, affection, friendship, exogamy, and creative activity. Likewise, the child cannot actualise the destructive impulse towards the father or mother, and so this too must be sublimated towards productive work and labour. However, 'Culture demands continuous sublimation; it thereby weakens Eros, the builder of culture. And desexualisation, by weakening Eros, unbinds the destructive impulses. Civilisation is thus threatened by an instinctual defusion, in which the death instinct strives to gain ascendancy over the life instincts. Originating in renunciation, civilisation tends toward self-destruction' (ibid, p.83). The forces of repression which served the purpose of preserving the species have thus established a status-quo that perpetuates violence and ensures continued hierarchy, whereby the destructive capacities of civilisation are deepened at the expense of the sex instincts which seek need satisfaction and pleasure. Civilisation's productivist impulse, the compulsion to work, which extends itself through the forces of *technics*, thus leave nature "violated" (Ibid, p.86), and further undermine Eros, life is subdued and contained, exploited, and subjected to the logic of a destructive rationality. For Marcuse, all resistance to this tendency has come against the unrelenting force of *primal guilt*, and it is through

guilt that humanity contains the rebellious and liberatory drive: 'The father, restrained in the family and in his individual biological authority, is resurrected, far more powerful, in the administration which preserves the life of society, and in the laws which preserve the administration.' (Ibid, p.91). The Law, the law of primal guilt that founds all of civilisation has thus firmly embedded itself in the consciousness of humanity, rendering all impulses towards rebellion with an already predetermined betrayal, a resignation to the force of the reality principle and the continuation of hierarchy; guilt is morality's failsafe against liberation. We can thus see here that love becomes a conservative force through its containment by the sedimented determinates of the Oedipus complex, of patriarchal culture, of class society and inequality – love and desire are not purely individual but rather determined in the social field. This is where Marcuse renders Freud's account of genesis more useful, for he extrapolates it to the wider social terrain and thus sees that in order to change society we must also change how we love ontogenetically and phylogenetically – we must uncover those principles which inhibit us, subjectivise us, and as such limit our capacity to find new ways of loving, desiring, and acting.

However, it is not enough for Marcuse to suppose a simple philosophical rebuttal to Freud, but rather one must actualise such a critique as practised in life, in the practise of artistic or aesthetic creation. As Douglas Kellner highlights 'Art for Marcuse practices the "Great Refusal," incarnating the emancipatory contents of memory, phantasy, and imagination through producing images of happiness and a life without anxiety.' (LibCom, 2009). It is in art that the return of the repressed can actualise itself not in guilt but in affirmation, in the play of the imagination consequently undermining the parameters through which Freud demonstrates memory's repressive dimension under the sway of the reality principle. In the development of the subject, in our infancy we are gifted with an imagination that free, but through repression it becomes subordinate the determinations of reality, deemed useless by the dictates of the reality principle. As Marcuse goes on to argue 'Imagination envisions the reconciliation of the individual with the whole, of desire with realization, of happiness with reason. While this harmony has been removed into utopia by the established reality principle, phantasy insists that it must and can become real, that behind the illusions lies knowledge' (Ibid, p.143). At its core, art embodies enjoyment in the activity of the play of the imagination, in the practise of creation, in the wonder of beauty, art therefore establishes a regression in the psyche to the foundation of pleasure that is at root in the sensuousness of all being subsequently undermining the imperatives

of the reality principle. It invokes the 'tabooed logic' of gratification against repression, and against the destructive imperative, eros takes sway in the mind of the subject that contemplates and engages with the object of art (ibid, p.185). Art therefore offers the potential to activate or reinspire the freedom of infancy, to inspire the desire for the negation of unfreedom that prevents aesthetic realisation in the here and now. Whilst the Performance principle decries the facile nature of art, only venerating it as a value in relation to other values, the pleasure principle sees in art the fulfilment of a universal need, the need for joy and non-destructive creation. Phantasy therefore denies the prohibitions placed upon it by the reality principle, and lays the foundation for utopia, the utopian imaginary. Marcuse therefore in contrast to Freud, sees a possibility for a fantasy not beholden to recollection but one which is able to envisage a new world freed from repression and the impositions of class society, and it is this fantasy of a world that could be free that gives energy, potency, and urgency to every political demand for change. This demand for change however found its limit not in culture but the axiomatics of capitalism, something Marcuse's later work begins to appreciate and this something we shall reflect upon in the next section.

A.2. A False Liberation

Marcuse's most famous text is perhaps *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), a book which demonstrates definitive shift in tone from what be called the optimism of his earlier work. The text, as the name suggests, charts the disintegration of radical negativity within consumer society, the capacity for dialectical thinking and activity being almost totally absorbed within the technological¹⁴ rationality of *advanced industrial society*, the working class no longer holding the privileged position as the agent of social transformation as it had been thought by orthodox Marxism¹⁵. Marcuse in effect supposes that contemporary society, with the advancements of technology in the fields of mass production i.e., automation, and with media i.e., radios and television, has regressed in its ability to

¹⁴ Marcuse throughout his writings holds a certain ambivalence to technology – he regards automation as being both a resource and a problem – technology is a socially determined artifice and as such it can be both a tool for emancipation from the drudgery of work and also the means for power to further its reach. In this regard he believes that cultural critique provides us the means to realise technology's latent potential. (See Alway; 1995, p.85)

¹⁵ In Marcuse's later text *An Essay on Liberation* (1969) he invokes the radical potential of the marginalised rather than the mass worker – it is here where we see his return to optimism, his belief in revolution being reinspired by a myriad of different actors: Black Youth, Third-World revolutionaries, Hippies, Students, and Women. These actors remain on the periphery of the existing reality, they remain deprived of its fruits, and thus they can embody the power of the negative.

envisage alternatives to capitalism. His argument is not to suggest that such a society must be supplanted by a Soviet style economy with its tendency towards totalitarianism, but that the proliferation of advanced industrial technologies has allowed for a democratic form of totalitarianism whereby the overabundance of choice annihilates the capacity for individuals to conceive of a different kind of world, a world not predicated on consumerist immediate gratification and its associated pleasures. Douglas Kellner explicitly highlights the broader emphasis of the text as whole and its indebtedness to Hegelianism:

'In Marcuse's usage the adjective 'one-dimensional' describes an epistemological distinction between signifying practices that conform to pre-existing structures, norms and behaviour in thought and practice, and 'bi-dimensional' thought which appraises values, ideas and behaviour in terms of possibilities that transcend the established state of affairs. This 'bi-dimensional' thought presupposes antagonism between subject and object so that the subject is free to perceive possibilities in the world that do not yet exist but which can be realized through human practice. In the one-dimensional society, the subject is assimilated into the object and follows the dictates of external, objective structures, thus losing its abilities to discern more liberating possibilities and to engage in transformative practice to realize them.' (1984, p.235).

Advanced industrial society develops one-dimensionality through reducing the gap or mediation between the subject and the objects that proliferate within it – products do not require any work, they can be consumed and accessed easily, they can be tailored to individual tastes, they require no education or thought to be accessible. This lessens the necessity for reflective thought and action, a tv viewer for instance can engorge themselves on soap operas without putting much thought into the form or content on offer, since they are designed to be as simple and accessible as possible – they simply tell a story with a few personal dramas and limited contradiction, the day-to-day affairs of the characters being consistent over time. As such there is a distinction between consumer entertainment and more nuanced cultural forms such as opera or theatre, these cultural forms are harder to produce and access, they require greater mediation and as such are less inclined towards one-dimensionality¹⁶. Marcuse is thus effecting, in his use of the

¹⁶ There is certainly a resonance here with Adorno – and it could be said that thus supposition of a binary or clear-cut divide between popular/low and high culture is rather condescending and conflationary – not all popular culture is totally devoid of negativity or the capacity to effectuate critique. Sometimes the greatest divide between low and high culture is merely its accessibility.

notion of One-dimensionality, a cultural and political critique which also inspires the demand for greater negativity, and perhaps a return to more sublimation rather than less as espoused in his earlier text *Eros and Civilization* – his thinking has drastically altered, and he clearly became less accepting of the radicality of sexual liberation or desublimation. This line of thought is most pointedly expressed in One-Dimensional Man's third *chapter The Conquest of the Unhappy Consciousness: Repressive Desublimation* – it is to this chapter which we will now turn, and it expresses quite perfectly all the limitations of pleasure that were not present in his earlier work.

The first point of emphasis that Marcuse makes in this chapter is that the flattening of antagonism that is present in the mass culture of advanced industrial capitalism does not represent the denial of high culture or submergence into the mass, but rather that reality has now surpassed the wildest fantasies of past epochs. The advancement of technology has allowed for space travel, global communication, atomic energy, and entertainment in every home, and as such the feats of hero's and dramatic protagonists depicted in earlier cultural media no longer have the same esteem or wonderment they once conveyed. Odysseus, Dante, or Faust have increasingly less allure relative to Neil Armstrong. In this sense the two-dimensional aspect of high culture, which separated the ideal reality from reality, no longer has purchase – the ideal has been subsumed within the real and thus, culture, merely reflects the real without transcending, or giving space for the envisioning of transcendence. Furthermore, according to Marcuse, the high cultural form tended whether intentionally or not to exhibit antagonistic forces, between the forces of order and the forces of rebellion, with the hero often embodying order rather than rebellion, the devil or deviant acting as the subversive or revolutionary actor. By contrast, mass culture represents that which is deviant as remaining fundamentally a part of the existing reality, neither antagonistic nor revolutionary. Marcuse is not however a high cultural romantic, what he emphasises is that high culture represents not only a pre-technological cultural form but also a *post-technological* one – by this he means it remains able to capture or haunt consciousness; they promote thought and thinking rather than allowing or breeding complacency. Through positioning reality and the ideal in contradiction with one another, high culture promotes the mediation of subject and object, it separates and divides rather than unifies, and to this degree it allows for the envisagement of alternatives. The key notion that is being conveyed here is the necessity of *artistic alienation* – whereby art essentially offers us the ability to imagine or escape from the alienation of lived existence.

Whether art is negative or affirmative, it still remains positive relative to One-dimensional art (which is heavily commodified) through allowing for contradiction and antagonism, by promoting conscious reflexivity. Artistic alienation is both a possibility and a limitation, it remains a limitation if the possibilities envisaged within it are only envisaged as impossibilities within reality – but if those possibilities are translated into reality and they are constructed in an antagonistic relation to the postulates of capitalist or class society, then they remain radical. Art must convey alterity, it must project itself beyond and in contradiction with the status quo, or in other words, art must not be conducive to pleasure, but to thought and conscious activity even if this may be painful (in an existential sense).

High culture remained invested in a form of *unhappy consciousness* – it treated the cruelty of world as almost cosmic and intangible, tragedy was destiny, but the struggles depicted within it nonetheless gave space to introspection upon one's own existence. The unhappy consciousness was defeatist but nonetheless revealed the contradiction between the ideal and the real – that was its power, its Pandora's box. The tragic inspired and manifested the demand for justice, for reconciliation of ideal with the real, it fostered antagonism. The power of art, if it is to inspire what Marcuse calls the "Great Refusal", is its capacity to practically convey change – if the world remains static or ossified or lost to its own ideological illusion – then art must provide a space to mediate between the spectator and their reality and an alternative reality. Marcuse, drawing on Brecht, identifies the necessity for the *estrangement-effect* – all that is assumed to be natural must be understood to be historical, all that is timeless must be seen to be time specific, in essence, the world must be revealed to be infinitely changeable. But in the style of Brecht, this also means that actors on the stage must not produce empathy in the audience, rather the audience must realise they are watching a play, they must be made tacitly aware of their role as spectators to what is happening – they must not be absorbed into the reality of the play but rather situated in the gap between the play's reality and their reality. Likewise, poetry is an exemplary literary form for promoting the negative over the positive, it does not speak directly but invokes the gaps and inconsistencies of meaning – poetry remains difficult to integrate within One-dimensional culture since it works the work of thought to truly discern its beauty. As Marcuse writes 'Creating and moving in a medium which presents the absent, the poetic language is a language of cognition – but a cognition which subverts the positive. In its cognitive function, poetry performs the great task of thought: "le travail

qui fait vivre en nous ce qui n'existe pas” (1991, pp.67-68)¹⁷. Technological rationality and the deepening of consumer culture gives less space for this kind of art, it actively swallows or crowds the space in which this art can manifest itself, it effectively drowns out the negativity of art in the mass, whilst also obscuring it in the immediacy and imposed demand of gratification. At its core, for Marcuse, art is dependent on sublimation, it is a mediation and deferral of subjectivity rather than being a palliative to every urge and demand – the deferral of pleasure is essential to artistic creation¹⁸. As he articulates, desublimation has become inimical to liberation, capitalism now parasitises our sexually uninhibited desires:

‘Its incorporation into the kitchen, the office, the shop; its commercial release for business and fun is, in a sense, desublimation – replacing mediated by immediate gratification... The Pleasure Principle absorbs the Reality Principle; sexuality is liberated (or rather liberalized) in socially constructive forms. This notion implies that there are repressive modes of desublimation, compared with which the sublimated drives and objectives contain more deviation, more freedom, and more refusal to heed the social taboos. It appears that such repressive desublimation is indeed operative in the sexual sphere, and here, as in the desublimation of higher culture, it operates as the by-product of the social controls of technological reality, which extend liberty while intensifying domination’ (ibid, p.72).

We can thus see a clear reversal in Marcuse’s position, he no longer sees the overcoming of repression and the potential of desublimation as empowering, rather it allows for a new form of social control, a social control that we actively enjoy – our subordination is felt as liberating to the degree that consumerism promotes choice, even if that choice is circumscribed by the capitalist universe. Marcuse regards repressive desublimation as a central dynamic within advanced industrial capitalism, it fundamentally underpins our alienation and continued acceptance of the status quo – and thus pleasure which had a radical potential in a society of enforced scarcity becomes the means by which hierarchy and exploitation are in fact reinforced. We are thus so mired in our pleasures and our fantasies of pleasure, that the inverse of pleasure is unthinkable – we cease to be able to

¹⁷ Cited from Paul Valéry “The effort which makes live in us that which does not exist”

¹⁸ Finn Bowring neatly summarises point ‘desublimated art is... an anti-art; true art cannot change reality or represent the revolution, but only invoke it in an unpolitical medium’ (2012, p.17).

see beyond pleasure, beyond consumerism, beyond the narcissistic pursuit of gratifying sexuality. One dimensional society therefore ceases to operate by repression, but rather by liberation (albeit in Marcuse's view a false liberation, a liberation which breeds a false consciousness of reality).

Carrying this further, Marcuse highlights that repressive desublimation reduces our capacity for genuine eroticism since it de-situates us, it separates us from nature, technology and consumer durables severing our connection to the world around us. We remain glued to television screens, we walk outside with headphones on, we drive around in cars that protect us from the elements – we are induced to be less experientially connected to nature; the medieval peasant and the modern consumer are thus not only separated by time, but they also live and experience the world in an entirely different way. In a sense the modern world actively obstructs us ability to feel as a part of the world, it conditions us and immerses us in a technologically mediated world abstracted from the world of nature – we essentially live within a technological bubble which only occasionally is burst when technology fails or natural disaster and calamity rears its head. To this degree, we, unlike the peasant, may not suffer as much in the way of toil and hardship, but we also feel less of our world, and as such modern society generates an affective condition of indifference – pain and pleasure both being circumscribed. Carrying this forward, Marcuse makes an interesting contrast between what could be referred to as consumerist-love and erotic-love:

'compare love-making in a meadow and in an automobile, on a lovers' walk outside the town walls and on a Manhattan street. In the former cases, the environment partakes of and invites libidinal cathexis and tends to be eroticized. Libido transcends beyond the immediate erotogenic zones – a process of nonrepressive sublimation. In contrast, a mechanized environment seems to block such self-transcendence of libido. Impelled in the striving to extend the field of erotic gratification, libido becomes less "polymorphous," less capable of eroticism beyond localized sexuality, and the latter is intensified. Thus, diminishing erotic and intensifying sexual energy, the technological reality limits the scope of sublimation. It also reduces the need for sublimation. In the mental apparatus, the tension between that which is desired and that which is permitted seems considerably lowered, and the Reality Principle no longer seems to require a sweeping and painful transformation of instinctual needs. The individual must adapt himself to a world which

does not seem to demand the denial of his innermost needs – a world which is not essentially hostile’ (ibid, pp.73-74).

Sexuality therefore under the auspices of repressive desublimation ceases to be erotic, it manifests merely as the compulsion towards immediate gratification – it excludes rather than includes the world in the operations of pleasure. By doing this it renders the world as subordinate to the narrow perspective of the consumer – they invite no contingency, no alterity, they live in a fantasy. Through repressive desublimation – sexuality is both de-eroticised and commodified, it becomes an exchangeable and marketable product.¹⁹ Consumerism can easily integrate sexuality within its matrix of valorisation, using sexy marketing to sell clothing, cars, holidays, perfumes, and music – the commodity in effect becomes a surrogate object for cathexis, or it invests itself with the promise of being able to enable the consumer to eventually attract sexual partners. In this way we might also say that consumerism parasitises our imagination since it projects an image of a life that we wish to be a part of it, it invests our desires in an image of the “good life” and as such our capacity to imagine a different world becomes circumscribed, we imagine a capitalist lifestyle, a big house, a fast car, and a litany of sexy accomplices – our fantasy is the fantasy of capitalism, and as such it is a fantasy that cannot envisage contradiction, or as Marcuse states ‘Pleasure, thus adjusted, generates submission’ (ibid, p.75).

Ultimately consumer society fosters what Marcuse refers to as the *Happy consciousness* – essentially, we are no longer mandated by institutions of repression to feel guilty of pleasure, there is no demand for asceticism, and likewise with a reduced Super-ego we

¹⁹ Marcuse here is intuiting and developing the psychoanalytic account of libidinal economy – capitalism in effect renders sexuality a mechanical and passive process of consumption which mirrors the consumption of commodities. The subject of pleasure therefore ceases to be capable of relating to their pleasure since in effect it is always predetermined extrinsically by the capitalist imperative of enjoyment. We can reflect upon this in relation to Steve McQueen’s film *Shame* (2011) which depicts the struggles of Brandon (Michael Fassbender) a sex addict (this form of addiction entering the medical lexicon at conterminously with the ascendancy of neoliberal financial capitalism: 1987). The opening scene of the movie depicts Brandon in the moment of orgasm, his face contorted in pain, and there being no real presentation of the Other who is instigating this pleasure. Brandon’s pain is constituted through the mechanical nature of the sexuality which suffuses contemporary capitalism, his jouissance is mimetic to the capitalist imperative of continual consumption, a repetition that has no moment of true fulfilment, the subject of pleasure ceasing to be able to relate and understand the erotic core of sexuality – its pursuit of radical connection and desiring proliferation. Marcuse in this regard directly demonstrates the horror of this situation – pleasure is no longer something we can engage with as subjects, we have in effect become subjects of pleasure and as such we can no longer productively and ethically relate to pleasure – a pleasure so mechanical and extrinsic that it is felt as painful, but a pain that has no creative potential whether negative or affirmative.

are inclined to develop less of a conscience for the evils or injustices practised within or by our society. Desublimation induces conformity, it does not cultivate innovative means of undermining the status quo, it is not propelled by the desire to navigate repression – it simply accepts what is at face value, it does not seek to transcend anything. Marcuse however does not think that only sexuality is desublimated, aggression has also been desublimated within consumer culture. This manifests in our thrill at watching war movies or perhaps contemporarily in the pleasure of violent video games, or perhaps in loud and fast automobiles, in the proliferation of guns, or in some forms of pornography that cross the threshold of violence. These kinds of circumscribed releases of aggression, are for Marcuse linked to the limited nature of contemporary erotic experience – the libido cannot really express itself fully if it can only be sexual in the straightforward sense, and thus it fosters other activities that give expression to this frustration – we might say that violence appears when the world loses its association with the erotic. Furthermore, by naturalising aggressive impulses within the consumerist milieu, people in effect grow increasingly desensitised to violence, to tyranny, to injustice.

We have thus come full circle – pleasure as a concept has shifted from having a radical potential, to being fundamentally imbricated in oppression and subordination, and not only that but it becomes conducive to the proliferation of indifference and the outgrowth of violence. Capitalist modernity and technological progress have divested the world of its grandeur but also its hostility - we see ourselves as totally in control and without any connection to nature - our innermost needs both material and sexual seemingly not being at odds with a system designed to foster and supply our desires, desires which have under the rubric of the capitalist injunction to enjoy become purely mechanical, regimented, de-eroticised, and thus experientially devoid of alterity. We are thus actively cultivated to become perfect consumers, gaining fun in our sexual play and our new gadgets or toys. We are freed from guilt, so that we might consume more, and the most perverse activity no longer promotes disgust but can be an object of enjoyment in a cyclical and affirmative fashion, our consciousness as defined by enjoyment severing the subject of enjoyment from the conditions of radical contingency and political critique - we might view it with curiosity and it can be marketed as such to produce a faux sense of transgression without this transgression actually having any weight within a desublimated field of production. What we thus encounter is not a subject deprived of pleasure but readily consumed by it - we are defined by the *Happy consciousness* that shies away from social criticism, and

antagonism, or hostility in favour of the immediate gratification provided by consumer culture. Sexuality, even for Marcuse no longer holds an intrinsic radical potential, it is now simply part of the capitalist order - Eros has become a glutton. From the preceding discussion we can see the utter exhaustion of pleasure as a critical concept, for pleasure seemingly leads us to be utterly complacent and has been easily taken up as the foundation for continued exploitation of people and the world. Marcuse's reliance on Freud, and his in belief repressed essential qualities has led him to a dead end. He therefore moves away from sexuality, and pleasure as the means for transformation.

However, it is only in Deleuze & Guattari that the whole debate is reshaped, for Freud has become an exhausted resource for pursuing the politics of pleasure (even if he rightly identifies the fundamental problem of subjectivity in its conservatism) - the dogmatic idealism of psychoanalysis must be overturned so that we can really get to the heart of the problem. Ultimately what Marcuse adds to our discussion of love, is an acknowledgement of its socially embedded conditionality, and that contemporary capitalism (in contrast to Weber's notion of asceticism in early capitalism) actually relies upon us increasingly becoming invested in its pleasures and fabricated desires, to the point where we become so enamoured that we treat gratification as our habitus, our learned core of desire - however, it is only through Deleuze that we see that the very subject of love itself must be challenged, that pleasure is not reducible to the pleasure principle. In a sense Deleuze is against love, since love as seen in Freud becomes a sedimented form of desire, a fixed set of attachments that closes us to the event (the possibility of difference). Marcuse rightly socialises this problem of identitarian sedimentation, examining how love and desire become trapped within a particular arrangement of culturally determined pleasures - but Deleuze takes us further. It is Deleuze who completes the project of Marcuse in overturning the reign of pleasure and reality as all-encompassing determinative principles in the psycho-somatic matrix of the subject - and thus opens the way beyond seeing love and desire as inherently radical but rather as objects of total critique that need to be rethought of beyond the determinates of Oedipus and beyond capital - free love will not save us, nor will a return to asceticism, but rather what must occur is an ethical revaluation of what it means to love, to desire, and to act. The next section will complete our discussion of subjective genesis, and hint at where we can go from there at the level of politics and ethics. Deleuze is against love, but only so that we might be able to love differently.

Chapter 2 - Deleuze's Problem with Pleasure

In the opening lines of *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze & Guattari famously write 'It is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and starts. It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks. What a mistake to have ever said the id. Everywhere it is machines—real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections' (1983, p.1). Deleuze & Guattari are thus immediately making a vital gesture beyond Freud - they displace the terrain of principles, for desire has no principle, it is already full and able to form infinite connections - Oedipus is uncoupled from his precipice and relegated to the all-too-human realm of social determination, an affectation of cultural and psychoanalytic discourse, a vestige of what Nietzsche regarded as the Socratic and later Christian topos predicated on guilt and redemption. To look at desire without the trappings of Oedipus, without even the Id or its relation to the Ego, is to divest the notion of desire of its dependency on what it is not. Marcuse was stuck primarily because he relied upon an understanding of desire and pleasure defined by principles incapable of radicalism - rather than returning to the repressed, the more radical move is to go beyond the order of life as fixed and established. Marcuse was reliant upon a subject who could readily claim to know itself, to know its abilities, potentials, and limitations, but if we go beyond this state, to the time prior to the Id and to desire in its raw state we can retroactively work beyond the subject as an essentialist category, one defined by rigid parameters. In the way of Spinoza, we need to realise that we have never truly known what a body can do - and that by recognising the subject as mere residuum, a condensation of *Habit* (sedimented pleasures and behaviours) and *Memory* (sedimented identifications, idealisations, and fantasies), can we push beyond to the realm of Thanatos, the future, a subject that can render itself as recombinant beyond itself. Deleuze & Guattari in their conception of machinic desire thus go beyond reductionism of mechanism and vitalism, they suppose a desire without lack, a desire that is itself the motive force of individuation and de-individuation: 'There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together. Producing-machines, desiring-machines everywhere, schizophrenic machines, all of species' life: the self and the non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever' (Ibid, p.2). This therefore establishes a fundamental principle that desire is part of assemblages that transverse the divide of subject and object abolishing the two in a creative process of becoming. This section will

carry the insights of the preceding sections to completion, recognising that if love is become a more radical category for politics, and if we are to see its efficaciousness from a Deleuzian perspective, we must de-link love from its dependence on love as totally conditioned set of attachments which are determined by the past of the subject and their investment in a broader social assemblage of sedimented identities.

Before we carry this forward, we must recognise that the psychoanalytic conception of desire as lack immediately forces the subject to become one which entirely dependent on its past, upon recollection as principle in the forms of habit and memory – we can only find our way back to Oedipus, the root of all desire returning to that fundamental drama of lack. This drama is as they say *desire as a theatre* rather *desire as a factory*, and as such we are never able to free ourselves from the way that desire is scripted and played out. The Oedipal drama becomes the foundation for all desire, every activity is reduced to this play of mumma and pappa, daughter and son, the traumatic kernel of all subjectivity being dependent upon a set of rigid obligations, upon guilt and shame – something Marcuse rightly lamented in his attack on the repressive hypothesis, however he still supposed desire as an element of the individual rather than as inhuman force that pervades the socius and existence more broadly. The notion that desire is a machine offers a means of escape from this grounded drama. Desire is depersonalised, de-situated, it pervades the whole terrain like a plague of locusts, it swarms the field and couples with everything it connects with. Desire is pluralised into machines, it is not the singular Id (this Id being all-too human) that determines desire but the multiplicity of connections that can be established within a milieu – we might even say that Freud's understanding of the Drive as the conglomeration of all the partial drives is reworked in *Anti-Oedipus* to its absolute limit, whereby there is now unification into the greater Drive, but rather (and this might be a Jungian influence) the Drive is divested of its sexual connotation to become a schizophrenic category that pervades every milieu, disintegrating and coalescing beyond functionality. What we find is the coupling of human and nature, of human and history, of human and machine, until the binary (but not the binary of the machine) is dissolved in the flows of desire so that we return to Spinoza and the *Deus sive Natura*, and of conatus or the striving to be as the paramount principle through which machines orientate themselves towards connectivity - it is a principle without conditions and without end. Whilst in psychoanalysis the unconscious takes on a specific role in ontogenesis - Deleuze & Guattari extend the concept to the world, the unconscious operating wherever desire

operates, and thus everything is in some way part of the unconscious, being both transcendental and materialist. The unconscious field of desire operates in different modes simultaneously, one a binding of matter to excitations, one of organisations, and one is consumed actively - the first is passive, the second is globalising, the third is active and part of the subject. These three modes can also be defined through the language of the syntheses: the *connective synthesis of production*, the *disjunctive synthesis of recording*, and the *conjunctive synthesis of consumption-consummation*. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to outline how Deleuze sees the subject as effect of desiring-production, how the subject is merely the residuum atop the flows of connection and disjunction - and from this tracing of genesis, we can see that love is part of this crystallisation or individuation of the subject, that pleasure forms a rhythmic ground for the subject, a refrain, a set of habits that keep us grounded. But Deleuze recognises this tracing of genesis in Freud but realises that the subject is never purely fixed in this way - a line of flight, a new assemblage of desire can take hold, and Oedipus is not the be all and end all of desire. There is more to love and desire than mumma, pappa, me - there is a love capable of the future as virtual potential, beyond the fixity of principle. Pleasure must also navigate pain - or the cut that severs the fixity of habit and opens the way to the new (for even pain can be pleasurable if it becomes habit). This chapter will thus trace the genesis of the subject in Deleuze's writings, and also recognise the tense position of pleasure in this genesis, finally reflecting on pain as being a part of the answer to the trouble with pleasure - and as we will see in the later chapter on Deleuze and the movement of love, that quite often it when love ends, when we fall out of love, when the attachments, pleasures, and forms of memory that had grounded us fall apart, that we gain a new perspective on ourselves as subjects, and love can become a radical force no longer beholden to the determinates of history and identity.

2.1. *Id to Ego?*

The desiring-machines that Deleuze & Guattari outline in *Anti-Oedipus* are innumerable, a mouth is a machine, a breast a machine, an anus a machine, just as an intestine is a machine. Machines actualise the flow of desire but only through interruption of this flow of *hyle*, of matter. Like brick a top brick, machines associate with one another, they connect and produce in their connection, a veritable auto production of *The Real*. It is through a connection that matter derives its content and energy, for without connection

matter would be formless and devoid of creative potency. The Schizophrenic provides the model of desire, for in Schizophrenia the subject ceases to operate around a fixed I or ego, the process itself takes the place of the static, the internal and external are divested of their content as analytical categories - thus allowing for desire to flow freely and assume connectivity beyond the confines of the ego. It is the ego as a static principle that Deleuze and Guattari are militating against, and the Schizophrenic allows for a return to the primal condition of desire freed from the containment that it has been forced into by the conditioning of lack. Principles such as lack, or more broadly familialist psychoanalytic categories such as the Oedipus complex, castration (or Electra complex), sublimation etc., inscribe repression into desire but desire has no need of repression - repression is a social force secondary to desire. We must understand here that love is merely the name we give to desire in its sedimented form in relation to objects of attachment - it is desire in its sublimated form which generally ossifies desire into a state of cathexis (attachment) to significant others, family members, friends, and even national institutions and myths, since as Marcuse already highlighted, there is no clear distinction between the ontogenetic and phylogenetic permutations of sublimation - many things can become the object of attachment in the unfolding of desire (we will deepen this dimension in later chapters).

Deleuze opens his discussion of Freud in chapter two of *Difference and Repetition* by stating that: 'Biopsychical life implies a field of individuation in which differences in intensity are distributed here and there in the form of excitations. The quantitative and qualitative process of the resolution of such differences is what we call pleasure' (p.96). What this means is that, in the process of formation, of individuation, life binds excitations which are the product of various intensities. Pleasure is a global effect of these integrations, the by-product of excitations bound within a system of repetition. Freud's Id is thus the determination of local intensities into an all-determining schema. However, Deleuze finds this account wanting in this regard because it begins with the retroactive application of the principle of pleasure to the formation of the Id as if we can presuppose the Id's prefiguration in the determinations of intensity - that desire is purely driven by necessity, which is a false assumption based on the predicate of lack. As Deleuze comments 'It is here that Freud's problem begins: it is a question of knowing how pleasure ceases to be a process in order to become a principle, how it ceases to be a local process in order to assume the value of an empirical principle which tends to organise biopsychical life in the Id.' (ibid). The formation of the organic entity is a consequence of processes of

binding, but Freud fails to understand these processes in the field of difference, and he cannot conceive of the intensive dimension of individuation which is built upon the processes that bind prior intensities and are not predetermined by a teleological principle. Binding locks us into habit - the expectation and predictability of the process - the eye, for instance, becoming locked into circular dependency upon light, for the eye binds excitations derived from light but then must always persist in that bound condition and therefore is dependent upon light as its principle. Pleasure is, therefore, an ossifying outcome of intensive processes, for it binds excitations and locks them into a circular modality *visa vi habit*. Drives as a consequence are nothing more than bound excitations, and as Deleuze goes on to say:

'at the level of each binding, an ego is formed in the Id; a passive, partial, larval, contemplative and contracting ego. The Id is populated by local egos which constitute the time peculiar to the Id, the time of the living present there where the binding integrations are carried out. The fact that these egos should be immediately narcissistic is readily explained if we consider narcissism to be not a contemplation of oneself but the fulfilment of a self-image through the contemplation of something else: the eye or the seeing ego is filled with an image of itself in contemplating the excitation that it binds.' (ibid, p.97).

Pleasure becomes a principle through which the past and the future become bound in a habit of expectation (I expect the present to pass), but we cannot conceive of pleasure as being prior to the processes of synthesis, it is not the first principle but must be seen as a secondary effect of a process of individuation. And then as Deleuze says 'it would be wrong to suppose that the reality principle is opposed to the pleasure principle, limiting it and imposing renunciations upon it. The two principles are on the same track, even though one goes further than the other' (ibid, p.98). The passive syntheses thus determine the active syntheses through a process of binding and integration - the reality principle being the site of habit and later memory, whilst the pleasure principle is an effect of bound excitation or stimulus, both operating under the conservative tendency of preservation. If we relate this to the machinic understanding of desire that comes about in *Anti-Oedipus*, we can see that machines mirror the passive synthesis in that they form bound connections or assemblages, myriad webs of connection that lock desire into flows of connection. Machines interrupt desire just as they allow it to flow. Pleasure is the sum of this process; in that I am a multiplicity of machines of desire and I derive pleasure through maintaining

certain excitations that are linked to the bound aspects of my being. We are thus locked into certain modes of excitation due to prior processes of passive synthesis - but because we are made of multiplicities these machines often form infinite connections. Memory is, of course, vital here although it is not purely a conscious memory but also an affective one - pleasure is bound in many ways to nostalgia - and it is in these categories that a fixed repetition occurs (we shall discuss the themes of memory and nostalgia in more detail later). This is the Freudian hypothesis, to the degree that all our acts later follow from this seemingly mechanistic understanding of all activity as in some way being determined by the memory of something past - I love you like I love my mother etc. The point for Deleuze & Guattari is to recognise this element of psychic life, but also to recognise that there is also a polyvalence to the unconscious of memory, lines of escape from the determinants of the past - not all behaviour becomes determined, there are other possible alternatives, desire can form its own path free from a repetition of the same - Deleuze and likewise Guattari's whole project could thus be regarded as the pursuit of freedom from the tyranny of the principle, their reconceptualization of desire allowing us to see alternatives beyond the scripted theatre of psychoanalytic subjectivity.

2.2. Disjunction and the Body without Organs

To recapitulate the prior discussion, the passive synthesis leads to the binding tendency of habit, desiring-assemblages become increasingly organised - I become a person only after the process of binding and the formation of habit - I become an organism. However, Deleuze & Guattari are fundamentally opposed to a totalising understanding of life, to the idea that life can be contained within a rigid frame of the organic, this supposition being again a functionalism of the organism. The wasp and Orchid, mentioned in both *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* highlights the falsity of totalising an organic lifeform, for both evolved syncretically - the reproduction and continuation of both species being reliant on a becoming-wasp of the orchid, and the becoming-orchid of the wasp - the two are not mutually exclusive but co-determinate in a particular assemblage. Whilst an organism represents a hierarchized and organized entity, with its organs being defined by the global entity of the body - Deleuze & Guattari reject the closure that the organic poses to the organs contained within it, an interiority pushes towards its exterior limits. Likewise, memory, the foundation for psychical life begins with a passive synthetic relation and then becomes oriented around repetitive behaviours that were so expertly distilled by Freud.

The concept of the *Body without Organs* (later reconceptualised as the *Plane of Immanence*) provides a name for the push beyond the confines of an Organic and Psychical unity, it again like the desiring-machines undermines the totalising orientations of mechanism, vitalism, and organism, in order to suggest the potential of all systems to create something entirely new. The Body without Organs thus represents the force of *anti-production* at the centre of a machinic-assemblage, like a great well of gravity orientating the whole terrain whilst also providing it with the energy to escape such a terrain. As Deleuze & Guattari argue:

“Desiring-machines make us an organism; but at the very heart of this production, within the very production of this production, the body suffers from being organized in this way, from not having some other sort of organization, or no organization at all. “An incomprehensible, absolutely rigid stasis” in the very midst of process, as a third stage: “No mouth. No tongue. No teeth. No larynx. No oesophagus. No belly. No anus.” The automata stop dead and set free the unorganized mass they once served to articulate” (1983, p.8)

In their organisation, the organs begin to form a unity, but because all systems are permeated by desire which actively seeks connections it finds this unity oppressive or unsustainable. Anti-production occurs when the relations become ossified and static but also exhausted, however this can only occur through a recording process, the Body without Organs serving as a surface of inscription. To understand this more clearly, we can think of a map with clear lines to specific destinations. These lines represent the machinic assemblages formed in the passive syntheses, becoming fixed into a particular path of connection to a location. The map here is the Body without Organs, it serves as a surface for the lines, but also demarcates the fact that there are other possible paths which are yet to be traced. In regard to exhaustion, the example of a child suckling is also helpful, for the child cannot be connected infinitely, the flow of milk dries up and the belly becomes full - in both instances anti-production becomes predominant, but it allows for a divestment of energy from one machine to another. We might comment here, that Deleuze could see both connection and disjunction in love – the machines as there are arranged do not always function as expected, there is always a contingency or possibility for alterity contained in experience that defies the predictability of the pleasure and reality principle. In love this dynamic is always apparent – the moment of falling in love is explicitly a

moment of connection whereby both old and new conditions are instantiated, this couple-assemblage of machinic interconnection orbits both the pleasures, habits, and points of memory that define the subjects of this moment. However, since there is always a tendency towards disjunction or anti-production – love can find itself becoming out of joint with the preceding connective syntheses. We can fall out of love, and this may occur through a conservative rejection of the object of attachment or cathexis since it has failed to meet the sedimented expectations of the subject, or because some external contingent disruption (death or forced separation) has intervened. Love does not persist indefinitely; it constantly renews and diverts its points of connection. We fall out of love but only so that this process can begin again – perhaps we might find this occurring within an existing relationship thus giving rise to a new understanding of this relationship, or perhaps the world constituted by this love becomes unbearable for the subjects within it, and thus the lovers (who always remain secondary to the process of love) must take flight again on new course, a new path, they must again return to the map and move off the grid and find again what means to love under a new set of conditions. Love is only eternal to the extent that the beginning and end of the process are always moving between one another – love subsists as an interstellar medium that works through connection and disjunction, and in so doing constantly modulates the subjects that exist in the third position of consumption relative to the field of desire that is defined by this dyadic interplay. In this sense Deleuze is introjecting the radical contingency of the future into Freud's reduction of the interplay of love as dialectic between pleasure and memory, what Deleuze in *difference and repetition* refers to as the interplay of *Habitus* (Habit or the binding synthesis, the present), *Mnemosyne* (Memory or repetitious realm of the drives and their shifting virtual objects, the returning past or recollection). As such Deleuze's metaphysics does not allow for a blithe acceptance of purely affirmative conceptualisation of love, but rather supposes love as never ending process which is often more fruitful in its failure rather than its obtainment in terms of its capacity to engender the new – since love often remains trapped in the possible, and it is only its fragmentation that the virtual as the unthinkable rears its head and thus allows for a different course for the subject to be charted.

To substantiate this further, we must accept that the *Body without Organs* in some sense mirrors the Lacanian unconscious, although it does not privilege the linguistic, but rather is polymorphous in regulating the whole field of desire. The interplay between desiring-production and anti-production produces alternating rhythms of attraction and repulsion

between the organ-machines and the Body without Organs – arguably the Body without Organs functions similarly to the Freudian Death Drive or Thanatos, it divests Eros of its privileged place in the machinations of desire and renews the field of actuality by injecting it with a greater degree of virtuality – however this is not duality as in the classical Freudian formulation where these forces are oppositional, rather they operate at times dialectically (visa vi identity) and at others syncretically in a resonant field of multiplicities which become-in motion (loving like the Wasp and the Orchid). We might say that anti-production can predominate if the Body without Organs is able to disrupt the flows of desiring production ‘In order to resist linked, connected, and interrupted flows, it sets up a counterflow of amorphous, undifferentiated fluid’, this therefore generating a smooth space on which the organ-machines lose purchase forcing them to find new connections (ibid, p.9). By contrast, if desiring-production is predominant then ‘Machines attach themselves to the body without organs as so many points of disjunction, between which an entire network of new syntheses is now woven, marking the surface off into co-ordinates, like a grid.’ (ibid). This is then how whole new systems can be formed and coded, from individuals, to groups, to cultures and states. It is in the play between repulsion and attraction that desire can mobilise and effectuate creative possibilities, the disjunctive synthesis allowing for an *Either.... Or*, a choice that entails possibilities for something otherwise.

