An introduction to metaphysics

in which I hope to show with the help of two metaphysicians
Heraclitus of Ephesus and Gilles Deleuze
what metaphysics is, what it means and what is at stake

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Abstract — In the *Lives of eminent philosophers*, the ancient biographer Diogenes Laertius writes that when the work of Heraclitus was first brought to Greece, the owner of the book warned that it required a Delian diver not to be drowned in it. In my thesis, I have chosen Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari as my two Delian divers. By means of a comparative study, I hope to have presented a somewhat systematic reading of a number of Heraclitus' *Fragments* and of the tenth chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, '1730: Becoming-intense, becoming-animal, becoming-imperceptible…'. That is what I have done; *why* I have done this is because I think that in spite of its alleged downfall, a millennia-long tradition of Western metaphysics is not easily dissolved. Are we not left with an ontology that pretends not to be an ontology? And because metaphysics is concerned with every body and every thing, that is, with *πάντα*, one may conclude that metaphysics concerns everyone. Accordingly, I have written an introduction to metaphysics in which I wish to show what I think metaphysics is, what it means and what is at stake.

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Een woord vooraf (Dutch)

"Een filosoof werkt noodzakelijkerwijs in absolute eenzaamheid," beweert Gilles Deleuze in een van zijn gesprekken met Claire Parnet. "Maar," erkent hij, "dit is een enorm bevolkte eenzaamheid." Zo is bijvoorbeeld te lezen is op pagina 24 dat deze scriptie niet de mijne is, niet alleen de mijne, tenminste. Ik heb tijdens het schrijven veel hulp gehad van de mensen om mij heen. Allereerst wil ik Sjoerd bedanken. Tijdens zijn cursus *Mannerism and modernity* maakte ik voor het eerst kennis met de filosofie van Deleuze, en met Sjoerds lezing hiervan in het bijzonder. Ik denk niet dat het overdreven is om te zeggen dat zijn lessen (al dan niet stilzwijgend) zijn terug te zien in mijn scriptie, en van alle wijsgerige vakken die ik de afgelopen twee à drie jaar heb gevolgd bloeide mijn liefde voor de filosofie het meeste op dankzij een cursus over het maniërisme. Daarnaast wil ik Sjoerd bedanken voor het feit dat hij me mijn (soms wat eigenzinnige) gang liet gaan, niet moeilijk deed over de volkomen afwezigheid van deadlines, en mij tijdens onze gesprekken niet alleen stapels bruikbare boeken aanraadde, maar me ook regelmatig overspoelde met een 'metaphysico-theologico-cosmo-nigologische' stroom van woorden waarvan ik nog nooit had gehoord. Twee andere faculteitsleden die ik graag wil bedanken zijn, ten eerste, Awee, die (naast het feit dat hij me losklopte met Heideggers zijnsvraag) vanaf het moment dat ik hem mijn scriptievoorstel stuurde nooit schuwde zijn enthousiasme te tonen (iets dat mij enorm helpt); en ten tweede, Bart, wiens advies als het ware aan de grondslag lag van wat uiteindelijk is uitgegroeid tot deze scriptie.

Deze zogeheten 'erkenningen' zouden niet compleet zijn zonder een woord van dank voor mijn rotsen in de branding, mijn beschermengelen, mijn steunen en mijn toeverlaten; mijn vrienden. Ik bedank graag vier van hen in het bijzonder; Frank, voor het transcriberen van Gadamer's Duits; Wessel, die mij liet kennismaken met het atoommodel van Ernest Rutherford; en Niels en Kyra, voor hun gastvrijheid (anders had ik daadwerkelijk in absolute eenzaamheid moeten werken). Tot slot wil ik twee personen bedanken die mij wellicht het meest hebben geholpen met deze toch vrij moeizame en langdurige opgave, om te beginnen met mijn zus. Paula, bedankt voor het feit dat ik altijd bij je terecht kan, niet alleen voor de honderden vragen over de Engelse taal die ik je de afgelopen maanden heb gesteld, maar ook voor alle andere dingen waar ik je nu en dan mee lastigval. Y querida Clari, sé que mi español está bastante lejos de ser bueno, pero quería decirte, o más bien escribirte, en tu

proprio idioma para hacer de esto algo un poco más íntimo. No estoy seguro de que sepas lo mucho que me has ayudado a lo largo de estos meses, y no creo que esté exagerando cuando digo que en cada capítulo de mi tesis hay rastros de tus peculiares ideas.

A glossary of Greek words

ἀεί (*aei*)	eternal
ἄπειρον (*apeiron*)	boundless
ἄρρην (*arrhēn*)	male
ἀρχή (*archē*)	first principle
γίγνομαι (*gignomai*)	to come into being
διᾷδον (*diaidon*)	singing disharmoniously
διαφερόμενον (*diapheromenon*)	being drawn apart
διαφέρονται (*diapherontai*)	they are at variance (with)
ἐγκυροῦσι (*egkyrousi*)	they meet with
εἶναι (*einai*)	to be
ἕν (*hen*)	one
τὸ ἐόν (*to eon*)	what is
ἔρις (*eris*)	strife
Ζηνός (*Zēnos*)	of Zeus
θῆλυς (*thēlys*)	female
κυβερνάω (*kybernaō*)	to steer
κυκεών (*kykeōn*)	kykeon
λέγειν (*legein*)	to say
λόγος (*logos*)	–
νοῦς (*nous*)	mind
ξυνόν (*xynon*)	common
(*οὐχ*) *ὅλα* ((*ouch*) *hola*)	(not) wholes
ὁμολογεῖν (*homologein*)	to agree with, to say the same as
ὄν (*on*)	being
πάντα (*panta*)	all things
πατήρ (*patēr*)	father
Περὶ φύσεως (*Peri physeōs*)	*On Nature*
πόλεμος (*polemos*)	war
πόλις (*polis*)	city

οἱ πολλοί (*hoi polloi*)	the many[1]
σοφόν (*sophon*)	wise
συλλαβή (*syllabē*)	syllable
συλλάψιες (*syllapsies*)	–
συμφερόμενον (*sympheromenon*)	being brought together
συνίστημι (*synistēmi*)	to combine
σύναψις (*synapsis*)	contact
ὑπό (*hypo*)	by
φρόνησις (*phronēsis*)	practical wisdom

[1] Although a literal translation of *οἱ πολλοί* would read 'the many,' the Greek expression is often used to refer to 'the people.' It is safe to say that, in the *Fragments*, Heraclitus employs the term with a heartfelt sense of contempt, repeatedly scolding the uncultured masses.

An introduction

'*Metafysica*, *wat heb je dáár nou aan*?' ('Metaphysics, what's the use of it?')[2] Those were the words of my father when I told him I was presently occupied with the writings of Benedictus de Spinoza and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. To be sure, I certainly understood my father's intuitive response; at first glance, the philosophical branch of metaphysics appears to be altogether estranged from our all too familiar, and very mundane, world. With its rather esoteric discourse, suffused with concepts such as *essentia* and *existentia*, *monades* and *miroirs*, and *der Wille zum Willen* and *das Sein des Seienden*, one's first encounter with metaphysics might evoke a reasonable sense of suspicion. Indeed, one might even argue that metaphysics is *passé*; ever since Immanuel Kant published his *Critique of pure reason*, the philosophical branch seems to have suffered greatly.[3] Or, as Agamben expresses it in *The use of bodies*:

> [One might ask] whether access to a first philosophy, that is, to an ontology, is today still — or once again — possible. For reasons that we will seek to clarify, at least since Kant, this access has become so problematic that it is not thinkable except in the form of an archeology. First philosophy is not, in fact, an ensemble of conceptual formulations that, however complex and refined, do not escape from the limits of a doctrine: it opens and defines each time the space of human acting and knowing, of what the human being can do and of what it can know and say. Ontology is laden with the historical destiny of the West not because an inexplicable and metahistorical magical power belongs to being but just the contrary, because ontology is the originary place of the historical articulation between language and world, […].[4]

What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope? According to Agamben, the answers to these questions are ultimately rooted in ontology, that is, in the question concerning being. Still, the question 'What does being mean?' is generally dismissed as vague and meaningless, a

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[2] "Aristotle rightly says that 'What Thales and Anaxagoras know will be considered unusual, astonishing, difficult and divine, but never useful, for their concern was not with the good of humanity.' Philosophy […] is distinguished from intellectual cleverness by its emphasis on the useless."

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks*, trans. Marianne Cowan (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1998), 43.

[3] "Besides, the professor was not a geologist or a biologist, he was not even a linguist, ethnologist, or psychoanalyst; what his specialty had been was long since forgotten."

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 42-43.

[4] Giorgio Agamben, *The use of bodies*, trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 111.

hollow enigma meant for grey philosophers working in murky rooms with books stacked up to the ceiling, altogether estranged from the 'real' world. Accordingly, Martin Heidegger lists several prejudices regarding the word 'being': "It is said that 'being' (*Sein*) is the most universal (*allgemeinste*) and the emptiest concept. As such it resists every attempt at definition. Nor does this most universal and thus indefinable concept need any definition. Everybody uses it constantly and also already understands what is meant by it."[5] Indeed, I have used the word 'is' nearly six hundred times in my thesis, and I doubt that this particular inflection of the verb 'to be' will be counted among the more difficult concepts that I have considered. Yet, Agamben continues, "Ontology or first philosophy has constituted for centuries the fundamental historical *a priori* of Western thought."[6] One is left wondering, then, whether one man can simply dissolve a millennia-long tradition of Western metaphysics; might it be possible that our relation to being is the mutated residue of years of inbred metaphysical doctrines that quietly persist under the guise of the self-evident? Are we not left with an ontology that pretends not to be an ontology? Or, as Foucault puts it, "[…] it is probable that we belong to an age of critique whose lack of a first philosophy reminds us at every moment of its reign and its fatality."[7] Therefore, I will attempt to oppose the alleged fall of ontology by writing an introduction to metaphysics, in which I wish to show what I think metaphysics is, what it means and what is at stake. This, I hope to do by means of a comparative study, relating one of the oldest metaphysical works to one of the newest; Heraclitus' *Fragments* and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*.

Although the Presocratic thinker is most renowned for his river fragments, three concepts thoroughly pervade his ontological thinking; *πάντα*, *ἕν*, and the *λόγος*. Throughout the one hundred and twenty-six fragments of Heraclitus that have been collected in Hermann Diels' paradigmatic *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, the word *πάντα* appears thirty times. Both *ἕν* and *λόγος* appear ten times each, although the two concepts also turn up under various other names, such as *ξυνόν*, *Ζηνός*, or *σοφόν*. Only once, however, does Heraclitus use all three words in a single fragment:

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[5] "The fact that we live already in an understanding of being and that the meaning of being is at the same time shrouded in darkness proves the fundamental necessity of repeating the question of the meaning of 'being.'"

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 1 and 3.

[6] Agamben, *The use of bodies*, 112.