At the level of the social, desire pervades all production and reproduction, however this is not desiring-production which remains the primary and free flowing movement of desire, but rather desire contained within a regime of desire. Just as desire becomes contained in the Organism, so desire becomes contained and mapped within a grid of the social - or the *Socius*. The *Socius* is a field permeated with desire whilst also being defined by an inscriptive process of recording which marks desire into ossified nodes that divert the flow of desire and thus perpetuate its flow within a closed system. Desiring-machines are converted into broader social-machines that operate upon the full body of the earth, the tyrant, or capital - these being the transcendental principles that organise the broader assemblages that gravitate around them – something Marcuse attempted to encapsulate in his own discussion of sublimation. Desire is thus considered as eminently social ‘We maintain that the social field is immediately invested by desire, that it is the historically determined product of desire, and that libido has no need of any mediation or sublimation, any psychic operation, any transformation, in order to invade and invest the productive

forces and the relations of production. There is only desire and the social, and nothing else' (ibid, p.36). Desire is therefore fundamental to all assemblages of the social totality, but it is not really repressed (contra to both Freud and Marcuse), rather it is channelled into certain directions dependent upon the confines of an existing map or terrain: 'Social repression is not an exterior, non-desirous force that pushes desire into the unconscious, where it then returns through forms of displacement, transference, projection and fantasy. Repression does not suppress desire, but rather reconfigures it' (2013, p.220). The figures of *The Earth, The Despot, and Capital* form the master signifiers following Lacan, but for Deleuze & Guattari this cannot be seen as purely linguistic process but a broader and more fluid semiology of pervading signs. The very fact that historically the socius has manifested differently is indicative of the fact that code systems, hierarchized and organised regimes of desire, have the capacity to change and this is because of the fact that in each regime anti-production can manifest and disrupt the flow of desire – or in the vein of Foucault we might also say that each modulation of power comes with its own possibilities for modulations in the forms of resistance that it helps to constitute. Furthermore, if we return to the theme of love, we can see that love operates within this socius, and considering that Freud recognised in his later works on mass psychology that the sedimented mode of love in the family often ends up being mirrored in the army, in the church, within the hearts of nationalists and even fascists, then we cannot think of love as somehow being external to politics or the socius. In a Deleuzian sense, the way we love is varied and determined by the regimes of identity that become codified and accepted by repressive apparatuses of power, but love can always be returned to the map of desire, and thus desire returns love to its polymorphous core, love not being entirely a conservative force but always chafing at its edges.

2.3. *Beyond the Subject of Pleasure*

From the preceding discussion we can see that the subject with its crystalised ego is in fact totally secondary to the processes of production outlined by Deleuze & Guattari. Whilst Kant operates from the basis of a reasoning subject, and Descartes supposes a subject defined by its capacity for thought in the Cogito, the subject for Deleuze & Guattari is a subject defined by the contingency of its bound excitations, its particular assemblages of desire. Rather than *I think therefore I am* it is rather a question of *I am affected therefore I am*, and even this *I am* merely the molar aggregate of all the larval *I am*'s, the little egos

flow in a primordial flux of the passive syntheses - the subject is thus defined by its experiences and operates as a global term above the various bound excitations that came to form it. Our subjectivity sits atop the surface of the Body without Organs and imbricates itself within the various assemblages of desire that have been inscribed there. As Deleuze & Guattari go on to say, 'the subject is produced as a mere residuum alongside the desiring-machines, or that he confuses himself with this third productive machine and with the residual reconciliation that it brings about' (ibid, p.18). The subject consumes, it is the third syntheses not of disjunction or of connection, but rather of conjunction or consumption - it purely exists to satisfy itself. Figures such as the neurotic or pervert become important as they show two different relations to desire, to the productive flow the syntheses - the latter working constantly to resist desiring connection and its production, and the former deriving pleasure from consummating repressed activities of desire. Eugene Holland usefully surmises that 'neurotics and perverts are not so by conscious choice; they are not the agents but the results of connections and disjunctions made on the body-without-organs by the interplay of forces of production and anti-production that constitute them as subjects' (1999, p.33). Seldom do we feel that this is the case however, we often feel that we are sovereign in our desires, and that it is us that chooses, but that is because desire engineers partial objects that then appear to us as objects of our own choosing - we already feel we want them and cannot think beyond our conscious thought of wanting. We cannot say "this wants" but rather can only say "I want", desire immediately becomes part of the subject who desires - the subject posits itself retroactively into the sequence, when it is in fact secondary - the desire for domination being the manifestation of the ways in which our desires are always beyond us being both determined by our history, our social context, events whether personal or political etc. We are thus often dominated by our desires rather than having the capacity to be pure agents of desire. The subject confuses product with production, and we can say that it is actually the result of the disjunctions created by the body without organs that stratifies the connections of the desiring machines and makes them appear whole rather than fluid. The subject is therefore, in a sense, predatory in relation to the Body without Organs, it takes for itself the products created by the Body without Organs as its own. However, subjects have different ways of relating to the interplay between connection and disjunction, there are many subjects - as already noted the neurotic and the pervert, but also the paranoiac and the schizophrenic. In the paranoiac we can see someone totally repulsed by desiring production, and thus compelled toward destructive tendencies, or in the schizophrenic we

see someone totally driven towards desire. We can inhabit all these states at different times, and thus we can never say that there is a subject, but rather many subjects in motion, in process, in becoming.

Deleuze in his notes on *Desire and Pleasure* (1997) provides a useful summary of how we must reconfigure our attitude towards the idea of a subject that resists coded or axiomatized fields of desire (and thus likewise rethink the subject of love). Desire cannot exist without the assemblages within which it exists, it is never 'natural' or 'spontaneous' for each assemblage operates in relation to another assemblage. Power operates here, but Deleuze, unlike Foucault, does not privilege power in relation to the other assemblages, it is an assemblage amongst others, often operating within and between other assemblages, although never outside of them for this would render power transcendent. Power operates at the level of re-territorialisation, whereby deterritorialized forces are reconfigured into a molar or static configurations. Desiring-assemblages therefore swarm points of power, which harks to Foucault conception of resistance as being the effect of power rather than pre-existing it, although the notion of the swarm emphasises the plurality and fluidity of this process along with its relationship to aggregation or conglomeration. Desire is assembled and configured into assemblages, both organic and machinic, with neither constituting a closed totality, for the organic can enter the machinic just as the machinic can enter the organic through the flow of desire as a connection. In opposition to a Marxian understanding of the social totality, there can be no contradiction but rather a movement between assemblages which reconfigure themselves at different points. The masses can turn to fascism because power is as much a part of desire as it a part of resistance, there is no subject waiting to find itself, there are only configurations of desire that shift and ossify in the field of immanence. Contradictions seldom produce anything, and perhaps they often render the stratified organs more rigid, and so the path towards something different can only be found by going off the grid, by tracing a new line to return to the map analogy alluded to earlier. Hence why in our earlier discussion of the politics of recognition in the introduction we challenged the notion that we can entirely base political radicalism upon recognition, since often recognition can actually play a central role in maintaining stratified identities and limiting the field of change. This is not to say that recognition does not come with certain benefits or possibilities for redressing social injustice, but rather to simply acknowledge that identity and its recognition can also perpetuate its own forms of injustice – love plays a part in this

dynamic, and we must be sensitive to the interplay of identity and power, between stasis and change.

Going forward, Deleuze recalls his exchange with Foucault: 'The last time we saw each other, Michel says to me, with much kindness and affection, something like: I cannot bear the word desire; even if you use it in another way, I can't stop thinking or living that desire = lack , or that desire is the repressed. Michel adds: As for me, what I call "pleasure" is perhaps what you call "desire"; but in any case I need another word than desire' (1997). Pleasure for Foucault allows for intensities (or passions in Foucault's terminology) that cross the thresholds of existing subjectivity, but they also operate beyond the subject. Sexual encounters and drug use can represent extreme moments of pleasure through which a subject divests itself of control, the usual rhythms that define egoic subjectivity being transcended in the potency of the intensive encounter or episode. Deleuze however argues against this, and he says that:

'for myself I can hardly bear the word "pleasure". But why? For me, desire does not comprise any lack; neither is it a natural given; it is but one with an assemblage of heterogenous elements which function; it is process, in contrast with structure or genesis; it is affect, as opposed to feeling; it is "haecceity" (individuality of a day, a season, a life), as opposed to subjectivity; it is event, as opposed to thing or person. And above all it implies the constitution of a field of immanence or a "body without organs", which is only defined by zones of intensity, thresholds, gradients, flux. This body is as biological as it is collective and political; it is on this body that assemblages make and unmake themselves, it is this body which bears the points of deterritorialization of the assemblages or lines of flight.' (ibid)

Contrary to the differences highlighted by Wendy Grace in her essay *Faux Amis* (2009), there is a distinct crossover between Deleuze and Foucault on the point of pleasure even if they invert the usage of desire and pleasure, for what unites them is the belief in a need to completely do away with the subject as it had been thought up to that point. To make a relevant digression, we might actually say that Deleuze and Foucault's divergence in regard to desire and pleasure can be bridged by recognising the intersection of *Intensity* (Deleuze) and *Passion* (Foucault) – the orgasmic sexual encounter being defined by both of these particular differential modes. Arguably if intensity and passion are not reducible

to the idiocy, conservatism, mechanical repetition of pleasure, or the negative conception of desire defined by lack, they better encapsulate the radical potential of those encounters which although suffused with pleasure still have thresholds of *transductive* becoming, the sexual or passionate encounter being a veritable assemblage of desiring connectivity, of individuation, of the folding of being, affect, and subjectivity. We should therefore, as Frida Beckman highlights, be wary of totally excluding pleasure from our discussions of radicality, since often there are forms of subjectivity that are excluded from access to pleasure – the feminine in the sexual coupling being a typical case, male pleasure taking a privileged position in the sexual coupling. We might therefore say that some pleasures are worse than others, that male heterosexual pleasure can often pride itself in a narcissistic focus, whereas feminine sexuality as the minor position is more open to passion and molecular intensity. To quote Beckman:

'If we build a theory of pleasure on an understanding of the body, as well as the soul, as foldings, rather than on the linearity and self-reflexivity of Cartesian subjectivity, or on Freudian principles of transcendence, it becomes possible to free the orgasm from its deplorable economy of lack. The orgasm becomes an event that folds into the body at the same time as it folds out. Instead of returning to confirm the subject, the orgasm marks the folding through which the monad simultaneously withdraws into the contractions of muscle and mind in an intense moment of individuation and grows and opens towards the variations of matter. Rather than a concrete division of body and world, and subject and body, the orgasm creates a moment of cohesion which in itself is a folding'. (2013, p.64)

With this in mind we can more sensitively apply Deleuze's critique of the concept of pleasure, we are complicating the concept to greater degree by acknowledging its molar and molecular possibilities – that although pleasure has a predominantly conservative tendency, it can be modified by passionate intensity, the refrain or rhythmic conservatism of pleasure as a principle can be modified by engaging or acknowledging alternative pleasures at the limit of typical experience (pleasures which might be regarded as unsettling, disturbing, or painful relative to majoritarian pleasures – and thus pleasure can also to a degree imbibe in *Thanatos*).

Developing this theme further we should acknowledge Deleuze's invocation of the idea of *haecceity*, a term coined by Don Scotus, which in this context indicates the intensive rather

extensive dimensions of being - for the intensive is non-divisible and is constantly shifting, whilst the extensive pertains to that which is divisible. Haecceity in this regard mirrors Foucault's understanding of passion as an 'impersonal or subpersonal event, non-human non-organic and unrepresentable' (Robinson; 2003, p.120). A life is not divisible, and in a sense, it is wholly immanent to all life, to the lives of others, to lives that have been and will come after - this is *univocity*, or the *Deus sive natura*, or the *plane of immanence* to use other terms. Our lives, our loves, our wayward thoughts are all passing intensities, or events that produce becoming at the level of the subject, and thus we are never stable but always experiencing transitions that we can either embrace or militate against - there is thus a conservative and revolutionary element to the intensity of haecceities, however this is never purely a free choice but a conflict or set of conflicts that define every life. Haecceity is the flux of life, it is the events that define us, it 'has neither beginning nor end, origin nor destination; it is always in the middle. It is not made of points, only of lines. It is a rhizome' (1987, p.263). This leads us to fully engage with what Deleuze say about pleasure in his notes 'I cannot give any positive value to pleasure, because pleasure seems to me to interrupt the immanent process of desire; pleasure seems to me to be on the side of strata and organisation; and it is in the same movement that desire is presented as internally submitted to law and externally interrupted by pleasures; in the two cases, there is negation of a field of immanence proper to desire' (1997). Pleasure (and by extension memory and habit which are the constitutive ground of pleasure) as highlighted before is the effect of passive synthetic binding, whereby desire is forced into a set of parameters that it must fulfil under the ambit of a *repetition of the same*. It is secondary to desire, and it often works to prevent change, its tendency being conservative and inhibiting. He goes on to say 'Pleasure seems to me to be the only means for a person or a subject to "find themselves again" in a process which overwhelms them. It is a re-territorialisation. And from my point of view, it is in the same way that desire is related to the law of lack and the norm of pleasure.' (ibid). This is pleasure as the refrain, the consoling rhythm that keeps us on track, that guides us in the dark - pleasure in the flux of a life may help prevent us from being dissolved in a sea of change, but if we refuse desire's vicissitudes too often or too harshly then we will never open ourselves to possibilities beyond the consolations of pleasure.

If our lives are defined by events, then pleasure is a conservative tendency that can often prevent full confrontation with these events - for events are often not pleasant but painful,

disturbing, or confusing. Falling in and out of love are events (radical cuts in subjective experience) that often confronts the barrier of pleasure for we seldom find ourselves free from pain in such states, we are riddled with anxiety, with a questioning of motive or possibility. Love disrupts our fixed habits and thus confronts us with a choice, to accept the vicissitudes of love (and its loss), or to reject it in the hope that we might regain stability and pleasure. The most domineering kinds of love are often those that do not allow for a fundamental shift, an acceptance of the event of desire's returning, and rather simply allow for both subject (or even worse only one) to maintain their pleasures without any shift or fundamental confrontation. Love defined by lack, one incapable of confronting displeasure or disappointment, simply maintains the fixed, stratified, or territorialised terrain of the subject that violently clings to a sense of ground or foundation. This is the problem of pleasure, and why desire is revolutionary in comparison, for one is fundamentally inclined to be conservative and reactive, whilst the other proliferates difference, allows for creativity, and is inclined to be active. A love beyond pleasure and suffused with desire is thus revolutionary, and it is often in reflection that we can see our own failures when confronted by love, the loves we disavowed in favour of ourselves as subjects providing a lesson in what could have been otherwise. However, if we are to fully confront the role of love as conservative force, and thus open its ethical potential in a Deleuzian way which can be transformative for politics, then we must also more fully articulate the problem of love and memory, which forms the other side of love as pleasure and habit. This is the focus of the next chapter, which seeks to demonstrate how love as sedimented form of desiring attachment can become defined and perhaps imprisoned by nostalgia, by melancholy and loss. What happens to love defined by pleasure when it must confront loss, when the that which is desired ceases to be obtainable – how does this function socially and politically? And what dead ends does it lead us down for rethinking the political coordinates of the present and the future?

Part 2 – Memory as Love’s Prison?

Chapter 3 – Control and Nostalgia: The Temporal Trap of the Present

In the preceding chapter we charted a developmental picture of subjectivity, one which becomes ossified through the permutations of desire and repression – these permutations not being reducible to the ontogenetic level as with Freud, but also extendable to the phylogenetic level, both levels being determined by sedimentary principles that lead to the stratification of desire in habit, pleasure, and consequently love. Deleuze added to this discussion by problematising the subject as a static and essentialist subject, supposing that the subject of desire is in fact always a mere residuum, a historically contingent mass of larval subjects which shifts and transmutes itself through failure of pleasure, and the return of desire. In love this leads us also to see that love as intense form of attachment, defined by repetitive drives may be opened to change, that the object of overvaluation can shift, however this is only possible if the subject also shifts with it – when the desire returns, the subject of love must find a way to love again. However, this process, this possibility for change is often not smooth or accepted by the subject of love – change is resisted. We have already alluded that the subject of contemporary capitalism is often mired in pleasure, and this gratifies to the point where only that which intelligible to pleasure is accepted – it is difficult to combat pleasure, but at the least pleasure often fails in the contingency of encounters which do not present themselves as readily intelligible. The possibility for pain, anxiety, fear, and more importantly for us later, disappointment may rear their head and through the subject of love which had been defined by pleasure out of joint. But the loving subject which resists alterity, resists the returning of desire has a failsafe: memory. If there is trouble with pleasure, it is vastly exaggerated in the permutations of memory which often attempt to parasitise the present and confine them within the intelligibility of the past – every new encounter becomes subsumed within the phantasmic apparitions of pleasures past. In this chapter we will focus on arguably on two of the most obstinate (and contemporarily relevant) forms of memory or what we might call loving memory – these being nostalgia and melancholy – in both these forms of memory the past corrupts love’s potential for change, for in both the object of attachment, of overvaluation persists in the hopes, fantasies and desires of the

subject of love. The nostalgiac and the melancholic cannot let go even when confronted with the reality of loss. These forms of memory are never purely personal however, since they of course infuse the phylogenetic level just as they permutate at the ontogenetic level, thus nostalgia and melancholy of social and political implications – they pervade the socius not just the individual.

To chart the present interregnum, we might first begin within the writings of Mark Fisher who published *Capitalist Realism* in 2009, right after the 2008 financial crisis that rocked the world and reminded us all of how unstable capitalism can be, that every crisis appears like an earthquake that awakes us from the slumber of certainty. Considering the years that led up to that crisis, the neoliberal slumber which precipitated it, we are now living in a world marked by its own earthquakes - a decade later we have lived a lifetime - through the Arab Spring, the Eurozone crisis, the collapse of centrist politics, Brexit, and populism, and now we are living within what could be seen as a biopolitical crisis: Covid-19. The affective landscape that Fisher traced was one of a deep complacency, melancholy, and nihilism - but that was then, and we have experienced so many affective shocks since - many now sense an unsettling rupture occurring, a collective fissuring within the global socius (the Black Lives Matter uprisings demonstrating a certain return of the repressed). Capitalist realism was defined by Fisher as ‘the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it’ (2009,p.2). This meant that there was no future conceivable beyond the established horizon of neoliberal capital - its tenets of profit, efficiency, and productivity - formed the inescapable ground for all activity, including politics. And yet, we find ourselves today immersed in an increasingly fragmented set of discursive and material conditions, whereby the dogmatic slumber of elites has been cracked open, and the masses or multitudes that inhabit the world are witnessing the incapacity of the present state of affairs to fully adapt itself to such crises - a set of crises entirely immanent to the regime of capitalist realism itself. At the affective register, fear and uncertainty abound, but this does not mean that such a system will inevitably collapse under the weight of its own contradictions as Marxists had once hoped - the terrain of struggle is too complex for such an explanation - for what occurs within the various isomorphic instantiations of capitalist extractivism (neoliberalism and its variations) is a process of recapitulation.

Capitalist realism leaves us with a prescient question: can we transform our affective culture, currently mired in fear, doubt, anxiety, and uncertainty, into one capable of recognising its determinations, its connection to history – how can we more adequately circumnavigate the travails of memory and the perils of falling in love with a vision of the past cleansed of contradiction? Capitalist realism has shown its flexibility by shifting from a false optimism of meritocratic individualism to one divested of such pretensions, one defined by collective resignation - capitalism must continue even if this means environmental and epidemiological death - an ontological abyss. Under such conditions, we can understand the ontopower that defines capitalism, its capacity to define the very horizon of all possibility - it tells us what a body can do, what we are capable of even if that means consumption until death. Brian Massumi has highlighted that our ‘degree of freedom at any one time corresponds to how much of our experiential ‘depth’ we can access towards a next step – how intensely we are living and moving’ (2015, p.6). What is essential then is to reconfigure this affective register which remains monopolised by the capitalist injunction to enjoy, to produce, to consume even whilst we are utterly abjected and exploited within the recombinant churn of capitalist valorisation. As Fisher highlighted, capitalism is like John Carpenter’s *The Thing*: ‘a monstrous, infinitely plastic entity, capable of metabolizing and absorbing anything with which it comes into contact’ (2009, p.6). In *The Thing* all the characters undergo intense affective states, panic, fear, suspicion, anger - the creature preys on their paranoia, their divisions, their isolation until eventually few remain. The metaphor is increasingly apt - but Kurt Russell who plays MacReady, the main protagonist, still even under such conditions works to undermine this affective order, at times galvanising collective action despite the likely inevitability of his death - his ultimate fate left unknown with the close of the credits. In this instance, solidarity and collective responsibility operate as spectres that undermine the atomisation that *The Thing* represents - they are weapons in the arsenal against ontodeath. The trouble is, and this what this chapter will attempt to unpack and problematise, is, how does love function in a world defined by increasing fragmentation and atomisation? Love as the return, love as recollection, love as nostalgia, love as melancholia are all forms of love determined by pursuit of the lost object of attachment, identification, and idealisation – in loss and fear the subject ceases to seek new loves and rather consoles themselves in the comforting shroud of loves past. Fantasy is often more comforting than reality, the past less messy than the present – and also less unpredictable than the future. In what follows we will

problematise these themes further and acknowledge how we got here and perhaps how we can get beyond this situation.

3.1. Control Society

To begin with it should be noted that Fisher's thesis about the slow cancellation of the future by the logic of capitalist realism is heavily informed by Gilles Deleuze's insights into the movement from power as enclosure to power as modulation. Deleuze's argument builds on Foucault's understanding of disciplinary society which proliferated regimes of conformism modelled on the penal system - subjects became predetermined by the milieus which they engaged with and were subjectified by them - life became administered through scientific discourses that worked to optimise and enhance the capacity of individuals to be productive in the furtherance of capitalist exploitation. But whilst this regime had defined spaces of subjection, contemporary society has broken down the boundaries which disciplinary society demarcated. In the passage from Disciplinary societies to Control societies what occurred was a crisis of 'interiors' (Deleuze;1992, p.4). Society increasingly modelled itself on that of the corporation; work and labour becoming distributed across the networks of everyday life - we work from home, we reply to emails on the train, we constantly work on ourselves, and we incessantly seek to be productive and efficient in order that we might perform better. Deleuze contrasts these two modes of social regime, discipline and control, by two criteria, molding and modulation: 'Enclosures are molds, distinct castings, but controls are a modulation, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point' (ibid.). This distinction, as articulated by Yuk Hui is taken from Gilbert Simondon's critique of *Hylomorphism* in which matter is always constituted in its relation to a set form, with form constituting the internal teleology of the thing (2015, p.74-80). The crucial point is that under conditions of modulation, things are always in transition, things slip into and out of relation - plasticity is the rule of becoming under capitalism. New desires, new demands for revolution, new political frontiers can be easily recapitulated within the logic of valorization - the most typical of these recapitulations being the deradicalization of collective struggles through localisation, the impetus for radicalism being put upon the individual as a free consumer who can make ethical choices. Anti-capitalist environmentalism for instance has been deeply co-opted into a kind of ethical consumerism, the enjoyment of ethical consumption being a vital means by which

radicalism is displaced and social transformation foreclosed. Control societies through modulation have thus advanced the proliferation of power, but it is a form of power which actively preys upon our own preferences, our own free choices. Deleuze uses the example of highways (perhaps both physical and digital) as an example of control which manifested itself in the form of networks - we can move freely on the highway forming our own path without the direct observation that typified disciplinary societies but nonetheless it is not us that controls the network but the state and corporation, the free flow of populations is a means for the collection of data which is then used to further manipulate our patterns of behaviour; freedom thus advances our own subordination by providing the regimes of control with a knowledge of the flow, a knowledge of our very desires. Under these conditions of Control, individuals have become 'dividuals' and aggregated into 'masses, samples, data, markets, or "banks"'²⁰ (Deleuze; 1992, p.5). A dividual is 'a bundle of elements held together in variation' (Mackenzie; 2018, p.122) - it is infinitely recombinant, it is not a unity but a multiplicity of parts, they move fluidly in one context to the next, with the prevailing psychology of this system being a brute behaviourism, whereby force is not needed to dominate, but rather subtle nudges, little adjustments to our daily routines that redirect the flow of the aggregate and serve the valorisation process. City planning and data mining being two modes in which data and behavioural science combine to ensure that we can consume as much as possible - targeted ads, new avenues of travel, or even electoral engineering are part of this process (not to mention the ways in which dating apps tend to direct users to the "most desirable" thus actually reinforcing sexist, ableist, and racist prejudices through algorithmic recursion). Contemporary capitalism cares little for individuals (which are by nature indivisible), but rather mines the aggregate masses, it looks for what sells, what goes viral, or how it can more effectively parasitise our behavioural patterns and atomise us in the process - it destroys the individual.

Capital is everywhere, it invades the whole social terrain, and with it the social has come to mirror the corporation - we are all little entrepreneurs within the 'quantified community' (Davies; 2015, p. 42). With this shift at the level of subjectification has also come the economic shift towards social production, the hegemonic commodity of contemporary

²⁰ This form of extractivism provides a dark contrast to the process of love which often individualises the beloved by separating them from the crowd, by recognising something "special" in one person at the expense of the milieu that surrounds them. In this way control society does a death to love by submerging the individual into the aggregated mass – we end up all loving in the same turgid manner, and in a sense our desires become utterly morose, mechanical, cyclical.

capitalism being information - it forms the foundation for all economic activity defining all other areas of production. It must be collected and operationalised in the valorisation process, and with information comes the power to control not only vast populations but personal inclinations. McKenzie Wark in her own analysis, has argued that what has occurred with the proliferation of information technology is the growth of a new class structure defined by *vectoralism*:

'if the capitalist class owns the means of production, the vectoralist class owns the vectors of information. They own the extensive vectors of communication, which traverse space. They own the intensive vectors of computation, which accelerates time. They own the copyrights, the patents, and the trademarks that capture attention or assign ownership to novel techniques. They own the logistics systems that manage and monitor the disposition and movement of any resource. They own the financial instruments that stand in for the value of every resource and that can be put out on markets to crowdsource the possible value of every possible future combination of those resources. They own the algorithms that rank and sort and assign particular information in particular circumstances' (2019, p.55).

Capitalism under the ambit of control society thus topologically operates more like a web than a tree – the structure of class power is not localised into the hands of factory owners but rather is dispersed into numerous directions. Vectoralist power grows the more we use and partake in the services they offer, but considering how imbricated we all are in these services it is difficult to argue that we can simply refuse them – especially since refusal would also require us to acknowledge our own complicity in these systems and the pleasures, we derive from them. Take for instance social media such as Facebook, which tracks all of our activity so that it can sell it to advertisers, every “like” being fed into an algorithm that grows the data well for future use. Or at another level, search engines which use recursive algorithms to monitor and assess our search patterns, Google PageRank being a prime example, and then uses that information to channel our searches towards promoted websites. On top of this, we might also say that capitalist social relations as they presently exist undermine the contingency of information, the possibility of redefining the feedback loops that operate within recursive systems – in a sense all contingency is predictable, controllable, and all we ever end up with is a return of the same, a return to the imperatives of valorisation. Such a system is autopoietic, self-regulating and

sustaining, and unable to embrace radical potentials outside of its ambit. What is important here is ultimately that our behaviour is the product rather than the medium itself. Whilst some have compared algorithmic governmentality to Deleuze's own philosophy of rhizomatics, it should be noted as Iain Mackenzie does that 'algorithms are finite processes - procedures - whereas rhizomatics is a way of connecting the signs in an infinite number of ways. As such, rhizomatics is a process-orientated method of connection that critiques algorithmic procedures from within' - recursive algorithms thus work to close off connections, rather than to open them up to the new and vibrant virtualities (2018, p.126). How can this be so? It is because although algorithms through their recursive functions invite contingency to grow (an algorithm in contrast to a standard commodity only gains value in use, in the number of inputs it can channel on mass), it immediately submits that contingency to the functional axioms of capitalist valorisation. In Deleuze's phrasing we can see algorithms as parasitic upon the intensive relationality of the *socius*, reducing the intensive or non-divisible to the extensive or voluminous aggregates which can then be used to further the flows of consumption and also render us as subjects of consumption. Algorithms are thus limited by capitalism, only ever able to trace connections within the coordinates of value extraction, rather than to simply allow for the free flow of intensities that form their own map and thus find their own capabilities (something the early internet attempted to foster until it was captured by copyright and monopoly). Although, contrary to Deleuze (who in his essay on control seems to suggest too linear a transition), it could also be argued that we have not fully left disciplinary society - due to the prevalence of incarceration and border policing, just as we have not fully left Fordism for Post-Fordism, but rather the different systems remain overdetermined - control society has simply come to form the hegemonic position in relation to all the isomorphic iterations of extractivism, of apparatuses of capture - and with it power has become even more pervasive. Nonetheless the problem persists - how do we break free from the tracing processes that merely solidify relations of domination and preserve passive subjects incapable of constructing new possibilities.

Taking this forward, we can also see that with the proliferation of technical machines (or constant capital in Marx's terminology) subjection has become undermined because it is all too human, too attached to a form of individualism that fetishizes subject/object dualisms. Machinic enslavement becomes fundamental to the creation of individuals, as Maurizio Lazzarato so expresses:

'Not only is the individual of a piece with the machine assemblage but he is also torn to pieces by it: the component parts of subjectivity (intelligence, affects, sensations, cognition, memory, physical force) are no longer unified in an "I," they no longer have an individuated subject as referent. Intelligence, affects, sensations, cognition, memory, and physical force are now components whose synthesis no longer lies in the person but in the assemblage or process (corporations, media, public services, education, etc).'' (2014, p.27)

We may recognise that power is more diffuse today, but the modus operandi of capitalism remains the same: to extract value - it remains an apparatus of capture in this regard. Control societies have liberated us from the enclosure of the factory, but they inhibit our freedom to move beyond the axioms of value extraction and thus enclose the possibilities of the future within the apparatuses of algorithmic governmentality and control. Hardt and Negri (see *Assembly*; 2017) have outlined how neoliberal capitalism is presently beset by numerous crises unleashed by its own drive towards extraction - there is a crisis at the level of value, a crisis of access and control of information, a crisis of populations and migration, and of course the impending crisis of ecological decay perpetuated by intensified depletion of the biosphere and geology of the earth (and all the misery this inflicts on marginalised populations). Automation and immaterial commodities present a crisis at the level of value production by reducing the efficacy of surplus value, with Marx's identification of the tendency for the falling rate of profit diagnosing the contradiction between constant capital and production costs. Capitalism revolutionised itself to undermine the mass worker, the subject of the strike by automating production and offshoring labour, but this in turn led to a shift towards an increasingly service driven economy in the global north, with the global south falling prey to primitive accumulation and formal subsumption. Destruction of the mass worker also had the effect of creating a new reserve army of precarious workers in the global north, the racialised, abjected, and the migrant or refugee - capital had overcome one set of obstacles to valorisation but was fostering new crises. Domestic purchasing power had to also be expanded through the increase of available loans, overdrafts, mortgages - the 2008 crisis was the direct result - and yet the instruments of debt remain in full force. Finance capital which was once peripheral to capitalism has become the fundamental means for its continued perpetuation, the use of derivatives forming the primary means by which capital

perpetuates valorisation but also accelerates crises - derivatives 'refer to an unknown future and thus can be used either to hedge against risk or as vehicles of speculation' - they in essence control the future (Hardt & Negri; 2017, p.164). Immaterial production forms the supplement to financial capital, and is by its nature limitless, once it is created it is infinitely reproducible - and so scarcity must be imposed extrinsically through the weapons of copyright, debt, and algorithmic coding. Limits are imposed so that value can be hoarded and extracted, even though these goods are inherently social and common. Capitalism has shifted towards a different form of extractivism 'the renewed centrality of extraction is thus situated in the historical passage from profit to rent' (Hardt & Negri; 2017, p.169).

Whilst Fordist capitalism produced the mass worker, Post-Fordism cannot produce a unified subject because the processes of contemporary capitalism are constantly modulating the very terrain of production beyond the localised site of the factory - fundamentally, then, production (and by extension power) is now primarily social, with our affective and cognitive capacities becoming the inputs and outputs connected to the vast machinic assemblages of finance, mass media and social media, corporations and consumerism. Machinic enslavement is a molecular process that operates at the pre-individual level - it looks at our behaviours, our affects, and our unconscious tastes, these all being mined for the data that they produce and how that data can be valorised. Machines have become part of us, not just mediating our activity - human and machine have thus become ontologically combined, and it is this cyborg condition that control society latches onto; control society could not have become so prevalent without the advancement of technology and the algorithmic logic of modern technologies. As Hardt and Negri have argued 'the increasing abstraction of productive processes, then, rests upon the web of social relations, the social conditions that make production possible. It relies... on a foundation of the common, including the shared knowledges, cultural forms, and circuits of cooperation that constitute our collective existence' (2017, p.173). This creates a problem for older forms of mass politics, a politics many still cling to - if the mass worker, the figure of the strike and the barricade no longer holds a majoritarian position as the figure of resistance, then political praxis must be formulated to confront this reality rather than obstinately cling to reductive models of commitment or parliamentarianism. If control is molecular, parasitic on the social, then resistance must also be molecular (although not without its own molar elements) and formulate ways of transforming

subjectivity at the pre-individual and affective levels. Lastly, the desire to return to the politics of mass worker is also indicative of a broader trend towards the fragmentation of collective memory – our present, past and future are out of joint, our belief in progress can no longer find for itself a ground upon which it can develop. The return of the past in nostalgia, whether that be of left or right is indicative of the desire or felt need for a ground in a world utterly riven with fragmentation, and as such we search for a home in a world of memory that can only stabilise itself in the form of fantasy. This is not entirely dismiss the necessity for instance of trade union militancy, or worker resistance, since these still have a valuable role in at the least presenting some form of counterpower to capital, but rather it is necessary to not purely think of political subjects entirely defined by molar antagonism. When we trace the molecular or micro political processes at play within contemporary society, we can better assess the terrain of struggle and also effectuate alternatives or provide counter-discourses that are not reducible to liberal or workerist notions that are reformist or antagonistic. From a Deleuzian perspective, it is only by tracing how molar identities and power relations are attempting to preserve themselves can we really effectuate change, this being coterminous with an ethics of becoming – or a politics of desire – that resists its subsumption within ossifying regimes of identity, pleasure, and memory.

3.2. Our future is not Here

Control society renders time as no longer free but entirely quantified by the forces of control and the vectors of information - the sun never sets on the capitalist axiomatics of extraction, we are burdened with the forever foreclosed future of debt. Franco Berardi aptly described the situation as thus 'De-personalized time has become the real agent of the process of valorisation, and de-personalized time neither has any right, nor any demand. It can only be either available or unavailable, but the alternative is purely theoretical because the physical body, despite not being a legally recognized person, still has to buy his food and pay the rent' (2011, p.90). In the pre-capitalist world, life was lived as the time of an endless durée - but this time became increasingly formalised and spatialized. Clock towers arose in the centre of towns and cities thus changing the rhythm of daily life and labour - time became productive. Disciplinary society and the advancement of Taylorism cut the day into segments, hours to work, hours to play and reproduce, hours to sleep. Within the time of control, this enclosed or segmented time has been displaced and

the time of valorisation reigns supreme - mediated by the information technologies of phone, tablet, and computer. This capture has drastic consequences for our affective capacities - it renders us constantly under the influence of capital and thus we seldom have the time for thoughtful reflection, of peace and quiet, of love and intimacy. Berardi has identified the affective moment as one defined by panic whereby the rapidity of infomatic flows has overwhelmed the bodies of contemporary workers, especially the denizens of the cities - which are the hubs of deterritorialized flows of capital and labour. Too much psycho-somatic stimulation deadens the capacity for affective feeling and thus a socialised depression ensues which only furthers atomisation and social dislocation - the parasitism of capital on time has thus become its own pathology. Capitalism has ceased to have any real connection to the living community - and it cares little for how its manipulation of time destroys the creative capacities of the heterogeneous subjectivities it fosters.

This situation of control is likewise affectively subordinated to Capitalist Realism - there is no alternative but the society of control and valorisation process. Fisher highlighted how the question of the future was always already answered, the denouement of capitalism is always more capitalism, there may be insurrections and blips in the cycles of production and consumption, but ultimately there is no alternative. Insurrectionism became a spectacle, subjected to the process of detournement and pastiche repetition. Culture is the sphere where this gains its highest expression - where music and cinema, and even video games, are constantly tapping into the various tendencies of the 20th century - the various decades which constantly revolutionised the previous artistic forms is now revamped, remastered, repackaged and sold in the deepening web of detournement. Our cultural moment is one permeated by a domineering feeling of nostalgia which also manifests a kind of formalistic repetition whereby popular cultural does not really innovate but parasitise on previous cultural forms - there are a litany of examples, from Quentin Tarantino's *Once a upon a time in Hollywood* or Netflix's *Stranger Things*, to vaporwave aesthetics in music such as Kavinky's album *Night Call*, or even the prevalence in video games of pixel art or to simply remaster older classics such as *Spyro* and *Crash Bandicoot* - cultural production has increasingly become cyclical and mechanical, popular culture losing much of the esoterism that invigorated artistic productivity. At the level of creativity this produces an affective state of 'reflexive impotence' (Fisher; 2009, p.21) amongst the young preventing them from being able to fully effectuate their creative capacities, to

realise themselves as creative individuals that can fully express alternatives in art, culture, politics, and style - capitalism has fully enveloped the conditions of ontopower and the horizon of the new. At the material level we should also highlight that music, film making, and video game production has fallen foul of the monopolistic tendencies of late capitalism which renders the conditions for creative production as ossified and constricted, copy right and the megalomania of individual producers or franchises serving to disincentivise cultural creativity that stretches the bounds of what is considered profitable or palatable. This is not to say that contemporary culture is completely deficient in creative innovation, but generally this has been progressively pushed towards the margins and as such its ability to invest the social field has been curtailed.

Beyond simple material determinations, Mark Fisher's use of hauntology - derived from Derrida's work *The Spectres of Marx* - explains how the future has entered such a closed loop within capitalist realism, that not only is our cultural moment materially constrained but it is also bereft of the kind of alienation that Marcuse emphasised earlier - it is unable to really grasp a future orientated imaginary that has a positive connotation for political struggles against the status quo. As Fisher writes 'The future is always experienced as a haunting: as a virtuality that already impinges on the present, conditioning expectations and motivating cultural production. What hauntological music mourns is less the failure of a future to transpire—the future as actuality—than the disappearance of this effective virtuality' (2012, p.16). The prevailing logic of the postmodern condition is thus a nostalgia for the creative potentials latent within modernism - for the modernist disposition was one defined by a constant ambition to create the future, to constantly transgress the bounds of the present, and embody the new with impassioned vibrancy and political militancy. As Fisher writes, invoking Fredric Jameson's work 'Jameson's nostalgia mode is better understood in terms of a formal attachment to the techniques and formulas of the past, a consequence of a retreat from the modernist challenge of innovating cultural forms adequate to contemporary experience' (2014, p.11). By contrast to the modernist moment, we are seemingly obsessed with the past, an obsession which expresses itself in constant reproduction of a cyclical present. The futures envisaged by modernism haunt the present as spectres or ghosts, they are present whilst remaining absent, they exist in the compulsion for us to constantly repeat them in our cultural forms - the past has a causal effect or determination on cultural form of the present without actually being present in actuality. The compulsion to repeat is in part due to a sense of (disavowed)

mourning within our affective condition for a time less dominated by control, the time of Fordism at least had social democratic protections that gave us free time, and on the other hand this drive to repeat is caused by the incapacity for capitalism to produce anything other than parasitic repetition – spectacle has absorbed our dreams and has thus prevented us from finding a way beyond the map of nostalgia.