[7] Michel Foucault, *The birth of the clinic: An archaeology of medical perception*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage, 1994), xv-xvi.

οὐκ ἐμοῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστιν ἓν πάντα εἶναι. (50)
Listening not to me but to the *λόγος* it is wise to agree that all things (*πάντα*) are one (*ἓν*).[8]

'Do not listen to me,' the Ephesian tells his audience. 'Instead, heed the *λόγος*!' The fragment, which Charles H. Kahn describes as 'one of the weightiest of all,' evokes a simple question; what does *λόγος* mean?[9] A quite literal translation of the word *λόγος*, which stems from the verb *λέγειν* (to say), would read 'that which is said,' and accordingly, *λόγος* is often translated as 'word,' but may also refer to narratives or doctrines, for example.[10] As such, fragment 50 could simply refer to Heraclitus' own *λόγος*, to his own theory *On Nature* in which all the remaining fragments were originally embedded. Surprisingly, however, the Presocratic makes an odd distinction between *his* words, between *his λόγος*, and the *λόγος* that one would do well to listen to. The cryptic fragment seems to suggest that the *λόγος* is something separate from Heraclitus' discourse, an idea that also comes to the fore in the first sentence of fragment 1: "Of the *λόγος* which is as I describe it men always prove to be uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and when once they have heard it."[11] Here, Heraclitus stresses that even *before* having heard his doctrine, people generally do not understand the *λόγος*, alluding once

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[8] In my thesis, I have made use of the Diels-Kranz numbering system.

G.S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments* (Cambridge: University Printing House, 1975), 65.

[9] "It seems likely that this sentence, one of the weightiest of all, came at the end of the introductory section when Heraclitus returns (by a kind of ring composition) to the theme of the *logos* with which he began."

Charles H. Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus: An edition of the fragments with translation and commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 130.

[10] The *Greek-English lexicon* of H.G. Liddell and R. Scott lists more than fifty possible translations of the ancient Greek word *λόγος*. However, as Mark A. Johnstone notes in his chapter 'On '*logos*' in Heraclitus': "Our evidence suggests that around the beginning of the fifth century BC, when Heraclitus was philosophically active, the word '*logos*' usually denoted a written or oral account or story presented to an audience to persuade or entertain them." Still, the Ionian writer did not shy away from appropriating ordinary words and somewhat distorting their use: "Heraclitus was evidently fond of taking common terms or concepts and giving them a new and restricted meaning: […]."

Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1057-1059.

Mark A. Johnstone, "On '*logos*' in Heraclitus," in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, *Volume 47*, ed. Brad Inwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1.

G.S. Kirk, "Heraclitus's contribution to the development of a language for philosophy," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 9 (1964): 73.

[11] *τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον.* […]. (1)

Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 33.

more that the *λόγος* is something that has existed long before his own narrative. What, then, does Heraclitus mean when he speaks of the *λόγος*?

Moreover, there is the glaring question concerning *what*, precisely, the *λόγος* tells us; *ἓν πάντα εἶναι*, or 'all things are one.' At first glance, the Delphic utterance might seem rather vague, or even empty, and in fact seems to say nothing at all. Still, a thorough study of the Greek thinker's other fragments shall reveal a surprisingly profound thought hiding behind these shallow words. Taking Heraclitus' fiftieth fragment as the heart of my thesis, I will try to answer the following research question:

Listening not to me but to the *λόγος* it is wise to agree that all things are one.
'*What does that even mean*?'

No one knows what it means, but it's provocative; it gets the people *going*. Indeed, the mysterious writings of Heraclitus have been subjected to a staggering number of interpretations. One might encounter the Ephesian in Plato's dialogues, as Socrates meets Cratylus, a young Heraclitean visiting Athens. Aristotle, moreover, happily used Heraclitus' aphorisms in many of his works, sometimes carefully reconstructing Heraclitus' doctrine in his *Metaphysics*, while at other times nonchalantly tearing the fragments from their context in order to fit his own ethical arguments. The Pyrrhonian skeptics and the Stoics followed suit. Various theologians, such as Clement of Alexandria and Hippolytus of Rome, either eagerly cited or fiercely renounced his pagan words. Hegel, of course, boldly declared that "[…] there is no proposition of Heraclitus which I have not adopted in my *Logic*."[12] And Nietzsche, too, spends the lion's share of his *Philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks* recounting the philosophy of Heraclitus with which he is quite obviously enamoured. Perhaps the most daring hermeneutical drama can be found in Heidegger's lectures on Heraclitus, eliciting, in turn, the vicious critique of hordes of quarrelling historiographers who have tried with all their academic might to discover the 'true' legacy of the Obscure.

I sometimes see a resemblance between the historiographer and the photographer. Like the photographer, the historiographer also fixes that which he captures. After years of scholarly toil, the historiographer has supposedly succeeded in unearthing the 'authentic' meaning of a thinker; he has taken, as it were, a photograph, creating a frozen image that,

[12] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the history of philosophy*, *Volume I: Greek philosophy to Plato*, trans. E.S. Haldane (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 279.

despite its meticulous precision, is not at all lifelike.[13] In *What is philosophy?*, however, Deleuze and Guattari characterise the history of philosophy as follows:

> The history of philosophy is comparable to the art of the portrait. It is not a matter of 'making lifelike,' that is, of repeating what a philosopher said but rather of producing resemblance by separating out […] the new concepts he created.[14]

Whereas historiographers generally try to capture, secure, and rigidify a thinker's work, ridding it of life, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the history of philosophy should instead paint a vivid portrait of a thinker that, as opposed to scrupulously representing an anaemic body, *gives* it life. Perhaps this may only be achieved by awkwardly deforming, or even mutilating, a thinker; perhaps Heraclitus' lifeless body of work will show a mere spasm, a short contraction or sudden convulsion. Still, to me, it seems time for a modern interpretation of Heraclitus' philosophy of Nature, inspired by the metaphysics of *A Thousand Plateaus*. By means of an encounter between two works that seemingly have nothing to do with each other, I hope to somewhat arouse the ontological thinking of our time.

I have tried to write this thesis as an experiment in what Deleuze, in one of his conversations with Claire Parnet, called 'pop philosophy.' (I do not remember which one of the twenty-four interviews of *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze* it was exactly.) Accordingly, we will see many things. We will see Homer, beaten with a staff, and visit adult websites. We will face werewolves, and vampires, and various other monstrous animals. We will dwell in Leibniz' picturesque gardens and ponds. We will meet both Roald Dahl and Annie M.G. Schmidt. We will run into irresolvable paradoxes, which we will just have to take for granted. We will, moreover, take a slight detour in order to consider the philosophy of Kanye West. We will feel little worms wriggling around inside our body, arouse a psychedelic experience, and even participate in a cosmic orgy… To begin, however, it seems fitting to formulate a first principle.

In the first chapter of my thesis, I shall attempt to show that Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* and Heraclitus' *Fragments* share a strikingly similar 'first principle.' It should be noted that with regard to *A Thousand Plateaus*, an attempt to construe a first principle might

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[13] "[…] the photograph should be criticised, not for being too faithful or 'true-to-life,' but for not being faithful enough."

Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The logic of sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003), 97.

[14] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 55.

seem unfitting, as the concept undoubtedly opposes the authors' efforts to overcome "[…] the representational thinking that has characterised Western metaphysics since Plato, […]."[15] Still, I wish to pay homage to the antiquated concept of *ἀρχή* by using the term somewhat loosely, as denoting a fertile ontological soil from which a variety of further metaphysical thoughts may sprout. I will begin my inquiry by comparing Deleuze's multiplicity to Heraclitus' *πάντα*, arguing that both concepts are defined by a thorough emphasis on difference. Secondly, I shall illustrate the crucial role of relations in *A Thousand Plateaus* and the *Fragments*. These two parts, in turn, will allow me to formulate the shared 'first principle' of the two works.

Nature's two crucial features, difference and relation, are able to account for one of the most well-known parts of both Heraclitus' and Deleuze and Guattari's work; becoming. Nature's differences differentiate via communications with other differences, which, in turn, produces Nature's perpetual metamorphoses. In the second chapter, I shall provide an interpretation of the concept of becoming that is marked by an emphasis on the senses, which I will illustrate with the most renowned part of Heraclitus' work; the river fragments. Yet, as we shall see, the Presocratic's cryptic aphorisms confront us with the problem of the doctrine of flux, as formulated by Socrates in Plato's *Cratylus*: How can that which is never in the same state be anything? Do our eyes not tell us that our lively world, marked by becoming, is populated by a wide variety of relatively durable beings? In the second part of this chapter, I will attempt to show that Heraclitus and Deleuze and Guattari share a similar answer to this problem. The solution, I argue, lies in the concept of haecceity, as described by Deleuze and Guattari in their chapter '1730: Becoming-intense, becoming-animal, becoming-imperceptible…'.

The concept of haecceity, and its emphasis on the open nature of bodies in particular, will allow me to discuss Heraclitus' *ἕν*. The intensive individuations that appear before our eyes invariably slip into other haecceities, and ultimately compose a single plane. Still, Heraclitus was not the only Presocratic thinker whose natural philosophy contained a concept of *ἕν*. Xenophanes' divine hymn, for example, invokes a single, otherworldly Being and Parmenides' ontological poem is notorious for its insistence on a frozen, eternal 'One,' too. Therefore, we should critically assess whether Heraclitus' thinking is not afflicted with the 'specifically European disease' of transcendence, which severely opposes *A Thousand Plateaus*'

[15] Brian Massumi, "Translator's foreword: Pleasures of philosophy," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), xi.

emphasis on immanence.[16] By relating three fragments in which the word *ἕν* appears to the concepts of becoming-imperceptible, the disjunctive synthesis, and the plane of Nature, I hope to show that the relation between *πάντα* and *ἕν* in the work of Heraclitus is not a relation of transcendence, but is instead inherently marked by immanence. These three concluding fragments, in turn, will finally allow me to uncover what 'all is one' means.

To conclude my thesis, I will propose a new interpretation of the *λόγος*, based on Heidegger's consideration of the Presocratic thinker's subtle use of the verb *ὁμολογεῖν* in fragment 50. I hope to argue, in turn, that it was Heraclitus who first introduced the theme of language into ontological thinking.

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[16] "It is odd how the tree has dominated Western reality and all of Western thought, from botany to biology and anatomy, but also gnosiology, theology, ontology, all of philosophy … : the root-foundation, *Grund*, *racine*, *fondement*. […] Does not the East, Oceania in particular, offer something like a rhizomatic model opposed in every respect to the Western model of the tree? André Haudricourt even sees this as the basis for the opposition between the moralities or philosophies of transcendence dear to the West and the immanent ones of the East: the God who sows and reaps, as opposed to the God who replants and unearths (replanting of offshoots versus sowing of seeds). Transcendence: a specifically European disease."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 18.