In this way we might say that cultural production has taken on the kind of flavour of love overloaded with memory, an over investment in the ideal of a cultural moment that imbibed in the spirit of community and future orientated possibility, Freud's notion that love is always determined by recollection and return is thus reformed in socially in nostalgia. Two features of our contemporary moment that are highlighted by Fisher reflect this point. The first being a desire to imbibe in the familiar as a palliative against the debilitating, disintegratory or fragmentary conditions that pervade the contemporary economy, the precarious worker relying on such cultural nostalgia as a soothing consolation, a means of security in an insecure world. The second element is the role of hyper communication and consumption, which when combined with the effects of precarity, leave us both exhausted and overstimulated – we thus lack the energy to invest ourselves in any meaningful cultural production, the realm of culture being effectively de-eroticised. We are thus becoming overly invested in quick fixes, from pornography to retro (or retro-pornography), all offering 'promise of a minimal variation on an already familiar satisfaction' (ibid, p.15). Nostalgia is thus the means by which the subject of contemporary capitalism anchors their subjectivity, it is a refrain that lingers and offers comfort whilst nonetheless trapping the subject since it does not deal in the new or the future. We should not however confuse nostalgia with a literal remembering of things that have past – nostalgia is a fantasy which invests an image of the past that is pristine or freed of contradiction, it packages a form of the past which is accessible and consumable. In this way the past is always a reimagining, a past refracted, a simulacral past – however this leaves it open to capture, the past can be utilised as a weapon by elites or populists, the power of fantasy and its consolations offering succour to those left reeling from decades of privatisation, de-industrialisation, and precarisation. Nostalgia is love consumed by fantasy, a fantasy that twists memory to its own ends and one which proliferates socially, collectively, rather than purely at the level of the individual – and in its prevalence it does a death to love as the possibility of realised difference.

3.3. Collective Nostalgia and the Restless Soul

Nostalgia in the 17th century was regarded as a pathology, whilst in the 20th century, optimism in the future gave no room for nostalgia, futurisms of left and right being preeminent, but today it has become an endemic and normalised phenomenon. Nostalgia's collective dimension cannot be understated, and it has directly led to the investment and resurgence of nationalism and identitarianism in the 21st century. Zygmunt Bauman expresses this resurgence as a form of retrotopia 'From that double negation of More-style utopia – its rejection succeeded by resurrection – 'retrotopias' are currently emerging: visions located in the lost/stolen/abandoned but undead past, instead of being tied to the not-yet-unborn and so inexistent future' (2017, p.8). Politically retrotopia is efficacious – it harks to the decades prior to neoliberal fragmentation and deindustrialisation, to a time prior to communal disintegration, a disintegration tethered to the Post-Fordist moment, whilst blame is laid on multiculturalism or sexual and gender progressivism as a useful scapegoat. Retrotopianism is utopianism with a reactionary flavour. Nostalgia breeds contempt for alterity, for the foreigner or lifestyle other, it fosters a kind of negative solidarity, whereby the other's misfortune is our fortune and vice versa. As politics becomes invested with collective memory, our psycho-social relations become distorted and weaponised into a form memory that expunges the desire for any encounter with otherness – and as such our collective memory closes our universe to difference for the false security of sameness. Memory becomes akin to property; it becomes privatised to the in-group at the exclusion of the out -group. Nostalgia is the restless longing for a home that is no longer secure, and in our contemporary moment this restless longing becomes intermixed with xenophobia, with reactionaries of all kinds, anti-feminism, racist disavowal, and a strident familialism, with a corresponding cultural sclerosis, and the escape into myth making (see Duyvendak; 2011, p.22). Nostalgia becomes the refrain of the oppressed and fragmented, the sigh of those seeking a path home, a line not of flight but of return. However, this idea of home is merely an abstraction that is loaded from the start with certain exclusions and distortions – there have always been those who did not fit in with the general *topos* of home – home is always loaded with otherness pushed to the margins, ethnic and racial others, sexual or gendered others, disabled others, political or religious others. The place of home is always a site of contestation, where borders are

delineated, and as such the image of a peaceful home for some might be hell for others, and as such those excluded others might construct communities, homely places within the broader homeland.

Nostalgia is a relatively modern term, it did not begin with the Greeks but rather was coined in the 17th century by the Swiss doctor Johann Hofer in 1688 – the word Nostalgia deriving from *nostos* – return home, and *algia* – longing. The term was applied to many who seemed to suffer from a kind of mourning or melancholy when far from their native land, whether they be students, soldiers abroad, or peasant migrants. Nostalgia was thought to afflict people with erroneous representations or illusions, it rendered those afflicted with lethargy whereby the present ceases to have any value whilst past becomes oversaturated with associations. Nostalgia was an illness that appeared at a particular point in human history – a time of intense change, when modernisation was beginning to take hold. It is therefore a phenomenon inflected by alternations in spatial and temporal terms of reference. Feudal ways of life were rapidly disintegrating, people were increasingly on the move, and time was subsequently organised by fixed quantities of hours, minutes, and seconds – with the first ever wristwatch being invented in 1812. As Svetlana Boym highlights:

‘At first glance, nostalgia is a longing for a place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time—the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams. In a broader sense, nostalgia is rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress. The nostalgic desires to obliterate history and turn it into private or collective mythology, to revisit time like space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition.’ (2001, p.xv).

Nostalgia is therefore an “illness” directly coterminous with modernity, with modernisation, with capitalism. The social and political upheavals of the last 400 years developed a tension which had not existed in previous epochs, a tension between tradition and revolution, between stasis and change, between memory and forgetting. Drawing on the work of Reinhart Koselleck, we can clearly demarcate a shift in temporal emphasis between the medieval and renaissance era from the time of modernity – with there being two distinct strands, a religious inspired Manichean millenarianism that supposed a near approaching end times, and alternatively as exemplified by Machiavelli (and his connection

to Cicero) an emphasis on *Historia Magistra Vitae* – that history has all the lessons one would need, that the Roman and Hellenistic eras should serve as the guiding *topos* for contemporary life. With the shift in the late renaissance towards secularism, humanism, rationalism, and the emerging nation state – Christian expectations and historical didacticism would give way to the ever-expanding ambit of reflective doubt, or put differently theology gave way to politics, historical virtue to modernising hubris, prophecy to prognosis. As Koselleck highlights, the changes that were occurring in the premodern period were indicative of a rapid acceleration of the approaching end times, but when the end did not occur this gave way to a new *topos*:

‘For Luther, the compression of time is a visible sign that, according to God’s will, the Final Judgment is imminent, that the world is about to end. For Robespierre, the acceleration of time is a human task, presaging an epoch of freedom and happiness, the golden future. Both positions, insofar as the French Revolution descended from the Reformation, mark the beginning and end of our period’ (2004, pp.12-13).

The question for many modernists, Rousseau, Baudelaire, Nietzsche, Benjamin, became what to do in the face of such change? What were we to do with history and the future? How were we to confront the rapid changes that were befalling the modern world? Nostalgia is thus a fundamental reaction against the imperative of progress – a word which was seldom used by the premoderns who often regarded the future as simply more of the present. Nostalgia and progress are fundamentally intertwined in a dyadic relation. Technological acceleration, spatial dislocation (Marx’s notion of primitive accumulation is important here), and temporal realignment thus set modern humanity on a course of constant drift – stasis is anathema to the modern condition and its imperatives. Nostalgia comes into being just as the spaces of time and experience increasingly become contracted, our expectations are confronted by acceleration – the particular is subsumed within a universal narrative of progress, and we as such feel as if we are caught in the riptide of history – *Historia* as the collection of particular narratives and lessons gives way to *Geschichte*, universal progressive history that cares little for the particular.

In this flux, memory serves as our life raft, it lifts us up from the swell but is quickly consumed by a myriad of fantastical associations since the home we long for never really existed, it was always mired in turbulence and contradiction. Memory serves as both a

lifeline and a trap – memory consoles just as it disappoints. One might be inclined to treat Great Britain as an exemplary case study in this problematic investment in nostalgia, the British national psyche being totally consumed with its own image as a national power and fantastical visions of a noble mission. The constant recourse to national myth is a fundamental aspect of the British political psyche – Brexit being a symptomatic expression of nostalgic longing for the glory of days past, for the halcyon era of British exceptionalism and imperial dominion. British history as it is refracted through the nostalgic mode is completely disinvested of its contradictions and the violence which it propagated with a YouGov survey from 2020 showing that 69% of the British population are either proud of the Empire or not ashamed of it, with 33% of respondents regarding the Empire as having a positive effect on former colonies (Smith; YouGov, 2020). British nostalgia has likely been reinforced by the elegiac nature of decades of British cinema that focuses on stories of heroism, determination, and moral conflicts of good and evil, with recent indicative examples being *Dunkirk* (2017) or *Darkest Hour* (2017).²¹ British cinema's elegiac portrayals of the past divest it of any real negativity, it is affirmative and consoling, it makes us proud to be British. mass culture renders commodities and imagery as displaced artifices of longing and human connection, we supplant the flow of time with mementos that halt time through convoking and crystalising particular moments. These artifices when held, tasted, smelled, or viewed re-convoke and transplant us to a past that is removed from temporality and is purely fantastical. The nostalgic mode of British culture and political discourse helps to shroud history in myth and has helped perpetuate national chauvinism whilst obscuring present problems or tensions – Britain's collective memory has become a circular cul-de-sac, orbiting the penumbra of 1945. Love of country in the form of British patriotism is thus firmly enmeshed in a narcissistic disavowal, that thrusts the blame for Britain's decline in power, prestige, and internal social cohesion outwards onto foreigners or the EU (or in the contemporary culture wars – left progressives). Paul Gilroy powerfully identifies the pervading mood of the British polity as being one of *Postimperial Melancholia*, tying his own thesis to a broader postcolonial critique:

²¹ *Dunkirk* shows the great heroism and courage of both British soldiers and British citizens involved in the evacuation across the channel, but it completely elides the role of thousands of French troops in staving off the German advance, these soldiers dying or being imprisoned in terrible conditions for much of the war. Likewise *Darkest Hour* completely invests Churchill with this Herculean personae whilst obscuring his role in imperialism or his acceptance of the bombings of civilians in places such as Dresden. History is easily sanitised or obscured through the pleasurable medium of cinema in the nostalgic mode.

'Once the history of the empire became a source of discomfort, shame, and perplexity, its complexities and ambiguities were readily set aside. Rather than work through those feelings, that unsettling history was diminished, denied, and then, if possible, actively forgotten. The resulting silence feeds an additional catastrophe: the error of imagining that postcolonial people are only unwanted alien intruders without any substantive historical, political, or cultural connections to the collective life of their fellow subjects' (2005, p.90).

Through disavowal, Postimperial melancholia divests the political horizon of any means by which to adequately address the past or present, it locks the British polity into a kind of fantasy matrix that cannot countenance any challenge or critique lest the life raft of nostalgia be sunk. Memory becomes ossified in nostalgia to the point where it ceases to be memory but merely fantasy, a fantasy all the more potent as the effects of economic and social disintegration intensify. Collective memory is collective longing, it constructs for itself rituals, idols, and signifiers that are replicable and repeatable – they ground the polity and ensure continuity even during turbulence, they present themselves in the Deleuzian sense as a refrain, that little rhythmic tune that guides us home in the dark. One might say that nation states of the modern era are less predicated upon an obscure social contract than an 'emotional contract' that ensures investment and participation whilst preserving injustices – in a restless world, the emotional bonding of national ritual gains greater purchase at the expense of a true remembering (Boym; 2001, p.16). Ultimately we must also recognise that nostalgia is so easily appropriated by political discourse because its implicit mode of operation is an "associationist magic" which allows for the displacement of affectivity into an economy of signifiers that might be rearranged at will, altering itself to suit a particular set of fantasies – and as such, nostalgia is always different in each context, it is always modulating itself within a field of persistent negotiation, whether that be towards ends of power or resistance.

If our present moment is a time of nostalgia, it is perhaps a nostalgia of a particular type, the kind that Svetlana Boym identifies as *Restorative Nostalgia*, something which she contrasts with a more positive or potentially more radical kind: *Reflective Nostalgia*. It is worth quoting her in full:

'Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on nostos and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in algia, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance. The first category of nostalgics do not think of themselves as nostalgic; they believe that their project is about truth. This kind of nostalgia characterizes national and nationalist revivals all over the world, which engage in the antimodern myth-making of history by means of a return to national symbols and myths and, occasionally, through swapping conspiracy theories. Restorative nostalgia manifests itself in total reconstructions of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time.' (2001, p.41)

Restorative nostalgia is the mode in which nostalgia operates to alleviate the anxiety produced through modernisation's fragmentary impulse – it produces sites of collective intimacy even as it works to distort history and exclude contradictions or alterity. In the restorative mode national myth is secured and rendered cohesive, a national narrative of decline or renewal become intertwined. This narrativization of history is however conducive to conspiracy theory, it opens up a space for notions of alien threats from within, whether they be Masons, Jews, or Migrants – it supposes that the promised land or home might be restored so long as all that is different or antithetical to the national ideal is expunged, the alien Other remaining a testament to the instability of the fictions produced in nostalgic longing for a mythic home free of contradiction. Reflective nostalgia by contrast is more individual (to the degree that it is not monopolised by the collective) and less inclined to find consolation in the idea of home – it recognises the past and the future as mutual sites of creative play and reflective commentary. It does not assume a truth that is out there ready to be claimed, but rather supposes that the work of remembrance is never completed, it always throws out new possibilities for thought and reflection – the past is also here loaded with irony, it might be both an object of pain and humour, irony coming with and emphasising playful or painful contradictions. The past for the reflective nostalgic is always loaded with virtual possibilities – I return to the past so that I might engraft it anew, that I might touch upon it in my loving and mournful embrace and imbibe in its spectral presence, it whispers to me so that I might dream of what the future might hold. The reflective nostalgic therefore does not suppose a past purified of contradiction, but rather embraces all the different tendencies in past moments and epochs so that they might provide fruit for the present and the future.

We might argue that reflective nostalgia is a kind of active nihilism in the Deleuzian mode which counters the pure passive nihilism of capitalist axiomatisation and technological modernisation, which restorative nostalgia although at first glance might be thought to counteract in fact intensifies, since it never truly cares for the creation of any truth beyond fantasy. As Keith Ansell Pearson tells us 'For Deleuze it is always a question of two nihilisms, namely, the one kind which destroys old values in order to conserve the established order and which never produces anything new, and the other kind which extracts from nihilism something that 'belongs' to the untimely, to the monstrous future, remaining faithful to the promise of a 'time to come'" (Pearson; 1999, p.19). Collective memory thus has two tendencies which are constantly in dynamic conflict – the tendency of restoration which acts as site of capture, and the tendency of reflection that opens the past to a line of flight. Restorative nostalgia is antimodern, whilst reflective nostalgia is modernist at its most critical and expressive – it allows us to imbibe in the freedom that modern temporality allows, the freedom of change whilst nonetheless allowing us to remain grounded in the activity of reflection. If we are to challenge systems of control, we must work to overcome the tendencies towards atomisation, dividualisation, extractivism, fascistic identification and nostalgic restorationism – we must imbibe in a collective and social process of experimentation, both with the conditions of community building and with cultural production. We need in essence to weaponize love against these tendencies and find for ourselves fruitful lines of flight at the level of social production and collective imagining, we must alter the affective contours of our societies in an experimentalist and solidaristic direction – we must build organisations and communities of collective care that are founded on solidarity, predicated on love, a love directed towards a future in common. Or in the provocative Deleuzian challenge, we must be willing to fall out of love, we must open ourselves to pain, to disappointment, to loss, and in so doing the bonds that render us unable to adequately conceive of our power as desiring beings will be cut, and we can find in love a new freedom not beholden to memory but rather open to the future. In sum then if we are to radicalise love, we must break free from the prison of collective memory which reduces love to recollection, and which sediments us into systems of identity which occlude alterity and difference internally within the subject of love and broader socius.

Excursus – Reflections on Hippie Modernism

In the preceding section which charted the contours of a political moment which can be possibly thought of as eminently bleak – one saturated by a forlorn longing for a home which is lost, a home of community, of stabilised identity and hierarchy. In this excursus we turn to a moment which in many ways is starkly different from the one just elaborated upon – a moment not defined by a kind of strange longing for home, but rather a moment defined more by the pursuit of a new home, a new set of conditions from the strictures of the old world – this being the hippie moment. To speak of and write about the hippies one can end up being nostalgic, looking back to a time of youthful play, music, and experimentation – but this excursus does not what to reinforce the kind of nostalgia that the previous section of this thesis was in fact lamenting. The hippies remain particularly relevant to this thesis through their espousal of “free love” – we can recognise that love and its relation to politics perhaps garnered it most intense and problematic expression during the height of the sexual revolution and its affiliation with the broader counterculture. In this particular historical episode, love was reimagined and played with, politics became more personal, attempting to divest itself of the stultifying a constricting nature of power politics, class politics, unionism and Cold War brinkmanship, against the segmentary and molar forces of the family and the state. We might ask ourselves to begin with what were the hippies? What did they stand for? These questions fall flat against the reality of a plural and international movement of young people who hardly relied on systematic thinking or a doctrine; to ask such questions is to pursue contradiction. What this excursus aims to do by focusing on a different moment, one divorced from our present (although many so called “boomers” likely look back to the hippie moment with nostalgia) but one which shows the very tensions of love, ethics, and experimentation this thesis wishes to unpack. The hippies will be seen as a resource for understanding how experimentation against the determinates of molarising identities can be fostered, whilst nonetheless recognising that without critique, without the problematisation of pleasure, one cannot really practise a “free love”. One can criticise the family, marriage, monogamy but if one does not reflect on the way their desires can be sedimented and restricted in other ways, then the radicality of love is circumscribed. Srečko Horvat rightly criticises the hippies for fetishizing *Praxis* over *Theory* – or put otherwise, that one can simply fuck their way to freedom, without really evaluating what that freedom would mean, what pleasures are prioritised, or what new hierarchies could take shape (2016, p.130). This is where the last section of this

excursus will identify the limits to the hippies as a micropolitical movement for transforming love – they sowed the seeds for further struggles, opened up the possibilities for identifying new avenues for loving, living, and thinking, but they also replicated some of the worst aspects of “straight society”.

If we take a moment to pause – we can reflect that the hippies were an immanent outgrowth of a moment, of its tensions and its new conditions. They were a product of their age, and all the ages before it. And they died as quickly as they were formed - newer movements being born in the ashes of the old. One would not be wrong to suggest that ‘there is no such thing as a “hippie.”’ - the term itself being an open signifier, that conservatives treat as a pejorative, or liberals as romantic ideal (Lipsitt; 2009, p.57.) Various material currents, of course, impacted their arrival - from the explosion of consumer goods and technological advancements that allowed for the mass dissemination of a “new” culture, to the generational shift of general affluence and security compared to the depression era, with the Cold War providing a stark contextual frame within which all subversive activity was linked. But the hippy period often historically chronologised from the early 1960s civil rights movement to the end of the Vietnam war (which gave impetus to the far-reaching anti-war movement) in 1971 tells us nothing about the effect or specific qualities of the movement, in all its vagaries and tensions. My aim is not to provide a complete history of such an ephemeral movement but to trace those themes that offer insights into the present, to trace the themes of style, experimentation, and love, those guiding threads that became mired in the murk of a prevalent moral panic – or in a sense to chart those points of tension between the segmentation of society and molecular becomings that broke beyond that structure. The death of the hippies was already declared before Woodstock, and rightly so. *The Diggers*, an offshoot of the movement, could already see that as soon as the eyes of society had turned to the Haight Ashbury district of San Francisco, the famous site of *Summer of Love*, that the subversive quality of the movement was ready for consumption, for caricature, for debasement, for death in broad daylight. Drugs, sex, and rock music may be cultural phenomena most associated with the movement, but these having been refracted through the popular imagination, capture only a fragmentary picture. Hedonism is no longer radical (if it ever was), we care little for the hippies, and perhaps view them as nothing but clowns or fools – Silicon Valley optimism and New Age mysticism further entrenching a notion of the hippies as being a purely idealistic or fantasists. Does the movement require a revival? No.

We cannot revive that which is dead, but history, our radical history taken with a critical eye, can nonetheless be fruitful for the imagination; an imagination not steeped in fantasy but reality. For it is imagination that the Hippies never lacked, but it is something which we are sorely lacking today steeped as we are in a cultural malaise that can only look to the past as a phantasmagoria, our eyes set in the frame of a camera obscura only able to see caricature and venerate parody. The problem of the hippies was always creating the new, and it is to this end that reflecting on their legacy allows us to think again about how we think and act differently, and thus envision the new again – whilst nonetheless being fully aware of their failures, dead ends and limits of deploying love and experimentation without readily understanding that these terms are not actionable without also exploring the very conditions and determinations which inflect those modes of feeling and action.

B.1. Hippie Modernism: A New Stylistics of Life

To begin with, we can recognise the hippies as heirs of the Beatnik or Beat generation - which had articulated itself against an assertive turn towards social conservatism, cold-war brinkmanship, and increasing government censorship of literature and speech. The 50s also were marked by an increasing prevalence of consumerism - one's lifestyle choices becoming wedded to the latest products, gadgets, or fashion items. The Beatniks - defined by icons such as *Jack Kerouac* and *Allen Ginsberg* - attempted to set themselves apart from the domineering forces of western capitalism and modernity by articulating a divergent lifestyle, styling itself both artistically and politically as opposed to the mainstream. The Beats were immersed in the Jazz and revival folk scene - which would subsequently find its mutual synthesis in the Blues and Rock and Roll. Beats coalesced in urban centres, such as San Francisco, Jazz and Coffee Houses being places to congregate and discuss politics, literature, and culture. The Beats were obsessed with themes that would later come to define the Hippy movement - Eastern Religion, ecological consciousness, pacifism, homosexual rights, and hedonism as a lifestyle. Hippies were not a systemic or systematic movement, they did not have a fixed doctrine, but they lived a lifestyle or ethics of non-conformism that mirrored the beatniks whilst also transcending them. Sociologically, it is arguable whether the hippies can be neatly defined under rubrics of either a subculture - a neutral subset of a larger society whether it be racial, ethnic, or religious - nor a contraculture as postulated by J. Milton Yinger - as an oppositional movement produced dialectically out of a contrast or conflict with a dominant society

(Braunstein & Doyle et al; 2002, p.6-7). The hippies were far too diverse and pluralistic to be realistically captured by either term, and it is questionable if they really opposed mainstream society or rather attempted to sidestep it all together. More accurately, the term hippie is often simply a catchall phrase used by those who were outside of the movement, and often became a pejorative in state and media discourse. Theodore Roszack's use of the term counterculture (perhaps it's first proper formalization as a term) is much more apt in capturing the strangeness of the hippies, their otherworldliness - as he writes 'a culture so radically disaffiliated from the mainstream assumptions of our society that it scarcely looks to many as a culture at all, but takes on the alarming appearance of a barbaric intrusion' (1969, p.42). The hippies attempted to question the coded or rigid forms of social life that attempted to subjectify them. Timothy Miller has, for instance, argued that 'From such basic questioning of received truth the hippies began in a fragmentary, tentative way to outline a new ethics, born of the precepts of intuition and direct experience, that was often at odds with the values of the prevailing culture, in the midst of which the counterculture found itself, but also often reaffirmed some traditional values that had been nearly forgotten in Western society's headlong rush into modernity.' (2011, p.xv). Peter Braunstein and William Doyle have also argued that against the tendency in academic literature to capture the hippies within a concrete definitional approach, as they state 'The term "counterculture" falsely reifies what should never properly be construed as a social movement. It was an inherently unstable collection of attitudes, tendencies, postures, gestures, "lifestyles," ideals, visions, hedonistic pleasures, moralisms, negations, and affirmations. These roles were played by people who defined themselves first by what they were not, and then, only after having cleared that essential ground of identity, began to conceive anew what they were' (2002, p.10). From this, it is also questionable whether we can truly say the hippies had an explicit doctrine, as it is unclear if they really internalized the radical literature of the time - such as Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* or Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd* - but rather proceeded through ideational endocytosis, these ideas coming to form through practice rather than theory.

This also relates to the way in which the American way of life was conditioned by a certain set of codified social mores such as getting a salaried job (The American Dream), having a (patriarchal and nuclear) family, practicing your religion (uncritically), and consuming diligently - not to mention the McCarthyite anti-communist witch hunts that plagued all walks of life. It should be said that although the hippies were diverse in their aims, tastes,

practices, and affinities, they were also predominantly middle class, white, young, and university educated (although many were also dropouts not completing their education or draft dodgers). This meant that the hippies could never be a truly universalist movement, and often set them at odds with other currents in American society – such as New Left radicals and the Black Panthers – but it would also be wrong to suggest that hippies were completely aloof to these other movements, the anti-war movement and later Weather Underground also being formed predominantly by hippie renegades. Demographic uniformity that marked the early hippies would quickly fracture in the later years of the movement, and it is questionable if that uniformity really tells us much about the movement as such. If there was one universal thread that tethered the disparate counterculture together (Hippie, Panther, New Left etc) it would have been the impending threat of nuclear catastrophe - Theodore Roszak draws explicit attention to the general affective mood of the early cold war period which helped to catalyse the youth revolt against their elders:

'The orthodoxy they confront is fatally and contagiously diseased. The prime symptom of that disease is the shadow of thermonuclear annihilation beneath which we cower... We are a civilization sunk in an unshakeable commitment to genocide, gambling madly with the universal extermination of our species. And how viciously we ravish our sense of humanity to pretend, even for a day, that such horror can be accepted as "normal," as "necessary"!' (1969, p.47)

The contradictions of such a society were readily exposed by the civil rights movement, by the anti-war movement, by feminist and radical undercurrents – but the very fact of nuclear brinkmanship exemplified by the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) already set young people up to no longer respect or trust in the capacity of their elders to act responsibly in averting destruction (perhaps the same could be said of today's youth in the wake of impending environmental catastrophe). How could one be happy when the universal ideal was so exclusive and so rigid, so blatantly oppressive – when the future was so darkened by the spectre of total annihilation. These tendencies were productive, and their product was the creative tendency of the hippies – they no longer accepted the doctrinaire answers of either left or right, since both seemed hell bent on dragging the world into the abyss for the sake of ideology. Experimentation became the heart of the movement, the music and artwork created during the period testifying to this fact, but most importantly, rather than

simply be consumed within the broader New Left, the hippies articulated a politics of experience, a politics of ecstasy which absconded from fidelity to a pre-defined modernist ideal. In this way we cannot say the hippies were really guided by any strong nostalgic or memory based politics – they were attempting to in their revolt from straight society to transform the existing determinates of pleasure and politics by crafting a third way from the antagonistic conservatism or class based politics of their elders, which bore fruit at the level of interpersonal and communitarian experimentation, even if it failed to ultimately resonate beyond isolated urban and rural enclaves of communal living.

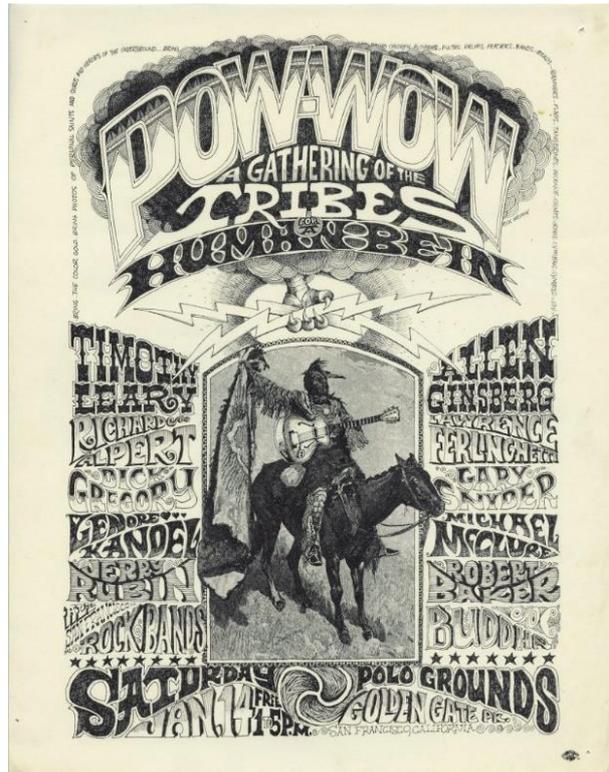
We can rightly assert that they were innovators of style and artistic expression, modelling themselves as the negation of society whilst reaffirming the idyllic, non-materialist and anti-individualist tendencies of premodern societies - although these two poles often blended, intersected, and contradicted one another. The style of the hippies before, it was captured by the systematisers of sociology or marketing machines of consumer society, in many ways reflects Deleuze's comments on style: 'It belongs to people of whom you normally say, 'they have no style.' This is not a signifying structure, nor a reflected organisation, nor a spontaneous inspiration, nor an orchestration, nor a little piece of music. It is an assemblage, an assemblage of enunciation. A style is managing to stammer in one's own language' (2002, p.3). The hippies were foreigners in their own land, and even in their own language. Stuart Hall writing in 1968 also recognized this aspect of the Hippies by emphasizing the curious way in which they spoke, their phraseology often being constantly marked by the continuous or ever present tense – *grooving, balling, mind blowing, where it is at* – with there also being an added prepositional flavour to repeated mantra's: *turn-on, drop-out, freak-out, be-in, love-in, cop-out, put-on, trip-out, uptight etc.* As Hall formulates this manner of speaking or style of phrasemaking is both 'existential' and 'connective' (1968, p.7). In this way the hippies even in their speech engendered a style which was constantly focused upon being present or in the moment, but also connected to one's milieu. Hall also draws attention to the epitomal hippie slogan, coined by the psychedelic doyen Timothy Leary – *Tune In, Turn On, Drop Out*. As Hall suggests this slogan can be broken apart to encapsulate three central threads that guided a great deal of hippie activity in the early years. *Tune In* for instance denotes the capacity to attune oneself to another way of life, to a new way of thinking and perceiving (something Hall connects to mass media and the television's need to be tuned into a different wavelength). *Turn On*, by contrast, sends an invitation to use mind expanding drugs that will facilitate

the first proposition. And *Drop Out* is a demand of refusal, to reject mainstream society and its values of work, status, and power – and is likely an affirmation of already existing trends: dropping out of school and dodging the draft. These three declarative points affirm the hippies as a movement of negation, of refusal to the life of the modern world – to pursue the hippie way of life is to pursue escape from the strictures of the old world, although this relationship between the hippies and modern was often fraught with tension. Hippies romanticized the simplicity of seemingly older or more natural cultures, seeing in them a path beyond capitalist modernity and towards liberation – some might say that in this way there is a degree of nostalgia in the hippies, but against this we might also say it is a nostalgia for a way of life they never declared ownership over, if anything it was a history that they recognised that settler society had erased and continued to erase in its drive to venerate capitalist, white, and urban modernity. The beats had similarly looked to black culture as the negation of mainstream white culture, finding in it a path towards the outside, they avidly appropriated Jazz and cannabis (a drug predominantly associated with African-Americans) and by doing so actively cultivated a deviant personae in confrontation with the strictures of white society. As Hall writes ‘In the white beatnik’s exploration of the submerged side of the ‘American Dream’, the man he was most likely to encounter in the forbidden psychic journey was his black counterpart, committed by the very conditions of his existence to the ‘hip’ round of life’ (ibid, p.11). The hippies would however find less affinity with black culture due to the nature of the political scene at the time – the deepening civil rights movement and the emergence of strictly oppositional black radicalism in the form of the Black Panthers. Most hippies were aloof to mass movement politics, even if many did participate at times with anti-war activism; negation required a complete rejection of a militancy so attached to dialectics and class struggle, or as Nadya Zimmerman states ‘racial politics required people to pick sides’ (2008, p.29). This does not strictly mean hippies disagreed with the motivations of the civil rights movement, but rather for them politics was engendered in one’s lifestyle and in the building of community, and not in direct confrontation with sites of power. Racialized demands or motifs were often distributed into ‘the pluralistic mix of signifiers that underscored the counterculture’s cultural landscape’ thus allowing the hippies to deal with racial politics ‘indirectly’ without being pegged to any particular agenda (ibid, p.30). This remains however a central tension, it shows that the hippies through rendering themselves entirely aloof to molar politics, still nonetheless could be said to remain as beneficiaries of whiteness, and thus by not

involving themselves in such struggles in fact became complicit in slowing active movements towards racial justice.

As mentioned earlier, Hippies often also turned their attention to more distant cultures – giving an orientalist flare to the movement, regularly appropriating eastern religions such as Buddhism or Taoism, although closer to home, the hippies would look to Native Americans as their spiritual and cultural totem. A mythologized native culture was a means for white Americans to connect to a supposed spiritual and environmental purity that the native embodied – anti-modernism blended with American identity (See Hall; 1968, p.11). Why this turn to the east or to the premodern? It was largely due deepening tensions the Cold War and the expansion of American empire, the Vietnam War and the policy of containment generating neo-colonialist tendencies which reverberated throughout American society. As Zimmerman argues ‘when one’s own socio-political system is oppressive and imperialist, then freedom, escape, and alternative realities can seem possible by immersion in radically different constructions of radically different cultures’ (2008, p.62). The exotic Other therefore provided a lifeline away from the confines of western subjecthood, a path beyond the determinates of liberal-capitalist values, and a chance to explore unknown possibilities. Deleuze and Guattari, in their critique of the confining nature of western arborescent thought provide an alternative reading of this trend with the East becoming for them a field of rhizomatic connectivity not tethered to a regime of organization, it is freer flowing and thus more open to the possibilities for reinvention, change, or experimentation. They go onto argue that transcendence is a ‘specifically European disease’ and that beyond the western model music and even sexuality can take on a different form: ‘Neither is music the same, the music of the earth is different, as is sexuality: seed plants, even those with two sexes in the same plant, subjugate sexuality to the reproductive model; the rhizome, on the other hand, is a liberation of sexuality not only from reproduction but also from genitility. Here in the West, the tree has implanted itself in our bodies, rigidifying and stratifying even the sexes. We have lost the rhizome, or the grass’ (1987, p.18). A great deal of Countercultural music was often inflected by this cross pollination, from *The Kinks* use of Indian musical influences to allude to eroticism (including homoeroticism), *Country Joe and the Fish’s*

experimentation with the Sitar (notably Eastern Jam), or *Jefferson Airplane's* blending of Flamenco (a musical form that dates back to the cosmopolitanism of the Andalusian peninsula prior to the inquisition) and eastern inspired tantric melodies (notably White Rabbit). Of course, this tendency towards appropriation is problematic – re-inscribing orientalist essentialisms onto the Other – but it did provide an impetus towards an emergent sense of ecological awareness and also articulated a politics not tethered to the bipolarity of the Cold War era. These musical cross pollinations emphasized and



reinforced a condition of estrangement and self-othering, disattuning the hippie from the affective condition of the Cold War moment. Zimmerman comments to this effect by arguing that the exoticism of the counterculture allowed it to shift its frame of reference to the otherworldly, a form of utopian fantasy not incumbered by the negativity of dialectical relations:

‘On the surface, exotic signifiers marked the counterculture as nonpolitical, nonmainstream, nonmaterialist, and non-Christian... the Otherworldly or mystical spaces that they offered could provide the fantastical qualities that modern dialectical civilization lacked. The exotic allowed the counterculture to appear to exist in an idealistic anti-Occidental frame - a frame that remained intact when political reality was not overtly challenged but kept at arm’s length’ (ibid, p.89).

Countercultural exoticism thus gave impetus towards an immanent critique of the very conditions of Western civilization, it produced a rhizomatic shift from the shackles of modernity and its Christian inheritance – opening up new pathways towards a liberated sense of self, of sexuality, of musical and artistic production.

This then leads us to the question of modernity and its relation to the hippies – a fraught relationship at best. Hall comments that ‘Hippie society is better understood as an attempt to build up an arcadian enclave within the heart of city life, thereby combining two powerful cultural impulses: rural simplicity and modernity. Hippie pastoralism is the dream of an urban arcadia’ (1968, p.11).²² The hippies were therefore a Janus-faced movement, constantly vying between the modern and anti-modern tendencies – a tension which helps explain why Gerry Garcia, Ben and Jerry, and Steve Jobs could claim to be hippies despite being so divergent in political motivation and ambition: Left-environmentalism, liberal reformism, Silicon Valley Neoliberalism etc. Andrew Blauvelt emphasizes this tension explicitly: ‘The modern conjures the figure of the machine as its preferred metaphor - a creation of man but with no trace of the hand, all smoothness and refinement, an abstraction of labour and an efficient, if indifferent, labour-saving device - something apart from nature. By contrast, the hippie evokes not the machine but the body - sensual and emotive - connecting man to nature, a direct rather a distant connection wherein man and nature are part of a shared cybernetic system’ (2015, p.12) One can find a notable illustration of this tension in the *Human-Be* festival poster by Rick Griffin (figure 1.) which shows a Native American astride a horse whilst carrying an unplugged electric guitar – subtitled “a gathering of the tribes”. This poster and many like it demonstrate the evocative nature of hippie poster art, its connection to the future and the past, its crossing of various lines of culture, and a certain optimism of the period. Deleuze and Guattari make explicit reference to the expressivity of the American Counterculture, and how it often formed a curious rhizome of heterogeneous orientations, an experimentation with a vortex of cultural cross pollination. As they reflect: ‘*Everything important that has happened or is happening takes the route of the American rhizome: the beatniks, the underground, bands and gangs, successive lateral offshoot in immediate connection with an outside... its West is the edge of the East*’ (1987, p.19). Only in escape and negation will we ever be able to live a life worth living – the hippie ideal is therefore both a negation of society but also an affirmation of a totally different world beyond the values of technocratic, capitalist, or conservative society. Andrew Blauvelt provides a worthwhile definition of this ethos, referring to it as a *hippie modernism*:

²² This tension with modernism is also manifest in the Hippies use of advanced musical technologies - the electric guitar becoming increasingly popular after Bob Dylan, who had previously been the figurehead of the folk musical revival, decided at the Newport Folk Festival (1965) to play an all-electric set prompting the crowd to boo and jeer at him and the band, but nonetheless Dylan had set a precedent that reverberated throughout the hippie music scene

‘An aesthetics of refusal - one that rejects the given parameters of practice, obviates the boundaries of a defined field, or alters the course of an instrumental technology. It is also, fundamentally, a form of projection not just negation - one that envisions utopic potentials, models and experiences, and channels liberatory futures.’ (2015, p.26)

The hippies therefore defy the demands of social determination within the confines of straight society, the world for them as it had been constituted was one worth rupturing with. The molarising identities of worker and consumer, citizen and patriot, husband and wife, were losing their purchase amongst American youth – and as these identities began to leak at their edges, new possibilities for politics, identity, and self-expression were found. Love became a central battleground for the conflict over identity – the family and traditional values representing the ideological edifice of American society. We shall however leave the problem of “free love” to the side for the moment and see how this hippie modernist ethos was effectuated in practise – focusing in particular on one important location of hippie awakening – the Haight Ashbury district of San Francisco – which a site of immense hippie experimentation.

B.2. Hippie Awakenings: The Haight Ashbury

The Haight-Ashbury²³ district of San Francisco prior to the 1960’s was a well-established working and middle-class area, with a progressive reputation due to its ties to the labour movement. Post war suburbanization and the plans for commercial rezoning led to flight from the district – consequently forcing down property values and rental costs²⁴ (See Ashworth; 2007). Just as this was happening (1961-2), rents in the North Beach district rose drastically – this district was populated by many prominent poets with connection to the Beat literary scene – thus the stage was set for the Haight to become a new cultural hub of the emergent Hippie movement. Perhaps one of the first definitive events that

²³ I will use “Haight” to denote the broader Haight Ashbury district as that was how it was colloquially referred to at the time.