In search of a first principle

It is not a coincidence that Lucretius devotes the very first words of his renowned poem, *De rerum natura*, to the goddess of love.[17] In order to describe the perpetual metamorphoses of a fertile earth, the Roman poet often evokes a variety of sexual metaphors. Similarly, in *Περὶ φύσεως*, Heraclitus also seems to allude to a carnal union of bodies as one of Nature's principles. Still, the Presocratic's innuendo is decidedly less sensuous than those of Lucretius, and is instead marked by a ferocious libido, defined by strife: "Homer was wrong when he said 'Would that Conflict (*ἔρις*) might vanish from among gods and men!' For there would be no […] animals without male and female, both of which are opposites."[18]

In spite of its feral character, however, the sexuality portrayed by the Greek philosopher remains rather docile in comparison to the images aroused by Deleuze and Guattari. In their chapter '1730: Becoming-intense, becoming-animal, becoming-imperceptible…', Deleuze and Guattari insist that Nature is inherently marked by "[…] sexuality […] as a power of alliance inspiring illicit unions or abominable loves."[19] As opposed to the 'natural' couples of Heraclitus, who solely recognises an erotic relation between opposite members, *ἄρρην* (male) and *θῆλυς* (female), of the same species, one would be more likely to find the sexual acts described by Deleuze and Guattari at the most remote nooks and crannies of some obscure adult website (I am not speaking from experience). Nature, they say, is largely ruled by a sweaty, forbidden, and unlawful love; a love that should

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[17] "Life-stirring Venus, mother of Aeneas and of Rome / Pleasure (*voluptas*) of men and gods, you make all things beneath the dome / Of sliding constellations teem, you throng the fruited earth / And the ship-freighted sea — for every species comes to birth / Conceived through you, and rises forth and gazes on the light."

Titus Lucretius Carus, *On the nature of things*, trans. A.E. Stallings (London: Penguin Classics, 2007), 59.

[18] *καὶ Ἡράκλειτος ἐπιτιμᾷ τῷ ποιήσαντι ὡς ἔρις ἔκ τε θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων ἀπόλοιτο. οὐ γὰρ ἂν εἶναι ἁρμονίαν μὴ ὄντος ὀξέος καὶ βαρέος οὐδὲ τὰ ζῷα ἄνευ θήλεος καὶ ἄρρενος ἐναντίων ὄντων.* (A22)

τόν τε Ὅμηρον ἔφασκεν ἄξιον ἐκ τῶν ἀγώνων ἐκβάλλεσθαι καὶ ῥαπίζεσθαι καὶ Ἀρχίλοχον ὁμοίως. (42)

The original fragment be can found in the seventh book of the *Eudemian Ethics*, as Aristotle, saying that opposites are inclined to love each other (*τὰ ἐναντία φίλα*), paraphrases a passage from the perished book of Heraclitus. Although the authenticity of fragment A22 is a matter of dispute, the Presocratic's antipathy towards Homer can also be concluded from the verified forty-second fragment: "Homer deserves to be expelled from the competition and beaten with a staff — and Archilochus too!"

Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1235a25, accessed 13 October 2020, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0049%3Abook%3D7%3Asection%3D1235a.

Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 37 and 67.

[19] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 246.

not be; a loathing yet fascinating sexuality; a horrendous union between two utterly different beings. It is these forms of love, these 'unnatural nuptials,' that, according to Deleuze and Guattari, are the principle behind Nature's offspring: "Unnatural participations or nuptials are the true Nature spanning the kingdoms of nature."[20]

"[…] what is called wisdom is concerned with the primary causes and principles (*ἀρχὰς*)," Aristotle writes in the first book of his *Metaphysics*.[21] The concept of *ἀρχή*, first used by Anaximander, has played a significant role in the history of ontological thinking, which could be portrayed as the study of first principles.[22] Since the demise of Aristotle's philosophy of Nature, however, the idea of first principles has decidedly lost its vogue; René Descartes' methodical doubt, for instance, exposed that the ancient *archē*-tects had constructed "[…] very magnificent palaces that were built on nothing but sand and mud," and the laws of reason formulated by Kant, too, did not (and do not) permit such outrageous speculations.[23] Even Deleuze himself contends that the unchanging *ἀρχαί* of history, such as Thales' water, Plato's idea of the Good, or a divine *causa sui*, should rather be seen as 'principles become' (a firm yet temporary bedrock, an *Ungrund* or territory, so to speak).[24] In spite of its bad name, however, I nonetheless wish to use the old-fashioned idea of first principles in order to begin my thesis, devoted to the equally obsolete philosophical branch of metaphysics.

In what follows, I shall attempt to show that Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* and Heraclitus' *Fragments* share a strikingly similar first principle. As mentioned earlier, however, an attempt to distill a poststructuralist work like *A Thousand Plateaus* into a sole first principle might seem unfitting or even absurd, which is why I wish to stress once more that I will use the concept of *ἀρχή* somewhat loosely, as denoting a fertile ontological soil from which a variety of further metaphysical thoughts may sprout. Using Nature's sexual extravagance as

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[20] Ibid., 241.

[21] Aristotle uses the word 'wisdom,' or *σοφία*, to refer to what we now call metaphysics.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 981b25, accessed 13 October 2020, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0052%3Abook%3D1%3Asection%3D981b.

[22] W.K.C. Guthrie, *A history of Greek philosophy: Volume I, The earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 77.

[23] René Descartes, *Discourse on method and Meditations on first philosophy*, AT VI 8, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1998), 5.

[24] "That identity not be first, that it exists as a principle but as a second principle, as a principle *become*; […]."

Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 40.

a prelude, I will begin my inquiry by comparing Deleuze's multiplicity to Heraclitus' *πάντα*, arguing that both concepts are defined by a thorough emphasis on difference. Secondly, I shall illustrate the crucial role of relations in *A Thousand Plateaus* and the *Fragments*. These two parts, in turn, will allow me to formulate the shared 'first principle' of the two works.

Deleuze's multiplicity and Heraclitus' *πάντα*

Nature is pretty sexy. It is perpetually engrossed in an orgy that knows neither bounds nor morals, a bacchanal that would force even a libertine Roman emperor to turn away his face in shame. Still, we are largely oblivious to its tireless lovemaking, often falling prey to the anthropomorphic conception of sex. As opposed to the familiar view on sexuality, involving a bodily union of two specimens of the same species, Deleuze and Guattari emphasise that, in Nature, there is a joyous abundance of communications between utterly different beings. Such heterogeneous communications, however, could very well be termed 'copulations' due to the deformed fruits they engender.[25] Nature births, spawns, and produces, not by virtue of a supposedly pristine intimacy between two individuals that 'belong' together, but through an amalgam where heterogeneous creatures contaminate each other:

> Bands, human or animal, proliferate by contagion, epidemics, battlefields, and catastrophes. Like hybrids, which are in themselves sterile, born of a sexual union that will not reproduce itself, but which begins over again every time, gaining that much more ground. […] Propagation by epidemic, by contagion, has nothing to do with filiation by heredity, even if the two themes intermingle and require each other. The vampire does not filiate, it infects. The difference is that contagion, epidemic, involves terms that are entirely heterogeneous: for example, a human being, an animal, and a bacterium, a virus, a molecule, a microorganism.[26]

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[25] "What we call [the] anthropomorphic representation [of sex] is just as much the idea that there are two sexes as the idea that there is only one. We know how Freudianism is permeated by this bizarre notion that there is finally only one sex, the masculine, in relation to which the woman, the feminine, is defined as a lack, an absence."

"[…] psychoanalysis was shutting sexuality up in a bizarre sort of box painted with bourgeois motifs, in a kind of rather repugnant artificial triangle, thereby stifling the whole of sexuality as production of desire so as to recast it along entirely different lines, making of it a 'dirty little secret,' the dirty little family secret, a private theatre rather than the fantastic factory of Nature and Production. […] any comparison of sexuality with cosmic phenomena such as 'electrical storms,' […] fluids and flows, matter and particles, in the end appear to us more adequate than the reduction of sexuality to the pitiful little familialist secret."

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 49 and 292-294.

[26] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 241-242.

Here on Earth there are no virgins; we are all tainted. Deleuze and Guattari emphasise that Nature, composed of 'bands,' produces its anomalies through symbioses involving 'terms that are entirely heterogeneous.' The passage, however, evokes a simple question; what are bands?

A little earlier in the chapter, we read that "[…] every animal is fundamentally a band, a pack. […] It is at this point that the human being encounters the animal. We do not become animal without a fascination for the pack, for multiplicity."[27] The word 'band' or 'pack,' then, appears to refer to the concept of multiplicity. A mere 'translation,' however, does not grant us any further insight in Nature's machinism, and the concept's meaning remains decidedly opaque.[28] Therefore, to aid my search for a poststructuralist *ἀρχή*, I shall use François Zourabichvili's interpretation of the Deleuzian multiplicity, as set out in *Deleuze: A philosophy of the event*.

Zourabichvili commences by affirming that a multiplicity consists of heterogeneous elements, of 'differences as such,' which paradoxically compose a genuine unity: "Internal difference is neither one nor multiple: it is a *multiplicity*. […] There is multiplicity when the unity of the diverse does not require the mediation of a genre or a subsuming conceptual identity. Difference must be the only relation that unites these terms, and it must be a real relation: […]."[29] A multiplicity is an organisation without an organiser, you could say. "It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion."[30] A school of fish, a flock of birds, or a group of friends; these are all multiplicities. When swarming differences spontaneously bind themselves via machinic relations, an open system may emerge: "[…] multiplicity must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather an organisation belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system."[31]

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[27] Ibid., 239-240.

[28] I purposefully avoid using the word 'mechanism' due to the deterministic undertones of the term.

"This is not animism, any more than it is mechanism; rather, it is universal machinism: […]. What we term machinic is precisely this synthesis of heterogeneities as such."

Ibid., 256 and 330.

[29] François Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A philosophy of the event*, *together with The vocabulary of Deleuze*, trans. Kieran Aarons (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 102-103.

[30] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 21.

[31] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 182.

Perhaps we might better understand the concept of multiplicity with the help of another example; the human body. The human body is inhabited by a teeming mass of various microbiomes. As a body, I do not only rely on the perpetual workings of my throbbing organs; I also serve as the warm and humid home of herds of bacteria performing various functions that are crucial to my survival. Yet we often forget the different beings that reside in us. (Am I the water that my body holds? Is that me? I am inclined to say yes, which would mean that I am dying when I pee.) Either way, 'our' body is never solely our own, but it belongs to others, too. Or, as Zourabichvili expresses it: "Of internal difference, one can say that 'there is *other* without there being several.'"[32]

Not only do our organs, bacteria, and innumerable molecules populate our bodily multiplicity, which somewhat reminds me of a well-oiled machine or factory, these fragmentary parts themselves form a multiplicity, too: "[…] every multiplicity is from the outset a 'multiplicity of multiplicities.'"[33] To be sure, Deleuze has undoubtedly adopted his concept of multiplicity from the work of Henri Bergson, but it might be suggested that some of the paragraphs in *A Thousand Plateaus* are inspired by the philosophy of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz:

> 66. […] there is a world of creatures, of living beings, of animals, of entelechies, of souls in the least part of matter.
> 67. Each portion of matter can be conceived as a garden full of plants, and as a pond full of fish. But each branch of a plant, each limb of an animal, each drop of its humours, is still another such garden or pond.
> 68. And although the earth and air lying between the garden plants, or the water lying between the fish of the pond, are neither plant nor fish, they contain yet more of them, though of a subtleness imperceptible to us, most often.[34]

Leibniz' baroque portrayal of a bottomless microcosm, secretly residing in our mundane world, is remarkably similar to the notion of a 'multiplicity of multiplicities' as mentioned in Deleuze and Guattari's chapter '1914: One or several wolves?,' which also uses the figure of

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[32] Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A philosophy of the event*, 102.