²⁴ Tensions which would later emerge in Haight predominantly gravitated around the three communities that took shape in the mid-1960s – The white predominantly middle class property owning community and the neighbouring Black working class community being the older of the two communities, and the emergent rag tag hippie community who although predominantly middle class youth or university dropouts also was composed of draft dodgers, working class youth attracted to the scene, and also older avantgarde artists and literary figures. Although it should also be said that there is a distinction amongst the hippies politically – “longhairs” vs “liberals” – the longhairs tended to be radical and politically left leaning, whereas the liberals were more integrationist and commercially orientated whilst nonetheless being critical of mainstream values.

marked the flourishing of the hippie community in the Haight was Ken Kesey's infamous *Acid Test* at Longshoremen's Hall (See figure 2.) also called the *Trips Festival* in January 1966 – Kesey hosted this kind of event across West coast with the help of his



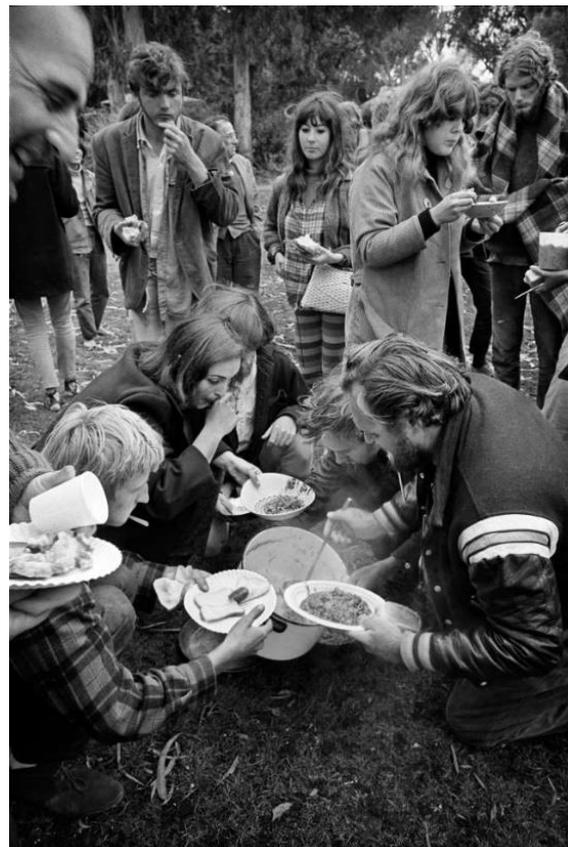
*Merry Pranksters*²⁵. The festival at Longshoremen's Hall lasted three days and was widely advertised attracting local young people and students at Berkley across the Bay, music being provided by bands such as *Big Brother & the Holding Company* and *The Grateful Dead*. With the punch spiked with LSD (this was prior to its criminalization in October 1966) and massive amounts of strobe lighting, the event would likely have been incredibly memorable for its participants – a definitive and life altering experience for any who had not previously been exposed to psychedelic drugs. The Fillmore²⁶ and Avalon ballrooms located just outside the Haight would also provide central spaces for the emergent hippie musical scene – the Fillmore was particularly notable for also inviting famous Blues artists such as *Muddy Waters* and *Little Walter* thus allowing local hippies artists to develop their only style in conjunction with the blues (even if this created its own set of artistic conflicts related to appropriation). The second definitive event that marked the Haight was the *Human Be-in*²⁷ festival hosted in the Golden Gate Park nearby on 14th January 1967. This event attracted an estimated twenty-five thousand people – and featured an extended afternoon of readings by beat poets, speeches by countercultural celebrities, and performances by the *Grateful Dead*, *Country Joe and the Fish*, and *Jefferson Airplane* – Timothy Leary would also utter his famous mantra for the first time here “Tune in, turn on,

²⁵ The hippie term “happening” was often used to refer to such events – parties, gathering, or festivals which offered music, dance, and psychedelic experience.

²⁶ The Fillmore dance hall was located in the Fillmore district neighbouring the Haight – it was a predominantly black community, and it is noted that although there was community intermingling, there was also tension between the two communities, with many in Fillmore regarding the hippies as eccentric and taking umbrage with the “fantasy ghetto” that the Haight was becoming. The idea of playing at poverty whilst real poverty was the reality of the black community was thus quite offensive for some and antithetical to their values – principally this revolved around a still ingrained notion of the American Dream but one that was hoped could become racially inclusive.

²⁷ Human be-in plays on human being – with there being many such events of in's: sit-in, love-in, bed-in, laugh-in.

drop out”. Drugs and music would therefore become fundamental to the hippies in the Haight, giving cultural grounding to their activities that extended beyond the dance halls and festival activities. As Anthony Ashbolt argues ‘Hippies constituted a community in that they possessed a collective style (revolving around drugs, music, fashion generally), which brought them together no matter where they were... More significantly, hippies achieved community by becoming wedded to particular places. A hippie community like that in the Haight-Ashbury was bounded by place as well as taste and habit. It was a concentrated social experiment rather than a diffuse set of styles’ (2007, p.40). Ashbolt draws attention to *The Print Mint* and the *Psychedelic Shop*²⁸ as providing fundamental hubs for the community in the Haight, the former being established in December 1965 and the latter January 1966. Both would provide the community with psychedelic art – posters being the mainstay of hippie cultural production – and various pamphlets, books, and other sundries which directly channelled the radicalism of the time; it could therefore also be said that a burgeoning form of hippie commercialism was taking hold in the Haight as part of its organic growth. Ashbolt articulates the tension of commercialism with the anti-materialism of the hippies: ‘While the hippies yearned for personal authenticity (‘be yourself, man!’), at the same time they were bedecked in colourful costumes and used the marketplace as a space for performance.... Here, in the Haight-Ashbury district, was a community that lived its opposition to bourgeois society. Yet it was underpinned by commercialism’ (2007, p.42). However, there was another fundamental dynamic to the Haight: communalism. Many young hippies, who were dropouts or runaways, relied upon the generosity of the community to ensure that



²⁸ Quite famously the Psychedelic shop was raided by police for selling “The Love Book” by Lenore Kandel – on the grounds of obscenity an accusation which would also be targeted at the Print Shop’s supposed sale of pornography. This became one of the longest court cases in San Francisco history. Video footage of the raid can be found here: <https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/sfbatv/bundles/210733>

they could live their freewheeling lifestyle – and a fundamental component of that communalism was the Diggers.

The Diggers were named after the 17th century English Diggers who had defended the commons against attempts by the royals to enclose land and usurp it from the peasantry. They were fundamental to the flourishing of the Haight, and as Timothy Miller summarizes ‘Diggers were a lot of things at once: a theatrical troupe, a service organization, a band of outlaws, and an urban commune, or more properly several-perhaps as many as thirty-five-scattered communal houses’ (1999, p.44). The Diggers had originated out of San Francisco based Mime Troupe, which combined avant-garde theatre with a radical anti-consumerist and collectivist form of politics defined in opposition to mainstream society. Part of their practice was what they called ‘life-acting’, a form of prefigurative politics in which one would actively live out a revolutionary lifestyle and thereby make it a reality (see Auther & Lerner; 2012, p. xxviii). Michael William Doyle also emphasizes the way in which the Diggers blended art into political praxis, remodelling the streets into the image of theatre:

‘the Diggers took theatre into the streets. In the process they attempted to remove all boundaries between art and life, between spectator and performer, and between public and private. The resulting technique, which they referred to as "life-acting," punned on the dual meaning of the verb "to act," combining the direct action of anarchism with theatrical role playing. The Diggers' principal project was to enact "Free," a comprehensive utopian program that would function as a working model of an alternative society.’ (Braunstein & Doyle; 2002, p.80).

Many of their practices were therefore actively directed towards raising a collective consciousness amongst the hippies, altering what was traditionally conceived of as possible. One such consciousness raising activity was “garbage yoga” which in effect was taking societies leftovers and putting them into the service of the community – this could be food²⁹, furniture, clothing, or even housing (whilst also running a free medical service).³⁰

²⁹ Food collection was done predominantly by Digger women, using their charm to persuade local vendors to give up their leftover goods freely.

³⁰ It is easy to see that much of the practise of recycling and repurposing of goods was an attempt to grapple with the new issue facing modern society: overabundance. For much of human history resource scarcity had been a fact of life, and waste actively avoided. But in the modern era we are all too familiar with the excess our society produces – we are still yet to fully grapple with this abundance, our societies

The daily practice of the Diggers revolved around this form of recycling, and every day they would set up on the panhandle of the Golden Gate Park, preparing loaves of bread and large pots of stew for the locals in the Haight under the condition that those who came brought their own



plates and cutlery – this being in part a way to ensure collective responsibility of those benefiting from the free service (see figure 3.). But this activity was also a performance because participants had to first pass through a large wooden frame called the “free frame of reference” before they could receive any food. The purpose of such a symbolic exercise was to show that when one passed through the frame, they were not simply gaining access to the goods they needed but also that they were leaving mainstream society and entering a new world predicated upon totally different values. As Craig P. Peariso states ‘Any preconceptions or ideological baggage they may have brought with them to the park that day were to be left behind so that each person could truly experience and recognize the reality they were engendering... The main point was to liberate individual desire from the dominant system of exchange’ (Cited in Blauvelt; 2015, p.81). The Digger Free store (there was actually more than one, but all shared the title free store) also had a similar function as the Panhandle kitchen, with goods being distributed freely and the store itself being run democratically – the words “Don’t waste. Give to the Diggers.” Being written on the outside of the store (see figure 4.).

The Digger ethos also extended to the provision of housing in the form of “Crash pads” – them helping to facilitate a network of free housing - which were essentially places that people could stay at for a day or a month at a time – there being possibly a thousand crash pads in the bay area. Jay Stevens describes the scene for many who found themselves in the Haight and in need of housing:

still clinging to the unsustainable consumption patterns. Ecological and equitable sustainability were fundamental to the burgeoning counterculture.

'Your first night in the Haight was usually spent in one of the many communal crash pads, sandwiched together with a dozen friendly strangers. Your inhibitions and frequently your virginity were the first things to go, followed by your clothes and your old values - a progressive shedding that was hastened along by your first acid trip. Within days your past life in Des Moines or Dallas or wherever was as remote as the school outings you took as an adolescent' (cited in Miller; 1999, p.45).

Living in the Haight was therefore a radically different experience than the kind advocated by middle class America – it was communal, free, and constantly imbibed by the dramatization of different ways of life. Of course these spaces could also be dysfunctional, messy and disorganized, with sickness and sexually transmitted diseases constituting prime issues³¹, but they also could be the complete opposite, well maintained and regulated, whilst also being democratically run – the possibility they offered was a real chance at a community that was not tethered to a narrow or selfish individualism, they transformed urban space, and rendered urban life as fluid and not wholly determined by the strictures of the average working day and its disciplinary time frame. In a way the



³¹ Part of the downfall of crash pads was a crackdown by the state on the supposed danger of these refuges – them not suiting building regulations. Another more esoteric instance was the case of The Family in the Bronx Park in New York. It was a crowd ranging up to forty persons who built shelters in a corner of the park – and they were mostly overlooked, the shelters being progressively improved and winterized. However, a police officer saw an open flame (contained in a brazier) which violated a ruling against open fires. The shelters were promptly torn down, along with the home of a local hermit unaffiliated with The Family (see Miller; 1999, p.46).

activity of the crash pads helped foster a lifestyle more akin to Guy Debord's notion of the Dérive 'One or more person indulging in dérive give up, for a greater or lesser duration, their familiar reasons for movement and action, their own acquaintances, jobs, and forms of leisure, to release themselves to their solicitations of the site and of the encounters suiting it' (2009, p.78). Communalism was therefore a vital aspect of the hippies in the Haight – but it was a communalism that was not only aimed at providing for the community, but also actively changed the mindset of all those involved, a change that occurred in the encounter.

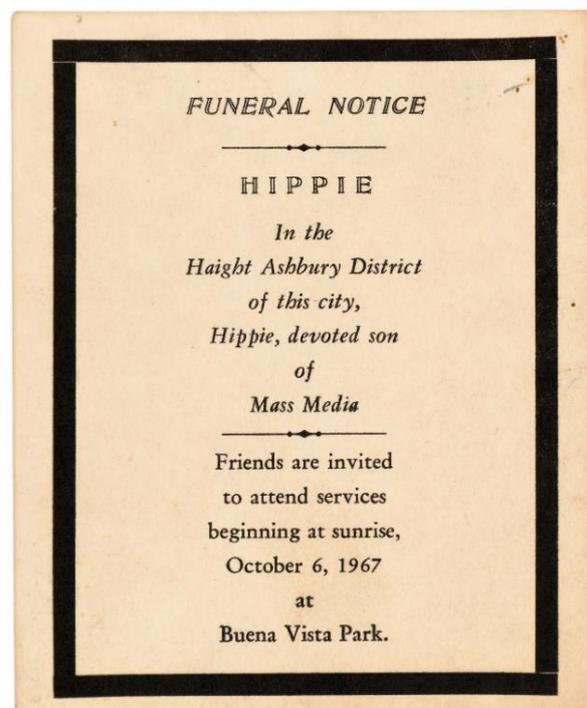
However, the Diggers were at root a theatrical group and so their practices were not purely limited to the provision of free services. They often hosted events or happenings which invited community participation. One notable example is the “Death of Money, Birth of the free” (see figure 5.) parade held on the 17th of December 1966 which went as follows: ‘The burial procession. Three black shrouded messengers holding staffs topped with reflective dollar signs. A runner swinging a red lantern. Four pall bearers wearing animal heads carry a black casket filled with bowls of silver dollars. A chorus singing “Get Out of My Life Why Don't You Babe” to Chopin's Death March. Members of the procession give out silver dollars and candles.... Street events are rituals of release. Re-claiming of territory (sundown, traffic, public joy) through spirit. Public NewSense' (Digger archive – cited in Auther & Lerner; 2012, p.xxviii). Such a happening was likely intended to demonstrate the antipathy of the Diggers to what was then emerging in the Haight – a self-interested consumerism growing within the counterculture represented by the Haight Independent Proprietors (HIP) formed in late 1966. The HIP was not opposed to the counterculture, being hippies themselves, but they were also driven by a desire to commercially develop the Haight (one is perhaps reminded of gentrifies of today – noble intentions and



terrible consequences). They believed that the sensible path for the counterculture in the Haight was to expand its influence through a wider reaching public relations campaign, and with the media's obsession with the Human be-in festival believed that another festival should be promoted with media help – the Summer of Love (1967) was born. The Diggers were deeply opposed to the idea of inviting the nation to the Haight, as this would likely overstretch the capacity of the city and ability of the Diggers to collectively organize the provision of food and housing. They were proven right, with over 100,000 flocking to the city and many who came seeking freedom and love, only finding themselves homeless and harassed by local miscreants and thieves³². Rates of rape, robbery and assault rose dramatically, and local medical clinics were overwhelmed. As Anthony Ashbolt notes:

'The Summer of Love itself propelled an unsustainable population explosion and this, together with the steady gaze of media spotlights, placed almost unbearable pressure on the community. Simply too many with flowers in their hair flocked to the Haight and the chilly winds off the Bay fuelled a culture of despair more than one of hope. Moreover, the categorical imperative of drug taking provided criminal elements with a mass market to manipulate, whereas internal dealing characterized the early community experience' (2007, p.43).

The Digger dream of a liberated community built within the heart of the old was slowly crumbling apart frayed by the tensions that have racked many communal experiments in the past. These spiralling conditions led to the apt "Death of the Hippie" parade hosted by the Diggers on the 6th October 1967 (see figure 6. And 7.). The parade featured a large coffin filled with beads and memorabilia and was then taken to the panhandle to be ceremoniously burned – with hippies



³² The Hell's Angels biker gang was a prominent group within the Haight helping to provide drugs to the Hippies and also providing security for musical gigs – however they were prone to violence and didn't just sell psychedelics but also hard core drugs such as heroin and thus with the massive influx of people became even more unruly. It should also be noted that the Angels were a white working-class group that harboured racist views – this promoted tensions with the Black community and also led to a series of deaths.

dancing in a circle around the fire. The fire brigade came to put out the massive bonfire, and the revellers then rubbed the ashes upon themselves in a symbolic act of rebirth. The point of the parade was to create a media spectacle that countered the media narrative that had allowed for the calamity that was the Summer of Love, with the media image of Hippies as sex crazed drug fiends not fully encapsulating the real dynamics and everyday practices that kept the hippie community functioning. The image of the hippie presented was hedonistic rather than utopic and it attracted many who wished to imitate such an image – thus the hippie movement would slowly collapse in the coming years, becoming more about pleasure than real social transformation – the Diggers would split going onto help form the backbone of the 70s communal movements. The victory of the individualistic dimension of the hippie movement was not something that was pre-given by the plurality of the movement, but rather comes with the plasticity of capitalism to deploy a consumerist recuperation³³ of the values and styles of the hippies. The famous 1971 Coco Cola advertisement “I’d like to buy the world a Coke”³⁴, featuring dozens of young people in hippie garb captured both the iconography of the hippies and their values of universal love and peace, converting the hippie into the perfect consumer – the radicalism of the 60s was effectively gutted of its negativity, and the desire for utopia rechannelled into the desire for commodities, with the politics of a subversive “life-style” becoming purely an affirmative lifestyle of personal cultivation, narcissism replacing collectivism in the consciousness of American society. To use the phraseology of Deleuze and Guattari, the line of flight which the hippies embodied would be reterritorialized within the axiomatics of capitalism. However, this argument is rather one sided, and it fails to recognize that the legacy of the hippies was not purely one of a fall into consumerism, for many movements were spawned from the countercultural shifts that came about from the 60s: feminism, black radicalism, radical ecology and environmentalism, with communal and artistic experimentalism also being birthed. The hippies were born and died in a very short-lived space of time but echoes of their ideas have carried on beyond them. The next section of this excursus will emphasize the artistic and experimentalist dimensions of the hippies in

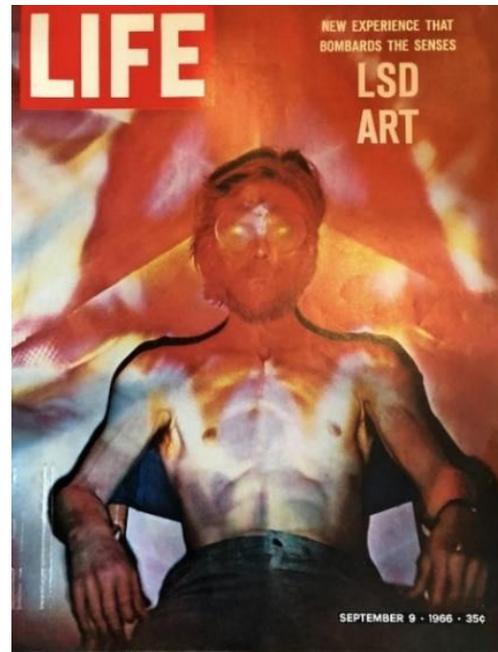
³³ The Situationist concept of detournement or “rerouting/hijacking” was intended to subvert older artistic styles or even capitalist advertising for antithetical ends, this often-entailed parody but is also contrasted by the capitalist practise of “recuperation” which converts radical iconography into commodities. As we will see in the section following, the hippies’ artistic style would adopt an approach similar to hijacking, in that they would repurpose older styles, techniques, and materials for their own ends.

³⁴ A link to the advertisement can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VM2eLhvsSM>

their artistic and architectural endeavours focusing in particular on the case study of Drop City.

B.3. Art as Life: Psychedelia and the Domes

Psychedelic art was an organic outgrowth of the hippies' tendency to use mind altering drugs, and the desire to move beyond the art gallery as a space of artistic legitimacy. Much of what was produced by the hippies rejected the formalism of the avant-garde which in many ways was caught up in an aloof, all too academic, and elitist understanding of what art could or should be. As Andrew Blauvelt articulates 'psychedelia follows Impressionism, not chronologically but philosophically, as the artist depicts an altered sense of reality and the objects and spaces within



it. Rather than a formal reordering of perceived colour and form (e.g. Pointillism), psychedelia promises something different - access to more deeply hidden truths of reality and alternate planes of lived experience' (2015, p.16). In this way psychedelic art was intended to mirror the experience of being under the effect of drugs like LSD and distil the revelations that come with it. This kind of art was intended to raise a new form of consciousness, to alter how people experienced not just art but also themselves and the world – it promoted a sense of the otherworldly³⁵. Psychedelic art was also especially resistant to consumerism, not even wanting to replicate the kind of critical gesture that pop art was making at the time of reproducibility. But it was also wrong to suggest that psychedelic art was a fully self-conscious movement – at times there was really no distinction between art and life, art as pleasure and play, or art and personal taste or style:

'The counterculture was too preoccupied inventing a new world of cultural experiences and social rituals - acid rock music; guerrilla or street theatre; anarchic literature; Eastern-infused spirituality; freestyle dancing, "de-schooling" and the free university; androgynous fashion and hairstyles, including flying the long hair of one's "freak flag"; gatherings of

³⁵ Images – 1. Richard Aldcroft facing his "Infinity Projector" cover of LIFE Magazine, 9th September 1966; Isaac Abrams - 2. Hello Dali, 1965, 3. DMT: In Search of the Golden City 1967

campus protests, be-ins and sit-ins, and communal living etc. - to be concerned about a separate category called art. To the hippie, life was art and art was life.' (Blauvelt; 2015, p.17).

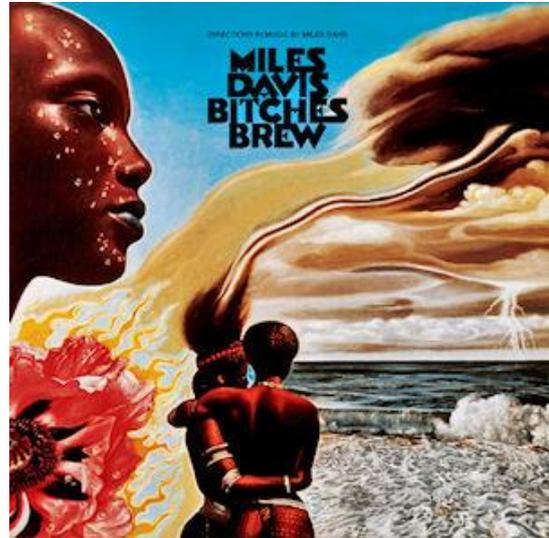
Because of this explicit attempt to counter the formalism of mainstream art, and its resistance to institutionalization, much of hippie art was rejected by critics as not being art – it was far too dilettantish, too gawdy, too esoteric to be considered an artistic art form in its own right. Even in many art history texts to this day, psychedelic art is excluded despite it having had such a wide sweeping influence on those who were involved with it and the generations that followed, academic arrogance meant that a large swathe of artistic history has been lost to the broader artistic community. It should be said that if Washington was the centre of state power and conservatism, and the East coast more defined by an aloof avantgarde with artistic creation curated by gatekeepers, art critics stuck in the frame of distinguishing art from life, then the West coast was the heart of the counterculture and its artistic radicalism – San Francisco and Berkley would help produce a completely different attitude to artistic creation. Greg Castillo makes an important point about the general style of hippie art and architecture ‘the hallmark of hippie modernism was a focus not on any rigorous or specific architectural form but rather on a kind of empirically informed and socially inspired bricolage.’ (Places; 2015). This echoes the words Adolfo Natalini, one of the founders of the Superstudio in Italy, who said in 1971:



‘if design is merely an inducement to consume, then we must reject design; if architecture is merely the codifying of bourgeois model of ownership, then we must reject architecture; if architecture and town planning is merely the formalization of present unjust social

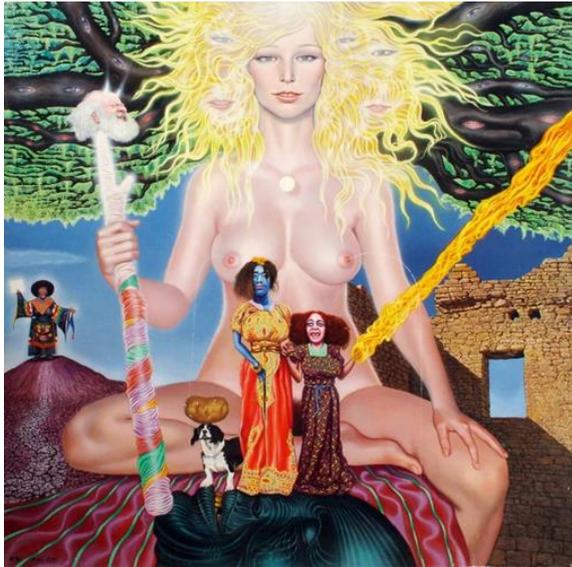
divisions, then we must reject town planning and its cities... until all design activities are aimed towards meeting primary needs. Until then, design must disappear. We can live without architecture." (cited in Blauvelt; 2015, p.13).

This reinforces the central point that the counterculture what not only resisting mainstream culture but were also attempting to transform the more marginal communities that made up the avantgarde – they were effectuating a disruption of the very set of conditions under which art and architecture could be produced, for even art was repressive and to self-absorbed to recognize its own conservatism. One way in which psychedelic art differed from much of the art at the time, and art up to that point, was its intimate connection to music – expressing the transformation that Marshal McLuhan had highlighted that “the medium is the message”. The cover art for many of the 60’s top bands was produced by artists, Alton Kelly and Stanley Mouse providing covers for the Grateful Dead, Peter Blake providing the cover The Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), and Andy Warhol’s cover for The Rolling Stones’ *Sticky Fingers* (1971) and for The Velvet Underground and Nico (1966) – both being interactive covers³⁶.



Mati Klarwein is of note as a countercultural artist who provided a slew of dramatic – and painted – art covers for albums, the band Santana using his painting *Annunciation* (1961)

³⁶ As Christopher Gair notes 'Sgt. Pepper's gate-fold sleeve and the front of *Sticky Fingers* are both examples of covers that do more than merely contain the music, and the latter, with its zipper that was found to damage the vinyl inside, is perhaps the supreme example of impractical album art. The cover painting for The Velvet Underground and Nico also challenges conventional relationships between musicians and the designers who would promote their work, since the banana on the front cover of the first pressings could be peeled and – even more significantly – Andy Warhol's signature was at least as prominent as the band's name.' (2007, p.185).



Klarwein - Julie Awake 1974

for their album *Abraxas* (1970), and Klarwein provided the cover for Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew* (1970). Both demonstrate an intimate connection to female sexuality which relates to a notion of uninhibited freedom beyond social repression and a wide sweeping global cosmopolitanism; aspiring to blur the lines between human and nature in the tantric forms presented. Klarwein also provides another exceptional work that embodies the hippie modernist ethos of liberated sexuality, psychedelic consciousness raising, and eastern spiritualism: *Crucifixion* (Freedom of

Expression) – a painting he also referred to as “the fucking tree” (depicted below - 1963). Klarwein paintings rarely demonstrate a central figure of focus or attempt to replicate or represent everyday people, places, or ideals, but rather demonstrated the heterogeneity of cosmic experience. The central frame of reference was always disorientated through the use of collage – if the viewer decided to home in on a particular aspect of the piece, they would be able to see a whole myriad of entities or aspects which although connected to the whole, were in themselves singular and vested with their own potency. Through excess, Klarwein was able overwhelm the viewer and thus distort the tendency to ground his work within a fixed meaning or interpretation – the point was rather to bring the viewer into a different frame of thinking that would disrupt their presuppositions about what art could be or portray – and this heterogeneity was deeply indebted to Klarwein's own use of psychedelia and his connection to the popular musical scene at the time. In one of his last interviews, he described his own style as deeply inspired by dreams, something which makes him akin to one of his mentors Salvador Dali “There was a time when I dreamed of sex and then I dreamed of drugs... Soon I will be dreaming of light.” (Jones, *GQ Magazine*; 2019). In Klarwein we perhaps find a real sense of the aesthetic being blended with the Hippie ideal of Free Love which in its way could help produce an affective transformation of selfhood beyond the egoistic confines of “straight society” and its rigid familial bias. It should also be said that even though many of Klarwein's images demonstrate a



heightened exuberance of sexuality and evocative images of women, he manages not to repeat the misogynistic overtones of other forms of countercultural art, Christopher Gair writing that 'In Crucifixion, the images represent not so much Klarwein's abstract curiosity about the past, as an attempt to re-think what the present could be like if repressive Euro-American norms were removed' (2007, p.187). In psychedelic art we thus see a new form of consciousness giving itself expression – art providing the medium for a new prometheanism not so enamoured with mastery of the world, but rather a prometheanism which utilizes the impulse towards freedom and creativity in an entirely different way, one which rather than privileging humanity, in effect dissolves it into a new world where the binary between subject and object is overcome, where humanity is reborn in the image of nature, or the cosmos.

However, hippie art would take on an entirely different dimension with the founding of Drop City on the 3rd May 1965, by a small handful of art and film students: Gene Bernofsky, Joann Bernofsky, Richard Kallweit, and Clark Richert. The intended aim of Drop City was to build a new civilization from scratch, and the project would last well into the 1970s even after the original founders had left. Drop City was fundamentally a commune orientated around the values of pacifism, sexual freedom, rural isolation, and consciousness raising experience – through both artistic practice and experimental drug use. It would pioneer integrated arts, and multimedia spectacles using vibrant colours and the reusing of trash as its source material. The inhabitants would even experiment with using new names, to

try and embody a new form of collectivist society. The founders of Drop City had been thoroughly immersed in the avantgarde art scene during their time at university and in their visits to New York but were tired of the formalism of art which was too wedded to the past. The early “droppers” were largely inspired by the art form of *Happenings* (which prefigured performance art) – which attempted to involve spectators as participants; they were spontaneous, interactive, and open-ended and thus often had a more disorientating or bizarre effect on those involved than classical mediums such as painting. Droppers would take the Happening, which often occurred within an institutional space, and take it to the streets, referring to their new style as ‘Dropping’ (See Elder in Auther & Lerner; 2012, p.5). Examples of such droppings include the dropping of painted pebbles from a loft window onto passers-by below, or the instance when the droppers connected an iron and ironing board to a parking meter, and a more elaborate dropping where they set a table and left a huge breakfast in front of a bourgeois hotel free for anyone to sit and eat. These droppings were intended to be disruptive and disorientating, breaking people from their fixed routines or closed worlds, exposing the routines of reality which otherwise pass by unnoticed. In this sense droppings easily conform to much of hippie art which engendered the otherworldly – but for the droppers, art also needed to be “unarted” breaking art off from its connection to institutions and also used to shape a new way of life which would also transform art itself – this is where the transition from Dropping to Drop City can be traced. The medium of art was to become the medium of life.

The Droppers would attend a lecture by Richard Buckminster Fuller – well known for his Geodesic Dome architectural designs – and they would see these designs as a creative medium through which to express their opposition to the stifling rigidity of contemporary urban life and its planned, mass manufactured housing developments. The droppers would thus set to work building their own variant of Fuller’s designs – putting the domes together with scrap materials scavenged locally, and handcrafted with only sparse



collection of hand tools, each dome being utterly original and personal. Simon Sadler notes that the Geodesic dome design that Fuller had designed was not even in commercial use at the time that the Droppers decided to appropriate it, making the Drop City a truly cutting-edge architectural experiment³⁷. As he writes, the Droppers 'were now performing a geodesic experiment remarkable in at least three respects: first, by volunteering as guinea pigs for the private civilian deployment of the geodesic dome; second, by attempting to build domes without access to blueprints, let alone kits; and third, doing so with virtually no resources bar their personal energy and ingenuity' (2006, p.7). But unlike Fuller, the Droppers were not scientifically minded, adopting a more laissez faire and esoteric attitude to design and construction, applying the principle of bricolage – they would build their domes with whatever materials at hand (which often meant plywood, tar paper, and scrap metal – although later the domes would be built from sheet metal scavenged or stolen from cars), and with the slow build speed and local weather conditions the structures themselves would become distorted, warped wooden frames producing more mutations than Fuller would have accepted. The first two domes were completed by the end of 1965 with the Great Pumpkin Dome and the Kitchen Dome, neither building costing more than \$200. Erin Elder highlights the important encounter between the Droppers and architect Steve Baer who would introduce the Droppers to his own "Zome" design. As Elder states 'The zome is a dome-like system that involves fewer parts and is more forgiving than Fuller's geodesics. Fuller domes require total accuracy, whereas zomes allow for spontaneity and additions, alterations and mistakes. Zomes encourage experimentation and chance and are always unique in their final manifestation. The geometrics of the Fuller domes were freed up by Baer's new mathematics and authenticated by the Droppers' amateurism and low-budget building practice' (cited in Auther & Lerner; 2012, p.11). Fuller's domes could only be expanded outward, the whole structure's radius having to be increased if it were to continue supporting its own weight which was incredibly limiting for building adaption. Zomes by contrast were zonohedral and thus could more easily expanded along their axis.

Drop city was always however a precarious place to live, the land was unforgiving, and the Droppers had little money to sustain themselves, it was a site of equalized poverty, isolated and hard but creative in this poverty. All things were used to create works of life and art,

³⁷ Drop City was also a pioneer in the use of solar powered heating before many Americans had even heard of Solar energy.



and this meant that the aesthetic was in abundance. In keeping with the art form of dropping, much of what the Droppers produced was evocative and disturbing – they made statues of various sizes, diffuse assemblages, painted furniture and garments, there were also sculptures of rocket ships and scarecrows, and some conceptual pieces as well. But the most important piece of art the Droppers produced was the Ultimate painting (pictured above) which was a large circular geometric painting and was rotated under strobe lighting. The ultimate painting, perched as it was in the desert like scene that provided its background embodied the spirit of Drop City, its attempt to articulate the submersion of art into life, and life into art – there was no subject and object, but a myriad of shifting forms. The Ultimate painting articulates the hippie modernist drive towards the otherworldly, its deterritorializing tendency, or as McLuhan stated:

'Every age has its favourite model of perception and knowledge that it is inclined to prescribe for everybody and everything. The mark of our time is its revulsion against imposed patterns. We are eager to have things and people declare their being totally. There is a deep faith to be found in this new attitude – a faith that concerns the ultimate harmony of all being.' (1964; 2001, p.6).

Drop City like many communes disintegrated under the weight of increasing population demands and rifts in organisational direction – but remains a clear expression of the ingenuity of the hippies in constructing for themselves a new horizon of social, cultural, political, and aesthetic production – these new horizons also being intimately linked to the use of mind-altering substances that provided a chemical catalyst for new imaginings.

B.4. Free Love and (its) Limits

Psychedelics may have opened the hippie to another world of experience, but they were not necessarily a panacea to the political problems that the hippies were engaged with – drugs were a means to an end, the end of an emancipated sense of self. The fact that drugs are by their nature a mere neutral means, a tool in the arsenal of emancipated selfhood, renders them open to abuse, or to that other possibility - the simple pleasure of fulfilment which reifies the pursuit of pleasure as an ultimate goal rather than that other more radical end: social transformation. In fact, the Diggers were wary of the use of drugs as a political tool, as propounded by the Learyite faction of the hippie movement in San Francisco, with the Digger collective authoring in their local newspaper a scathing critique of Leary entitled "Uncle Tim'\$ Children". As the piece pointedly remarks:

'Pretty little 16-year-old middle-class chick comes to the Haight to see what it's all about & gets picked up by a 17-year-old street dealer who spends all day shooting her full of speed again & again, then feeds her 3000 mikes [of acid] and raffies off her temporarily unemployed body for the biggest Haight Street gang bang since the night before last. The politics & ethics of ecstasy Tune in, turn on, drop dead? One wonders' (Quoted in Doyle and Braunstein; 2002)

Using drugs to exploit minors for the purposes of sexual exploitation draws attention to the contradictions of the hippie movement that professed the mantra of *Free Love*³⁸– freedom in this instance being akin to the negative conception popularized in the liberal tradition, but there is little reflection on how freedom in itself can be uncritical of domination and exploitation at the level of free choice. Hippies may have been radically questioning the cultural and moral norms of their time, but they were also replicating the same injustices in a different form – hence why the hippie decade would give rise to a later insurgent radical feminist critique of patriarchal values – free love was a Pandora's box, it harboured both treasures and horrors. Nayda Zimmerman rightly expresses the limits of the hippie emphasis on free love 'As rules were dropped, "free love" filled in the gaps - a nonsystem that purportedly had no rules, no artificial restrictions, and no social conventions. "Free love" wasn't particularly concerned then with equal treatment or egalitarian practises'

³⁸ The notion of free love was perhaps first popularised in America by the theologian John Humphrey Noyes when he formed in 1848 the Oneida community, a religious cult which actively practised group marriage (See Issit; 2009, p.20).

(2008, pp.140-1). But even if we acknowledge the fact that most hippies indulged in free love uncritically, we can also recognize that free love opened the way for a rebellious youth to break away and expose the already existing contradictions of the regimented and stifling monogamy of their parents – a regime of marriage, familism, and fixed gender roles. In sum free love constituted a pursuit for authentic connection between individuals not inhibited by the institutional and cultural mores that both dominated and in a Foucauldian sense moulded sexual relations in ways conducive to the demands of disciplinary society. Free love gave expression to a desire for rebellion and social transformation – its vivacity likely also being linked to a sense of exhaustion with the destructive impulses of Cold War brinkmanship. Free love as both the path to domination and to liberation exposes the indifference that love bears to transformation, it is a double-edged sword for those that wield it for political purposes – and therefore love must never be uncritical or complacent, never guided simply by pleasure or viewed in religious terms as a transcendent concept that is pure and free from the vicissitudes of power.

The *sexual revolution*³⁹ that crested during the 1960s into the 1970s was the end result of various tendencies: greater acceptance in the post-war era for nudity, sex as a product became more widespread and disseminated through new mediums (pornography), the proliferation of sexually explicit and candid literature, and perhaps most importantly the invention of the birth control pill. David Allyn has for instance argued that ‘It is almost impossible to overstate the impact of the pill on American culture. It gave women the freedom to have sex when and where they wished and made contraception palatable to the prudest of the prude. It put birth control on the covers of family magazines and symbolically represented scientific support for the sexual revolution. The pill promised a return to the rationalism and optimism of the Age of Enlightenment’ (2016, p.40). With the pill, sex became less of a danger – young women could engage in sex more freely without the risk of pregnancy, a pregnancy outside of wedlock holding severe social stigma and pregnancy within wedlock potentially holding its own risks whether physical or economic. Free love and greater access to contraception are thus intimately connected, contraception perhaps making love free in turn by disconnecting it from the morbidity of biology – love could thus become more potent, less inhibited, and more radical, it could

³⁹ The term sexual revolution stems from the work of Wilhelm Reich who popularised it in the 1920s in Germany – He advocated strongly for the use of birth control and abortion. His original text *The Sexual Struggle of Youth* would be republished in the United States in 1945.

take on a life of its own, beyond the family. The very idea of free love gained one of its most forceful enunciations with Emma Goldman's essay *Marriage and Love* (1914) wherein she states 'Love, the strongest and deepest element in all life, the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy; love, the defier of all laws, of all conventions; love, the freest, the most powerful moulder of human destiny; how can such an all-compelling force be synonymous with that poor little State and Church-begotten weed, marriage?' (Marxists.org). Hippie sexual freedom imbibes in this American anarchist tradition, in the desire to surmount the atomism of the couple and shirk the need for external legitimation. Hippies in this regard present a view of sexual mores antithetical to the Christian heritage that defined American society, but also on a different but related note, undermined the notion presented by thinkers such as Hegel that marriage ensured love through the imposition and institutionalization of duty. However, for thinkers like Goldman marriage represented coercion in the realm of sexual relations, it placed the individual in a position of dependence on the State, which was privileged with the right to sanction or prevent union between persons, and it ensured that once union had been sealed there was no escape – marriage becomes a gilded cage, it does a death to love. Goldman expresses the superficial nature of marriage, its false relation to love 'Separated by an insurmountable wall of superstition, custom, and habit, marriage has not the potentiality of developing knowledge of, and respect for, each other, without which every union is doomed to failure.' (ibid.). Marriage from an anarchic perspective is a fetishized institution that replaces the capacity for love to be vibrant and embodied, it renders it passive and supplicant to elusive ideal caught in the trappings of the Christian heritage – although, the question of marriage will be more properly thematised later when we trace its connection to the values of private property and of capitalism. As the hippies turned elsewhere, namely eastern spiritualism, it is clear they were charting a line of flight from the territorializing condition of marriage and its investment in familism – we must also remember that at this time, divorce was much more difficult to obtain - the institution of marriage itself providing a representation of love that could not account for plurality, or the possibility of difference. In this sense the free love experiments that marked the hippie period (even though still problematic) opened the political and discursive possibilities for a love which could be congenial to feminist or LGBT aspirations. Free love was thus indeed a line of flight which deterritorialized the limits of love – no longer was love between a man and woman for purposes of procreation the ideal that all love must aspire to, and indeed the Oedipalizing nuclear family was also jettisoned as part of free love's critique of traditional sexual morality – such a morality

being coextensive with the pervasive cultural implantation of those feelings best suited to regulating sexual desires: shame and disgust.

What we therefore find is that free love as mantra provides the central nexus and modus vivendi for all hippie activity – the hippie modernist project in all its plurality would not have been possible without the guiding idea that love must be free, that love must be the quest for a new experience, and that the journey through experience must be conducted with others in a collective odyssey of self-exploration and cultural transformation. As Issitt rightly identifies, the hippie movement was always predicated upon two crucial foundations, individualism and hedonism: ‘it is good to live a hedonist lifestyle, and second, in an ideal society there will be no rules governing consensual behaviour. In other words, the hippies believed in doing things that feel good and, so long as no one gets hurt, everyone should be free to engage in any activity deemed pleasurable or positive’ (2009, p.15). To live a life beyond consensus, and to pursue pleasure against convention provided the hippies a vital impetus towards an experimentalist way of living – it allowed them to set a course that has had a lasting cultural impact. However, in contrast to Issitt who identifies the hippie rebellion as a fundamentally liberal rebellion against social conservatism, we can also see from what has previously been discussed that the hippies were by no means tethered to a regime of property or pure individualism that typifies early liberal thought, but rather utilized liberal categories as means to form a line of flight from a society which demanded conformity. Therefore, in a contradictory fashion hedonistic individualism also produced such a litany of collectivist social experiments – participants in *The Sexual Revolution* blended with the Diggers and broader commune movement directly challenging what they saw as the corrupting and degrading conditions of modern life and capitalist society. Free love is the key to understanding that inversion, because once love had been unleashed from its narrow confines in “straight society”, it could not help but bring into being the pursuit for new worlds, and with it the exploration of what could constitute collective joy – the joy of being together in the pursuit of a better or at the very least different world. This endeavour gains perhaps its most succinct expression in the Port Huron Statement (1962), the political manifesto of the Students for Democratic Society (SDS). In this definitive document of the Hippie era, they state that:

‘The individualism we affirm is not egoism, the selflessness we affirm is not self-elimination. On the contrary, we believe in sacrifice of a kind that imprints one's unique

individual qualities in the relation to other men, and to all human activity. Further, to dislike isolation is not to favour the abolition of privacy; the latter differs from isolation in that it occurs or is abolished according to individual will. Finally, we would replace power and personal uniqueness rooted in possession, privilege, or circumstance by power and uniqueness rooted in love, reflectiveness, reason, and creativity.' (Hayden, 1962, p.30).

Such a statement reflects the democratic impulse of the hippie movement, the longing for an emancipated society not propelled by the urge for destruction or the imperatives of property accumulation. The isolating influence of capitalist modernity was condemned in favour of a vision for human relations that would enable the fulfilment of individual capacities for self-development, free love was thus crucial if the world were to transition to a more egalitarian and creative condition of emancipated creativity.

Nevertheless, we must not simply assume that we can purely derive a naïve notion that deterritorialized love is equivocal to free love, that free love represents the ultimate form of love – since as Deleuze was always at pains to emphasise, a war-machine can also become fascistic in certain hands. Free love does indeed inform a Deleuzian ethics of love, but only because both are guided in some sense by a spirit of critique against molarising forms of love. Hippies practised sex in an increasingly casual way, and this often-meant shunning monogamy and marriage, but even as this helped radicalise what it meant to love beyond the heteronormative confines of the nuclear family, it nonetheless was not enough to fully break with patriarchy and its practises and discourses that subordinated women to a regime of masculine desire. As Jenny Diski recalls 'it was uncool to say no... on the basis of no means no, I was raped several times by men who arrived in my bed and wouldn't take no for an answer' (2009; p.61). Non-monogamy and liberated sexual practise do not preclude other forms of domination, it may undermine the family, but in the way it was practised by the hippies there remained the persistent issue of who's pleasure was prioritised in this new free society – consent seemed to fall completely out of the discussion. The constant imperative towards sex and non-monogamy, which at times led to cultist tendencies in some communes, rendered aspects of free love just as ritualist and moralistic as the kinds of conservative love it purported to subvert. From a Deleuzian ethical standpoint, we cannot prescribe the ways in which one must love – but we can make ethical judgments based on assessing how power operates in a given assemblage, within a given territory, and between subjects of love. If Deleuze is against love, it is

because love can become stuck in ways that undermine its potential to imbibe in desire, and often what happens when desire is inhibited is that other possibilities are obscured. We can criticise rape, sexual abuse, and misogyny because ultimately these are practises which do not allow for a pluralised and creative becomings to occur within an assemblage - all they do is ramify existing hierarchies and deify the principle of pleasure that is in actuality the principle of masculine pleasure. Pleasures when reduced to molar identities tend to totally define the territory and dominate those other forms of pleasure that are beyond its field of intelligibility. If the hippies creatively reinvented themselves at the level of art, music, drugs, communal practise, and self-expression - they nonetheless faltered when it came to gender and sexuality (let alone race and even class). In this way they did not go far enough, and their identities, their egos, were still in need of ethical problematisation. Male heterosexual sexuality dominated free love far too much - and in this way it was never truly free. We might even say that in the male economy of desire, sex is always a commodity for the sake of accruing prestige and status amongst other men. Even a poor man, if he has sex with enough women can feel secure in the knowledge that he is a real man - but just as Marx regarded money as the means by which even the most banal person can seem interesting, the male Don Juan is merely compensating for his fundamental anxiety that he is nothing without the phallus and its domineering use in serialised pointless sexual encounters. By thinking of sex in this way, we cannot really find out as Spinoza and Deleuze cared to know - what can a body really do? Male desire is always suffused with a fundamental anxiety (see Angel; 2022) that it will never really live up to the phallus, to Oedipus, and as such it is trapped in its own inadequate conception of what is worthwhile in life. A Deleuzian sexual ethics therefore supposes that the molarising identity of male heterosexual sexuality must be put back on the map of desire, it must be diagrammed - its preferences, anxieties, and rituals problematised and undermined, in order that other possibilities be found, since ultimately even men remain trapped within this regime, harming other identities and other men alike within the ambit of masculinity.

Taking this further, if free love is to be transformed, we must be against love, and this means problematising what it means to be loving and desiring beings. We must realise that we cannot simply in a blunt way “fuck ourselves to freedom” as some parabolic counterculture slogans might purport, because sex and desire are not neutral means but rather loaded categories - something which persists today in discussions of sex positivity.

We need to as Amia Srinivasan has articulated, to problematise why we desire in the ways that we do, what has prompted our sexual preferences, to ask why we think we have a right to sex? To see that sex or sexual preference is always ‘political, not metaphysical’ (2021, p.90). In Deleuze, the distinction between the political and metaphysical does not really exist – for as we mentioned in the introduction, all being is politics, there is nothing beyond desire and its subordination, beyond power and the resistance which determines it – our identity is always a political battle of innumerable virtual and actual tendencies. When we love as subjects, we often do so without understanding why, and if we simply practise a love contra to the way it is scripted in “straight society” who is to say that this will intuitively be radical? The point is not to turn away from free love in some sort of conservative counter reaction – the point rather is to be open to the vulnerability that love can fail, and it is how we navigate this failure of loving identity that distinguishes fascists from revolutionaries, we either embrace change in a collective and pluralising fashion, or we drag others down our own rabbit hole in the hope that they will not shatter the illusion of loving solidity, purpose, and the identity we so desperately cling to against the travails of the world. Our pleasures are never not open to question – and this applies to conservatives and radicals alike. This is something Natasha Lennard identifies with a great deal of acuity:

‘Our desires are worth questioning and challenging... but by treating sex as a political project of rupturing preconditioned desires, might we end up reducing each other to experimental objects for our own self-development? And more to the point, such an approach treats sex acts as techniques of self-construction, as if the simple meeting of certain bodies serves to subvert and reorganise desires’ (2019, p.92).

The radicality of sex and love is not found in arbitrary principles that moralise or normatively prescribe what is good sex and bad sex, or good love and bad love, but rather in the immanent unfolding of mutual negotiations of desire, intimacy, and vulnerability. In practise this means questioning why we want to love in such a way and opening ourselves to the love of others – it also means situating our love and our sexuality within discourses, institutions, and broader regimes of power. How does my ascribed identity impact my capacity to effectuate difference? How do I find a love that is not my own, that is beyond me as a limited subject of love? why do I love in this way and under these conditions? The hippies always pushed themselves to get outside their narrow perspective and find out

what was beyond “straight society”, beyond the American dream, even beyond the doors of perception. This was why free love was so potent – but once it became a principle beyond question – then it ended up as a dead end. By recognising this, we can at least see both the potential that a line of flight can have, and the pitfalls it may end up collapsing into. In this way we can look back at the hippies with fondness, but not nostalgia, we can look back reflectively, soberly, and learn a few lessons for how love can change.

Chapter 4 - Melancholy, Ghosts, and the Urgency of Reflective Forgetting

In our reflections on nostalgia and the tensions of the present, we saw how love can often end up deadening itself through its supplication to memory as fantasy, as the pursuit of some lost object, a lost sense of home, a lost sense of community – nostalgia is loss with a social flavour. Freud supposed that all love is determined by loss in a way, determined by the traumas of our pasts, by the care and intimacy we felt as children when we were the first learning how to experience desire and attachment – our caregivers becoming the models for how we love in adulthood. Nostalgia might simply be another name for a variation on love as a phenomenon, although it is clearer how nostalgia can be weaved into political discourses that pursue nationalistic projects, fascistic expulsions, or patriarchal renewal – the refrain of nostalgic being something to the effect of “let get OUR home back! Let us expunge all that has corrupted our home, our way of life, our way of loving!”. The hippies who we discussed in the previous excursus were not nostalgic, although they had just as tense a relationship to modernity as our contemporary nostalgics (who may have also been hippies). The problem of the hippie was how do we begin again? How do we live beyond our parents, and all their baggage? How do we love differently? In this section the problem of nostalgia, the problem of loss, and in a way, the problem of getting over our parents (or familial love) will be grappled with. There is another persona for love and memory beyond nostalgia – and that is melancholy. In melancholy we do not seek to return to a lost home, this form of loss and longing is worse than nostalgia since it cannot hide in the consolations of fantasy, it is this more subjectively debilitating since in this loss we cease to be able to even think, act, or hope – we struggle to fully confront the loss of love, the loss of the object that we had overvalued, invested with so much of ourselves. In melancholy we become stuck in the eternal present of loss, and likewise often only feel the visitation of moments past. Although it is in the visitation of ghosts that we might say the melancholic begins to move beyond what they had lost – this is something we will have to reflect on, something that cuts between melancholy and melancholia in the cruel navigation of guilt and failure that often exacerbate these states. For in melancholy, we become trapped principally because we in some sense feel to blame for that loss. If the nostalgic blames another for loss, then the melancholic blames themselves – this however is why melancholy can often be more subjectively fruitful than nostalgia, since it cuts against the subject of love.

In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the disintegration of workerism and unionism, and the sedimentation of neoliberal capitalism along with American hegemony, that the political Left was completely side-lined, bereft of its longstanding anchors – that egalitarian politics had become cast adrift with nowhere to call its home. Hence why Wendy Brown would look to Walter Benjamin and his concept of *Left Melancholy* to try and understand such an affective moment. In some sense this section is dedicated to the Left more broadly, to the politics of loss and love, and will at times take on a personal flavour – loss and melancholy are inescapable aspects of the human condition, and we can hardly extricate the subjective feeling of depression in the wake of death or defeat as being either personal or political, these affective and subjective states are immanently intertwined at both the individual and collective level. In an era of neoliberal self-help, biopolitical medical quick fixes, and false optimism, this section will treat sadness and loss as resources for a creative becoming – loss being an essential dimension to love, with the permutations of memory being a fraught territory, a site of capture but also of freedom. This is not to say that melancholy persists on the Left today, since there are always new generations, new struggles, new hopes, and new possibilities – the point rather is to offer these reflections for when loss does rear its head, to offer the perspective of someone who has known loss, known what it is experience a deep and longstanding melancholy, and to treat the working through of melancholy as its own resource whether that be a personal or a political loss. For loss should not be seen as a totalising state – when our world is thrown out of joint, when we can no longer feel secure, this does not mean we are without hope, it simply means we have to work to find ourselves again, to find ourselves differently, to love differently.

Perhaps the most significant, heart breaking, and emotionally intense moments that define our lives is the death or loss of someone we love or care for. For me personally, that was the suicide of my father when I was 19. It was the first death I had experienced, and it left a great void of feeling in its wake, it left me racked with guilt and self-doubt, it disrupted my life immeasurably. But almost 7 years have passed at the time of writing, and I have turned that experience into a fruitful resource for my own thinking, transfiguring my only melancholy into empathy and understanding, and in that regard, I cannot abide by any attempt to dismiss depression or sadness as unhealthy feelings. Our emotions define us and change us, they allow us to reflect and engage with the world – I wish my father had not died in the way that he had, but I cannot regret mourning him or feeling the

sadness that I felt and still feel, for ultimately it made me more aware of myself and of him, of our relationship, and it made me better at dealing with the fickleness of life and its fragility. And when I feel melancholy rearing its head, I turn to my own invented refrain that gives value to my experiences – that love is a difference that renders the indifference of the world liveable - and loss is simply something that makes that difference more tangible, more real, more valid, and more subjectively substantial. However, and this is something that must always be stressed, I could not have come to this conclusion without the love of others who reminded me that love although painful is worthwhile, that my pain should never be suffered in isolation, that through solidarity pain can be more fully recognised as resource for becoming and overcoming – love can also heal or redirect the hurt that it inflicts when it is not limited to one particular channel, one particular milieu, when it is allowed to proliferate. In this section melancholy is understood as providing a lesson in how we can tackle the morosity of love beholden to loss, and as Deleuze suggests (and as we will discuss in the next chapter) it is always the loss of love that helps us refound for ourselves a love worth having. Disappointment is love's means to pursue again the new, to return to desire, to pursue a new line of flight that cuts against its ossification and capture in moralising (and molarising) systems of love which tend to politically entrench conservatism, fascism, and socialised narcissism.

4.1. Left Melancholy

Wendy Brown famously highlighted that with the collapse of really existing socialism and the deepening hegemony of neoliberalism the left was experiencing a sense of loss that was so deep and perturbing that inertia had seeped into the revolutionary or radical milieus that persisted in the wake of this felt catastrophe. The left had become defined by what Walter Benjamin called *Left Melancholy* – an inertia inducing condition, a mood of defeat. Brown draws on Walter Benjamin's disdain for those revolutionary 'hacks' who are 'attached more to a particular political analysis or ideal-even to the failure of that ideal-than to seizing possibilities for radical change in the present' (1999, p.20). Left melancholy cannot come to terms with the present, nor can it let go of the past, and thus we are rendered rudderless, without any real vision of the future – and so our temporality is like that of the great snake that eats its own tail, a temporal impasse through which nothing can happen. From Freud we learn that both mourning and melancholia are states that arise in 'reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on' (1991

(1917), p.252).⁴⁰ But what distinguishes mourning from melancholia, and Brown highlights this distinction, is that whilst the former manifests temporarily – the latter persists for an indefinite period of time. This persistence stems from the fact that there is not really any willingness on the part of the afflicted to get over their loss – one desires the object of loss so greatly that one is not willing to part with it – and so a ‘hallucinatory wishful psychosis’ ensues (ibid, p.253). Brown also emphasizes Freud’s other crucial distinction between mourning and melancholia, that there is ‘a loss of a more ideal kind [than mourning] The object has not perhaps actually died but has been lost as an object of love’ (Cited in Brown; 1991, p.20). In mourning we undergo a process of work, the work of mourning, a process which applies what Freud calls reality-testing, we mourn in order to deduce what we have lost and thus resituate our reality in recognition of this fact, and thus we can slowly but surely reattune ourselves, our libido and its cathectic energy away from the void that the object has left, and thus regain a semblance of normality in which the libido can form new investments whilst sustaining the ego. For the melancholic this process fails, because what has been lost is never clear, and this can even occur in those transparent cases of loss such as the loss of a loved one to death, for as Freud says, ‘he knows whom he has lost but not what he has lost in him’ (1991 (1917), p.254).

Therefore, the loss felt in mourning is evident, it is consciously felt and apprehended, but in melancholia this loss may be felt but is only unconsciously understood and thus is not avowed, it cannot be recognized, and so the melancholic becomes beholden to this sense of loss which cannot be reckoned with – the psychoanalytic principal of negation takes effect. What further occurs for the melancholic is a diminution in self-regard, the narcissistic tendency of subjectivity being dis-regarded in favour of a constant state of self-imposed punishment, the refrain of the melancholic being “I am not worthy, I lack value, I am nothing”. As Freud writes:

‘the melancholic displays something else besides which is lacking in mourning – an extraordinary diminution in his self-regard, and impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale. In mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself... The patient represents his ego to us as worthless, incapable of any

⁴⁰ This quotation again highlights that in loss and love it is not always clear where the borders between the individual or social are drawn – since all desire and love fractures, vibrates, transforms in its interaction with the ontogenetic and phylogenetic operations of desiring production, disjunction, and consumption.

achievement and morally despicable; he reproaches himself, vilifies himself and expects to be cast out and punished.' (1991 (1917), p.254).

In melancholia then, the identification or libidinal investment of the object cannot be sustained, so that a narcissistic regression occurs through which the loss of the object becomes a loss felt in one's ego, and so an identification originally premised upon love becomes one of guilt, a guilt which the ego cannot overcome. Through the impoverishment of one's ego, the idealized object is preserved, it maintains its power in the libidinal drama of subjecthood, but through its preservation the failure of the ideal is disavowed, and spiral of suffering is the end result – we take upon ourselves through an internalized guilt the failure or death of the ideal. The logic of the left melancholic is the disavowal of the revolution's failure, whereby the ideal is spiritualized and thus becomes a fetish, a thing transcendent to the world and endowed with a potent symbolic power which cannot be questioned. As Brown goes on to highlight 'We come to love our left passions and reasons, our left analyses and convictions, more than we love the existing world that we presumably seek to alter with these terms or the future that would be aligned with them' (ibid, p.21). The spiritual ideal is untouchable, unassailable, beyond critique or question and thus the acolytes of this ideal cannot engage with the world around them or face the limits of their own past, they are stuck, lost to a mood of defeat and to a degree enjoy their marginality, for they can then claim that they and they alone hold fidelity to the right path. By attuning themselves to a mood of defeat they in effect reinforce it, and thus the holy ghosts of 'left, socialism, Marx, or movement' can be reevoked; again quoting Brown, we are stuck with a 'Left that is most at home dwelling not in hopefulness but in its own marginality and failure, a Left that is thus caught in a structure of melancholic attachment to a certain strain of its own dead past, whose spirit is ghostly, whose structure of desire is backward looking and punishing' (ibid, p.26).

However, this dimension of left melancholy should not be entirely construed as only having an emotional tonality – the left melancholic has effectively also lost the temporality that socialism or communism established for itself. Enzo Traverso has emphasised this following Reinhart Koselleck, that Communism came with both a space of experience and a horizon of expectation – our left expectations of a future orientated and liberated world have been destroyed, and as such the future has become deadened, whilst the field of experience has as a result become contracted and limited (2016, p.7). The collapse of

communism established a temporality of *presentism* whereby the past becomes immobile stagnant, consumable, or reified in cultural pastiche, whilst the future which was once the horizon and space of a utopian imaginary is now cut off from prognosis, alteration, or worse is likely a road to catastrophe. Therefore, the only thing we have is the moment, we are forced to simply act out a crude parodic life that imbibes in *Carpe Diem* whilst simultaneously accomplishing nothing and severs us from the collectivity that both the past and future demand(ed). This kind of attitude is also reinforced by the fact that history is now saturated with a kind of one-sided memory, the history of the present in capitalism has taken on a particular form of forgetting: amnesia. We are willing to look at the past as either one of idyllic tranquillity (the conservative disposition), one of purity (the fascist distortion), or one of abject failure (the neoliberal inclination) – but we are disinclined to properly navigate the past as a site riven with different tensions, conflicts, and lines of flight. Or as Traverso writes ‘The memory of the Gulag erased that of revolution, the memory of the Holocaust replaced that of antifascism, and the memory of slavery eclipsed that of anticolonialism: the remembrance of the victims seems unable to coexist with the recollection of their hopes, of their struggles, of their conquests and their defeats’ (ibid, p.10). Contemporary amnesia not only obscures history but reifies suffering without acknowledging the agency and ingenuity of the victims of atrocity – it tells us that they we must not repeat the past, we must disavow it, but in reality, it does a disservice to those who in the face of horror nonetheless acted and aspired to a future of liberation that denied oppression, racial or gendered hierarchy, and believed in the possibilities of humanity and progress. This amnesiac tendency both denies our present reality, with all its conflicts and problems, and also denies the work of memory. If we as political subjects get trapped in melancholy, if we can only reflect on our failures, then our love for the revolution, for the ideal of new society, will turn merely into an object of loss, we can only be subjects of the past, of past hopes and aspirations, and thus our agency is circumscribed by the prison of memory – a memory of our hope for that which could have been. This is love at its most traumatic, its most ethically inhibiting. However, if the past whispers to us, if it reminds us of promises made, then is it because we are demanded by the ghosts of those who have gone before that we should fulfil those promises? Or is it because those whispers are more the whispers of hope, of a love that was open to the future and the possibilities that it pertained to? Why linger on that which is dead and done, when there is so much more to living than dying an early death in the eternity of what could have been?

4.2. Ghostly Promises

We might say the past works like a ghostly spirit that haunts us with the spectre of our love, the love for an ideal which no longer has purchase upon our world – we cling all the more fervently because it was our love that drove us, and not our hate. Arguably beyond Brown's thesis, melancholy is hardly original to the Left, but is something embedded in us from the time that humanity realised that it could change the future, that we could in fact be agents of history. As Nietzsche noted in his *Genealogy of Morals*, human history has always been beholden to promises, it was indeed with the first promise that the future became beholden to the past, and with that promise came the internalization of conscience within the heart of humanity, the desire to live up to the demands of responsibility, our responsibility to live up to the promises we had made. But in the ebb and flow of history, so many promises remain unfulfilled – the promises of man and God are dead, and we stand upon the precipice of this great heap, looking about with a sense of dread that we might be consumed by the mass of history. The political landscape of the 20th century was perhaps the cascade of that terrible heap, and now we are left wandering in the detritus of history, terrified that the dead might rise. Hence why, to a degree, the left melancholic may in their own way be replaying an Oedipal drama, the ideal serving as their father who they have failed (although it was of course the ideal itself that was troubled and cancerous, it made a promise beyond the hope of fulfilment) – and so the great guilt of failed revolutions weighs upon us, the tyranny of our collective memory reigns supreme. Love is therefore cruel when combined with recollection, a recollection of the ideal that was, of a love that was pure and sincere in the promises that it. But if there is one thing to be said of the revolutionary ghost, it gives rise to passion, a passion feared by those who cannot comprehend it – the dogmatists and ideologues of reaction, the indifferent multitudes rendered complacent by their pleasures, they demand the ghosts be purged. But through their fear, they give substance and form to the old spirits and revenants, they make the ghosts of the left more alive than dead – they constantly conjure up the dead through their denials. Ghosts of the past and the future remain present despite their absence, in fact it is their very absence which gives them form. As Derrida remarked in his *Spectres of Marx* 'since conjuration today insists, in such a deafening consensus, that what is, it says, indeed dead, remain dead indeed, it arouses a suspicion. It awakens us where it would like to put us to sleep. Vigilance, therefore: the cadaver is perhaps not as

dead, as simply dead as the conjuration tries to delude us into believing. The one who has disappeared appears still to be there, and his apparition is not nothing. It does not do nothing' (1994, p.120). The right and the left therefore feed one another; they mobilize each other in a grand dance with the dead.

However, the spectre that we fear or venerate was always of the event. Communism or the ghost of communism was always a horizon, the very term itself only giving some form to an ephemeral pursuit. The event always sees us before we see it, it appears only in the passing visage of the Real made manifest, the explosion into the symbolic field of what remained latent, the potency of a force that cannot be repressed for long, and only deferred through its transmogrification into some less traumatic entity, a spook unmasked as a clown, and thus the game begins again, the holy hunt for the royal ghost resumes into the cycle of a timeless present devoid of foresight and hindsight. These are not ghosts of the Left, but ghosts of the hopes they clung to, ghosts of the real demands for justice and equality that mobilised their struggles and gave purchase to their communities founded upon solidarity in struggle – justice and equality always remain on the horizon, liminal points within our symbolic space defined by particularity and chauvinism. The communist horizon is always marked by its lateness, it is as Derrida would say to come:

'communism has always been and will remain spectral: it is always still to come and is distinguished, like democracy itself, from every living present understood as plenitude of a presence-to-itself, as totality of a presence effectively identical to itself. Capitalist societies can always heave a sigh of relief and say to themselves: communism is finished since the collapse of the totalitarianisms of the twentieth century and not only is it finished, but it did not take place, it was only a ghost. They do no more than disavow the undeniable itself: a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and come-back' (1994, p.123)

Whilst Derrida's main focus is the work of mourning that comes from the spectre, a spectre named communism and the various spectres of Marx that haunt the name communism, he also recognizes that for Marx the spectre of communism was in fact a ghost of the future and not connected to mourning – it was the horizon beyond the cyclical present of Old and New Europe, the universal international being the cut that would sever the ties that bound the present to its past, to repetition. Hence his emphasis on *frequentation* – Marx was always sensitive to the constant visitation in revolutionary moments, the time of

the event, of ghosts, past and future, ghosts that shatter the present and unleash a sea of simulacra. As Derrida writes ‘the more the new erupts in the revolutionary crisis, the more the period is in crisis, the more it “out of joint,” then the more one has to convoke the old, “borrow” from it. Inheritance from the “spirits of the past” consists, as always, in borrowing. Figures of borrowing borrowed figures, figurality as the figure of borrowing. And the borrowing speaks: borrowed language, borrowed names, says Marx’ (ibid, p.136). All revolutions convoke the old, whether it be the Roman Republic for the French Revolution, or the French Revolution and the Paris Commune for the Russian Revolution, and even now with contemporary movements such as Black Lives Matter and its convocation of the civil rights movement – it seems that the spectre invades us, it wears us as its new skin. We are thus possessed by the past. But with revolution comes counter revolution, first tragedy then farce, and the ghosts morph into new forms to terrorize the living until we demand that they be done away with again in a great amnesia that sets us to slumber, an act of repression that maintains the ghost as a looming force, disavowed and maintained in the social unconscious. The present is always marked in this way, it is crushed, deferred, lost between the past and the future – whoever has lost themselves in haunted places, places invested with the traces of times gone by, understand this fact, that the present is never really there, it always somewhere else. What is important to note here is that when we speak of the past as an *inheritance*, we are in fact not saying that the past communicates with us but rather as Nicole Pepperell articulates ‘Inheritance is not a form of passive reception, but rather something actively enacted – a performative act – one that takes place through interpretations that selectively appropriate what will and what will not be inherited. The dead do not bury themselves – and so they, least of all, are safe from the actions of those who would inherit them: inheritance interprets the past in a way that intrinsically transforms it’ (2009, p.255).

But if we carry the theme of haunting further, we can ask whether ghosts howl and banshees wail because they hate us and seek our destruction? Or do they cry in terror at the sight of the real living dead before them, our souls imprisoned by the weight of history. Perhaps they mean to scare us, to wake us from our own complacency, to wake us from death so that we might live again. How do we go about this new living, if not through a more violent forgetting? To forget is to walk within the spectral luminescence of a deep night towards the rising dawn, towards that light which casts away the ghosts of history and opens us to ghosts of the future freed from their encapsulation in some pre-established

teleology. Forgetting sanctifies the event freed from the debt that came with the promise, and the simulacra of simulacra that marked all revolutions in times past – history begins anew, only so that we might recollect in a way that does not impinge upon some determinate imperative, some overpowering fidelity – the spectral form is pluralized and the ghosts of the revolution come to us again but only so that we might look beyond them. As Nietzsche said ‘there can be no joy, no hope, no real present, without forgetfulness’ (2013 (1887), p.44). The fetish of the melancholics, their spiritualized ideals must be done away with. There is a great worry here of course, for to do away with ideals is often seen as the road to nihilism. Our fetishes give us security, they provide us with an anchor that tethers us to the dead past – think of for instance those who have lost someone they love, and then cling to an object of the lost beloved, a ring, a scarf, a perfume – these items are always invested with a certain power, they allow us to disavow the death of the beloved, they give us a sense that they are still with us in the present – the evocative glow of sparkling gold, the smooth comfort of soft silk, the inviting scent that enraptures us – all which allow the dead to live within us. But if these objects are perhaps lost, done away with by some unfortunate accident, some moment of carelessness – then the disavowal of the death of the beloved cannot be maintained, they have died all over again and we are cast into an abyss, a traumatic reckoning with death which we are ill prepared for. We search with all our might to find again that object, but the search for the object is really a search for the beloved, and during the search we slide into such despair that we cannot move, we cannot keep searching. This is when mourning can give way to an even deeper nihilism. But is nihilism really a threat? Rather than refuse it, perhaps we should embrace this process of painful dissolution. For when the world is shattered, then the way is open to begin again, to make or find for ourselves a new world. The death of our fetishes and ideals forces us to confront ourselves, the work that is done here breaks us from the world of the past and makes us find ourselves again, to find ourselves renewed – to engage with our inheritance and play with its performance and iterations in a creative refashioning. We have lost our fetish, and consequently we are forced to forget, forced to be free from the past and its constant return as a dogmatic image. Pain is vital – it can be destructive but it can also transform us, it can push us to the limit of ourselves and open us to find a world beyond, a world not so enamoured with the past and its unnameable debt. This is also why the melancholic disposition in its own way might also be considered radical. Freud highlighted that the melancholic is actually a product of the failure of the ideal to conform to reality, our expectations and the promise they contained are disappointed, but rather

than accept this the Melancholic disavows this failure and makes it their own failing. They debase and punish themselves to preserve the ideal. The melancholic engages in masochism, but what if this masochism is actually an attack on the ideal itself through deferment, or as Freud says, 'we perceive that the self-reproaches are reproaches against a loved object which have been shifted away' (1991 (1917), p.127). The melancholic exhibits an inverted relation – they do not hate themselves but really hate the ideal that has failed. Again, as Freud writes 'The self-tormenting in melancholia, which is without a doubt enjoyable, signifies, just like the corresponding phenomenon in obsessional neurosis, a satisfaction of trends of sadism and hate which relate to an object, and which have been turned around upon the subject's own self' (ibid, p.260). By constantly punishing ourselves we in effect torment our beloved – they are persecuted indirectly. Suicide may be the ultimate expression of this hatred, to die in order to spite the living for their failure. However, the maximalism of the melancholic might be thought of differently, it might have a positive or affirmative connotation, it might help us see how we can really begin forgetting. Through inverting the relation, by engaging in masochism which destroys the ego, we divest the ideal of its power – we sublimate the failure of the ideal in order to rethink ourselves in relation to it, we engage in critique in order to be freed from it. We cannot decry the ghosts of the world if the ghosts within us are maintained, the spook of the ego; we must side with Marx against Stirner. Pain again, is the path to renewal, we must follow its line of flight – a pain of the absolute limit - to kill ourselves, our own ego but only so that it may be freed, so that it can be born again in the image of liberation beyond the cycle of pain as recollection. Such a task requires a great deal of work, to perform an inversion whereby we move to a world beyond, a world in which we can love again, and it is always in love that new worlds are born. However, unlike Marx, or unlike the ghost of Marx which haunted the 20th century, we cannot make such passage to a new world as if that world really existed, it is always yet to be, we arrive without arrival, we journey but only for the sake of the work that it entails and not with a vision of some serene place of completion and wholeness.

If we are to think again what it means to live by the event, and to cast ourselves towards the future not beholden to the past, we must begin with a certain forgetfulness – we must forget all the past failures and do away with Oedipalizing god of the revolutionary ideal: 'No, no more revolutionary memory, down with the monument, bring down the curtain of the shadow theatre and the funerary eloquence, destroy the mausoleum for the popular

crowds, shatter the death masks beneath the glass caskets (Derrida; 1994, p.142). What is needed then is a dis-attunement from the mood of defeat, this melancholic disposition that pervades the left who cannot overcome the lost ideal, and instead foster an experimentalist disposition which embraces the event without presupposition. If the past seems to constantly weigh upon the present, to haunt it with ideals of what could have been, then we need to face the ghost and exorcise it. The ego must be broken and shattered; it must be rendered multiple. The answer to capitalism's control of ontopower is love, but a love defined not by recollection, by pleasure, by indifference, but a love that is of the event, a love which carries us towards the new horizon by breaking free from love itself – when we cease to love, we can begin to love again but differently. Wendy Brown even provided some hint to love as an answer to the problem of melancholy:

'In the place of our political unconscious, is there also an unavowed loss - the promise that left analysis and left commitment would supply its adherents a clear and certain path toward the good, the right, and the true? Is it not this promise that formed the basis for much of our pleasure in being on the Left, indeed, for our self-love as leftists and our fellow feeling toward other leftists? And if this love cannot be given up without demanding a radical transformation in the very foundation of our love, in our very capacity for political love or attachment, are we not doomed to left melancholy, a melancholy that is certain to have effects that are not only sorrowful but self-destructive?' (1999, p.22)

What is needed for this new image of love to take hold is an experimentation with both the practices that define selfhood, or a new politics of the self, which also works by the principal of critique whereby principals, habits, and ideals are inverted or deconstructed immanently thus taking them to the limit – or otherwise put, a synthesis of affective and aesthetic politics which would unbind the web of capitalist realism and disrupt the flows of control, a politics of love that is defined by a painful confrontation with the established world, of both the ego and the ghosts of the past. Love transformed constitutes the passage towards the weird and unhomely, a pursuit of the experimental that casts us into a new beginning that pluralizes the conditions of possibility – this is action through working through our past and its associations, through conducting an introspective cartography of all those loving encounters that formed nodal points in our subjective history. To forget in a reflective manner, to forget the dead is not hateful, it is an act of love, it is to do justice to the love they offered, to say yes to life, to embrace and affirm the loves that are yet to

come, to carry the love that they gave us into the future, a pluralized future of becoming, and not leave it stranded in the past. In a sense reflective forgetting acts out a form of transference in the psychoanalytic mode, it takes our particular narrative, the one we constructed for ourselves, and allows us through a kind of sublimation and negotiation to reimagine those possibilities within the past that are not so laden with guilt and shame, this guilt and shame being things which we have introjected into our own narrative due to the weight of history and the juridical demands of the promise – this process of transference, reflective reimagining and forgetting allowing us to chart the potentials that were already latent within the past thus freeing us from a sense that we are entirely responsible for past failures. We can again touch upon the centrality of contingency as fundamental aspect of history, and in so doing we must be willing to accept the death of God and the Father, learning from their love, and carrying their fire forward⁴¹, and only then will the world be renewed, a renewal that opens the way for a journey into the unknown, where new loves might be formed and new destinies conjured. The first act of the revolution will be an act of love, an act which establishes a new world and transforms the future as it remakes the past and present.

I shall conclude here this very political construal of melancholy and loss with a personal reflection upon my father's suicide. In the wake of his death my father over the years has visited me in my dreams – but curiously he has never appeared as a judgmental or moral agent, he has always been a consoling presence. A week after his cremation I dreamt of him, and he spoke to me and insisted that that everything would be “okay”, that I would be fine without him around anymore, and that I should not blame myself. In the aftermath of his death, I held myself responsible for his passing, I thought I had not shown that I loved him enough – I punished myself with the recurring thought that when he died, that he might have thought no one in the world cared for him, no one would shed a tear at his passing, and that thought echoed in my consciousness, in my waking hours for years. In another dream that stands out, one I had several years after his death, which seemed to depict an alternate temporality in which he had not taken his own life. In this dream he lived alone, his home was in disarray, and he seemed mentally lost and incoherent. I spent

⁴¹ I allude here to the ending of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, which crystallises well at the end of the novel the constant need to reckon with death, with destruction, with end of the world. The father in his dying breath makes one final request that his son must “carry the fire”, that he must keep the flame of love alive even when all seems lost – to walk the road on his own and to make for himself his own destiny – which we might regard as the only promise worth keeping.

most of the dream caring for him, guiding him around and consoling him in his confusion, and as the sun set, I read to him as he slowly drifted into sleep, me by his bedside – his breathing growing shallower until I awoke. Certainly, this dream was living out my deep hope of redemption, a hope that I contemplated often – what if I could have saved him? My father no longer speaks to me in my dreams anymore, he may sometimes appear but only watches, sometimes he smiles. Perhaps if I were to provide a simplistic interpretation of these dreams, I would say that my unconscious is far kinder to me than my waking consciousness – each dream seems to present an attempt to absolve me of guilt, his consolation demonstrating no ill will, the dream with an alternate temporality suggesting that things would have hardly been perfect if he had lived, and his present silence showing perhaps that no more need be said, that I am ready to live for myself beyond the past. In my own way I am still undergoing the painful work of reflective forgetting, of finding in my own past those possibilities that are not so beholden to the burden of guilt or self-doubt, this weight having in the past inhibited my relationships with others and rendering me less capable of loving those I care for – how can you love others if you spend most of your time lost to bitterness, to self-doubt, to self-hatred? And on the other hand, sometimes I would accept far too much, too much indifference and unkindness in my relationships. I sometimes accepted it because I did not know any better, I was acclimated to chaos, and maybe I deserved the harm, maybe it was my penance (Oedipal I was indeed). Melancholy can render us selfish – a selfishness which is only transcended through working through the material of melancholy, only by traversing pain and disappointment are we freed to learn how to love again. And I cannot say this work is ever done alone – my pain shines upon the pain of others, and we have helped one another through sharing our pain, through giving just a little bit of ourselves to one another – the sharing of pain, our history, our journeys, being a work of love that soothes the cruelty that melancholy can inflict upon us. When love ends, when we can no longer rely on the loves we treasured, we can lose ourselves to loss, or we can do the more radical gesture – we can turn that loss into empathy, into reflection, into learning, we can change ourselves in the wake of loss for the better – memory need not always serve as love’s prison, so long as we open ourselves to the event that is love’s dissolution, so long as the real of desire is embraced, and the webs of pleasure and memory are fully problematised. The Deleuzian answer to loss is that there never truly is loss, there are merely new beginnings and the horizon we share with others. In loss there is hope.

Part 3 – Finding a New Image of Love

Chapter 5 – Deleuze: The Movement of Love

In the preceding chapters we outlined how the subject of love comes to be, to conditions of genesis which end up rendering love as on the side of identity and molarity, the principles of pleasure and memory serving as two crucial lynchpins in securing the subject of love, a subject which is often conservative or incapable of properly grappling with love's radicality. In a sense what we have been alluding to up until this point is the need to rethink love from within – we need to stop being ruled by love and start rethinking what means to love. This required tracing how love functions both as an identitarian principle which serves to preserve molar identities and thus becomes captured within macropolitical dynamics, and through that tracing we can then chart the contours in which love breaks down. For Deleuze is not against love per se, but rather against those sedimented forms of attachment which tend to define the Oedipalized subject of love, so determined on reconfirming pleasures or living up to past ideals. Love on a line of flight is more interesting for Deleuze – but Deleuze does not think we can purely embody a radical love in a straightforward way – what is always essential is tracing where molar love cracks up, and thus this gives us space for change, for a pragmatic ethics of love at the margins. If we are against love, it is only so that we can love differently.

To that end we can return to Deleuze and one of his most important texts on love, his *Proust and Signs* which initially published in 1964 – it is here that we see love as both an everyday and not so everyday phenomenon, it cuts between the complacencies of habit and the utter alterity and radicality of the event. *Proust and Signs*, as a text, is curious in that it seemed for Deleuze an unfinished project, its second edition (1972) receiving a new conclusion entitled *The Image of Thought* – clearly connecting the text to his previous work *Difference and Repetition* (1968) which features a chapter by the same name – and its third edition (1974) changing the structure of the book into parts, with the new second part being entitled *The Literary Machine* which harks to his collaborative work with Guattari *Kafka: towards a minor literature* (1975). *Proust and Signs* therefore almost serves as an evolutionary text in Deleuzian thought, capturing his shift from an upturned Platonism to his critique of psychoanalysis and the development of a Schizoanalytic thinking, or put differently, we find his thought in its own intensive movement encapsulated in a single text. This chapter will attempt to capture some of this intensive movement, articulating in part a new image of love through Deleuze's engagement with Proust, although it should

be said that this chapter's emphasis will be upon the first part of the text, the latter being more focused on the nature of literature more generally. We will also focus on Deleuze's philosophical insights rather than measuring the accuracy of his reading of Proust, *In Search of Lost Time* will thus not be examined but will remain a shadow in the background of my exegesis. In what follows, Deleuze's ideas will be re-presented in a condensed form, and it will be demonstrated how his speculations in *Proust and Signs* can offer a revived conception of love (one which likewise has political import). Firstly, we will begin by discussing the notion of apprenticeship which he elaborates upon in the opening segments of the text, then moving onto the crucial movement between objectivism and subjectivism that defines the apprenticeship to signs, finalising with a discussion of essences and seriality. By developing these themes, it will be argued that love can be understood more fully as a pedagogical process that cuts in twain the everyday thus providing the ground for a new set of radical possibilities for the subject who experiences it. To that end we must fundamentally understand that for Deleuze, disappointment in love is actually essential, for it is only when love or the subject of love falters that something changes, that a new situation can be conjured – love without the crack up or the breakdown does not open itself to desire, to a world beyond love as recollection, habit, and pleasure.