[33] Ibid., 181.

[34] G.W. Leibniz, "The principles of philosophy, or the Monadology (1714)," in *Philosophical Essays*, ed. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), 222.

the human body to illustrate this idea.[35] Yet, the *Monadology*'s sixty-eighth principle also notes that, although the multiplicity of Nature is composed of countless differences, we might not always perceive these differences.[36] In relation to his concept of *πάντα*, Heraclitus, too, evokes this emphasis on imperceptibility, remarking that "Nature loves to hide."[37] And even when the world's abundant differences do present themselves to us, we often tend to miss them. For example, at first sight, the tiny leaves of a weeping willow may all seem identical; the tree is adorned by an imposing foliage of duplicate petals. Yet, if you take a closer look, you will discover that the willow's leaves diverge in form, in the pattern of their veins, and in colour as the leaves vary from yellow to green; an ocean of small differences that ordinarily go unnoticed reveals itself.

οὐ γὰρ φρονέουσι τοιαῦτα πολλοὶ ὁκοίοις ἐγκυρέουσιν οὐδὲ μαθόντες γινώσκουσιν ἑωυτοῖσι δὲ δοκέουσι. (17)
Most men (*πολλοὶ*) do not think things in the way they encounter them, nor do they recognise what they experience, but believe their own opinions.[38]

Nearly all interpretations of Heraclitus' *Fragments* begin by deciphering one particular fragment, which is then held onto like Theseus' thread, aiding wandering scholars in finding their way through the labyrinth built by the Obscure. So, too, do Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink in their reading of the Presocratic's work, set out in *Heraclitus seminar*, *1966 / 67*. In order to find the meaning of Heraclitus' *πάντα*, they first turn to fragment 64, which provokes a lengthy inquiry into *πάντα*'s various characteristics: "[…] we can understand the meaning of *τὰ πάντα* only in the context of all the fragments in which *τὰ πάντα* is mentioned."[39] Presently, however, I have decided to omit Heidegger and Fink's interpretation of the sixty-fourth fragment, and will instead follow their path from fragment 64 to fragment 7:

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[35] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 34.

[36] "[…] each individual is an infinite multiplicity, and the whole of Nature is a multiplicity of perfectly individuated multiplicities."

Ibid., 254.

[37] *φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ.* (123)

Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 33.

[38] Ibid., 29.

[39] Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, *Heraclitus seminar*, *1966 / 67*, trans. Vittorio Klostermann (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1979), 16.

εἰ πάντα καπνὸς γένοιτο ῥῖνες ἂν διαγνοῖεν. (7)

If all things (*πάντα*) were to become smoke, the nostrils would distinguish them.[40]

On the basis of this fragment, Heidegger and Fink quickly decide that "*τὰ πάντα* is the realm of differences," and various interpretations of Heraclitus' seventh fragment underwrite this conclusion.[41] As G.S. Kirk mentions in *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, "What we are entitled to assume is that Heraclitus thought that different odours […] might inhere in what to the eyes is a single kind of smoke […]. […] if everything turned to smoke (a purely hypothetical assumption) the nostrils would still perceive all kinds of different smell in this smoke, but the eyes would be presented with a single uniform impression."[42] When a funeral pyre consumes a rotting corpse, a single cloud of smoke looms up from the remains; but although the various parts of the carcass have been transformed into an apparently uniform body, the nose is still able to detect the slightest difference; burnt flesh smells decidedly less foul than a scorched head of hair. To be sure, when pitch-black smoke rises from the ashes and clouds our vision, we are presented with an undifferentiated world that knows neither colour nor form. Yet, as Kahn tells us, *πάντα*'s variety has not truly disappeared, and "[…] the differences which become invisible if all things turn to smoke will still be perceptible to smell."[43] This feature of *πάντα*, then, allows G.T.W. Patrick to conclude that "Against the unity of Xenophanes, a unity opposed to the manifold, Heraclitus grasped the idea of a unity which includes the manifold within itself."[44]

Furthermore, it might be suggested that, should *πάντα*'s differences, whether visual or odorous, no longer expose themselves to the human senses, we may still not conclude that they are gone altogether; although we may not always perceive the various differences inhering in things, they may be present nonetheless. Although a careless glance might induce us to conclude that two things are the same, to exist truly is to differ, and every singular body comprises even further, internal differences. Allow me to illustrate my claim with a rather

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[40] Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 232.

[41] Heidegger and Fink, *Heraclitus seminar*, *1966 / 67*, 16.

[42] Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 234-235.

[43] Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 257.

[44] G.T.W. Patrick, "The fragments of the work of Heraclitus of Ephesus on nature" (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1888), 27.

literal interpretation of the earlier cited passage from *A Thousand Plateaus*: "[…] every animal is fundamentally a band, a pack."[45]

Recall an image from a nature documentary, showing an immense colony of emperor penguins, tightly bound together in crowded formation in order to keep each other warm in the remorseless blizzard of the arctic. Whenever I see such an image, one question always enters my mind: Considering that this flightless bird is devoted to the monogamous life, how do all these seemingly identical exemplars, these black and white copies populating an anonymous herd, find their way back to the love of their life? Does the romantic behaviour of emperor penguins not tell us that there must be some difference which prevents a lovebird from mistaking a stunning female member of the group for his partner, accidentally mating with 'the other woman'? Perhaps a male penguin is able to distinguish his sweetheart by means of her shrill call; perhaps the length or shape of her beak may vary slightly; perhaps the colour of her bright yellow feathers knows a unique, but to the human eye barely discernible, shade. To be sure, the concept of species refers to a population of 'homogeneous' animals, but it seems to me that every creature constitutes a uniquely singular body in this grand multiplicity. Not only do animals vary, however slightly, with regard to their composition of genes, they are additionally characterised by their own eccentric manners and behaviour, by an *ethos*, so to speak: "[…] the rigid image of the animal as a mechanism dominated by the automatism of instinct is showing signs of slackening, to give greater margin to individual variations, as evidenced in the rise of a new research area in ethology dedicated to animal 'personality.'"[46] For example, while making a movie adaptation of Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, a crew of animal trainers, trying to discipline an army of squirrels for the scene of Veruca Salt's demise, discovered to their great surprise that not all squirrels were susceptible to the 'subjectification' efforts of their teachers:

> I was amazed to find out the varying personalities of the squirrels we have here. They don't all have the same personality. They are all capable of learning. Some are better at other things than others. We have found that some just don't have an interest in picking up the nut at all […]. And

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[45] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 239.

[46] "Nature produces individuals and nothing more… Species have no actual existence in nature. They are mental concepts and nothing more… Species have been invented in order that we may refer to great numbers of individuals collectively."

Ernst Mayr, "Illiger and the biological species concept," *Jounal of the History of Biology* 1 (1968): 163.

Brian Massumi, *What animals teach us about politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 1.

> those [are] squirrels that don't lend themselves to being what we're calling 'good-nut squirrels' […].[47]

I am very happy that both *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and questions concerning the adulterous behaviour of penguins have played a small part in my thesis, but it seems time to return to the matter at hand. Not only a careful study of the fragments in which *πάντα* is mentioned grants us insight into the significance of difference with regard to Heraclitus' concept; a mere consideration of the Presocratic's mindful choice of words also reveals this.

The word *πάντα* is a plural noun. Following Leibniz' Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, we may say that in the cosmos, no two *x*'s which are perfectly alike may be distinguished. If not a single difference can be distinguished between a 'pair' of bodies, the two are necessarily indiscernible, and thus identical. This, in turn, allows us to conclude that whenever a plural is used, the presence of difference is unavoidably implied; a plural noun simply *has* to implicate difference. Moreover, the plural character of *πάντα* is downright unusual. Considering that its singular form, *πᾶν*, already means 'everything,' *πάντα* should be awkwardly yet adequately translated as 'alls' or 'everythings' in order to evoke the plural character of the Greek word. Heraclitus' odd choice of words, then, seems to further emphasise the Presocratic's insistence on a plurality of different bodies.[48]

Our brief consideration of fragments 7, 17, and 123, in conjunction with the plural character of the word *πάντα* itself, allows us to conclude that even an all-consuming inferno is unable to turn the world's variety to ashes, as even an apparently homogeneous body of smoke is, in truth, a multiplicity marked by internal difference. Although dissimilarity might not always be perceivable, we should not hastily agree with Heraclitus' favourite antagonist, *οἱ πολλοί*, and should instead cultivate an awareness of the omnipresence of difference in the world. I am therefore inclined to agree with Patrick, who, in his study of the fragments, concludes that "*Difference* is the essential element in change, and difference is all that is

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[47] Michael Alexander, "Making of the attack of the squirrels in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," *Willy Wonka*, YouTube, 3 February 2020, audio, 2:33, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92iTatZHnEI.

[48] Not unlike Heraclitus, Deleuze is also remarkably sensitive to language. In chapter ten of *A Thousand Plateaus*, '1440: The smooth and the striated,' we read: "It was a decisive event when the mathematician Riemann uprooted the multiple from its predicate state and made it a noun, 'multiplicity.'" Purposefully chosen to avoid the archaic metaphysical doctrine of substances and predicates, the word 'multiplicity' allows Deleuze to refrain from using 'one' or 'multiple' as supposed attributes of some underlying substance. As a noun, 'multiplicity' aptly evokes the image of a single body, while also preserving an emphasis on the body's internal difference, owing to the concept's obvious relation to the adjective 'multiple.'

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 482-483.

necessary to the idea of change."[49] It is precisely this heterogeneity, this difference, I would say, that forms the first half of both Deleuze and Guattari's and Heraclitus' *ἀρχή*.

Sole difference, however, is not enough to account for Nature's metamorphoses; unlike Patrick, who maintained that 'difference is all that is necessary to the idea of change,' I will argue that Nature's differences need to be embedded in a web of relations, too: "Thus each individual is an infinite multiplicity, and the whole of Nature is a multiplicity of perfectly individuated multiplicities. […]; its pieces are the various assemblages and individuals, each of which groups together an infinity of particles entering into an infinity of more or less interconnected relations."[50] It is these very relations that will constitute the second half of our 'first principle.'