5.1. The Search and its Signs

Deleuze opens his first chapter of *Proust and Signs* with a fundamental question – what is the unity of *In Search of Lost Time*? This question is in many ways parabolic, for the search for unity is in itself mirrored in every life – what is the unity of a life? What is it that we strive for when we pursue this unity? The quest for meaning is something that marks us and is often a quest that leaves us dissatisfied. The search, which is embodied in every life, is at its root a search for truth, it is not a search for something in particular, but rather the thing that unifies all the particulars and gives them a tangible form. Proust's great text was initially translated as *Remembrance of Things Past*, since memory and recollection form central pivots of the narrative, but Deleuze rightly suggests that although memory, involuntary memory, and recollection form important moments of the search, they remain only moments, and it is only through progressing through the temporal drift that the newer translation encapsulates that we come to grasp the more fundamental emphasis of the text. Looking to the past is an aspect of every search, which is always a search for truth, but ultimately a more profound movement occurs, when the closed circle of present and past is shattered by an intervention that thrusts the two out of joint, the future is here

recognised not as another present but rather as the truth appearing as an intervention that realigns all that has already been or could be. When we cast our mind backwards to the lives we have lived, to the passions and pleasures we felt, and the possibilities and hopes that we cherished, what we are engaging in is a form of apprenticeship for Deleuze – this is the process by which we come to learn that our whole life was a vocation, a search for truth. The resonances with Platonism are clear, but Deleuze sees in Proust a new Platonism which divests itself of transcendence – there is no truth separate from the search itself, no form hidden which must be revealed or unmasked – movement is preserved but the product of the search is only embodied or made in the act of searching itself. As Deleuze emphasises in regard to the hero of the search:

'He is under a certain illusion, which he will ultimately discard. Whence the movement of disappointments and revelations, which imparts its rhythm to the Search as a whole. One might invoke Proust's Platonism: to learn is still to remember. But however important its role, memory intervenes only as the means of an apprenticeship that transcends recollection both by its goals and by its principles. The Search is oriented to the future, not to the past.' (2000, p.4)

We spend all our lives learning, this is existence in its essence, there is no outside to learning – the passage of a life is always a movement that never reaches its terminus for even in death our life carries on in the world as a word on the breeze, a warm kiss on a winters night, as an imprint on our favourite spot in a spring glade, a thoughtful glance met by another. Life's learning is a learning that occurs in a world suffused with signs, it is these signs that call to us and force us to live, it is they that force us to be and to become, for all thinking occurs in the encounter, all activity in the embrace of signs. Signs are evocative through their ability to operate in an a-signifying or pre-signifying fashion, they may be moulded into an expressive unity, but this is not primary to the sign. Signs are not reducible to language, and as such they allow for a more fluid pedagogy, a pedagogy to the plural images that signs envelope. Learning is the passage of consideration, to consider is to project and introject the place of the sign in the sea of signs that pervade our milieu. This is where Deleuze and Freud agree, for all learning and thinking are fundamentally related to signs which are exemplified by a kind of Egyptology – but they differ on the point of the event, for Freud every sign comes back to recollection, to the past in the present, to trauma, whereas for Deleuze signs can also open us to the future, to the event which constitutes difference, as something beyond us and our history. We learn with

signs, not by asking what they mean in a linguistic sense, but rather through asking what is it in this sign that affects me? (See Colombat in Buchanan and Marks; 2001). Searching interpretations and plural productions, revelations and disappointments, the two movements of the artist, the hero of the search.

The signs that define the search are always temporal and they operate in various intersecting circles – the signs of one world are different from that of another, and likewise one might be adept in one circle but helpless in another. Deleuze is very specific in this regard ‘The worlds are unified by their formation of sign systems emitted by persons, objects, substances; we discover no truth, we learn nothing except by deciphering and interpreting. But the plurality of worlds is such that these signs are not of the same kind, do not have the same way of appearing, do not allow themselves to be deciphered in the same manner, do not have an identical relation with their meaning’ (2000, p.5). Love is the second circle of signs, and in contrast to the worldly signs that Deleuze elaborates upon first, is felt as more deeply personal. When we fall in love, we individualise the beloved by the signs that they emit – we extract them from all the other worlds, from the groups and milieus in which they often appear – and we try to decipher their world, for in its germinal state, love is pure fascination, a fascination with the soul of the beloved, their inner essence, the plurality that constitutes their being. However, this essence, this soul remains hidden to us, it requires deciphering, we care to know or find its truth – a soul is laden with possibilities, and it is these possibilities that enrapture us, the plural worlds of the beloved are all the possibilities they contain. To look into the eyes of the beloved, when we hold them in our embrace, we see in them an infinity, we are struck by the sublime in human form, it is that gaze that often leaves us breathless and stupefied – what soul lingers behind that gaze? It should also be said that love unlike friendship does not require language as its intermediary, the beloved can be loved in absolute silence, love is the movement of a ‘silent interpretation’ (ibid, p.7). This is something that can be intuited when on restless nights we lay next to someone we love, we might pass our gaze over them, watch their shallow and peaceful breaths, caress their hair and wonder what dreams might be circulating in their depths – in their tranquillity we see them as objects of wonder freed from anxiety.

It is perhaps here that we arrive at a Deleuzian definition of love, which is in many ways a particular form of apprenticeship and search for truth: ‘To love is to try to *explicate*, to *develop* these unknown worlds that remain enveloped within the beloved’ (2000, p.7).

Explication here does not mean recognition – for Deleuze we can never truly recognise anyone, hence why interpretation gains so much momentum in love – we are always at a loss for what makes the beloved who they are (and who they are to us). We may ask - who am I in the world of this person? From what vantage do they perceive me? What is the me that is reflected in those eyes – what is it to be seen? However, this is where Deleuze identifies the crucial or perhaps painful contradiction of love, that we are not and may never be the privileged object in the world of the beloved, for we are simply one of several objects in their world – we are thus left forever excluded, for love is not simply a movement of the couple, but rather is riven by the many – we are all condensations of past, present, and future, multiplicities of possibility. To pursue the world of the beloved is thus to acknowledge the presence of the worlds that have come before and are to come – and despite our hope for tokens of preference on the part of the beloved, we remain unsure of what occurs in the world of the beloved, they remain forever Other to us, beyond total recognition as the movement of understanding between two identities which are totally discernible, or as Deleuze says ‘the beloved gives us signs of preference; but because these signs are the same as those that express worlds to which we do not belong, each preference by which we profit draws the image of the *possible world* in which others might be or are preferred’ (ibid, p.8). Love is thus always pervaded by the shadow of *jealousy*, but it is this jealousy that makes the apprenticeship to the signs of love so productive relative to the worldly signs – it is an intensive force that provokes greater interpretation.

The first law of love according to Deleuze is thus jealousy, it is a fundamental aspect of love’s truth – the work of explication produces an insufficiency in our apprehension of the beloved, its excess in fact destabilises the field of love itself. Explication is met by deception which in turn produces great suffering, since we strive in vain to know this “unknown” world enveloped in the beloved – a world which we can never truly know. The fate of the lover is thus clear ‘To love without being loved’ (Ibid, p.9). We might thus say that a love without doubt, a love defined by certainty cannot exist – for if it did, love would lose its motive force. Doubt is the core and the abyss at the centre of the loving encounter, it is the vortices through which love as a process must navigate, a process which never truly obtains fulfilment or reaches a distinct endpoint. Jealousy remains fundamental to the initial conditions of love – it is its pedagogical core. However, we might digress briefly here from the Deleuzian reading of Proust and assert a fundamental distinction between love in its infancy and its maturity. Jealousy is inescapable, it is love’s striving towards truth in its embryonic form – but we cannot rest upon this position, love’s pedagogy must also

surmount jealousy if it is to mature, if it is to become something not entirely defined by insecurity and fear. Love defined by jealousy remains dualistic in its operation, stuck in the relation between lovers, a duality of the loving encounter. If love remains indefinitely in this condition, then it may slip into its more destructive form: envy. In this form love ceases to be a pedagogical process, and rather becomes co-terminus with a fascistic impulse to control, to dominate, to deprive the other of their enjoyment even if this also deprives the self of enjoyment as well. Love must therefore not remain purely conditioned by jealousy, it must strive to surmount duality and instead instantiate a third term that augments the very conditions of love itself, this third term touching upon love as an interstellar process of proliferation. A Deleuzian ethical love as contained within the couple gives way to a third term, a new set of relations which constitutes a new world not beholden to lover and beloved but rather is cut from both, the particulars of the relation unfolding their desires, their connectivity into a disjunction that propels love outwards. We might say that the lover's mutual gaze turns toward the horizon, they mutually invest their love into an object of creation that proliferates beyond them. This looking outward from the particular is where universalism can take hold, the universal not pre-existing the pedagogy of the particular, the particular which in this case is the loving couple allowing for an ethical negotiation, for a new language, for a new set of conditions to take shape that transcends but does not annihilate the particular within this movement. Love must in a sense begin in the particular only so that it can reach outwards, love's interstellar position embodies then a drive towards those stars that are not part of the existing relation of love, these lovers being able to find for themselves new connections, new conditions for love, and thus new possibilities. These lovers are thus in their maturity (even if the romantic coupling has ended, I might add, even if they have gone separate ways) able to constitute new conditions for pleasure, for history and memory, a new territory and new a freedom – only through disappointment is a new love possible, disappointment serving the same potential that doubt has served in philosophy – it is the impetus for reinvention.

Taking this forward, it should also be said that the time of love is caught in the valences of *Lost Time* – the world changes, our lovers live and die, the passage of time in love feels like a funeral procession. Lost time is the time of love, and as such to fall in love is to find that time itself has been altered, the time of love in loss may serve as an event that ruptures and reconstitutes the time of the subject – it makes us reflect upon our lives in a totally new way which was not possible without the travails that love undergoes in the course of its (un)fulfilment and dissolution. Love anticipates *alteration and annihilation* –

love must always act out its own dissolution. Deleuze will comment later in the second chapter of *Proust and Signs* that 'It is quite true that we repeat our past loves; but it is also true that our present love, in all its vivacity, "repeats" the moment of the dissolution or anticipates its own end. Such is the meaning of what we call a scene of jealousy' (ibid, p.19). Love is a process of repetition, but a repetition that ordains difference rather than in the Freudian vein mere recollection. If we feel love as tragic because it can never remain the same, if we look to our beloved and see the terrors of age, or a growing distance that time produces, then this is because we misapprehend the nature of love and of life. The truism that the only certainty in life is death must also be applied to love, all love must die, but with every death a passage occurs that establishes something new – a physical death transforms the material world, but since our lives are also incarnated in the ideals that we inspire, then these ideals may carry onward, and leave their traces upon the world continuing this process in our wake. Furthermore, if every subject is plural, larval, germinal, transitory, then we must also see that we die in every moment that we live, and are born in every moment we die, there is no stasis in the work of a life – only proliferation, a proliferation which proceeds by the nuptials of co-becomings, of becoming-other to others and to ourselves. And if we feel our loves have amounted to nothing, if we become trapped in a quagmire of lost time, then we miss the vital core of all apprenticeships – that suffering and joy are equal feelings in the odyssey of truth. There is no love that is not touched by loss, but this loss is also a means by which love can reinvent itself and touch upon the event, the future as the time of reinvention or renewal. However, we can only make this transition by also being sensitive to the way the circles of signs interact temporally, how they converge upon a unity of a truth which recasts the *Die of amor fati* – the play of chance that claims its own truth in the future that awaits us.

5.2. Apprenticeship: Between Objectivism and Subjectivism

Deleuze will show in his reading of Proust, that love must pass through many series of association, that its violence is in the *to and fro* of objectivism and subjectivism, and it is only by passage through these modalities of interpretation that love reaches new heights – it engenders the possibilities of art, which moves beyond the two towards a more spiritual synthesis which touches upon the universal rather than the particular. From this movement we might also engender a politics of love, an art of loving, or a love that is capable of a minor politics divested of its molar capture in an uncritical 'free love'. Love is not something that is inherently negative in relation to forces of repression or the

axiomatisation in capitalism, love is a process that imbricates itself in all of these milieus and becomes in relation to them. We cannot speak of love as perverted or repressed – love like any force can be directed or redirected, and creatively reimagined only through the act of loving. Love requires the work of critique that is effected in the movement of love, in its uncoupling from the procedures of objectivism and subjectivism, and its higher synthesis in art that reveals the way in which love can overcome its own morose nature (a nature that has perhaps been implanted to it through a romantic image of love, an image which ossifies its qualities rather than opens it to the event that is constitutive of love's self-rupturing) – only once the two scene has undermined itself from within can a broader proliferation be allowed to take root from without and within. Hence the necessity for unpacking those crucial although phenomenological modes by which love operates – and why Deleuze's intervention is so important for imparting a more radical understanding of love's potential, an intervention that begins perhaps with an acknowledgement of the crucial place of *disappointment* in the search for truth which allows us to overcome the falsities of both Objectivism and Subjectivism.

But what is objectivism in Deleuze's account? It is not purely connected to love, for it is an aspect of all the signs, since we all, perhaps obviously, begin with the object that emits the sign – the sign under objectivism is connected directly to the thing which emits it. We might say that we assume that the truth is contained within the thing, that surely its meaning is stuck in that indiscernible core of the object that is perceived and only partially apprehended. Deleuze however will say that a sign is marked by its own splitting into two halves 'it designates an object, it signifies something different' (ibid, p.27). To remain within objectivism is to be caught in the trap of recognition and language – to assume a meaning reducible to the object, to the appointed thing. Pleasure also comes into play here, we hope to consume the object like it were something for our satisfaction, in so doing we render the truth unobtainable. Objectivism is simply representation by another name, and in its worst forms can manifest as obsession. It is wedded to the intelligence which assumes that knowledge of the object is clearly communicable, that the thing can be more fully apprehended, that its significations can be easily formulated and *spoken of* – we are thus caught again in a trap, the trap of language that assumes knowledge is as easy as a well-articulated phrase. Intelligence under the guise of objectivism is thus congenial to conversation, friendship, and doctrinaire philosophy – all of which operate as though meaning is something to be communicated rather than felt with so many degrees of subtly, that the various objects that proliferate signs might be readily catalogued, ordered, through

the premediated exercise of thought. Deleuze, following Proust, thus designates two pairings which are antithetical to one another – *friendship and philosophy* against *love and art*. As he writes

'A mediocre love is worth more than a great friendship because love is rich in signs and is fed by silent interpretation. A work of art is worth more than a philosophical work; for what is enveloped in the sign is more profound than all the explicit significations. What does violence to us is richer than all the fruits of our goodwill or of our conscious work, and more important than thought is "what is food for thought"' (ibid, p.30).

Neither philosophy nor friendship can be truly radical in this regard, since as they are both guided by the intelligence, they are locked into a play of possibilities, whilst love and art are always striving towards the impossible, the limit which engenders its own potentials. If philosophy and friendship are unproductive, it is only because they are often too pleasing, too congenial, they struggle to provide anything that would truly nourish thought and its avidity. And if love were to remain caught in objectivism, it would remain stuck in the illusion of the object, that love is a product of the object rather than something beyond it: 'we shall be lost, all our freedom lost, if we give the object the benefit of the signs and significations that transcend it' (ibid, p.31). Many lovers fail in this crucial regard – they remain in the stupor of a hypnotic dream – and as such they close all their loves within the prison of the possible, they commit an act of murder upon the radicality of love, and as such are likely to remain forever stuck, their dissatisfaction which should serve as their means of escape is rendered eternal, and their loves stagnant. Again, it is *disappointment* which remains a 'fundamental moment of the search or of apprenticeship', the disappointment in objectivism leading to subjectivism or a 'subjective compensation' (ibid, p.34). We have failed to recognise fully the object of love, and thus, we can only rely on introspection.

When we realise that the object does not contain the secret of its sign, or that it is incapable of offering it, we turn inwards to our own web of associations, we seek the meaning within ourselves; our gaze into the eyes of the Other becoming a gaze that must be internalised. We in effect divest the sign of its association with the object, and instead examine the sign within a web or series of associations that transcend the object, this series forming its own crystallisation of meaning that may be freed from the history of the object. The sign itself might be thought of as more profound than the object which emits it, but its truth nonetheless is only intelligible within the subject's own web of associations.

The trouble with subjectivism is found in this emphasis on association, since it links the truth of the sign to the subject and thus traps the potential of the sign within the preestablished associative framework of the subject – memory takes the place of intelligence in this regard, meaning being vested in that which has already been experienced. Subjectivism is thus conducive to a certain nostalgia, a narcissistic investment of the sign which deprives it of any futurity, creativity, contingency. Signs are thus collected by the subject in their associative museum – the sign remains a thing of gratification, the gratification of recollection. Through the disappointment of objectivism, we are thus led to subjectivism – and if before we thought that the object held its secret prisoner, that the beloved was in some way unique relative to their milieu, then in subjectivism we recognise that the individuation that we had effected upon the group in which the beloved existed was not inevitable, but something conducted under the auspices of our own associations. The limits of subjectivism through its capture by recollection nonetheless however leads us to another step in the search, it allows us to recollect and thus retrace the web of associations we have formed in relation to the beloved, and thus touch upon the trans-subjective dimension of love, that our love is one of many loves, of many variations and possible associations. We might say for instance “ah I loved her because she reminded me of the sweet caring disposition of my mother”, a very typical Freudian anaclitic association, or we might say “ah I loved her because she touched upon my memories of sweet summer days and wistful holidays by the sea”, thus the beloved is extrapolated into a scenic web of association – something Proust does with his envisioning of landscapes in the eyes of the beloved. The subjectivist position however traps the beloved in the world of the lover – they became merely an extension of the subject rather than an autonomous agent that might offer something more, and as such subjectivism is a form of capture that inhibits love’s proliferation – again we get stuck in pleasure and memory. But we might also say that these associations open a door to a serial reversal, the series goes back upon itself, but when we engage in such a reversal, we also realise the immanent infinity of such a reversal – that every love is contained in every other beyond the beginning, of my life and theirs – we might realise that love is more than me and them. We can no longer gain succour from a purely subjective web of association but realise that the web of association exceeds us infinitely, and that to remain under the auspices of a subjective matrix is to miss the infinity of the associative web, its trans-subjective and impersonal grandeur. Deleuze thus in a quite explicit critique of the early Freudian

hypothesis, of love as recollection within the familial matrix, suggests that all love is an infinite regress towards the limitless threshold of humanity:

'We will conclude from this that the image of the mother is perhaps not the most profound theme, nor the reason for the series of loves: it is true that our loves repeat our feelings for the mother, but the latter already repeat other loves, which we have not ourselves experienced. The mother appears rather as the transition from one experience to another, the way in which our experience begins but already links up with other experiences that were those of someone else. At its limit, the experience of love is that of all humanity, which is traversed by the current of a transcendent heredity.' (ibid, p.72).

In this regard, it is a profound misconception to assume that love is in its essence personal – love is totally impersonal, the personal operating as a guise in which it might proliferate itself. To say we possess our love is akin to saying that I possess all humanity – an absurdity. We are not sovereign in love, for love is an infinity that permeates every life, it manifests only in individual instances in order to reveal its desiring essence, its polymorphously perverse core – its universality. The irony perhaps then that jealousy is so foundational to love, in that we seek to capture love when it is really love that has captured us and done a death to desire in its capturing of us.

5.3. Love's Essence: Beyond Objectivism and Subjectivism

How does one move beyond the dual operation of the subject of love, its tendency for both objectivism and subjectivism? It is for Deleuze through art, which for him acts as the fulfilment of a higher synthesis of the material that life provides us – although we might say that art is never limited to artists, since we can all imbibe in art, in thoughtful reflection, in textured creativity. Art does not ground itself in our perspective, nor is it willing to submit itself to the commands of the intellect, it transcends this limit, it reaches beyond the purely material and stretches itself to the spiritual, the immaterial is the substance of art – it constructs through perception, through affection, through sensation a lasting monument which itself transcends the very material which gave it impetus. Even reflecting on art, whether it be literature, painting, music, dance etc can we push ourselves beyond ourselves. The world of art is a world in becoming. Or as Deleuze writes 'art gives us the true unity: unity of an immaterial sign and of an entirely spiritual meaning. The essence is precisely this unity of sign and meaning as it is revealed in the work of art' (ibid, p.40). All the signs of life are too stuck in the material as their limit, and as such art represents an

immaterial line of flight, a means of escape, art touching upon the core of being as a difference not reducible to the extrinsic empirical differences that denote material objects – the material of sensation must take on the quality of something beyond a crude *Fleshism*; perception must become *Percept*, and affection must become *Affect* – thus the particular is rendered accessible to universal appraisal. Art is thus a means for us to get beyond the narrow viewpoint that defines every subject – it incarnates an *Idea* which can proliferate between subjects – what we find then in art is a means to recognise our own essence as that of difference. What this means is that through art we might begin to realise that what constitutes our narrow viewpoint as a world is a more fundamental and pluralistic essence that goes beyond us – our subjectivity is merely an enveloped or crystalised formation that derives its source from a greater plurality that goes beyond us. We thus can see ourselves through art in a new light, as subjects which are not pre-given but rather as subjects that came into being through an individualising expression of this essence. The subject is rather a prison for this essence, we are the jailors of plurality, we capture essence within us. For Deleuze a subject is merely an *explicated* aspect of being, whilst in a Neoplatonic sense there is always a more fundamental *complication* that precedes this explication, the world is a One derived from the many, existence and the things found strewn about within it are merely the individuated expressions of a more expansive and unstable complicated world – a world underpinned by multiplicity. Complication is Being's tendency towards contraction, a contraction which shatters the web of explications that reside upon it

In our liberal age, we often construe ourselves as individuals, as concrete atoms that interact and perhaps collide with other individuals – but this fails to recognise that each individual is merely an explicated unity that is riven internally with a complicated mass of souls that stir beneath that thin exterior. Deleuze also relates this in a Freudian vein to the dream state that we enter into nightly, for in dreams we bear witness to a great many images which may in fact touch upon the fragmentary core of the subject – all the disavowed feelings, associations, memories, and attachments that we keep at arm's length in our waking hours. Dreaming is thus a means to touch upon our complicated essence, but it is an imperfect means since it may be quickly forgotten or readily dismissed by the subject who does not wish to accept the meaning conveyed by the dream. In this regard, the artist operates in greater fidelity to the complicated nature of lived existence, since they attempt to touch upon the souls contained within the subject and give them a means of expression that the concrete subject might otherwise reject, these souls always

pushing to the limit what the subject could be – they connect and proliferate in milieus that every life must plunge itself in. Art is therefore a both refractory and creative medium, in that it synthesises *substance*, the painter with the substance of colour, the musician with the substance of sound, the dancer with the substance of movement, all of which in art take on a spiritual dimension since the substance is freed from its materiality in order to convey a meaning that is beyond this ground – the percept and the affect co-becoming with this substance, and the substance taking on new forms through this co-becoming, just as artists are shadows, ephemeral spectres relative to their creations. Through this process the artist effectuates a *Style*, something more than the objects at play within the artistic practise. Deleuze says as much when he discusses style ‘style is essentially metaphor. But metaphor is essentially metamorphosis and indicates how the two objects exchange their determinations, exchange even the names that designate them, in the new medium that confers the common quality upon them.’ (Ibid, p. 48). Style is not of the subject, but rather the essence of the subject in becoming, in all its complication, giving itself expression; and as such it is thus never an artist that defines the style but rather the style that defines the artist, just as it is love that defines the lover. Art is thus the means through which we transcend the conditions of the transcendental subject, and convert the objects of experience, composing their qualities as sensations in higher compositions (Percept/Affect) which readily communicate to an inhuman landscape that defies the very conditions of experience which had initially given it impetus, the artist touching upon the inhuman. We must then say that essence is thus the expression of difference and repetition beyond the facticity of the object and the hermeneutic of the subject’s associationism – and by practising art we can touch these essences, and render love as no longer beholden to objectivism or subjectivism, object and subject, Self and Other, through art we learn to love again in a renewed fashion, in a way that we could not have loved before – we might even say that it is in the love letter that love re-founds itself, for all great literature as Deleuze has said is ultimately a love letter. Art combined with love allows us to give expression to a love freed from the baggage of the subject, its pleasures, its memories, its modes of enjoyment and dissatisfaction, the conditions of its subjectivity in relation to the permutations of power – art effectuates a new set of possibilities for love by breaking love from the existing territory, the intensity of the subject and its dependency on a supposedly concrete Other, it mediates and transcends the sensible, and thus provides a new home from which the subject of love can orientate itself towards new conditions.

Love as a story of origin apropos the orthodoxy of psychoanalysis for Deleuze is utterly corrupted and butchered, it can only reflect an image that is retroactively imposed – and in the case of Psychoanalysis - by Oedipus and its repudiations, its litanies of guilt. The mother and father might serve as images upon which we relate and compare our loves, but this only does so much if it supposes the family is an isolated unit devoid of a social inflection. Each love is a repetition that inaugurates an overcoming of the original which was already an overcoming, the loves of the mother or the father coming into existence only in relation to the plurality of loves they themselves have experienced both within and beyond the family. Or as Deleuze writes ‘each love contributes its difference, which was already included in the preceding love, and all the differences are contained in a primordial image that we unceasingly reproduce at different levels and repeat as the intelligible law of all our loves’ (Ibid, p.68). There is thus no true origin of love, for love is always the overflowing of a successive series of repetitions that differentiate as they repeat ad infinitum – the image we construct is rather a *theme* which becomes distilled from the successive iterations of love. Love’s infinity is only captured by the paranoia of Oedipus that seeks to contain this proliferation within an ossified story of origin, Oedipus is the risk that lurks within every theme – which is why Deleuze and Guattari say in *Anti-Oedipus* that it is in fact the father who is the creator of Oedipus in relation to the child, rather than the other way around. True love repudiates this story of origin, and thus makes for itself a new line of flight that leads to the future rather than the past – the lover if they are to realise a form of love that is creative and generative must thus turn their back on those past loves, a line of flight is the acceptance of a love without guilt and a love without guarantees, but this turning away can only be done once the theme as law has been acknowledged. The theme of our loves is the supposition of a seemingly unitary dimension, but this unity gives way in a flux of repetition that demonstrates that each love in the series differs from the series as a whole – a gap is produced in bifurcation.

However, love is too intense to free itself, it must die a thousand deaths before it can really open the way for something truly new – this being a death of both ground and conditions, the movement beyond a love understood within the auspices of objectivism and subjectivism, and rather the acceptance of love as a process without finality. For instance, when we experience the absence of love, we are forced to reflect upon what love had meant for us and our world, we reflect upon the course that love had taken, we reflect on that first encounter which was so intense that it blinded us to everything else. The death of love inaugurates a serial rewind that takes us back to those moments which had

crystalised the theme of love, those instants which were fundamental to the series itself. By going back, the temporal regression refracted through a reflective panorama, we see love for what it was – pure intensity – the first sight, the first embrace, the first kiss, the first declaration of love and its fidelity – all these intensive points can only be understood later, once we have ceased to be moved and propelled by them, once we have shifted from that situation of intensity. This is where Deleuze following Proust asserts that the Intelligence finds itself renewed in reflection upon the series of love – it is an intelligence imbued with the affective intensity of sensibility. Memory and imagination only work in the context of a particular love, but it is in the intelligence guided by sensibility that the truth of the series is found. This is not an intelligence which merely applies an abstract method, but rather an intelligence that is humbled by the sensible, the humility found in sorrow. Deleuze expresses this movement as such:

'It consists in discovering essence as the law of the series of loves. Which is to say, in the realm of love, essence is not to be separated from a strictly serial generality. Each suffering is particular, insofar as it is endured, insofar as it is produced by a specific being, at the heart of a specific love. But because these sufferings reproduce each other and implicate each other, the intelligence disengages from them something general, which is also a source of joy' (ibid, p.73).

We can derive joy here because we realise that we can overcome the particularity of each love, incarnating from the series an *Idea* which encapsulates the essence of the series. Unlike Oedipus, this generality is not of stasis under the auspices of a principle, but rather the full embodiment of repetition and difference as the truth, the essence, the generality of the series. This *Idea* is the joyous overcoming of those objectivist stupidities and subjectivist illusions – it is the acknowledgement that love was not the manifestation of our will, but rather that it is an impersonal excess operating within us, it is the recognition that love works through us rather than working for us. Our joy is the joy of revelation, the revelation that we were as Deleuze says merely *Tableaux Vivants*, living pictures, within the theatre of the series (ibid, p.75). Love's essence is thus the series of loves in their generality, but by acknowledging this seriality, we also recognise the contingency of love, that the series could have been different, and in so doing we annihilate the image of love that had been trapped within the prison of the theme – we could have loved someone else, and this truth sets us free. When we isolate the beloved from the groups to which they belong, we establish the movement of love as an attempted crystallisation of their

essence, but likewise when we return to this moment of separation from the group – for every beloved is merely the singularisation of an individual from the mass - we realise that in truth, we could have chosen differently – and this is the search in its essence, an essence defined by its contingency, but one we gladly accept, for all that has been must be learned from, there is no learning without the encounter that consummates it.

We can see then that truth is the final revelation, but a revelation that would be nothing without the various faltering paths which we must travel in order to arrive at the destination that defines our life, a life is always an event in process of its fulfilment, and we only live through virtue of being true to that event, in all its profundity and tragedy, in loving and thinking with the event, which is ultimately the problematic and disappointing within Deleuze's philosophy. For Deleuze, love must fail in order to be capable of transcending its own conditions and it is only through this failure that love can be apprehended as a universal quality rather than as the singular preserve of the subject. In this sense the failure of love gives way to the possibilities of both art and politics, it allows for a universality which does not obscure the particular, the particular investing the territory upon which the universal situates itself, a shifting sand of ethical, political, artistic, and philosophical negotiation, or as Hannah Stark aptly surmises 'ethical relations are not made possible by developing better knowledges of either the Other or of other people. This model is not identitarian: recognition is neither conferred nor received. Instead, ethics becomes possible by constantly suspending knowledge, and reaffirming that suspension in every encounter' (2012, p.108). Love is only universalised through its overcoming at the level of the subject – and this is not a static universality but one which is immanently re-expressed with each life that gives it form. Art and politics once refracted through the travails of love might be seen as the means by which the subject transcends the limitations of mere individuality, the means by which they convert their narrow viewpoint, the work of their life, into something which might be universally enjoyed, received, and encountered in the movement that defines love's infinity. Once we engage in the kind of apprenticeship that Deleuze outlines we can all look back on the web of determinations which had up until that point defined us, and once we have done so, the subject of love can be rethought, reimagined, the identity of the lover opened to that which is different. We are not inevitably oedipalized, narcissistic, nostalgic, or melancholics, or whatever sedimented identity we end up stuck with – we can always be beyond this. Love can be more than itself through disappointment – when recognition fails, when pleasure has run its course, when memory falters, then love can begin again.

Excursus – Alain Badiou: Love and Universalism

In this excursus we shall discuss Alain Badiou's conception of love – which provides both a supplement and contrast to Deleuze's understanding vis-à-vis Proust. We are discussing Badiou principally because he remains a prime antagonist to Deleuze – the divide between being of course philosophical but also political, with Badiou being much more on the side of the macropolitical or politics of negativity that has defined classically leftist political projects. In the previous chapter we saw Deleuze offering a clear exposition of how love can be experienced as a pedagogical process which undermines itself immanently – we do not really need to rely on a psychoanalyst to save us (although the less oedipal may be sometimes helpful). In Deleuze love must fail, because love is not inherently of the event but rather often coterminous with identity, with the sedimented history of the subject which has been socially (family, friends, society) determined to love in a particular way – desire returns in failure, love reinvention being immanently intertwined with the movement of love and desire. The supplementary or congenial dimension of Badiou's account takes the shape of an indebtedness to Plato, in the pedagogical productivity of love, how it leads us beyond ourselves or our narrow world view. The point of contrast begins of course with an ontological perspective that either avows subtraction and non-relation (Badiou) or disavows it in favour of a synthetic and hyper connected sense of relational becoming (Deleuze), there is also a contrast of emphasis – since the encounter and jealousy are key elements for Deleuze, but Badiou disparages any necessity for jealousy in love, and likewise thinks love must be of course be an encounter but ultimately love is only real so long as it is able to endure beyond the encounter. This is perhaps the greatest limit of Badiou's perspective – he seemingly cannot think of the end of love as an event, only the fall of love, the love we find which makes envisage a new world is evental. There is some potential here for radicality indeed – since the lovers who enter our lives can often give us a new perspective on the world, opening us to new possibilities. But this perspective is actually quite limiting since this thesis has clearly shown that the work of love, or love's radicality, its ethical potential can only be understood if we problematise the genesis of love, how love functions to sediment the subject, and how love ultimately only realises difference once the terrain of our older love or loves has been properly charted, cleared, and reworked. Love as enduring truth event is only possible once love has initially been disappointed, since love in its immediacy is a conservative and recollective impulse which as we will see in the next chapter (and has already been alluded to) can serve to prop up rather than undermine identitarianism, fascism, patriarchy and capitalism. If we wish to

open love to other possibilities which these regimes tend to foreclose, then we have to accept that love is not inherently radical, if anything the loss of love is primary radical gesture, not purely a romantic one (since Badiou assumes that romantic love is merely a love overly invested in tragedy). Although what Badiou does rightly understand, is that love in its radicality cannot be purely an individual affair, something that the Deleuzian account in *Proust and Signs* seems to get a bit stuck in – we cannot simply assume that our ethical journey is the only horizon for love (even if Deleuze supplements this with his reflections on art).

These are key differences, and in a fashion, it is these differences that allow the consummation of a more fruitful or all-encompassing perspective of love – we might say that by blending these perspectives that we might find the process of love at work, love in thought, working itself out through the problem of love itself. Therefore, we shall endeavour in this chapter to unpack those key distinctions that render Badiou’s own account so important, and it will be shown how the universal forms a lynchpin that both Badiou and Deleuze orbit, even if the universal represents an interstellar point of attraction that constitutes the possibilities for a love’s imbrication in political life. We can say this even if Badiou is at pains to stress the disconnect between love and politics. We shall therefore in the opening section of this chapter cover Badiou’s central and perhaps most digestible exposition on love – *In Praise of Love* (2012). Once we have unpacked the key insights of that text, I shall then conclude with a brief reflection upon another of Badiou’s writings *Saint Paul: The Foundation for Universalism* (2003) – which neatly expresses the importance of the universalist dimension of love, or the necessity of universalism for understanding love’s capacity to imbricate itself in politics. As a provisional conclusion, we will see that love must move beyond the narrow confines of the couple, becoming invested in a third that constitutes the point at which love operates in a universal perspective and thus constitutes a space of de-subjectivation that reconstitutes a subject that is multiple – and thus more properly situate love as a category co-terminus with (rather than separate) to politics. The chapter following this excursus engaging with the work of Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, and Alexandra Kollontai who perhaps offer that crucial bridge between Badiou and Deleuze in envisaging why love can never be separated from politics, and how we can see other possibilities for love today.

C.1. In Praise of Love – Beyond the One and Towards the Two

If we are to situate Badiou's conception of love, we must first recognise what his conception is grounded in a critique of various images or conceptions of love that define contemporary culture. The first that he is at pains to criticise is love as it is understood within the matrix of capitalist egocentrism or consumerism – this form of love is solipsism by another name, captivated by a kind of narrow hedonism that is synonymous with the pursuit of satisfaction, whether it be narcissistic or sexual. The explosion of dating agencies and apps guided by algorithms is indicative for Badiou, of a love that has absconded from the possibility and necessity of risk, it is akin to arranged marriage – capitalist love treats love as merely a commodity that can be neatly packaged and easily digested, abstracted from the realities of love as a site of alienation and self-overcoming. There is in this form of love a chronic fear of the true encounter. Love without risk may often treat the Other as simply a means to the end of enjoyment without acknowledging the world that might be built once the onanism of the One, or the singular Ego is repudiated – sexual addiction representing an extreme manifestation of this tendency. For Badiou, love is thus in danger of simply being reduced to an egotistical amicability synonymous with the capitalist regime of private property. This kind of love is essentially summed up as a kind of love that is fundamentally *contractual* and *commercial* – however this exegesis can only be efficacious if coupled with the other two images that Badiou outlines. These other two images are the *Romantic* – which focuses entirely on the encounter, this being typified by classic romantic tales such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Tristan and Isolde*, or *The Sorrows of Young Werther* – and the *Sceptical* interpretation which reduces love to merely an effect of biological determination namely the sexual drive typified by the contemporary discourse of evolutionary biology or even the philosophy of Schopenhauer (2012, p.21). All these images do violence to love, the commercial renders love complacent and morose, the romantic likewise although intense can only envision a love synonymous with death with no enduring sustainability, and the sceptical reduces all love to sexuality which completely obliterates its ethical or cultural potential.

But what is Badiou's conception of love in contrast to these images? What does he add to the insights that we gleaned in the preceding chapter on Deleuze? Well, he at the outset he establishes love fundamentally, like Deleuze, as being a matter of truth. As he says 'It takes us into key areas of the experience of what is difference and, essentially, leads to the idea that you can experience the world from the perspective of difference. In this

respect it has universal implications: it is an individual experience of potential universality, and is thus central to philosophy, as Plato was the first to intuit' (ibid, p.17). Love is in Badiou's vocabulary a *truth procedure*, it allows for us to get outside of the narrow confines of our singular perspective, and instead imbibe in the perspective of another – love therefore stretches the field of possible experience, it shows us a world which is not our own but one which we might become a part of through committing ourselves to that moment, to that encounter of difference. Love represents the possibility for truth because it shatters our world which we might say is defined by a self-perpetuating and self-contained knowledge, a state of affairs which is fairly consistent and ordered – love however disrupts this world of knowledge and instead suggests other possibilities we had not fathomed or could not have fathomed prior to this disruptive encounter, it might be construed in this sense to be a form of auto-critique (this has an obvious connection to Deleuze's critique of the *Image of Thought*). The beloved is therefore like a tear in the fabric of our reality, they may expose us to new experiences or new thoughts, ideas, questions, and in so doing reveal the limits of our own existence and the limitations of our subjectivity (constituted through pleasure and recollection). The truth of love is subsequently constituted as the realisation of the limits that define our existence – difference over the confines of a hypostatized identity. Badiou follows Lacan, and by extension Plato, by suggesting the sexual aspect of a loving encounter is merely a point in love's development rather than being its end point – for there is no relation between sexual beings, to paraphrase Lacan. In the moment of sex for Badiou, all that occurs is two individuals consummating their own personal desire – there is no real connection there, both are separated in their particular world of pleasure – sexuality is narcissistic, and the sexual act is mediated by an imaginary representation of the other, it can only operate in a deferred fantasy structure that can be cathected, the Real of the Other always being too traumatic to be accessed without this deferment. Or as he tells us 'In love the individual goes beyond himself, beyond the narcissistic. In sex, you are really in a relationship with yourself via the mediation of the other. The other helps you to discover the reality of pleasure. In love, on the contrary the mediation of the other is enough in itself' (ibid, p.19). On this point then there is a crossover with Deleuze, who as we have seen in a previous chapter, acknowledged the narcissistic conservatism of pleasure and its tendency to side with identity over difference – a reflexive rather than expansive repetition is the repetition of pleasure.

We may however be slightly reserved on this point that sexual pleasure is inherently narcissistic. There is truth to this of course, however if it is too heavily stressed it might also miss that in the best and perhaps most loving sexual encounters, the lover and their beloved are actively seeking mutual fulfilment, reading and divining the signs of pleasure and intimacy that spark a more intensive, and excessive, movement of relational flourishing. If sex is merely geared towards pleasure and not passion or desire, it can indeed merely prop up the subject. But not all sex is totally narcissistic, and a sexual encounter guided by an ethically informed love might work to overcome this rather solipsistic aspect of the sexual. And finally, one must also be weary of not using such a pronouncement on the narcissism of the sexual to dismiss feminine sexuality – since the feminine orgasm unlike the male is not defined by a definitive ejaculation and consummate termination, but actively seeks constant reaffirmation in the intimacy of the sexual encounter (hence why sexuality subordinated to (heteronormative) male pleasure tends focus on penetration over other forms of sexual play). Loving sex which ethically informed is therefore often a moment of intense eroticism and intimacy, we listen to the breathing of the beloved, their sighs of ecstasy or even discomfort, which modulate our movements in conformity to these signs, we look into the eyes of our lover as we consummate this pleasure, and in this moment of ecstatic release we feel ourselves becoming subsumed in the passion of the encounter itself, the two become one within a rhythmic ecology of passion – even if this one is always fractured by the third that is love. The sexual addict does not relate to sex in this way, merely treating the other as means for their own masturbation in a mechanical proceduralism which can often be mutually dissatisfying. Vulnerability is the key to an ethical sexual relation – assuming a totalising non-relation may in fact sedimented narcissistic sexual practises since it forecloses the horizon of erotic intimacy.

What, however, is important in this argument is the acknowledgement that love cannot be reduced to the regulation of pleasure, but rather must be construed as a thing of chance, it is constituted in the contingency of the encounter whereby our world is thrown out of joint with itself – and it is in this disruption that a new world is constituted, one which was previously unintelligible within the confines of regulated pleasure. Put differently, love for Badiou is of the Real, it disrupts the symbolic field, whilst sex is too beholden to the imaginary and is thus too solipsistic to effect real change. Badiou in this regard is then certainly more on the side of Soren Kierkegaard rather than Arthur Schopenhauer, especially since in the former love must pass through three stages – the aesthetic level

defined by vanity and self-interested seduction, which then must give way to the ethical level whereby the beloved is treated as an object of worthwhile esteem and love becomes a lifetime commitment rather than a transitory state, but this level must also give way to the religious level whereby the ego recognises the transcendent as the source of its own power and thereby accedes to the full and superhuman recognition of divinity as the source of all love thus abolishing the illusion of a sovereign subject. Badiou does not conform to this approach entirely, but he is certainly sympathetic to its resonance with the Platonic notion of the ladder, whereby a particular beauty must give way to the *universal idea of beauty*. Love must then make this transition from the self-interested play of appetitive interest to a moment which is understood as having universal value and impact – this of course being the acceptance of love as a category of difference and differentiation which is far more creative than the immature play of singular identities regulated by pleasure seeking. And we can also accept here that if love were merely the extension of particular sexual impulse that it would never endure the vicissitudes of time's embrace, since all beauty falters in the passage of time and youthful lust often gives way to aged contentment and complacency – love however endures through not reducing itself to the conceit of beauty but rather imbibes in the eternal, which otherwise put is to say that love builds a world that lasts beyond the moment of its conception. Love is therefore at war with time, it cannot countenance its own dissolution but must ceaselessly envisage a world in perpetuity. Where memory fails, art as our artifice continues. Love thus constructs for itself its own *durée*, a time out of joint with the present, and as such history which is permeated by the field of the possible is cut by the impossibility of the event which founds for itself a new temporal lineage predicated on a Truth that is not divisible to an already established knowledge that fixes the coordinates of the situation. Love as an event fractures the situation and establishes a new set of conditions.

Badiou however is at pains to distinguish his own conception from those who assume love to be a transcendent or theological project, or as an ethical investment that totally subjugates the self to Otherness. What is essential is that love constitutes a new subject(s) which can suppose for itself an identical difference or a difference which is mutually felt – these are thus subjects constituted through the transition from One to Two (2009, p.25). To illustrate this point he refers to the hypothetical instance of a couple witnessing the panorama of a dusk lit mountain scape – both view this scene, but they both recognise that they are witnessing it together (when they usually understand that they are disunited

– disjuncture between subjects) and through virtue of this fact they acknowledge the bond they share in that moment, that that moment is fundamental to their existence in and with the world – and it is love that constitutes them as a subject, a subject of difference which has decentred the individual gaze into the gaze of a differentiated subject, a Subject that is Two (although again erotic sexuality may be felt as unification in the sexual moment, but really it plays out as a folding or bifurcation that sediments the two vis-a-vi a third that is the erotic – the erotic being distinguishable from narcissistic sexuality). The difference that is felt here, beyond identity, is the difference inherent to the infinite subjectivities that constitute a life – in this regard Badiou is consonant with Deleuze. Now Badiou recognises that typically this difference is often exemplified by the Lacanian inflection of *Sexual Difference* but again like Deleuze, he is not content to simply subordinate sexual difference to the heterosexist dichotomy of Man and Woman, but rather also acknowledges that difference operates even in same sex couples – since sex is always fundamentally in excess of itself through the difference that a life embodies (thus again dismissing the biologically determinist supposition of sex as reproduction). What is essential for Badiou, perhaps his first principle, is that Love is a play of the Two that is not one – something that Freud also dismissed in his *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905) against the thought of Kraft Ebbing and his sexual dichotomy which was also likely inspired in part by the myth put forward by Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium*. Sexual difference names the fundamental disjuncture of the sexes as they are multiple, that there is no possibility for the Other and the Self to obtain unity. As Peter Hallward identifies 'Sexual difference is nothing other than the result of incommensurate relations to the signifier, that is differing relations to our incorporation into (or alienation by) language', the phallic order of language containing and demarcating masculine pleasure/power along with the risk of castration, whilst the feminine remains on the periphery of the phallic order, its constitutive outside and thus able to touch upon an unnameable and limitless *jouissance* (2003, p.187). Love is the means, the process by which this symbolic system which constructs disjunctive territories of subjective identity is navigated, negotiated, and eventually transcended. However, this is always a transcendence without transcendence in a quasi-religious sense, love is materialist, but it cuts the material in twain through a spiritualisation of that materiality – it touches upon the potentials latent with an opaque material content thus transforming the conditions of the materiality itself, content and expression are mutually defined in becoming-other to themselves.

Badiou's second principle, as has already been indicated, is the *encounter* as a contingent disruptive event. There is a great deal of Deleuzian crossover here – since for Badiou the event of love marks itself out against the existing order of things, the two lovers must distinguish themselves from the crowd so to speak – in this sense he references *Romeo and Juliet* as being an exemplary literary case since they are two lovers who distinguish themselves from the competing camps of Montague and Capulet, severing that identarian difference for the sake of a more uplifting and creative difference of the loving couple. All the negativity of the hostile rivalry is subsumed or subtracted from in the event of love, and through love a new set of impossible conditions are realised as possible – the surprise of love is its subtractive potential, its capacity to extricate itself from the logic of the situation (2009, p.29). However, unlike Deleuze, Badiou regards death as anathema to Love – this is where the tale of *Romeo and Juliet* is too captured by the romantic fascination with encounters over duration. Love although capable of constructing a *world* should not be seen as somehow existing beyond the *World at large* – Badiou is therefore more grounded than the romantics, he does not believe love can exist without the World which gave it space to arise – love must persist within and against the turmoil that the World at large arranges against it, the Subject of love must therefore insist on the continuation of the *durée* of love against those forces that would attempt to dissolve its features into the already established determinates of the situation; the time of the impossible conflicts with the time of the possible. However, as we have already suggested this move away from the romantics if it totally denies the essential role of disappointment in love does not adequately account for how love can be transformative. Tragic love, a love that leads to dissolution, death and despair is indeed not radical, since it becomes stuck or territorialised around the black hole of death – this is not radical but utterly desolate. This again returns us to the nihilism which mentioned in the previous chapter on memory – a passive nihilism is closely aligned with the romantic, it becomes enamoured with tragedy, whilst the active nihilist accepts failure as part of the process of creation. This is an important distinction missed by Badiou but understood by Deleuze.

The next question is then how is this difference and encounter felt and expressed at the level of the subject of love? Well for Badiou it manifests in two central ways – the *declaration*, this of course being the iterative phrase “I love you” or words to that effect, and the feeling of *surrender*, which can be a kind of existential embrace of the reality of love, or the sensual giving up of boundaries and the experience of vulnerability. For Badiou

these physical and existential components of the *two scene* of love are universally applicable, hence why love stories are widely met with appreciation and interest, they resonate with the universally discernible truth procedure that constitutes the loving encounter and its enduring presence. In the iterative phrase or by extension the poetry that might come from love, there is an attempt to contain the contingency of love, the declaration in effect for Badiou is an attempt to convert chance into destiny, and if the declaration is reaffirmed this is again a means to revivify the event, to ensure its longevity beyond the vicissitudes of life that may undermine the unity of the couple. Badiou tells us that 'what they are always saying is: I shall extract something else from what was mere chance. I'm going to extract something that will endure, something that will persist, a commitment, a fidelity' (ibid, p.44). With the declaration we declare our *fidelity* to the event of love, that we believe in the change that it has enacted, that a world has indeed been created between the two, and that through this declaration it has been recognised and named – it exists and so long as I keep reaffirming it, I believe in its power and enduring presence. Of course, the phrase "I love you" has often been cheapened and overused rendering it either a banality or a creature of selfish self-interestedness, but if it comes with real conviction, it remains a potent power. It might also be said poetry provides a means out of the banality of the declaration, such as in Shakespeare 'Yet do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong, My love shall in my verse ever live young' (Sonnet XIX, 2009). In this way love is affirmed as something more than just a flippant instant or object of chance, but rather touches upon an eternal and atemporal dimension that persists – but such a declaration can only come about through a fundamental surrender that as previously said marks the transition from a One to a Two – a new subject is born in surrender and is reborn in each declarative instant that gives it new life, the declaration rendering love eternal.

This exegesis about the enduring nature of love is supplemented by Badiou with what he refers to as *points* within the unfurling of the event of love – this might be thought of as lynchpins that hold the subject of love more firmly in place. The declaration and surrender might be thought of as the most important points of love, but there are others – like having children, building a home, or working together towards some particular goal, perhaps even a political project. Points in love are therefore essential – although we should dismiss the essentialist notion that we must form a kind of nuclear family if love is to endure, or the necessity of reproduction in the form of children; these are merely supplements rather

than essential to love, and those two particular points are also often loaded with a cultural and institutional baggage that can constrict love's potential. To quote Badiou in full:

'A point, namely a particular moment around which an event establishes itself, where it must be re-played in some way, as if it were returning in a changed, displaced form, but one forcing you "to declare afresh". A point, in effect, comes when the consequences of a construction of a truth, whether it be political, amorous, artistic or scientific, suddenly compels you to opt for a radical choice, as if you were back at the beginning, when you accepted and declared the event. Once more you must say, "I accept this chance, want it and take it on board"' (Ibid, p.50)

Having children in this instance if it overdetermines the amorous encounter is rather perverse – it is like the case of the narcissist that Freud touches upon in his essay *On Narcissism: an introduction* (1914), whereby the child is merely a means for the narcissist to replicate themselves, the only means by which their love can extend to another. In this case, love is not of the Two but only the singular One – the narcissist consumes all for their own selfish benefit. Points in love are the means by which the Two differentiates itself and reaffirms the event of love – they represent a test for love, a probing of its possibilities. A child is a test for love in this regard, it does not serve to benefit narcissism but rather forces the Two to change, to differentiate itself further, and through doing so reaffirms the event of love – or if this test is not met, may lead to its disintegration, a tragic possibility. In Badiou we therefore see a different point of emphasis than Deleuze – in Badiou we see less of a focus on love as failure and more of a focus on love as a persistent negotiation between those who have declared their love for one another. Deleuze's perspective and Badiou's are not necessarily in contradiction here – Deleuze supplements Badiou's account by intuiting where that process of negotiation can crack up and falter as pleasure, habit, memory, and recollection emerge or bubble up within the subjects of love. Badiou's notion of points here also shows that there are certain moments that also prompt a cracking up of love, and it is how we navigate these points that leads to shifts within love. In a sense then both thinkers recognise that love is suffused with movement, negotiation and ethical exploration – those who are in love are always trying to navigate themselves as subjects of love whilst also trying to navigate the evolution of love as it changes with the passage of time and the intrusion of circumstance. Arguably what Badiou recognises that Deleuze does not adequately account for is how love has to be built and reinforced through its progressive development over the course of a life – the question that Badiou

asks is: can love endure? Deleuze is less concerned with this point, since his focus is on the change that can be allowed to occur once love fails. Badiou thus shows that perhaps even in the crack up of love, we do not necessarily give up on the relationships we have formed.

We must now conclude this discussion of Badiou's *In Praise of Love* by examining the relationship, or in case of Badiou the non-relation, between love and politics. Both love and politics are seen to be truth procedures – but for Badiou they are separate since politics is a truth procedure centred on the collective rather than the couple – this is the first point of division. Secondly, whilst love is about the management of difference, politics is the pursuit of equality by a mass or collective. Therefore, love is restricted in its focus and can only be a private affair, whereas politics is always a site of public work. The third difference that separates them for Badiou, and in many ways this is a Schmittian inflection, is that politics is fundamentally predicated on the friend and enemy distinction – there is for him no enemies in love (hence his dislike of Proust's emphasis on Jealousy), and as such this is perhaps the greatest impediment for making it a political concept. However, he does indicate some areas of crossover – the most essential is the role of what he calls the *State*. Now this of course in the case of politics makes explicit reference to the literal State – but it is also conceived of as the site of power, of reaction, of conservatism, and the terrain of static or hegemonic knowledge – in this way the State can operate beyond the state and be embodied in many different forms. In the case of love, the family is an exemplary instance – it has its own domineering potentials, it might orbit the Oedipal complex thus imbuing its members with guilt and thus constraining their behaviour, or it might use love simply to the end of its own reproduction, thus containing love within a vapid contractualism or reproductive essentialism. However, Badiou is clear to separate the *State* from the *state*, since even the family or the state as an institution can have its benefits for establishing the possibilities for difference or equality – the argument is more that love and politics cannot be reduced to this institution, otherwise you end up with the sclerotic and anti-revolutionary domination of Capitalist-parliamentarianism and Oedipal guilt. His pragmatism here is acknowledged in the necessary movement of points, as he stresses the goal of politics 'is to discover what the collective is capable of, not power itself' and 'in love, the aim is to experience the world from the point of view of difference, point by point, and not simply to ensure the reproduction of the species' (ibid, p.56).

Nevertheless, there is question of whether this separation of love and politics is truly convincing – it might be a suitable division if we assume that all politics is a negative relation, and in many ways, it often is since an emancipatory political project must overthrow systems of tyranny and exploitation that are fundamentally imbricated with the interests of particular groups and individuals, but this does not mean that love cannot influence politics in fundamental ways. This division only stands if we accept Badiou's claim that truth operates in a completely distinct fashion rather than in a messy and conflictual fashion – we might even say that love is the ground upon which all emancipatory projects are built, not as some vapid transcendent ethic but rather as the means by which an individual learns to make that vital transition from an individual perspective defined by a identarian ego, towards a more expansive sense of difference as the essence of one's life, a difference that must be worked through, as opposed to an identity that must be viciously preserved – this perhaps a transition from pride to humility. And in a sense Badiou says as much when he argues against Proust's emphasis on jealousy and love:

'The difficulties love harbours don't stem from the existence of an enemy who has been identified. They are internal to the process: the creative play of difference. Selfishness, not any rival, is love's enemy. One could say: my love's main enemy, the one I must defeat, is not the other, it is myself, the "myself" that prefers identity to difference, that prefers to impose its world against the world re-constructed through the filter of difference' (ibid, p.60).

Love is therefore a means of getting outside of the narrow confines of an individualistic persona, one that is itself reinforced through the crystallisation that occurs during the maturation of the ego. If politics is about the collective, then one can only understand or perceive that collective and its potential through undergoing the travails of love – through love's disruption of selfhood and its possessiveness, and as such there can be no radical politics against the conservatism of the State without the micropolitical (to hark to Deleuze) work that occurs in love, a love of difference as opposed to identity. This point is further proven by the simple fact that just like politics, love is not peaceful or congenial to pleasure but actively tears and shatters our subjective experience, it forces us to think anew and believe in the possibility of an enduring project, whether that be the project of love, of politics, or happiness, or of a life. As Deleuze and Guattari state 'We can guess what fear is. We are always afraid of losing. Our security, the great molar organization that sustains

us, the arborescences we cling to, the binary machines that give us a well-defined status, the resonances we enter into, the system of overcoding that dominates us—we desire all that’ (1983, p.227). There is therefore an enemy in love – the enemy of the self, the internal enemy within, that must be fought tooth and nail, the enemy that must be destroyed so that a new love can be born, a death that gives life – love is the conquering of fear, the great conservative impulse that begins with the self, and is abolished in flight towards a new politics that works its way to a point beyond the self and towards a new world. Again, this could be said to be the transition from pride to humility – which is always a fearful transition but one essential to the encounter and event of Love. We must therefore stress that love transforms the self, it pushes the self to its limit – to the outside of established existence, and as such, this thrust to the outside will also inevitably confront the world in its statist form and thus strive to transform it as well, from one outside to the next. This is the fundamental connection between love and politics.

C.2. *Love’s Universal Power*

here is, though, a remaining question for Badiou which we will conclude this excursus with - how does love to enter the universality of the event? Firstly, for Badiou, love establishes as he mentions in his earlier writings on St. Paul a ‘nonliteral law, one that gives to the faithful subject his consistency, and effectuates the postevental truth in the world’ (ibid, p.87). This in other words is the imperative of the address, that the event and its truth must be expressed universally to the world at large and that this address must in effect go against the statism of the law. Personal faith must give way to love as the *law beyond law* – and as such, love must be for all and not for one, it must be a public and infinitely proliferating work of truth – a work which rallies others to the event and thus reaffirms the truth of the event itself. Such a love can only appear because of Christ’s resurrection which overturns guilt, humanity is now free to love itself in a universal capacity, something again expressed in the maxim *love your neighbour as yourself*; such a principle being indifferent to particular differences. If we relate this to Deleuze, we must see that the micropolitical fracturing that love’s movement can effectuate within the subject must also be projected outwards to the world – there is an efficacy to Badiou’s universalist demand. If we get stuck in a personalised movement of love, if we only reflect on our love’s in an individualist fashion, then we might end up not reaching our maximal ethical potential even from a Deleuzian perspective. If we falter in love, if we have learned in love, then this must be pushed outwards towards others – our journey is also something that others can benefit

from. Badiou is clear that although he is discussing Paul, this possibility for universal love is also congruent with the subjective figure of the militant that marks revolutionary periods in history – both the follower of Christ and of the revolution are marked by their fidelity to the event that ruptures and subtracts itself from history, and as such allows for a renewed humanity capable of loving itself and thus able to love another free from guilt. Or as he writes ‘On the one hand, the eventual declaration founds the subject; on the other, without love, without fidelity, that declaration is useless. Let us say that a subjectivation that does not discover the resource of power proper to its universal address misses the truth for whose sudden emergence it seemed to be the sole witness’ (ibid, p.91). The declaration of fidelity to the event defines the necessity for its universal address – and it is love that imposes a regulatory principle that constitutes the necessity of its proliferation⁴².

Love is fundamental to the subject of the event, as such a subject would not be in fidelity to the event if they were not also inspired and driven to spread its *Good News* – in a sense, the declaration that an event has happened is fundamentally an act of love since a truth can only be real and universal if it is addressed to everyone. However, Pauline discourse is not suggesting that universalism must abolish difference – which in a sense would render it a negative principle – but rather that the subjective positions of Greek, Jew, even Man and Woman, must undergo a form of resubjectivisation and reorientation in relation to the third term, the event that severs or subtracts itself from the negative relation, a relation without relation to the state of the situation. If Paul claims that there is neither

⁴² We might also here quote Pier Paolo Pasolini’s poem *The Discovery of Marx* which concludes with a recognition that love must converge on the universal, that history is reconstituted in love as a shared history of collective emancipation beyond the selfishness of individuality:

*‘But there is in existence
some other thing than love
for one’s own destiny.*

*It’s a calculation with no
heart-striking miracle,
no cracking suspicion.*

*Our history! Stranglehold
of pure love, a force
both rational and divine.’*

(Cited in Hardt; 2011, p.123)

Jew nor Greek, neither Man nor Woman it is because these signifiers have lost subjective purchase in the wake of the event – they must be re-founded in accordance with the truth that has severed them from cultural, ideological, and historical determination. As such Paul’s universalism is one which operates through the third term that defies the binary of negativity – such a claim is inflected with Hegelianism, but unlike Hegel it is not presupposed that this rupture touches the absolute as its point of finality, but rather merely serves as a point between one event and the next. The tether that binds one event to next is *hope* – hope is the affective consistency of love, the name we give to enduring fidelity to the event as a process which must be constantly reaffirmed lest it fall victim to a spiritual, or perhaps literal, death. The universality of the event is therefore always imbricated in love, we might even say that the amorous encounter of the two gives us the first and most fundamental precondition for a truly universal love – how can we love another without qualification if we have not first transcended the narrow confines of egotism, of selfishness; it is only by living for another that we in effect learn to live for ourselves, and in so doing cross a threshold that allows us to love universally to the degree that we can declare the impossible has in fact become possible.

Ultimately then If we move beyond Paul, and assert that love is fundamental to politics, then we assert that difference beyond negativity is the central core of any emancipatory project since it allows us to defy the ossified strictures of identity – and in so doing we can proliferate our love in art, in politics, and in living; a life becomes universal only through breaking from the singular towards a universal singularity that speaks to all. The Apostle, the Militant, the Artist, the Lover – all names for the universal subject that severs itself from the confines of identity – love operates as the interstellar point between one world and the next, it is the event that consecrates the possibility for difference, its universal potential is its line of flight, it is a universal that allows for true difference to be proliferated, and as such we can only find emancipation through love, through the overcoming and creation that comes from the travails of love. If Badiou is wrong to suggest that politics and love are separable, and that the dissolution of love is not an event, then he is nonetheless better than Deleuze in understanding that the lessons of love, the truth that love reveals must be addressed outwards if they are to change the world. The universal at the core of love is its connectedness to desire as its principle of immanent difference, but this difference which stems from a universal ground must nonetheless be disseminated through the address that gives it a coherence which is discernible. If we name love, love and its dissolution as an event, then we may also recognise how love has the potential to

alter the regimes of identity and power that had originally defined love itself. If love can change, so can the world.

Chapter 6 – Hardt and Negri: Love against Identity, or a Love for the Multitude

In the preceding excursus we problematised love's positionality in the thought of Badiou contra Deleuze – and although Badiou fails to properly see the point of love's eventual possibility as that of loss, and subsequently its connection to politics, both thinkers nonetheless in sum attempted to extrapolate the real conditions of love from the conditions of identity that render it incapable of difference. Beyond Badiou, this thesis and line of inquiry is deeply indebted to the work of Michael Hardt who has in the last two decades attempted to articulate what a politically rejuvenated conception of love might entail and is to him that this chapter is indebted to and his work its central focus – it is in his work (coupled with Negri) that we see a clearer political variant of love which also happens to be indebted to Deleuze. What the collaborative work between Hardt and Antonio Negri also adds to this thesis is an understanding of the need challenge the notion that love is merely localised in the family – what we see is the Oedipal love, or the love of identity that Freud charted still remains one of the greatest obstacles today for moving beyond limiting or potentially fascist conceptions of the state and politics (which as traced earlier can manifest in the varied subjective coordinates of pleasure and memory). For them, concept of the *Multitude* takes pride of place as the collective subject of emancipation which as they say might be understood as 'an open and expansive network in which all differences can be expressed freely and equally, a network that provides the means of encounter so that we can work and live in common' (2004, pp.xiii-xiv). Such a network is not reducible to other forms of social subject, such as the working class, or masses, or the people – since these are subjects that remain grounded in a sense of unity, whereby their identity is expressed univocally across the gamut of individuals that form it. These other models of social subject tend to operate by exclusion and have also tended to marginalise minority voices whether they be women, racial or sexual minorities, or migrants. By contrast the multitude is expansive and embraces difference over identity, it does not subsume the particular within an indifferent conglomerate will – in this regard the multitude is driven by a horizontal conception of democratic process. What is relevant for our discussion here, is that love serves a vital ontological tether that allows the particular to be connected and mutually expressive without reducing such an expression to an all too domineering singular will – this forms a problem in of itself, how is difference maintained whilst nonetheless allowing for collective political project to be instantiated? it is because of this problem (which recurs constantly) why love as a political concept must

be explored so deeply. The initial way to answer this problem is that love creates, it does not destroy – what love creates for Hardt and Negri is *the common*, the sum of our social practises, our social bonds and relationships, even the very language we speak with is a part of the common, a common that is beyond the limited individualism and exploitative imperialism of capitalist globalisation. The common as understood by Hardt and Negri is communism in its becoming, the flourishing of potentials immanent to the existing terrain of empire and globalisation – love is thus a power that inscribes itself beyond the logics and axioms of capitalism.

It must however be highlighted that what Hardt (and by extension Negri) attempt to articulate is a love freed from *corruption* – such a corruption does not effect the essence of love but rather the way it is practically applied or the way in which it is confined in territorialised or institutional frameworks, such as the nation or the family. We might say that Hardt follows Spinoza's definition of love – 'love is nothing but Joy with the accompanying idea of an external cause', which may through vacillating affects or thoughts in the mind, and through institutionalisation, become mired in fear or confusion thus becoming more akin to hate – 'hate is nothing but sadness with the accompanying idea of an external cause' (1996, p.78). Love is thus often the victim of the inadequate idea, again harking to Spinoza, it easily becomes shrouded in all the mixed feelings and baggage that the world thrusts upon it, and it is only by overcoming this cultural and historical weight, that love might be adequate to the world and able to transform it. A love freed of superstition is more able to imbibe in the creative multiplicities which it inspires, and subsequently allows to flow in a generative proliferation of difference – although, and this is where this thesis differs from the overly affirmative character of Hardt and Negri, it is arguable that rather than love being, in a sense, a purely joyous concept, it inevitably falls foul of sedimentation in Deleuze's parlance – it is desire at the core of love, sublimated desire, which leads to love ending up in a myriad of dead ends. Love can be free, can become more in touch with an adequate conception of itself only if we apply critique to the ways in which it props up identity and is reinforced by systems of identity. Love is not neutral, it is neither good nor bad, it is a particular aspect of human experience, and its radicality lies in the moments when it becomes inhuman to itself, when the habits which had grounded it, when the refrains that had maintained it, are broken from – when disappointment looms, love returns to desire, and the way is opened for a new path, a new map can be drawn for love which no longer gets hung up on habit and pleasure, on recollection and memory, but rather touches the future. We shall mostly focus in the first

section of this chapter on the theoretical ideas espoused in Hardt and Negri's collaborative text *Commonwealth* (2009) – whereby love corrupted comes to the fore, with a particular emphasis added on the identarian dimension of love that will be supplemented with a discussion of Freud. The second section will examine in more detail the connection between love and property – incorporating the writings of Alexandra Kollontai who played an important role in Hardt's writing on love. Both sections allow for us to see how love, which is typically confined to the family, is in actuality always a collective process – love in the family has always had a role to play in propping up an identarian, and later with capitalism, a proprietarian conception of the socius. In this way politics is never separable from love, since love determines the very borders of what it is to be a political subject in most states.

6.1. Love beyond Identity

Hardt and Negri articulate in their collaborative work *Commonwealth* the necessity of reimagining love, they argue that love must be repositioned beyond the private and situated in the position of the Common as that which rearticulates both private and public – a rearticulation which is deeply political. Love for them is already at work within the world, it is central aspect of many collective activities from caring for the weak, vulnerable or disenfranchised, it also works in the act of building community especially in those areas that have been left behind as capitalist modernity has progressed – love is a thus a core means by which the poor or the exploited ensure their continued survival despite all the suffering and harm that imperialism, racism, sexism, homophobia, or exploitation inflicts upon those not in a position of pre-eminence within the ideological or hegemonic fields or material production or discourse. In this sense, love obfuscates the prevalence of material lack, by supplanting it with a richness that is affective – or it might be said, love imbricates itself beyond material production and instead is situated within the processes of biopolitical production that define immaterial or post-Fordist production. We might even say that social media and network technologies have adapted to this reality to parasitise and valorise our collective practises grounded in love – our care, our communication, our need for sociality becoming another means by which capitalism furthers its reach, although it cannot fully commodify love since ultimately we already possess the means of production that creates love, love being an aspect of our very being, an element that is created immanently within our subjective interrelation with the world. Hardt and Negri, like Badiou believe love needs reinventing, and like Badiou they do not believe in the romantic fashion

that love is purely an event which afflicts us (it may begin as this but that is not its only form of expression), which renders us passive – for them love is an active process. As they write ‘It does not simply happen to us, as if it were an event that mystically arrives from elsewhere. Instead it is an action, a biopolitical event, planned and realized in common’ (2009, p.180). In a practical sense, love is therefore fundamentally imbricated in the activity of collective practise – it is what drives us to form bonds of solidarity and care beyond the field of capitalist valorisation, and this activity cannot be thought of being either private or public, it is common – it is a plentiful presence within the social world. In the philosophical sense, they also stress that love is creative in regard to Being – love in effect creates the world and allows for its further proliferation in all the areas of sociality previously outlined. Or as they say ‘Being, in other words, is not some immutable background against which life takes place but is rather a living relation in which we constantly have the power to intervene. Love is an ontological event in that it marks a rupture with what exists and the creation of the new. Being is constituted by love’ (ibid, p.181). There is a great deal of crossover here then with Badiou, although for Hardt and Negri (in a Deleuzian fashion) – love is less of a subtraction from the world, and rather its immanent potential that is always expressed whether the situation demands it or not, or in other words love is a *power* within the field of *Power*. Their line of thinking in this regard is heavily indebted to Spinoza – since love for them is a joy with the recognition of an external cause, and since it brings joy, we are inevitably prompted to attempt to perpetuate, extend, and repeat this process thus further expanding the field of love. By engaging in loving activities, we are in effect both actively enhancing our bodies and minds, we are finding for ourselves the means to increase our power within the realm of social production.

This then leads us to the risks or potential for ambivalence within love – its potential for corruption, a corruption which synonymous with the shift from a love of the common which extends itself infinitely to a *love of the Same* which restricts its capacity to proliferate and produce – we might say the first is a love in touch with desire, whilst the latter has done a death to desire. This kind of love is found in the narrow injunction to love thy neighbour – this injunction only supposing that we should love that which remains close and familiar. To quote them in full:

‘Family love—the pressure to love first and most those within the family to the exclusion or subordination of those outside—is one form of identitarian love. Race love and nation love,

or patriotism, are similar examples of the pressure to love most those most like you and hence less those who are different. Family, race, and nation, then, which are corrupt forms of the common, are unsurprisingly the bases of corrupt forms of love. From this perspective we might say that populisms, nationalisms, fascisms, and various religious fundamentalisms are based not so much on hatred as on love—but a horribly corrupted form of identitarian love.’ (Ibid, p.182).

In effect what all these forms of love do is crystalise and homogenise a sense of community that cannot countenance the idea of proliferating difference – love must then operate within a self-sustaining and autopoietic system of established identities, love becomes cut into different segmentary arrangements that ossify and constrict its capacity to imbibe in difference. To carry this point forward, we can also assert that the love found within the family has an explicit connection to nationalistic or patriotic forms of identification – with the role of the father having a privileged positionality within the constituent hierarchy of the family. To make a genealogical connection, we can trace nationalist love to the patriarchal societies of Rome and Greece. Caspar Hirschi makes this connection quite explicit when he argues that

*‘In ancient Greece and Rome, the principal addressee of patriotic propaganda was the **kyrios** or **pater familias**, the male head of the family, who bore the legal responsibility for the well-being of his dependants and for the defence of his house and land; in Roman law, the patriarch had almost unrestricted power over his children, wife and slaves (**patria potestas**). In most Greek cities, despite considerable constitutional differences, the heads of every household (**oikos**) formed the backbone of the political community (**polis**).’ (2012, p.52).*

The construction of a unified community therefore was connected to the family – the polity in a sense mirrored quite directly the relations of power that were established both culturally and in law within the family. Laura Kipinis has also highlighted in a similar vein here that marriage has always in many ways served as a proto form of government whilst also ensuring the ability of governments to provide a justification for their continued involvement in our private lives. As she says, ‘marriage has long provided a metaphor for fidelity to the nation... the marriage bond providing a convenient symbol for the social contract that produces government’ (2003, p.168). There is also here another way in which familial and patriotic discourse are intertwined: *emotional investment*. It was through the construction of a kind of familial *civitas* that ancient civilisations could ensure

unity – political discourse often evoking the sense of duty to nation as akin to duty to family, and in this way in times of war or in times of unrest the polity could remain cohesive and project itself against threats, whether they be internal or external. What occurred in ancient Rome was the appropriation of *patria propria*, love of one's parents, and its conversion into *patria communis*, a form of love for the community at large that inscribed duty to the public as its primary virtue. The replication of familial discourse not only allowed for the demarcation of responsibilities, but it also allowed for the perpetuation of a kind fear of the outside – it in effect privatised love within the confines of the community lest that community disintegrate. Love was therefore combined with fear, this fear was both real and imagined, the ancient polity was indeed often under threat from foreign invaders, but this fear in its imagined form was also a useful means of control. The nation can thus use the family as a model for what it means to be an appropriate subject, defining that which is against the family or nation as an abject other, a threat, an obscene intrusion, a corrupting influence. Love is an age-old means of securing the boundaries of difference, love being the privilege of the accepted subject, whilst the abject other was deprived of love, being only a vehicle for sexual avidity (think of the racialised other) or of hate and violence (the alien denizen or foreign other), love thus serving as a vital discursive means of securing national boundaries within and without (see Macharia; 2015). At times, this discourse of the family and love, exemplified in the writings and oratory of Cicero, would articulate a vision of the nation as a dignified but vulnerable woman, a motherland, which it was up to the men of the patria to protect – we can thus see here again the replication of patriarchal norms in the service of nation building, but also the closure of love within a narrow identitarianism which also perpetuated the subordination of women within its discursive ambit. Patriotic love also articulates within its discursive frame the virtues of service which in its most extreme sense manifested as an emphasis on self-sacrifice or self-abandonment. Such a logic allows for the obfuscation of the nation's role in imperial conquest, or as Hirschi articulates 'a country's own aggression appears as self-defence and foreign self-defence as aggression, and thus a patriot is always in the right' (2012, p.61). In another vein, patriotic love also obscures the way in which politicians may use the apparatuses of power for self-gain, since they must always depict themselves as servants to the *civitas* and as such representatives of the Good who's work defies the forces of Evil. This kind of patriotic love would carry on beyond the fall of Rome, being sustained by the appropriation of Roman Law and classical writings which were then used

by Kings and ruling elites of the then emergent nation states⁴³ – this especially taking force with the religious wars of the late middle-ages and the then weakened role of the Catholic Church. The modern nation state was then in part predicated on a bricolage of modern and ancient patriotic discourse, and as was to become clear with the calamitous excesses of the 19th and 20th centuries, used to justify war, imperialism, and genocide.

Freud's essay *Mass Psychology and Analysis of the 'I'* (1921) also indicates this fundamental connection between familial love and its extrapolation into the other fields, namely the mass, but also the Church or the Army, all of which operate under the principal of *suggestibility* whereby libidinal energy is channelled to some purpose outside of its usual sexual orientation. In his discussion, the Church and Army are regarded as *artificial masses*, because unlike the family or the tribal horde these masses are a conglomeration of non-identical individuals, they in effect represent a non-homogenous mass that must be unified through *illusion*, although both are alike to the degree that they are institutional but also because they gravitate around some patriarchal figure whether that be Christ or the Commander. The illusion here is one of love whereby it is supposed that the figurehead of these institutions loves the members of the mass equally, an identical love for everyone. As he writes 'Everything depends on that illusion; were it to be dropped, church and army alike would, in so far as their respective external compulsions permitted, disintegrate immediately' (2004, p.46). It is this reciprocal love that constitutes the members of the mass as a brotherhood or fraternity – it is through virtue of this love that conflicts within the mass are mitigated and difference submerged within the indifferent principal of love – in this regard, Freud sees such institutions as directly mirroring the family, as the head of the institution operates like the Father whilst the constituent members are his children: 'in these two artificial masses, each individual has this libidinal tie, on the one hand to the leader (Christ, the commander) and on the other to the rest of the individuals in the mass' (ibid, p.47). If however this illusion is shattered then panic and fear ensue, destroying the unity of the mass and leading to its dissolution. We might say for instance such a panic sets in during war when the commander is too belligerent, forcing his troops to carry out acts that lead to mass casualties, the illusion of love becomes destabilised and doubt

⁴³ The emergence of conservative thought apropos Edmund Burke is also indicative of this trend to meld the hierarchies and bonds of family and state into a unified identarian love 'in this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood; binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties; adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections; keeping inseparable, and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars' (2008, p.20)

creeps in – does the father really have my best interests at heart? Likewise with the Church, if the commandments of Christ are seen to be too inflexible or if the priestly caste is seen to be corrupt or indulgent, then again, the feeling of betrayal seeps in. These masses when unified can inflict immense harm on outsiders – but if the threat is felt within, then there can be an even more intense slippage into internal violence that effectively renders the mass cannibalistic. For Freud then, the mass is simply the extension of infantile *identification* which normally occurs between child and parent towards some new external figure – *object cathexis*, once the privileged relation between family members becomes a social relation. However, it should be stressed that this attachment is felt so fiercely because identification works by the process of internalising the father within as the ideal of the ego – the child in effect wants to embody the virtues of the father, and so love in the mass is partly a narcissistic investment whereby the individual wants to imbibe in the greatness of the commander or leader and it is this identification that links the members of the mass. However, this logic is also found in other less institutionalised masses, since all masses according to Freud operate under the principal of identification. As he says, a mass is essentially a ‘number of individuals who have set one and the same object in place of their ‘I’-ideal and who have consequently identified with one another in terms of their ‘I’ (ibid, p.69). Freud echoing other crowd theorists refers to these more general masses as being guided by a Herd mentality or *Herd Instinct* which is equal parts love and fear – love for the other members, and fear of the vulnerability that dissolution of the herd would entail (the logic of abjection persists here) – although Freud unlike other thinkers disavows the notion of the Herd (a leaderless mass) for the Horde, since all masses must have a father whether real or imagined. However, Freud also supplements his argument by saying that what prevents this horde from fighting over the leader (or ideal) is the recognition that individual possession of the love object might in fact lead to the object’s destruction as others would end up vying for the same object. The sexual feeling which initially provided impetus for cathexis is thus sublimated into an aim inhibited love that helps avoid destruction. Ultimately mass psychology for Freud is an uncanny recurrence of the primal scene of civilisation – the animalistic horde returns in the form of the mass. To quote him in full:

‘So the uncanny, compulsive nature of mass formation evident in its suggestion phenomena can no doubt rightly be traced to the fact it has its origin in the primal horde. The leader of the mass is still the feared primal father, the mass still wishes to be dominated by absolute power, it is in the highest degree addicted to authority... The primal

father is the mass ideal that dominates the 'I' in place of the 'I'-ideal. Hypnosis has every right to be described as a 'mass of two'. There is no further need to define suggestion as a conviction based not on perception and thinking but on erotic attachment' (ibid, pp.81-82).

This discussion therefore lends itself to Hardt and Negri's understanding of the love of the Same, it demonstrates how love has been used as a means of control but also to isolate one mass from another. Love of the Same has its roots in the familial setting, it extends patriarchy from the intimacy of the home and out into the social world – there is no disconnect between private and public in love, with this love being invested in the nationalist project or in the extension of the Oedipal relation into cultural or statist institutions.

However, we must disagree with Freud that all love must fall foul of the Oedipal drama – something which has already been seen in our discussion of Deleuze and of Badiou, love can also embrace alterity as its fundamental principal without recourse to guilt or patriarchal identification (even if those paradigmatic elements have defined a great deal of our history). Hardt and Negri have also indicated a counter history to Amor Patri in their work *Multitude* following the writings of Ernst Kantorowicz 'When Kantorowicz scratches beneath the surface of the notion of love of one's country, he does not find nationalism but rather republican *caritas* or sympathetic fellow-feeling, which transmutes into amor humanitatis, a love of humanity, exceeding any and all nations' – there thus a latent potential in patriotic feeling which has been distorted by militarism (2004, p.50). Nationalism guided by the principal of love therefore does not always have to completely close itself off from difference, examples used by Hardt Negri are the Sanculottes at Valmy or the Vietnamese peasantry in their anticolonial struggle, but we might also extend this to many other movements of self-determination that also developed bonds of solidarity with other movements across the world – their resistance although beginning as an assertion of identity became, through a more expansive sense of collective struggle, a love broader than merely a love for their neighbour but rather a love that extended to strangers in unknown lands, these disparate movements recognising that each struggle was motivated by love, their particular love resonated with a more universalist demand for political justice that cut across identitarian differences, the particular through resonance formulating a universalism guided in part by love. This expansive concept of love as a political concept can only instantiate itself if the parochialism of the family matrix is superseded, love within

the limits of the family confines love to only that which is familiar and through its familiarity can be captured within the logic of property and stratified under patriarchal conceptions of hierarchy which then becomes easily captured within the state form to justify tyranny, xenophobia, and imperialism. But as we have already highlighted, it is often only when identitarian love is disappointed that new possibilities for love can be found – this process can occur through unpredictable slippages, or through the fostering of political critique of existing hegemonic discourses that couch themselves in familialist loving rhetoric. And on a last note, in this regard, we should also be wary of assuming that purportedly progressive shifts in the realm of the state towards minoritarian inclusion demonstrate a genuine move towards universality – since we may for instance find ourselves stuck in a situation of *Homonationalism*⁴⁴, as outlined by Jasbir Puar (2013). Under such a situation the further integration of sexual and gender minorities might itself help prop up a regime of imperialistic abjection towards supposedly non-inclusive others (typically the Muslim Other) who does not neatly conform to the dictates of western feminism and LGBTQ+ inclusion. This is not to say intolerance should be favoured, but rather simply to recognise the inherent plasticity of statist identitarianism to co-opt progressivism for its own imperial agenda. In this way, a Deleuzian ethical critique of identitarian love does not normatively hold to an essentialist logic of the minoritarian subject, but rather hopes to regularly and immanently critique the subject of love in all its varied manifestations within the segments of the state and identity more broadly.