The fight and the fibre

This thesis is not my own. Although it will likely pass the plagiarism check, I still wonder, as often happens when I write, which part of it is truly mine and to what extent I am simply parroting what I have heard others say. As paraphrases thrive and blatant appropriation, or even thievery, can be detected in almost every sentence, what I have called 'my' thesis instead appears to be a monstrous amalgamation of a wide variety of sources. And after my kleptomaniac impulses have finally settled, I made the bold decision to write, without any sense of shame, my very own name at the top of the first page. But have I really contributed anything, anything at all? Did even this very question originate from my own creative genius?

It did not. Deleuze and Guattari tell us that "[…] there are two constantly intersecting multiplicities, 'discursive multiplicities' of expression and 'nondiscursive multiplicities' of content."[51] Whereas in the previous part I presented a material reading of *A Thousand Plateaus*' concept of multiplicity using the human body as an example, linguistically, too, the individual is no individual. Deleuze and Guattari express it the best themselves in the first two sentences of their work: "The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was

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[49] "[…] change can never be explained out of a single existent."

Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks*, 91.

Patrick, "The fragments of the work of Heraclitus of Ephesus on nature," 66-67.

[50] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 254.

[51] Ibid., 67.

several, there was already quite a crowd."[52] Indeed, *A Thousand Plateaus* is one of the most imposing literary multiplicities I have ever seen; in order to understand what the authors' cryptic introduction means, one can simply leap to the last pages of the book and apprehend the frightful list of 'Notes' that the translator has composed, including no less than six hundred and twenty-eight footnotes; that *is* quite a crowd.

As I continue writing, the sixteenth footnote to the chapter 'November 20, 1923: Postulates of linguistics' echoes in my head: "[David Cooper's *The Language of Madness*] comments that 'the language of 'hearing voices' … means that one becomes aware of something that exceeds the consciousness of normal (i.e., direct) discourse and which therefore must be experienced as 'other.'"[53]

[…] *εἶμέν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶμεν.* (49a)
[…] I am as I am not.[54]

The many voices that reside in us, however, do not compose a harmonious ensemble performing a pleasant-sounding ballad. Honestly, you should have seen this thesis at its conception; the unreadable mess, filled with scattered notes and unfinished thoughts, would have dismayed any editor. But, as parts were rewritten and worthless sentences were removed, an incoherent chaos slowly moulded into a somewhat legible work; ultimately, the cacophony of voices birthed a thesis. It is precisely this relation of dissonance, or war, says Heraclitus, that produces the fruits of Nature's labour:

πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειζε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους. (53)

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[52] Ibid., 3.

[53] "To write is perhaps to bring this assemblage of the unconscious to the light of day, to select the whispering voices, to gather the tribes and secret idioms from which I extract something I call my Self (*Moi*). *I* is an order-word. A schizophrenic said: 'I heard voices say: *he is conscious of life*.'"

Ibid., 84 and 525.

[54] This translation purposely adheres to the lyrical character of Heraclitus' writings, as it provides the reader with a creative, but very flawed, poetic version of the *Fragments*.

Heraclitus, *Fragments*, trans. Brooks Haxton (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 51.

War is father of all (*πάντων*) and king of all (*πάντων*); and some he has shown as gods, others men; some he has made slaves, others free.[55]

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν καὶ δίκην ἔριν καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεών. (80)
One must know that war is common and right is strife and that all things (*πάντα*) are happening by strife and necessity.[56]

According to Kirk's interpretation of fragment 53, the aphorism might very well be part of the so-called 'anthropocentric fragments,' dealing with ethics or politics: "In [fragment 80] we learned that a principle of strife or reaction between opposites was in question; the present fragment contains nothing to show that so wide an application is intended, and war here may be simply the war of the battlefield, and no metaphorical principle."[57] I see no reason to believe why Kirk's conclusion would be correct; the noteworthy use of the word *πάντα* should remind us that Heraclitus' fragments are all related, and it is likely that the Presocratic is further describing Nature's machinism, while simultaneously highlighting the various features of *πάντα* in different fragments. Moreover, I wish to emphasise the genitive *πάντων*'s relation to the word *πατήρ* (father); as a spreader of seeds, the word 'father' undoubtedly bears a fertile undertone: "[…] under the guise of paternity, war bespeaks generativity; generativity through strife."[58]

The characterisation of *πόλεμος* as *πάντων πατήρ* aptly matches what Heraclitus tells us in fragment 80. Here again, the word *πάντα* is used in conjunction with a bloodthirsty image; strife. Yet, *πάντα* is also described as *γινόμενα πάντα* (*κατ' ἔριν*). Although Kirk has chosen to translate this phrase as 'all things are happening (by strife)' a more accurate translation would read 'all things come into being (by strife)' (*letterlijk*, *de in-zijn-komenden allen*).[59] These considerations, in turn, suggest that the different bodies of *πάντα*, opposed in battle, are marked by a fertile and creative struggle.

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[55] Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 67.

[56] Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 238.

[57] Ibid., 246.

[58] Claudia Baracchi, "The *πόλεμος* that gathers all: Heraclitus on war," *Research in Phenomenology* 45 (2015): 269.

[59] The neuter participle *γινόμενον* stems from the verb *γίγνομαι*, which, in turn, derives from the Proto-Indo-European word for 'to produce' or 'to give birth.'

Yet, doesn't war ordinarily bear a rather morbid undertone? As the Homeric epic, recounted throughout the Greek world, evoked images of the lifeless corpses of a legion of footmen scattered on white beaches, the theme of war undoubtedly pervaded the cultural life of the ancients. Heraclitus, however, preferred to highlight another facet of war. Like the drops of blood that seeped from Medusa's severed head into the Aegean sea and transformed into a crimson bed of corals, the Presocratic thinker, too, portrays death, war's grim companion, as a wellspring of life. Indeed, living and dying seem to be two intimately related components of the natural world:

ἀθάνατοι θνητοί θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες. (62)
Immortals are mortal, mortals immortal, living the others' death, dead in the others' life.[60]

Death seems to be the condition of possibility of life's flourishing. We are walking corpses, built from the material remains of our ancestors ('living the others' death'). And, under the name of feeble mortals, we are also dying ceaselessly as we repeatedly shed our serpentine skin (dead in the others' life). Not only the well-known myths of the time might have inspired Heraclitus; perhaps the Presocratic writer was also moved by the maternal deaths of ancient Greece: "What is significant is that normally woman — like some domesticated female animals — needs help to accomplish the function to which nature destines her; […]. With respect to nature, the conflict between the interest of the feminine person and that of the species is so acute it often brings about the death of either the mother or the child: […]."[61]

γενόμενοι ζώειν ἐθέλουσι μόρους τ' ἔχειν μᾶλλον δὲ ἀναπαύεσθαι καὶ παῖδας καταλείπουσι μόρους γενέσθαι. (20)
Once born they want to live and have their portions; and they leave children behind born to become their dooms.[62]

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[60] Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 71.

[61] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (London: Vintage Books, 2011), 561.

[62] Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 73.

The arrival of unborn creatures depends on the decay of elderly forms of life, worn out by the passage of time.[63] Perhaps the weeping philosopher, as portrayed in Johannes Moreelse's *Heraclitus* (1630), wished to make his ephemeral life somewhat more bearable by highlighting the roses that spring from the war-torn remains. Our consideration of fragments 20, 53, 62, and 80 allows us to conclude that *πάντα*'s relation of war carries a germ of rebirth and renewal.

Although Heraclitus chooses to give Nature's relations the name of war, or strife, they can be thought in various ways. In 'Introduction: Rhizome,' the first chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari set out the six principles that define a rhizome. Although I will not provide an interpretation of the concept and will simply mention that the word 'rhizome' is remarkably suggestive of the French word *réseau*, I would like to call attention to the first two principles of the concept: "1 and 2. Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be."[64] Not much later in the chapter, the authors, like Heraclitus, give a name to their principle of connection; the name of 'fibre': "Puppet strings, as a rhizome or multiplicity, are tied not to the supposed will of an artist or puppeteer but to a multiplicity of nerve fibers, which form another puppet in other dimensions connected to the first: […]."[65] After subtly introducing the word 'fibre,' however, it is lost for a long time, and only turns up again in the chapter devoted to Nature, '1730: Becoming-intense, becoming-animal, becoming-imperceptible…':

> Each multiplicity is defined by a borderline functioning as Anomalous, but there is a string of borderlines, a continuous line of borderlines (*fiber*) following which the multiplicity changes. And at each threshold or door, a new pact? A fiber stretches from a human to an animal, from a human or an animal to molecules, from molecules to particles, and so on to the imperceptible.

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[63] While considering of the theme of birth in the *Fragments*, Fink remarks: "We find *γένεσις* in an easily understood sense with living beings, phenomenally seen. Plants spring up from seeds, beasts from the pairing of parents, and humans from sexual union between man and woman. […] Coming into existence (*γίγνεσθαι*) in this region is at the same time coupled with passing away (*φθείρεσθαι*). If we now refer *γένεσις* also to the region of lifeless things, we operate with an expanded, more general, sense of this word." This, in turn, allows Heidegger to conclude: "What you understand by the phenomenal sense of the word *γένεσις* we can also label as ontic."

Heidegger and Fink, *Heraclitus seminar*, *1966 / 67*, 7-8.

[64] If one has paid attention up to now, these two principles should remind one of the *ἀρχή* that I am presently trying to formulate.

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 7.

[65] Deleuze and Guattari's concept of fibre is drawn from the recently translated work of Raymond Ruyer.

Ibid., 8.

> Every fiber is a Universe fiber. A fiber strung across borderlines constitutes a line of flight or of deterritorialization. It is evident that the Anomalous, the Outsider, has several functions: not only does it border each multiplicity, of which it determines the temporary or local stability (with the highest number of dimensions possible under the circumstances), not only is it the precondition for the alliance necessary to becoming, but it also carries the transformations of becoming or crossings of multiplicities always farther down the line of flight.[66]

Every individuated multiplicity, Deleuze and Guattari tell us, is defined by a borderline which relates one multiplicity to another. As one body forms a pact with the other, a wafer-thin thread is spun between Nature's parts and particles, and these subtle fibres are present, like multiplicities themselves, in even the most microscopic regions of our cosmos. Always relating the outside, or rather out-side (*buitenzijde*), of one body to another, fibres are akin to Heraclitus' *πόλεμος* in that they, too, are a crucial requirement for the alliance, or contagion, necessary to becoming: "Between [two bodies], there is threshold and fiber, symbiosis of or passage between heterogeneities."[67] Furthermore, as is mentioned in the very last sentence of 'Introduction: Rhizome,' "*Between* things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one *and* the other away, […]."[68] As different bodies meet, a shared contagion takes place, engendering an 'involution,' as Deleuze and Guattari call it, a term that aptly evokes the ungoverned, unavoidable, and perhaps unwanted character of the resulting metamorphosis.

To exist is to differ, Gabriel Tarde tells us.[69] However, the phrase 'to exist is to differ' does not only suggest that what exists is inherently different from every other thing, but also that every existing thing *makes* a difference. As Zourabichvili tells us, a multiplicity is comprised of "[…] differences mutually differentiating themselves, and renewing themselves in each other; […]."[70] Each difference, entangled in a relational web woven of fibres, is perpetually involved in differentiation, as "[…] the singularities that compose a multiplicity

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[66] Ibid., 249.

[67] Ibid., 250.

[68] Ibid., 25.

[69] Gabriel Tarde, *Monadology and Sociology*, trans. Theo Lorenc (Melbourne: re.press, 2012), 40.

[70] Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A philosophy of the event*, 103.

'penetrate one another across an infinity of degrees,' […]."[71] The concept of differentiation implies that differences alter via their communications, or copulations, with other differences; firmly rooted in a rhizome, or *réseau*, of mutually affecting heterogeneous bodies, differences alter each other unceasingly by, as I see it, making love with one another. When encountering an other, a difference mutates, or differentiates. Unavoidably ensnared in this continuous transformation, Nature's promiscuous bodies perform a repetition of difference. As Zourabichvili reminds us, however, "[…] repetition [should not be] confused with the reproduction of the same; […]." Rather, "The difference-dimension returns each time, but it returns as differing, […]. […] each difference is repeated, but at a distance, in another mode, at another level than its own."[72] Or, as the passage cited at the beginning of this chapter puts it: Nature engenders hybrids 'born of a sexual union that will not reproduce itself.'

Not unlike Heraclitus' emphasis on the intimacy between life and death, Deleuze's concept of differentiation is able to grasp both Nature's growth and decay in a single term. Whether one wishes to portray the countless relations between Nature's differences as a murderous father or as a simple fibre, it does not matter; differentiation remains differentiation.

✻ *A linguistic intermezzo*, *I* — "There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made," Deleuze and Guattari write on page 4 of *A Thousand Plateaus*.[73] Accordingly, the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* seems to echo the world it wishes to articulate, as readers are incited to make unexpected connections between the various parts of the work and may start reading where they wish:

> […] a book composed of chapters has culmination and termination points. What takes place in a book composed instead of plateaus that communicate with one another across microfissures, as in a brain? We call a 'plateau' any multiplicity connected to other multiplicities by superficial underground stems in such a way as to form or extend a rhizome. We are writing this book as a rhizome. It is composed of plateaus. […] Each plateau can be read starting anywhere and can be related to any other plateau.[74]

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[71] Ibid., 200.

[72] Ibid., 103.

[73] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 4.

[74] Ibid., 22.

Yet, Deleuze and Guattari are not alone; it might be suggested that Heraclitus' work, too, forms a rhizome. Considering that only fragments of his *Περὶ φύσεως* remain, the different aphorisms largely derive their meaning from the relational composition they are embedded in. In my attempt "[…] to draw together, in order to reweave intermittent and opposite fragments," I have tried to show that the ontology of both books is inherently relational, an ontology which is mirrored by the written works of the three authors.[75]

An *ἀρχή*

"Our first principle was: pack and contagion, the contagion of the pack, […]."[76] In this chapter, I have tried to argue that Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* and Heraclitus' *Fragments* share a strikingly similar first principle. As I have shown, Nature seems to be defined by two crucial features; difference and relation. As 'a multiplicity of perfectly individuated multiplicities,' Nature is marked by an abundance of difference, even though its heterogeneity might not always be perceptible. Between these boundless differences, a cosmic web of relations is woven, a web of relations that can be portrayed in various ways; either as a simple, colourless fibre, which is nonetheless able to arouse a contagious symbiosis; or as a war between the 'everythings,' as a perpetual fight that is characterised by the withering offspring it engenders.

It seems, then, that in my search for a first principle, for an *ἀρχή*, I have ended up finding an an-*archē*; indeed, both Deleuze and Guattari's and Heraclitus' metaphysics present us with a bewildering and anarchic Nature composed of war-torn differences. Since every body and every thing that exists differs from all others, an inherently related anarchism of beings is awakened, a "[…] 'crazy' patchwork, which fits together pieces of varying size, shape, and color," or "[…] a monster which combines all the demons."[77] Can such a monstrous first principle be given a name at all? Indeed, how would one ever define such an unruly an-*archē*?

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[75] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 43.

[76] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 243.

[77] Ibid., 476.

Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 37.

To me, it seems that it all comes down to this; as an *ἀρχή*, I choose love.[78] In this chapter, I have tried to portray Nature as caught up in ceaseless lovemaking, a lovemaking involving a thousand different sexes, that is. It is surely not a coincidence that *A Thousand Plateaus* is sometimes labelled 'hippie philosophy,' but it would be a mistake to presume that Deleuze and Guattari call for a second Summer of Love in their work (although they certainly wouldn't object to it, I think). As an *ἀρχή*, love can be strange or even terrifying at times; it may form bonds that are unlawful or arouse nuptials that are simply 'unnatural.' By indulging in these 'illicit unions,' love can bring forth deformed creatures or arouse becomings that may grow out of our control. Still, the name 'love' seems to be marked by all that we have spoken of in this chapter: Is love not defined by a fortuitous encounter between two differences? Does it not weave a binding fibre between two intermingling bodies, or a delicate filament which may sever at any time? Besides, is love not downright warlike at times, able to provoke a fierce animosity, or even hate? Two loved ones, furthermore, are able to profoundly alter, or contaminate, each other, as both subjects are wrested from their comfortable, habitual lives and are swept up in a frightening becoming. Love is marked by desire, and by sex.[79] To love is to make love, to *really* make love, involving body parts that are intimately folded into one another; it is to be truly selfless, since it is no longer clear where one limb ends and where another begins. In order to love, one needs to move, make a move, but one also needs to *be* moved, passively and immanently:

> On [the body without organs] we sleep, live our waking lives, fight — fight and are fought — seek our place, experience untold happiness and fabulous defeats; on it we penetrate and are penetrated; on it we love.[80]

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[78] "It might be inferred that the first person to consider this question was Hesiod, or indeed anyone else who assumed Love or Desire as a first principle in things; […] 'First of all things was Chaos made, and then / Broad-bosomed Earth … / And Love, the foremost of immortal beings,' thus implying that there must be in the world some cause to move things and combine them."

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 984b20, accessed 24 October 2020, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Aristot.%20Met.%201.984b&lang=original.

[79] "The only subject is desire itself on the body without organs, inasmuch as it machines partial objects and flows, selecting and cutting the one with the other, passing from one body to another, following connections and appropriations that each time destroy the factitious unity of a possessive or proprietary ego (anoedipal sexuality)."

Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 72.

[80] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 150.

Nature's paradox

In his unfinished work *Philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks*, Friedrich Nietzsche joyfully considers the legacy of five Presocratic thinkers. As he begins with the wisdom of Thales and concludes (untimely, that is) with Anaxagoras' philosophy, the writer's love of Greece quickly rises to the peaks of Mount Olympus. Although usually utterly critical of historical reverence, an uncharacteristic Nietzsche worships the brilliant sages throughout the book. One thinker, however, is not worthy of his praise, and is even described as 'un-Greek'; a graver insult could not possibly leave Nietzsche's mouth. Indeed, Parmenides is rebuked at length for his portrayal of a barren and petrified Nature, as the Eleatic thinker chooses to withdraw "[…] into the rigor mortis of the coldest emptiest concept of all, the concept of being."[81]

Parmenides, Nietzsche tells us, dismisses Nature's coming-to-be (*Werden*) as a mirage: "All the manifold colorful world known to experience, all the transformations of its qualities, all the orderliness of its ups and downs, are cast aside mercilessly as mere semblance and illusion. Nothing may be learned from them. All effort spent upon this false deceitful world which is futile and negligible, faked into a lying existence by the senses is therefore wasted."[82] Longing to transcend the mere 'Way of Seeming,' Parmenides chooses to flee the vivid natural world, beyond which (or so he deduces in an enlightened poem whose puzzling argument I will not discuss) lies an eternal and unmoving sphere (*τὸ ἐόν*, or 'what is'). In a forlorn search for certainty, the Eleatic philosopher devotes himself to an undeniable tautology: What is, is, and what is not, is not. The bleak axiom permits Parmenides to dwell in an escapist, yet absolutely infallible, delusion, and the formulation of the newly found principle marks, according to Nietzsche, the birth of ontology.

Even among philosophers themselves, ontologists are generally thought to linger in an extravagant castle high among the clouds, where they live happily ever after in their imaginative fairy tales. Throughout its history, metaphysics has been widely regarded as a groundless fantasy, likened, for example, to "[…] a wonderful building, which is perpetually being embellished, [yet whose] foundations are breaking down," as Søren Kierkegaard wrote in an early draft of the preface to *Philosophical crumbs*.[83] And in *Candide, or Optimism*, Voltaire,

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[81] Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks*, 80-81.

[82] Ibid., 79.

[83] Søren Kierkegaard, *Wijsgerige kruimels & Het begrip angst*, trans. J. Sperna Weiland (Baarn: Ambo, 1995), 284.

too, mockingly awards his character Pangloss, a zealous disciple of Leibniz' theodicy, the honourable title of professor of 'metaphysico-theologico-cosmo-nigology.'[84] Still, not every metaphysician prefers to dwell in a realm of pure thinking, far removed from a treacherous, uncertain, and metamorphic world. In his article *Natural change in Heraclitus*, Kirk mentions that the Presocratic "[…] believed strongly in the value of sense-perception providing that it is interpreted intelligently, with *φρόνησις*," a conclusion which can be easily deduced from a large collection of fragments.[85] In more than a dozen of his cryptic aphorisms, Heraclitus either praises the eyes directly or implicitly criticises the shallow sensibility of the plebeians, referring, for example, to their sluggish condition, or simply pointing out their vulgar stupidity. Moreover, in his *Περὶ φύσεως*, Heraclitus often illustrates his cosmic principles by using ordinary examples; the law of the *πόλις*, geological rhythms and meteorological cycles, the graceful beauty of apes, and the exquisite culinary taste of donkeys all make an appearance.

A Thousand Plateaus, too, is filled to the brim with lively examples ranging from masochist programmes to the territorial behaviour of songbirds. These worldly illustrations are not simply 'particular' exemplars that affirm the book's metaphysical ground; such a habit of thinking would be very much alike the clever fancies of the rationalist tradition, which begins with grand universals and hollow abstractions, to be imposed upon "[…] a world which they make conform to their requirements […]."[86] (At least Parmenides saw that the sensible world did not (or at least not always) make sense to reason, which is why he chose to withdraw into a land of perfect order hiding behind the confusing chaos. Rationalism and its rationalists, on the other hand, declare that the world itself is rational, and every singular difference that does not fit their prefashioned, or even innate, concepts is rejected as a freakish anomaly.) Rather than fabricating *a priori* conceptual schemes and schemas and strainingly enforcing them onto a world of differences, it might be suggested that Deleuze and Guattari

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[84] François-Marie Arouet (Voltaire), *Candide*, *or Optimism*, trans. Theo Cuffe (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 4.