Carrying this discussion forward, Hardt and Negri stress that identitarian love is quite often supplemented by the romantic conception of love popularised by Hollywood. In the romantic conception what we find is a love that is completely disinvested of its radical potential for social transformation since it can only understand love from the confines of the amorous couple – this kind of love is corrupting because it ossifies love’s capacity for difference by forcing it to operate under the principal of unification. Unity in love is essentially the supposition that love is the process of ‘making the many into one, making the different into the same’ – the love of the couple therefore reduces the two into the one whereby the individuals in the couple can only be fulfilled by finding the other that completes them (2009, p.183). Without this Other, the lover will forever remain unfulfilled

⁴⁴ Homonationalism should not be confused entirely with *pink washing* whereby politicians, institutions (particularly the police and military), and corporations use the moniker of inclusivity to distract attention away from their less than progressive policies – pink washing is a part of this process, but homonationalism speaks more to the malleability of relations of abjection.

and incomplete, doomed to live in a condition of dissatisfaction; this drive for unity identifiable in romantic discourse is easily discernible in patriotic discourse that assumes that an individual is nothing without the nation that gives them purpose and identity, or in religious discourse that assumes that to love God or to imbibe in God's love one must also give up their individuality and autonomy – the religious mass submerging all difference in divine unity (We have already problematised this in the preceding discussion of Badiou). All of this is to say that love as unity essentially renders us passive and supplicant, obscuring the potential for tyranny, hierarchy, and dogmatism. Hardt and Negri express the necessity of surmounting this parochial understanding of love:

'Sameness and unity involve no creation but mere repetition without difference. Love should be defined, instead, by the encounters and experimentation of singularities in the common, which in turn produce a new common and new singularities. Whereas in the ontological context we characterized the process of love as constitution, here in a political context we should emphasize its power of composition. Love composes singularities, like themes in a musical score, not in unity but as a network of social relations' (ibid, p.184).

Love reduced to sameness or to unity limits love's political potential, or in other words completely divests love of politics, production, creation, and invention – love is not a personal category, and by understanding the way it is inhibited we can see how our intimate and affective relations have a direct effect on wider social and political processes. We must then also from this discussion emphasise, as we have done in other chapters, that love need not be reduced to negativity or the relation between identities – if love is connected to identity, then it is likely to be woven into fascistic discourses that reduce the field of alterity to friend and enemy, and thus love can only operate through a kind of perverse hatred. Hardt in his *Essay for Love or Money* (2011) builds on this theme by quoting Hannah Arendt's critique of love, which for her 'is not only apolitical but antipolitical, perhaps the most powerful of all antipolitical human forces' (Cited in Hardt; 2011, p.678). Love's antipolitical potential is fostered in its reduction to negativity, sameness, and unity – since it might simply cut off individuals from furthering bonds of community and political solidarity beyond the narrow confines of what is considered palatable to identity. Love under these principles does not foster communication but merely narcissism, a love that is only capable of loving a homogenous identity without any encounter or negotiation with difference. Politics does not have to be purely understood as the interrelation and conflict of *Friend and Enemy* that Schmitt envisioned, but rather

can also be about the building of bonds that acknowledge the reality of a common world, a world that is for everyone, a world that can be constructively engaged with by everyone. The world and its products are initially open to everyone, and its only through the development of various hierarchies and institutions of power – namely property – that this world is made to seem as if it is not for everyone. Love offers us a means to recognise this truth, since it is a resource and a process that does not reduce itself to lack but rather affirms infinity as its limit – there is no shortage of love, and if we feel that there is a lack in love it is because we have been induced to believe it is so through the entrenchment of those corrupting principles of sameness and unity.

6.2. Love beyond Property

We now turn more explicitly to the individual works of Michael Hardt – who has not only stressed the corrupting influences of identarian and romantic conceptions of love, but also the fundamental cleavage of property or property relations which, again, finds its root in familial relations. The first instance by which property as a social category pervert or distorts love's potential is through the interlinking of exchange and possession as being essential to human relations. The supposition that we can in fact own our beloved, or that the romantic couple is site of exchange, of the transfer of goods for the purposes of the satisfaction of wants and needs, leads to a love becoming a kind of solipsism and subordinate to a tangential hedonic calculus. If the beloved cannot be possessed in their entirety, they must be deficient, cruel, or unfaithful to the love of the couple – such an account is crude, but touches the core of love as property, as a relation of domination – there is no understanding that love is question of *being* rather than *having*. Hardt follows Marx by supposing that monetary relations have a direct impact on love relations since we assume that we can directly buy love – that we can use money as the universal means of equivalence to buy or procure our relations with others. Money therefore obfuscates human relations and distorts the way in which love is productive, or as Hardt writes 'One problem with money... and with the way it focuses our lives on "having" is not only that it distracts us from our being in society and the world but also and more importantly that it causes us to neglect the development of our senses and our powers to create social bonds' (2011, p.679). Money in effect reduces everything particular to an indifferent axiom of numerical worth thus divesting social relations of their qualities in particular contexts – if labour can be bought so can love, in this way social bonds are reduced to nothing but exchange and possession and the essential essence of love is obliterated in indifference.

Marx writes that 'If we assume man to be man and his relation to the world to be a human one, then love can be exchanged only for love, trust for trust, and so on' (cited in Hardt, *ibid*). This however for Hardt is the wrong position to take – since it again replicates the notion of exchange, an exchange of love for love – it devalues love by assuming that love must be reciprocated. If we quickly make a rather Derridean inflection, is love really diminished when it is unrequited? Is love not more potent when expressed without the consolation of the possibility for it to be returned? Love just as with forgiveness, or the gift, should be offered freely, otherwise it is offered insincerely. The idea that love must be given in return also leads love to become akin to consumption – I must in effect possess my beloved, and they must love me unceasingly until I am done loving them. The act of loving in a Deleuzian ethical fashion must stand by itself, without recourse to reciprocation – when love fails, this opens the space to desire, and love can become again. Property distorts this potential by fostering a selfish conception of love, and if love is construed as a fundamental social bond, then this distortion effects all of our relations. To move beyond property relations would then allow for the transformation of love, a transformation of all social relations – or perhaps we might say that to transform our conception of love we might also transform our social relations and the rule of property, we might even say that a love reimagined allows us to reimagine society. Marx supposes that Communism, not as a crude levelling of differences under the rule of equality, but rather as the uplifting of individual potentials would in effect lead to a *new sensorium* – communism would allow us to sense, feel, think, and love differently, something that property relations have thus far prevented or distorted. Hardt argues from this that:

'Communism can thus be conceived as the creation of a new love, which operates not by reproducing the same or unifying society in indifferent harmony—that would be crude communism—but, rather, by increasing our power to create and maintain relations with each other and the world. Under the rule of property, in which property structures and maintains social order and bonds, Marx claims that the power of the love and the other senses cannot be developed. And correspondingly to achieve a society beyond the rule of property those human powers would have to be transformed and expanded' (*ibid*, p.681).

What follows from this then is love must firstly be understood as a social relation that can be directly impacted by prevalent forms of economic, political, and ideological systems. Secondly, this system is not immutable but historically determined – it can change. And lastly, love might offer us a useful means to begin probing how the different institutions or

systems that define society can be undermined or reimagined – a new love for a new society is conceivable. Hardt’s understanding of love is useful for directly exposing the facetious notion that love has no connection to broader social processes, or that it is in fact not a concept worthy for politics. We will now turn to briefly to the work of Alexandra Kollontai, a feminist Marxist scholar, who inspired Hardt’s other important essay on the topic of love *Red Love* (2017).

Alexandra Kollontai served as People’s Commissar for Welfare in Lenin’s government from 1917-1918 making her the first woman in history to be an official member of a governing cabinet. Her writings explore and problematise the role of women within society, and the possibilities of love once freed from the strictures of Bourgeois morality and capitalist exploitation. For instance, her essay *Love and the New Morality* (1911) whereby she execrates the role of property, of patriarchal marriage, of prostitution in undermining the capacity for a new set of uplifting and emancipatory values to take hold. She states for instance that ‘Legal marriage is based on two equally false principles: that marriage should be forever and that the partners belong to each other and are each other’s property’ (Marxists.org; 1911). Her contention is that if human beings are capable of change, a change which occurs as we age, develop, and grow, then marriage is always likely to fail to encompass this change – it is an unbreakable contract that operates under the pretence that individuals remain static. Marriage forces people to make too weighty a decision too early, it already sets too high an expectation on love, and sets love up for inevitable disappointment. This problem within marriage is further deepened by the role of cultural and social coercion – if marriage is meant to last forever, predicated on a contractual and literal declaration of everlasting fidelity – then it forces those within its grasp to feel guilty if they begin to doubt their decision. It makes us blame ourselves for the failure of marriage when in fact it is marriage which is to blame for this failing – this is especially worse for women, as it often patriarchal society which gives greater freedom to men to indulge in their physical urges outside of marriage whilst women are reviled for infidelity. However, Kollontai also argues that this dimension of marriage also obscures the material conditions that underlay the institution of marriage, the myth of happiness in marriage obscures the property relations which it entrenches – since marriage is ultimately a means to clearly define ties of inheritance or of ownership of familial property. Beyond this, the notion of strict monogamic marriage also consumes the time of the couple, it eats into and renders your time the time of your partner, and as such we can draw a direct parallel to labour relations whereby the wage labourer gives away their time to the capitalist – the

scope of freedom is thus not merely physically circumscribed, but also temporally. Property love destroys the time we have for ourselves and renders us always on the clock so to speak – and again for women this is often even more intensified since they are also able to gestate children, their time being given over not to just to their husbands but also over to gestational labour and child rearing.

Kollontai dismisses prostitution as a practise that objectifies women, but also desensitises men to intimacy – it reduces erotic feeling to mere exchange. She intuits the connection between the brothel and familial life – that the man who partakes regularly in such practices replicates the relations of the brothel within the familial home, treating his wife or partner as an object which he can possess and discard at will. Sex reduced to exchange also allows in her view a false separation of sex and love, when the two must always be connected to the degree that sex without any hint of love is more akin to violence than intimacy. We might even here reflect on the contemporary role of pornography is sedimenting problematic notions of what constitutes sexual intimacy, with Amia Srinivasan arguing that porn ‘etches deep grooves in the psyche, forming powerful associations, strengthened through repetition, reinforce and reproduce the social meaning assigned by patriarchy to sexual difference’ (2021, p.64). Furthermore, we must also fundamentally acknowledge that since the majority of porn is hosted on the internet, it is fuelled and shaped by algorithmic recursion, thus solidifying its inclination to cater to the immediacy and domineering dimension of male desire rather than to undermine it. This is not to deny the benefits or the essential need for a sex positive attitude when it comes to not demonising sex and sex work, but we cannot ignore the ways in which the existing infrastructures that facilitate pornography and sex work nonetheless limit the radicality of any politics of sex and love. Power persists in these regimes even as we fight against it. However, carrying this forward, we must also say that Kollontai’s early writing do not tend to see the nuance of the sex positive position, and thus tend to condemn unduly women who engage in prostitution (even if she concedes that they often act out of necessity). Her key point though remains: free flowing sexual intimacy in a capitalist society always harbours a potential objectification and male domination, but in a transformed society, a communist society, predicated upon the values of solidarity, equality, and self-fulfilment, the indulgence of sexual needs without the necessity of imbricating oneself in long lasting love relationships is less egregious or harmful. The point is more that sex if it is treated as something purely of exchange is likely to distort other intimate relations and thus degrade the capacity for both long lasting intimacy and fulfilling sexual relations without

complication. We are thus again seeing here the direct connection between private and public relations or social ties – if the husband can reduce his wife to a mere object that fulfils his needs rather than as end in herself, an end of mutual flourishing, then this is likewise congruent with the hyper individualism of capitalist society that prevents the creation of community, of bonds of solidarity or care. And again, we can also trace in here Marx’s supposition that capitalist society deadens our capacity for feeling – it reduces the complexity of human emotion and renders life a monotonous to and fro of pleasure seeking that invariably renders life unfulfilling since it cannot imbibe in more spiritual or intellectual pursuits, it actively fosters an inhibiting subjectivity of mere pleasure seeking as mechanical repetition. This defines in essence the political necessity for transforming social relations – we may however be more reticent than Kollontai in thinking that communism would lead to some utopian condition for love, freed of all complication, but we can nonetheless say that communism would certainly provide a new set of possibilities for love.

Kollontai also in her commentary on love within Bourgeois society also acknowledges that a supposedly free love comes with its own limitations – something with relevance our reflections on the Hippie experimentation in this regard. As she argues

‘A ‘free relationship’ does not succeed because it is a reflection of the total situation. The man of today begins a ‘free’ relationship with his psyche already deformed by false and unhealthy ideas about morality. He has already been educated on the one hand by legal marriage and on the other, by prostitution. The ‘free union’ inevitably comes up against two obstacles: our inability to love (an inability that is the essence of our atomised individualistic world) and the absence of the necessary leisure time for truly emotional experience. Modern man has no time to ‘love’. In a society based on competition, in a society where the battle for existence is fierce and everyone is involved in a race for profit, for a career, or for just a crust of bread, there is no room left for the cult of the demanding and fragile Eros’ (Marxists.org, 1911)

This in embryo is a fundamental critique of those who suppose that they can simply practise an emancipatory politics of love by not abiding by conventional standards of what a relationship must be – whether that be open relationships or polyamory. If we do not situate love within the situation, if we suppose its neutrality beyond the realm of discourse, culture, patriarchy, or capitalism, then we will likely replicate all the ills of the existing understanding of love. For instance, Kimberley Kreutzer has commented upon her own

time in supposedly radical leftist activist groups, and how men often advocated for polyamory even more vociferously than women in a supposed attempt to undermine the monogamic conceptions of love which were associated with conservatism. In her experience polyamory merely facilitated male desire even more avidly 'In polyamory, instead of being owned by one man, we are owned by many' (2004, p.41). By engaging in a political and philosophical critique of love and its various conceptions we are engaging in the vital work of love's renewal – but this does not mean prescribing how love must be practised in a totalising way, it does not mean simply fighting monogamy because it was the norm of our parents. This was one of the great failings of the countercultural practise of free love as we discussed earlier – which often resulted in rape, in sexual and amorous violence, in misogyny, in unwanted pregnancies that often-left women isolated and men off the hook for their own actions. In regards to the argument presented here, there is also the likelihood that the category of property will remain a corrupting influence on free love by still rendering the couple in a possessive or purely pleasure based relation – and as such any attempt to practise alternative forms of relationship will still lead to men (and women) living in contradiction – how many men in open relationships ⁴⁵with women have actually used this openness to obscure the emotions of the relationship, denigrating the emotions of their partners so that they may act with impunity? This is a fundamental problem, touched upon by Kollontai and Kreutzer, one which stems from the lack of critical engagement with the concept of love. On top of this, if the relations of power are not dealt with, if one partner owns the material means for independence and the other does not, then again love will be dealt another blow, it will again fall victim to a form of economic violence that uplifts one partner at the expense of the other. For Kollontai this leads to the necessity to reimagine love, to reinvent it beyond capitalist social relations, but also to ensure this project of reinvention is sensitive to the issue of gendered power, that society ensures the full autonomy of both sexes whilst also in particular ensuring that women who are prime figures of gestational labour and childrearing are protected and catered for within a community of care with the allowance of what she refers to as '*aid stations*', essentially social bodies that will offer women material and moral support throughout their lives (Marxists.org, 1911). Free love cannot succeed without this reinvention of love at a

⁴⁵ Just to be clear, I am not suggesting polyamory is bad – we must recognise that we cannot simply swap one form of relationship for another and assume that the solution will readily annihilate all problems. Polyamory and monogamy both confront and navigate patriarchy and this inevitable generates tensions.

conceptual level, but it also cannot succeed without social support and institutional backing.

For Hardt, this kind of critique provides an essential resource for conceiving of a *Red Love* – a love that is vested with socially transformative potential – it would undermine juridical, normative, and statist systems that circumscribe the capacity for individuals to form lasting relations of care. Hardt is sensitive to the fact that one cannot simply in the classic Marxist mode reconfigure the economic base and assume the superstructure will follow, what is essential here is that the overcoming of property relations is impossible without also transforming social relations. Following from Kollontai, Hardt recognises that love is not an a-historical category, it functions differently within different historical epochs. Feudal societies for instance often gave a great deal of autonomy to the aristocracy, although this autonomy was circumscribed by certain conventions – the Knight for instance could rape a peasant girl, or a lady indulge her sexual whims with a servant, but the relations between Knights and Ladies was meant to be strictly platonic apropos the practise of courtly love. The family in feudal society was embedded in the hierarchies of nobility and patrimonialism, the Church operating as the ideological foundation for this kind of structure – love was rendered a divided category, a division that separated the needs of the flesh from the needs of the soul, with marriage being simply a practical rather than loving institution. However, in the Bourgeois society of early capitalist modernity love took on a different form which attempted to overcome the division of flesh and soul, making love a central facet of marriage. This reorientation for Kollontai was in part connected to the demands of capital, whereby the family would also begin to serve as a vital vehicle for the accumulation of capital – the wife would then not only be a vehicle for the reproduction of children but also a means by which the husband could better manage the expenses and accrual of capital. In her view, it was then essential that familial relations be strengthened under the pretences of a new ideological construction of love, or as she writes

‘With the establishment of capitalist relations and of the bourgeois social system, the family in order to remain stable, had to be based not only on economic considerations but also on the co-operation of all its members, who had a joint interest in the accumulation of wealth. And co-operation could serve as a more powerful factor when husband and wife and parents and children were held together by strong emotional and psychological bonds’ (Marxists.org; 1923).

Love in capitalist society therefore becomes a fundamental ideological edifice, it obfuscates the real relations of society and family for the furtherance of capital accumulation. Property becomes the underlying principal of love even if it's expressed content is romantic – this then brings love into conflict with itself, it is mired in a whole set of ideological presuppositions that the loving couple may not be fully aware of. The simple pronouncement often expressed by romantics of “I am yours” and “You are mine” although perhaps stated with authentic affection and good faith nonetheless comes with the fundamental presumptions of a property love, a love of possession. And so even if today there is less of the overt cynical use of love as a vehicle for the proliferation of property, say in arranged marriage, there is still nonetheless a certain un-avowed logic of property which undermines love from within, which gains its fullest expression perhaps in the assumption that the loving couple is an isolated unit severed from society, that it remains a complete entity. What this does is sever the couple from the bonds of community, but it also renders lovers as partial individuals completely dependent on their partner. This produces a real condition of unfreedom, or as Hardt comments ‘All the existing and potential aspects of yourself that do not function as complement to the other – all the pieces that do not fit in the couple puzzle – must be set aside or subordinated’ (2017, p.784). Property love therefore is isolating and subjectively stifling – it operates under the presumption that, like the sovereign individual of liberal thought, the couple is autonomous relative to society, an extended egotism ‘masquerading as altruism’ (ibid). On top of this, property love corrupts the realm child rearing since it assumes that only care and consideration should be given to one’s own children, with the children of the family being treated as akin to personal property, the nuclear family being in actuality an *Anti-social Family*, one supportive of capitalist individualism and patriarchal subordination (see Barrett & McIntosh; 2015). This therefore severs children from their communities, whilst also often rendering women in the position of having to bear the larger responsibility for childcare alone. Such an arrangement has not always been present, pre-capitalist societies often having a more expansive understanding of what was required in child rearing – this is not to romanticise them, but rather to acknowledge that the current prevalent normative assumptions surrounding the family are largely a consequence of wider trends in the evolution of capitalist individualism. Furthermore, if we pose the overcoming of the *Anti-social Family* as fundamental to reimagining love, this does not necessarily mean submerging the family into a kind of collective monism, but rather the supposition perhaps of a ‘care commune based on comradeship, a world, sustained by

kith and kind more than by kin' (Lewis; 2019, p.26) which by extension would require 'inventing social institutions that allow and encourage us to love and care for others in the widest possible frame, developing a wide variety of social bonds' (Hardt, 2017, p.789). Such a progression would thus thwart the hegemony of property love and reconfigure our psycho-social conceptions of what it means to love and be loved – a love freed from the ideology of the family is thus an essential step in breaking love out of the morosity of property relations.

However, we should give pause here to further reflect on marriage as an institution since has regularly cropped up as a focal point for reinforcing patriarchal or statist domination. Historically marriage was indeed an institution principally driven towards reinforcing patriarchal familial relations and securing ties of inheritance. Marriage today though is a much more differentiated institution (at least within many western states), divorce and marriage law having altered significantly within the last two centuries – for instance, women have the capacity to secure no-fault divorces and inheritance tends to be less patriarchally divided within the family. Some liberal advocates for marriage highlight that because these reforms, we can arguably see marriage as a socially beneficial institution because it enables greater legal recognition and state benefits to couples, helps protect children and dependents through legal clarity, and with the shift to inclusivity of marriage status ensured that same-sex couples can garner many more of the benefits traditionally associated with opposite-sex couples (see Hartley & Watson; 2012). Indeed, one does not need to normatively advocate for marriage to recognise its existing benefits within a statist paradigm that confers greater legal protection and legitimacy on couples that have signed onto state sanctioned monogamy and fidelity. Queer and feminist scholars recognise this as one of the greater dilemmas of liberation politics. Since from a pragmatic perspective marriage is enticing – whilst nonetheless still holding the potential to entrench relations of domination. Marriage (even same sex marriage) can render coupledness as static, insular, and possessive, or through legitimating prevalent heterosexist discourses around proper sexual and loving conduct subordinate queer identity. LGBTQ+ subjects fully understand that state recognition holds benefits whilst also potentially being a trap – this trap being the one we all navigate whether straight or queer. This trap can also set minoritarian identities against one another, since those who marry will justify its perpetuation whilst also marginalising those who choose to live differently and thus not derive the legal benefits of marriage. Ann Ferguson articulates this dilemma well:

'we should defend gay marriage as the formal right to access a basic citizen right that if denied keeps lesbians and gays in the position of abject Other. Marrying for some is a way to confirm social standing for their same- sex bodily desires and relational commitments to a loved other. This should be available as an option in the construction of chosen and free social kinship relations. But we must defend a broader vision of queer relational rights for both straights and gays, centred in an ideal of democratic family and chosen kin relationships free of normative prohibitions by the state' (2007, p.54).

If we relate this to a Deleuzian ethical framework, we can recognise that marriage is an institution that should indeed be criticised and problematised – it should be opened to alternative ways of life. In its present form, marriage remains beholden to the state and its determinates of acceptability. By challenging marriage, we also challenge what it means to be a citizen and how we relate to familial, gender, sexual, and love relations. Marriage is the nexus through which tensions in these relations can be exposed, and as such can be ethically reshaped. We must also understand that marriage does not just effect citizens of a state but also those who seek to move between borders – marriage law being one of the ways couples of different nationalities gain recognition. Such couples are heavily scrutinised by the state, having to prove themselves (or doubly so if one or both members of the couple are not white or European of origin) – their love having to be a matter of discernible truth. Marriage thus fosters borders, but this does not stop many from marrying whilst also fighting against that border regime in the name of love. Or as Natasha Lennard has written from the personal experience of marriage and the border regime 'We can hate this, and work to fight against it, while nonetheless appreciating the exigencies of navigating it now. We cannot underestimate the current necessity of state recognition, and what it feels like to obtain it' (2019, p.85). In this way we must take Kollontai's critique of marriage with a greater degree of nuance – we can recognise all the flaws of marriage (and perhaps even monogamy more broadly) whilst nonetheless recognising its pragmatic necessity. From a Deleuzian ethical perspective, this is not a contradictory position to hold, it is a realistic one.

Returning to Hardt, we can see that he situates his own perspective on a love transformed beyond property relations, is in concordance with Kollontai's distinction between *winged eros* and *wingless eros*. In the latter, sexual relations occur on an equal footing divorced from the pretence of reproduction or necessity of sustained emotional attachment – such was the love of intense revolutionary moments when death lingered around every corner.

Wingless eros is thus an eros that grows out of the extremity of circumstance, it bears less of a psychological toll, and inspires small islands of intimacy between comrades who are striving for a better world. However, this Eros is not enough for Kollontai, it still harbours the possibility of a regression to empty exchange or pleasure seeking without end. A winged eros is a more sustainable and enduring set of relations, a condition of a loving which is orientated to the future and not the moment. Kollontai develops a set of principles that must guide this new love:

'1. Equality in relationships an end to masculine egoism and the slavish suppression of the female personality). 2. Mutual recognition of the rights of the other, of the fact that one does not own the heart and soul of the other (the sense of property, encouraged by bourgeois culture). 3. Comradely sensitivity, the ability to listen and understand the inner workings of the loved person (bourgeois culture demanded this only from the woman)'. (Marxists.org; 1923)

Such a concept of love is vested with a comradeship-love, a love sensitive more to interests of the collective rather than the individual. Hardt is very sympathetic to this conceptualisation but to a degree overlooks the moralistic and assertive tone of Kollontai – we might hesitantly say that Kollontai whilst making the right gesture is overly zealous, she pushes love to far in the direction of collectivity. We might then further stress, returning to the concept of the multitude, that a revolutionary love works through singularity, both individual and collective, not giving too much weight to either – the collective cannot legislate entirely for the couple, and the couple cannot assume itself to be an island apart from the collective, rather the loving couple is an assemblage which develops as the interstellar point between these two poles – they in effect, as has been said before, construct a world which also engages and potentially changes the world at large. What is essential is that the bonds of love are allowed to proliferate beyond the confines of the family and the couple, that love is not reduced to the love of the same which operates in valences of identitarianism, unification, or property. For Hardt, a winged eros must allow for new assemblages between people and their communities, new ways of life, it must also accept sexual proliferation or the diversity of homosexual or heterosexual affective modes, and must allow for an enduring capaciousness or a dynamism of relations that pushes against slippages into identity. To achieve such a transformation of love also requires divesting sex of its private individualist quality, it needs to be seen as a social practise that is impacted by broader relations that extend beyond the sphere of the couple. As Hardt

argues 'Only once we demystify and desacralize sex—sweeping away prohibitions and moralisms—can we begin to transform love and realize its social potential as a new form of life composed of multiple bonds, relationships, and modes of attachment' (2017, p.794). In essence, love must always look towards its outside, and in doing so, it can transform the world, Deleuze agrees with Hardt on this central point, that we must be against love to be in favour of love. Although, as a last caveat to this chapter, we must not simply assume deterritorialization for deterritorialization's sake, when we set out to recognise those ways in which love is occluded from changing or transforming itself in the social apparatuses of capture that identitarianism and proprietarianism entail, this does not mean we can assume a perfect love beyond them. Deleuze's ethical position tends to towards desire over love, even if he see love as having a potential which its sedimented forms preclude. The point is to trace those points of capture which prevent love from changing, for change allows for new possibilities. We cannot normatively prescribe what that change must be, for change often in its most radical forms occurs from within the territory of love itself. Pragmatics, rhizomatics, or critique, these are all ways a Deleuzian ethics opens love to the new, they give us the means to chart the contours of power (the state, identity, property etc) in its operation. We can challenge systems of power because they apply to love an extrinsic set of conditions for what love can be, the love of the powerful relies so often upon abjection and domination, upon love as a negativity, upon love as resentment. It is Deleuze (and in this section Hardt, Negri, and Kollontai) who help show us possibilities if it were not so. What kind of love would we choose otherwise?

Conclusion: Against Love? or Loving Differently?

What this thesis has aimed to carry out is a reconceptualization of love and politics from a Deleuzian perspective – focusing principally upon the permutations of subjectivity which cuts across both fields and connects them. This required acknowledging, at least for Deleuze, that everything is undercut by desire and its sedimentation – politics is always a part of love just as love is a part of politics. However, there is also a question that stems from Deleuze’s philosophy of difference and his critique of identity, of Freud, of the capitalist socius: If love is a sedimented form of identity that lends itself to repression, to being whipped up into statist and conservative political projects, then where is the future for love in radical politics? This thesis never aimed to presume love is inherently radical, nor did it wish to prescribe how one must love – but we must recognise that love has always been essential to politics just as politics is essential to love. In both, lines are drawn, identities shaped, and futures imagined – in both there is a sense of what is of value and what should be desired. In a simple fashion the State mirrors the family and the family the State, marriage is akin to the social contract, just as fidelity in love mirrors good political citizenship. But it would be wrong to suggest that by just transforming the family we can in an anarchist sense overcome the state – the point rather is to recognise and problematise how love operates at both the individual and social level, how it gets caught up in regimes of identity and power – to also acknowledge the state and fascist within us. For love is essential to who we are, but it is not purely individual, nor is it truly human. Love is an outgrowth of our collective history – it is a consequence of what Marcuse would refer to as an interplay of ontogenetic and phylogenetic individuation. Marriage, the rituals of courting, the dynamics of families and relationships, the things we find precious and beautiful, the values we hold, the sexual preferences we harbour, none of these are entirely reducible to some biological tendency but rather individuated behaviours and tastes that have developed over time – and they remain overdetermined to allude to Althusser. Love forms a lynchpin for these behaviours and practises, it is a form of attachment that is implanted within us as our desires become sedimented, stuck in sublimation, become diverted. This thesis has traced different versions of love – fascist loves, nationalist loves, propertarian loves, nostalgic loves, melancholic loves etc. All are forms of love in that they are defined by a particular set of attachments, idealisations, and defined by engrained pleasures and habits, fantasies, and memories, although in many ways they intertwine, they are socially pervasive. These loves are inclined towards identity,

towards the preservation of the subject of love, they tend to close off alterity, occlude the possibility for change, and they tend to lead to the entrenchment of prejudice, patriarchy, violence, and mystification. And so, if we are against love from a Deleuzian perspective it is not because love is Evil, but rather because we do not yet know what love is capable of if it is allowed to become something other to itself.

In the first part of this thesis, we unpacked the genesis of love through focusing on the trouble with pleasure. Drawing on Freud and his developmental model, we saw that love is a sublimated form of desire made up of many drives that become love only through repression, dissatisfaction, and infantile disappointment. Love for most of us is always defined by anxiety, we cling to some other person because we fear being alone, because we wish to feel comforted against the vicissitudes of the world, and this is the same anxiety we experience as children. Freud supposes then that love must indeed be a returning to the infantile scene, love is a curative for that which we lack – it is the need to be safe and wanted, the need to be desired or longed for, the need to be held. Although this process itself can become skewed, if we are not cared for as children, or if those around us produce more chaos than stability, then we end up inevitably playing out that same drama in our adult life. Love in this accounting is always simulacral – we act out a shadow of our former anxieties and attachments, in the unconscious hope that we can either find them again and the satisfactions they brought, or in some instances make right on what perhaps was felt of as wrong (if we add a touch of the melancholic here) – and this may lead us to become beholden to others, trapped within love, trapped within our own subjectivity. But Freud's accounting is too deterministic, it does not see that just as we become sedimented individuals and as our desires become sublimated, there is always a failure here, a recurring disappointment. From Deleuze, we might say that love always fails because we are too reliant on desire as lack and identity as fixed – we do return but we always return differently, and who we are or what we must be is never given. Love in the simulacra finds its problem and its solution – love always returns so it can return differently, and in it returning it returns as an event, as a problem, in that it no longer holds sway as identity but rather as difference. In the simulacral retracing we see that love is always chafing at its confinement, and desire rears its polymorphous head. We touched upon Marcuse, in order to see that this process is not simply individual, or reducible to the family, but is rather prevalent in civilisation, and in capitalism. Pleasure is the bastion of conservation, of resistance against change – and in capitalism, this has taken new heights. It is Deleuze that carries love beyond pleasure, beyond the principles that keep it grounded in

recollection and habit – in Deleuze, desire is seen as something that always pushes beyond its confinement, beyond its stratification. Freud established the right set of problems, but it is Deleuze who took desire from its entrapment in lack and the family, and in doing so allowed us to think of love differently.

In part two the insights of chapter one was taken further through examining that other conservative tendency of love – memory, and its preeminent manifestation in nostalgia and melancholy. Love as Freud suggested is driven by recollection, a recollection founded in memory, but memory is not entirely conscious, it is also unconscious, and we must also see that memory is not purely individual but also social, there is such a thing as collective memory. Today, many lament the postmodern turn, the loss of surety, the fixity of truth (which was always granted a religious aura). Alongside the loss of truth, there is also an increasing pluralisation of identity, and tendency towards precarious employment – the bonds of community whether identitarian or worker based have been undermined. In the wake of these tendencies, many have found solace in nostalgia, the dwelling on what they have lost and deriving consolation in the idea that if what were lost could be returned and restored then surely the world will be made right again. The parallel with Freud's accounting of love is uncanny – it is clear though that such a quest is doomed to failure, and that by clinging to it, our societies will only be dragged further into a paranoid and anxious folly that attempts to expunge that which does not love what we love, or long for what we long for. This is not because remembrance and looking back are inherently wrong or fruitless endeavours, but rather they are misguided if they look back blindly – without reflection upon those who were excluded, upon those who were unlovable, upon those who remain other and abject today. Nostalgia easily leads us to a dead image of the past and closes us to the possibility that both the past and present might hold. Likewise, mourning is inevitable but being trapped in melancholy is not. In melancholy we lose ourselves to the object of loss and in so doing lose our future, as the present becomes entirely subsumed in the past (which again is always a simulacral past). If we combine this with Oedipal guilt we inevitably become utterly riven by self-abasement, trapped by the legacies of promises that we can no longer keep. To turn away, to be against such a love, is to realise that love need not be trapped by the object of love, it can be allowed to imbibe in desire and return to the map, to the future as unrealised possibility. Although we must concede that this often cannot be done alone – the prison of memory must be exposed by others who reveal the possibilities latent within every present. To that end this part also turned to the historical moment of the hippies, not as some nostalgic enterprise of elegiac

eulogy but rather to examine a moment where love was in many ways driven towards the future and not the past – hippie experimentation being caught the flux of modernist transformation and conservative stratification. For the hippies, the future was open ended, the time of the present was to be lived in such a way that it cut itself away from the stultifying dogmas of their parents and the context of the Cold War which had rendered negativity as the ultimate ground of all politics. The hippies were thus in their own way against memory, against politics, and against love – charting whether they actively knew it or not their own line of flight. Nonetheless, from a Deleuzian ethical standpoint, we can also recognise that merely pushing towards the future and applying a limitless deterritorialization does not inherently produce radicality. Free love was a cut in the fabric of familial norms regarding the family and likewise a counter point to the negativity of the Cold War, but it led also to a politics and set of sexual norms which themselves were severed from accountability and critique. Deleuzian ethics venerates deterritorialization but one which is relationally situated and is sensitive towards how molar or majoritarian identities operate within a given assemblage. Harking back to the previous chapter, we can see that part of the reason we can arbitrate against hippie free love is because it remained grounded in pleasure, the dominant pleasures of majoritarian subjects. Pleasure, or in this instance male pleasure operated to inhibit the becoming of women, of their self-fulfilment, and what they could do. Any project which props of the majoritarian at the expense of the minoritarian can itself replicate the excesses of power – therefore critique must always be embedded in any politics which instantiates itself within a line of flight. Change is not always entirely radical – nihilism against existing norms must be active rather than passive in fostering broader bonds of relationality that are not monopolised by molar identities at the expense of those at the periphery. Or as Erinn Cunniff Gilson has said, combining a Deleuzian ethics with feminist critique:

‘Becoming, therefore, involves a measure of responsiveness to others that precludes it from rendering women the mere vehicles of men’s becomings. The responsibility inherent in becoming requires, rather, that men become-woman in a way that does not reterritorialize women’s bodies and selves but that facilitates women’s own becomings’ (Cited in Jun & Smith; 2011, p.80)

A Deleuzian ethics must therefore be responsive to the ways in which deterritorialization can itself work to the benefit of existing identities rather than simply assuming an inherent radicality along a line of flight. Charting the ways in which pleasure and memory operate

within a given assemblage can also in this way be vital for ensuring that no becoming is privileged relative to another.

Part three carried this forward by elaborating upon Deleuze's pedagogical conception of love found in Proust and Signs, then connecting this to Badiou and his blending of love and the event, finalising on Hardt and Negri who bring Deleuze's conception of love more clearly onto the political terrain (even if it is already implicit to Deleuze's account). What should be readily discerned from Deleuze's perspective on love and one which has seemingly been missed from other accounts, is the central role of disappointment in love and how this allows for love to change. Unlike Badiou who wrongly assumes that falling in love is the event of love, a Deleuzian account assumes the failure of love as being its condition for radicality and transformation. Badiou is right to suppose that love unto death in the romantic account is too nihilistic, but he fails to see that love can only change once it has been disappointed. If we are to see other possibilities we must be opened to the problem of disappointment in love – when the ideal fails to meet our expectations, when the beloved dies or leaves us, when we can no longer discern what we loved in them in the first place. This does not mean that we should endlessly jump from partner to partner, but rather we must recognise that love is often too beholden to lack, that we can never be satisfied in an ethically and experientially capacious way until we see that love is not about unity or completion, but rather is always the finding of difference and its navigation. When we are against love, we recognise that love must always be seen as a process, an almost implicitly pedagogical one. If we take this understanding into politics, we can chart the ways in which love becomes tied to all kinds of statist and capitalist discourses, when it stops being pedagogical and becomes dogmatic, how and where love is intermingled with regimes of power which occlude the possibility for a love that embraces alterity and difference over the familiar and same. Love is not, and has have never been a static phenomenon, it has always manifested in various ways – and it is when it changes that often new conditions for solidarity, togetherness, and collective action are fostered. If we deploy critique tactically rather than strategically or normatively, we can see where love chafes at regimes of power, where micropolitical shifts undermine macropolitical sedimentations, praxis being orientated around opening the way for new becomings that may be inhibited. Deleuze's account of love therefore breaks us from love as being coterminous with identity, and as such opens the way for loving differently.

Deleuze and likewise Guattari were always in favour of mapping the territory of the socius as a practical project for creation driven by experimentation - break things apart and see how they can reconnect, make life a collage and see what wonders are produced. Rhizomatics is the name they gave to this process of mapping, which offers an insight into how we can break free from some of the older assumptions that have guided love and politics, it helps prevent us from getting stuck in confines of identity, in molar systems of power, in arborescent thinking. This thesis has applied in a sense the rhizomatic method, it has attempted to chart the map upon which love finds itself situated, although this remains still a partial cartography - focusing upon representational schemas of thinking in the image of thought, upon a metaphysical overreliance on static conceptions of identity that subordinate difference to negativity, to the role of pleasure and memory in securing the territory of the subject (whilst nonetheless also offering the potential for the subject's overcoming). Love if lived rhizomatically, if we embrace those connections to others that tears us down from the certainty of our own subjectivity, we can invest politics with a new vivacity and creativity - we might even try to carry the hippie modernist project into our present but freed from all the failings and missteps which were taken in that manifestation of a politics guided by love. Love frees up politics by setting in place the very conditions for a politics that extends to everyone, it does not imbibe in the negativity of identity, and instead looks towards what we can mutually create together - love comes with risks, but these risks are worthwhile. And so, if we were to be a little prescriptive, it would amount to declaring that one must never be afraid to love or be exposed to love, for it is only through love that we can transform ourselves and our world, even if this transformation is felt as painful, even if it forces us to rethink again our history, to dwell on loss, and the uncertainty of the future. We must fundamentally recognise that love is a process that not only sediments, grounds, and gives stability to the subject through the joint modes of pleasure and memory - but also fractures it, leading to new potentials and possibilities, pain and forgetfulness serving as the dyadic counteroperation to forms of love that work to ground us, to secure us through recognition and the interplay of identities. Furthermore, love suffuses us at a micropolitical level beyond the segmentations of molar or macropolitical negativity and conflictual identities - love being a means to weaken identity from within, love working through disappointment, love remaining interstellar within the dyadic interplay of capture and chaos, love is suffused with becoming. From Deleuze we can see that love can be advanced through the deployment of a rhizomatic approach, that its coordinates on the map, inside the territory of the socius and the subject can be plotted,

and that these coordinates can be shattered, superseded, or broken from, allowing for us to chart novel paths, and find new possibilities for both love and politics. There are no guarantees in love, but love is always the difference that makes the indifference of this life liveable, it is the path that leads us to new worlds and new frontiers, new hopes and new fears, it is a process without end. So, we must learn to love differently and see what trouble we can get into along the way – all in the hope that this trouble can foster radical potentials beyond the capitalist axioms of valorisation, beyond narcissistic retreat, beyond chauvinisms, nationalisms, and fascisms. From Deleuze we learn that love is fundamental to politics, that molar politics is not the end of the political, that there are micropolitical processes that must be discerned, and by discerning them we can play with what it means to think, to collaborate, to engage politically. Love therefore does not just harbour potentials for politics – love is essential and indispensable for it.

'Love is a means, not an end. Love is a map, not a destination. That's why there is no such thing as 'they all lived happily ever after'.

Jeanette Winterson - *Love* (2017, p.32)

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