[85] G.S. Kirk, "Natural change in Heraclitus," *Mind* 60 (1951): 41.

[86] Gilles Deleuze, "Preface to the English language edition," in *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), vii.

would feel more at home in empiricist quarters.[87] This does not mean that *A Thousand Plateaus* is altogether void of concepts (quite the contrary, it is unmistakably 'a book of concepts,' as Deleuze stresses in the French newspaper *Libération*).[88] As an 'empiricist' work, however, *A Thousand Plateaus* does not pass from its concepts to the world, but from the world to its concepts, that is, to all kinds of 'fluid concepts' (as called for by Bergson in his essay on an intuitive or 'truly empiricist' metaphysics) that have to be extracted rather than abstracted. In other words, concepts have to be found, not in our heads, but in the world.[89] Although the names 'esoteric' and 'otherworldly' tend to envelop the 'supernatural' branch of metaphysics, both Heraclitus' *Fragments* and Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* seem to be firmly rooted in an earthly and allegedly deceitful world, that is, a world marked by becoming.[90]

In the previous chapter, we have seen that Nature seems to be defined by two crucial features; difference and relation. As 'a multiplicity of perfectly individuated multiplicities,' Nature is composed of a boundless number of different bodies, entangled in a relational web woven of fibres. Nature's differences, as we have seen, differentiate via communications with other differences; rooted in a rhizome, or *réseau*, of mutually affecting heterogeneous bodies,

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87 "Empiricism is known as the opposite of rationalism. Rationalism tends to emphasize universals and to make wholes prior to parts in the order of logic as well as in that of being. Empiricism, on the contrary, lays the explanatory stress upon the part, the element, the individual, and treats the whole as a collection and the universal as an abstraction."

"Now, ordinary empiricism, in spite of the fact that conjunctive and disjunctive relations present themselves as being fully co-ordinate parts of experience, has always shown a tendency to do away with the connections of things, and to insist most on the disjunctions. […] Radical empiricism, on the contrary, is fair to both the unity and the disconnection. It finds no reason for treating either as illusory."

William James, *Essays in radical empiricism* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1912), 41 and 43-47, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/32547/32547-h/32547-h.htm.

88 Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972 – 1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 25.

89 "[Metaphysics] is only truly itself when it goes beyond the concept, or at least when it frees itself from rigid and ready-made concepts in order to create a kind very different from those which we habitually use; I mean supple, mobile, and almost fluid representations, always ready to mould themselves on the fleeting forms of intuition."

Henri Bergson, *An introduction to metaphysics*, trans. T.E. Hulme (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), 21.

90 "Theology is very strict on the following point: there are no werewolves, human beings cannot become animal. That is because there is no transformation of essential forms; they are inalienable and only entertain relations of analogy."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 252.

differences alter each other unceasingly by encountering an other, resulting in "[…] a dissolution of constant form in favor of differences in dynamic."[91]

Our search for a first principle revealed a bewildering Nature composed of war-torn bodies, a world that might best be described as a monstrous anarchism. We encountered a dramatic Earth as the theatre of unlawful loves, of 'unnatural nuptials' that "[…] have results analogous to those of 'the abominable couplings dear to antiquity […].'"[92] Moreover, our consideration of Heraclitus' ontological principle of war, as *πάντων πατήρ*, allowed us to conclude that the Presocratic's fragments, too, bear a fertile and creative undertone.[93] Ultimately, these two features, difference and relation, are able to account for Nature's perpetual metamorphoses: "[…] packs, or multiplicities, continually transform themselves into each other, cross over into each other. Werewolves become vampires when they die. This is not surprising, since becoming and multiplicity are the same thing."[94]

In what follows, I shall provide an interpretation of the concept of becoming that is marked by an emphasis on the senses, which I will illustrate with the most renowned part of Heraclitus' work; the river fragments. Yet, as we shall see, the Presocratic's cryptic aphorisms confront us with the problem of the doctrine of flux, as formulated by Socrates in Plato's *Cratylus*: How can that which is never in the same state be anything? Do our eyes not tell us that our lively world, marked by becoming, is populated by a wide variety of relatively durable beings? In the second part of this chapter, I will attempt to show that Heraclitus and Deleuze and Guattari share a similar answer to this problem. The solution, I argue, lies in the concept of haecceity, as described by Deleuze and Guattari in their chapter '1730: Becoming-intense, becoming-animal, becoming-imperceptible…'.

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[91] Ibid., 104.

[92] Ibid., 10-11.

[93] "Becoming produces nothing by filiation; all filiation is imaginary. Becoming is always of a different order than filiation. It concerns alliance. If evolution includes any veritable becomings, it is in the domain of *symbioses* that bring into play beings of totally different scales and kingdoms, with no possible filiation. […] it ceases to be a hereditary filiative evolution, becoming communicative or contagious. Accordingly, the term we would prefer for this form of evolution between heterogeneous terms is 'involution,' on the condition that involution is in no way confused with regression. Becoming is involutionary, involution is creative."

"That is the only way Nature operates — against itself. This is a far cry from filiative production or hereditary reproduction, in which the only differences retained are a simple duality between sexes within the same species, and small modifications across generations. For us, on the other hand, there are as many sexes as there are terms in symbiosis, as many differences as elements contributing to a process of contagion."

Ibid., 238 and 242.

[94] Ibid., 249.

Sense and sensibility

In spite of his, at times, overly harsh words, Heraclitus of Ephesus was a sensitive man. In the previous chapter, we have already seen that the weeping philosopher was brought to tears by a morbid and withering world.[95] Yet, the tender Presocratic also possesses a keen pair of eyes, allowing him to spot things that commonly elude others:

ᾧ μάλιστα διηνεκῶς ὁμιλοῦσι τούτῳ διαφέρονται καὶ οἷς καθ' ἡμέραν ἐγκυροῦσι ταῦτα αὐτοῖς ξένα φαίνεται. (72)
They are at odds with that with which they most constantly associate. And what they meet with every day seems strange to them.[96]

Once more, we encounter Heraclitus' antipathy towards *οἱ πολλοί*, the dull and ignorant herd that somewhat reminds me of Heidegger's *das Man*. Although the pretentious Presocratic does not mention *οἱ πολλοί* explicitly in fragment 72 and simply employs the unspecified verbs *διαφέρονται* and *ἐγκυροῦσι*, the oblivious character of the Greek flock, and its vulgar sensibility in particular, appear once again. Still, what is it exactly that 'they' are at odds with? What do *οἱ πολλοί* meet every single day, which somehow still seems strange to them?

In spite of our crude senses, we, *οἱ πολλοί*, are all artists, whether Heraclitus likes it or not. In illustrating how an Anaxagorian chaos slowly matures into a shapely cosmos, Nietzsche likens the Ionian thinker's concept of *νοῦς*, an ethereal Mind that orderly composes Nature's vast number of parts, to "[…] a creative artist. It is, in fact, the most tremendous mechanical and architectural genius, creating with the simplest means the most impressive forms and orbits, creating a movable architectonic, as it were, […]."[97] Nietzsche is not the only one who evokes the figure of the artist as chaos' worthy opponent. In his *Timaeus*, Plato, too, introduces the image of a divine artisan, the Demiurge, who skilfully fashions the world,

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[95] *θάνατός ἐστιν ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ὁρέομεν ὁκόσα δὲ εὕδοντες ὕπνος.* (21)
Death is all things we *see* awake; all things we see asleep is sleep.

Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 69. — The italics are my own.

[96] Ibid., 31.

[97] Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks*, 122.

his work, in order to tame its anarchic character.[98] An artist, Deleuze and Guattari tell us, "[…] confronts […] chaos, the forces of chaos, the forces of a raw and untamed matter upon which Forms must be imposed in order to make substances, and Codes in order to make milieus."[99] In order to cope with a condition of unruly confusion, an artist's creative labour is able to mould an unrefined chaos into a much-needed serenity and order, producing, in turn, a milieu. But what is a milieu?

A milieu is largely composed of sensory stimuli, marked by a rhythmic regularity.[100] As I am watching the film *Miss Minoes* (2001), for example, the emerald hue of Carice van Houten's overcoat leaves a vivid sense impression upon my eyes. However, as Zourabichvili mentions, such an "[…] intensity does not last; a simple sketch or evanescent present, it tends toward 0, whatever its level may be." A single shot would fade quickly, and the overcoat's trace would disappear before my eyes. Yet, as the film rapidly unfolds within the steel projector, it is precisely the rhythmic repetition of the frames that allows me to grasp the intensity, Minoes' overcoat, persistently. However, in order to be able to apprehend the costume of Annie M.G. Schmidt's character, I require certain synthetic talents, as the fleeting stimuli as such…

> […] would trap us in a pure chaos if the passive syntheses were not effectuated in us, contracting the vibrations and the recurrent instant of intensity. It is from out of these syntheses that the

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98 "Plato was a great dreamer, as many others have been since his time. […] Here follows one of his dreams, which is not one of the least interesting. He thought that the great Demiurgos, the eternal geometer, having peopled the immensity of space with innumerable globes, was willing to make a trial of the knowledge of the genii who had been witnesses of his works. He gave to each of them a small portion of matter to arrange, nearly in the same manner as Phidias and Zeuxis would have given their scholars a statue to carve or a picture to paint, if we may be allowed to compare small things to great."

François-Marie Arouet (Voltaire), "Plato's dream," in *The works of Voltaire*, *Volume IV of XLIII: Romances*, *Volume III of III*, *and A treatise on toleration*, trans. William F. Fleming (Project Gutenberg, 2015), https://www.gutenberg.org/files/49726/49726-h/49726-h.htm#chap06.

99 "[…] the task of the classical artist is God's own, that of organizing chaos; and the artist's only cry is Creation! Creation! The Tree of Creation!"

"[…] chaos is characterized less by the absence of determinations than by the infinite speed with which they take shape and vanish."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 338.

Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, 42.

100 "Every milieu is […] a block of space-time constituted by the periodic repetition of the component. […] Every milieu is coded, a code being defined by periodic repetition; but each code is in a perpetual state of transcoding or transduction."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 53 and 313.

> 'actively represented repetition' emerges, the living present or the milieu […]. Every milieu or situation is therefore conditioned by a passive synthesis without which no reaction would be possible, for the body would undergo only a punctual excitation, a simple shock, […].[101]

By neatly organising the various impressions that affect our nervous system, we are able to compose a relatively stable image. This, in turn, prevents the rise of an altogether amorphous world, and it is precisely in this sense that we are all artists; a milieu, rhythmically composed of a manifold of sensory stimuli, stops us from falling in an unbearable chaos. Our synthetic talents help us to inhabit an anarchic Earth, rendering it somewhat more comprehensible: "From chaos, *Milieus* and *Rhythms* are born."[102]

Zourabichvili continues his interpretation of the Deleuzian milieu by raising an existential question: "Who am I? A contemplative habit, drawn through a contraction of the material and sensorial elements composing a milieu in which I live and act. Or else the multiplicity of habits related to the diverse milieus I contract, some of whose formation did not await my arrival: social milieus, linguistic milieus, etc. I have exactly the consistency of my habits; my actions and reactions presuppose the prior contraction of a milieu which I henceforth *am*."[103] A linguistic milieu, for example, offers us an assemblage of relatively stable 'constants' of language. When a newborn baby is torn from the secure home of its mother's womb, it is overwhelmed by an abundance of unknown sense impressions; a few days after the arduous delivery (surely, the expression 'to be in labour' is not incidental), a pair of large eyes betray the bewildering confusion which surrounds the infant. As we are raised and educated, however, we slowly pick up a language through the various redundancies that our ears are able to recognise.[104] Mere noises mould into sounds, and the twofold operation of hearsay begins: Hear, say. Single words grow quickly into a comprehensive vocabulary, and soon after, a child will start using uncannily 'proper' ways of speaking, including a variety of clichés. The supposedly invariable elements of a linguistic milieu, with its rigorously ordered

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[101] Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A philosophy of the event*, 113.

[102] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 338.

[103] Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A philosophy of the event*, 92.

[104] Recognition; re-cognition (*her-kenning*): 'O, I know this already! I've heard this before!' Or, in another word, redundancy.

syntax and a long list of grammatical rules, allow us to make *sense* of what we hear. Owing to the echoes of the English language, this thesis is rendered somewhat more intelligible.[105]

As we grow used to the linguistic milieu that envelops us, however, we lose our awareness of its transient character; indeed, for us, this is simply how language *is*. Yet, a linguistic milieu is unavoidably exposed to that which it is not, making it susceptible to change: "[…] milieus pass into one another, they are essentially communicating."[106] Michel de Montaigne eloquently stresses the metamorphic character of language, while simultaneously noting that we are inclined to regard our present manner of speaking and writing as the apex of linguistics:

> I write my book for few men and for few years. Had it been matter of duration, I should have put it into firmer language. According to the continual variation that ours has been subject to, up to this day, who can expect that its present form should be in use fifty years hence? It slips every day through our fingers, and since I was born, it is altered above one-half. We say that it is now perfect; and every age says the same of its own. I shall hardly trust to that, so long as it varies and changes as it does.[107]

As the refrain of our existence plays its repetitive tune, an ordinarily unnoticed *life* escapes our numbed senses. Although we undoubtedly rely on its rather monotonous character, it is precisely the milieu that accounts for, what Heraclitus would call, the obliviousness of *οἱ πολλοί*; due to the milieu's repetitive nature, we have the impression that we reside in a relatively stable present, and it is thanks to its habitual banality that we are able to cope with the chaos that surrounds us.[108] A milieu dulls our senses in order to achieve this serene, or even sedated, condition. The milieu, then, is precisely what we are *not* 'at odds with.' The concept of milieu only explains the insensible character of *οἱ πολλοί*, but not *what*, precisely, eludes them. Then, what is it that we 'meet with every day,' yet which still seems strange to us?

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[105] For someone who is unfamiliar with *A Thousand Plateaus*' odd, and almost unreadable, vocabulary, the work would likely seem to be utter gibberish, or even nonsense. Those who regularly dwell within the milieu that Deleuze and Guattari have created, however, notice that the book is filled with repetitious, redundant phrases. Really, you have no idea how often they repeat themselves.

[106] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 313.

[107] Michel de Montaigne, "Book the Third: Chapter IX: Of vanity," in *Essays*, ed. William Carew Hazlitt (Project Gutenberg, 2006), http://www.gutenberg.org/files/3600/3600-h/3600-h.htm#link2HCH0102.

[108] "A milieu is precisely an order of conformity that we rely on in order to act: […]."

Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A philosophy of the event*, 144.

The keen eye easily notices that the senses play a considerable role in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In a footnote to the eight chapter of the book, '1874: Three novellas, or 'What happened?'', Deleuze and Guattari subtly define their notion of microperception, or molecular perception: "[…] a *molecular perception* composed of fine and shifting segmentations and autonomous traits, where holes appear in what is full and microforms in emptiness, between two things, where everything 'teems and stirs' with a thousand cracks."[109] While remaining practically the same at first glance, the world around us is subject to countless tiny operations. All kinds of things are happening right before our eyes, leaving little traces, marks, and scars, or displacing and depositing a variety of matters and materials; a raindrop stains the window, an ant's footsteps uproot the soil, or a stormy bike ride stretches (however slightly) the fibres of a fancy dress. Or, as Walter Benjamin expresses it in *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*:

> By close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera, the film, on the one hand, extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action.[110]

Nature's 'microoperations' continue their work unceasingly, but because we comfortably reside within our milieu, this lively drama usually dissolves into the background as sensorial residue. As opposed to the haughty Heraclitus, however, Deleuze and Guattari do admit that "It's not easy to see things in the middle, rather than looking down on them from above or up at them from below, or from left to right or right to left: try it, you'll see that everything changes."[111]

Presently, I shall follow the advice of Deleuze and Guattari, as I try to cultivate a sense of microperception, using the imagery of Heraclitus' ninety-first fragment as an example.

ποταμῷ γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμβῆναι δὶς τῷ αὐτῷ. σκίδνησι καὶ συνάγει συνίσταται καὶ ἀπολείπει πρόσεισι καὶ ἄπεισι. (91)

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[109] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 535.

[110] Walter Benjamin, "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 15.

[111] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 23.

One cannot step twice into the same river. It scatters and gathers, it comes together and flows away, approaches and departs.[112]

As Kirk notes, the fragment presents "[…] three pairs of contrasted verbs which are evidently intended to suggest accretion and dispersal."[113] The verb *συνίστημι*, for example, does not only mean 'to combine,' 'to put together,' or 'to organise,' but can also be translated as 'to join or engage with (in a fight or battle)' or 'to form a league or band together.'[114] Considering the word's various undertones, it might be suggested that Heraclitus has purposefully used *συνίστημι* in order to evoke his simultaneously composing and dismantling ontological principle of war. As one of *πάντα*'s many multiplicities, the surging river is perpetually involved in battle. To be sure, one cannot step twice into the same river due to its constantly approaching and departing waters. But Nature's strife also continues outside the river, or rather at its outside; like a sculptor gently chisels off unwanted marble, microscopic specks of clay and slightly rougher grains of sand, salt, and various other minerals slowly erode the river's stream bed, armoured with supposedly solid, yet polished, pebbles. Similarly, the meandering river's banks are devoured as small portions of moist soil drop into the water and are carried away as sediment. And as dirty Greek sandals step into the cold river, the 'pristine' mountain water is polluted by an other.

Things always leave a trace. The art of drawing aptly illustrates this idea; the granite's very breaking off is the condition of possibility for drawing a line in the first place. Even the slightest touch leaves a mark of grey dust, and the tip of the pencil alters with every new line. An almost germaphobic perception notices that even the faintest contact is able to create a tiny and barely perceivable impression, and blemishes an other with its trace. Since "[…] whether [things] are large or small, inferior or superior, none of them participates more or less in being," we may conclude that "[…] *the smallest becomes equivalent to the largest* once it is not

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[112] On the basis of Kirk's criticism of decidedly non-Heraclitean passages, I have decided to cut certain parts of Diels' citation of fragment 91, while adding the verbs *συνίσταται* and *ἀπολείπει*, which were originally rejected by Diels as inauthentic. Furthermore, the first part of the fragment, 'One cannot step twice into the same river,' is a translation of Kahn, whereas the string of verbs was translated better by Kirk; I have made a combination of both.

Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 53.

Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 381.

[113] Ibid., 381.

[114] In fragment 91, the conjugation *συνίσταται* is used.

separated from what it can do."[115] Similarly, large geological metamorphoses are ultimately rooted in small, molecular transformations that occur without ceasing. Even though the Earth's strata might seem solid at first sight and even slowly grow as sedimentary rock amasses due to a lack of movement, the various bodies that compose our milieu erode and weather in detail.[116] It is precisely these perpetual workings of becoming that elude us, *οἱ πολλοί*, even though they happen right before our eyes; only a refined sense of microperception is able to reveal Nature's minute machinism.

It should be mentioned, however, that Heraclitus does not mention the word *πάντα* in fragment 91, and the infamous Heraclitean phrase *πάντα ῥεῖ* can only be found in Plato's *Cratylus*.[117] May we therefore still conclude that Heraclitus' ninety-first fragment tries to tell us something about Nature and its 'naturing' in particular? Other than the ridiculous notion that Heraclitus had simply decided to include a random thought about rivers in his *Περὶ φύσεως*, I

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[115] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 37.

[116] The science of geology concerns itself with the metamorphoses of something that is generally perceived as unchanging. Accordingly, the scientific branch has developed a whole language brimming with concepts that allow us to describe even the minutest of geomorphic processes; the Earth's materials abrase, attrite, corrode, dissolve, run off, scour, and weather, in order to be deposited again somewhere else. The imperceptible transformations of solid boulders, mountains, and even the Earth's tectonic plates (or, what Fernand Braudel aptly called the *longue durée*) are ultimately rooted in microscopic operations that ordinarily go unnoticed. Still, I see no reason to believe why only rocks would be subject to, for example, erosion. Indeed, the 'cutting edges' of deterritorialisation of which Deleuze and Guattari often speak somewhat resemble the geological concept of erosion.

"[…] every animal swept up in its pack or multiplicity has its anomalous. It has been noted that the origin of the word *anomal* ('anomalous'), an adjective that has fallen into disuse in French, is very different from that of *anormal* ('abnormal'): *a-normal*, a Latin adjective lacking a noun in French, refers to that which is outside rules or goes against the rules, whereas *anomalie,* a Greek noun that has lost its adjective, designates the unequal, the coarse, the rough, the cutting edge of deterritorialization."

"If the anomalous is neither an individual nor a species, then what is it? It is a phenomenon, but a phenomenon of bordering."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 243-244 and 245.

[117] It should be noted that even in Plato's *Cratylus* the phrase *πάντα ῥεῖ* does not appear literally, as Socrates concisely summarises Heraclitus' philosophy with the words *πάντα χωρεῖ*, or 'all things give way' (*alles wijkt*).

"Heracleitus says, you know, that all things move (*πάντα χωρεῖ*) and nothing remains still, and he likens the universe to the current of a river, saying that you cannot step twice into the same stream."

Plato, *Cratylus*, 402a, accessed 18 November 2020, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0172%3Atext%3DCrat.%3Asection%3D402a.

also wish to argue, contra Kirk, that the Presocratic's twelfth fragment seems to suggest that *πάντα*'s other bodies, too, are characterised by flux:[118]

ποταμοῖσι τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρεῖ. (12)
As they step into the same rivers, other and still other waters flow upon them.[119]

Kahn offers us a wonderful analysis of this poetic fragment, which is characterised by a rhythmic flow that would even make Denzel Curry jealous:

> The wording offers several oddities. […] there are four consecutive dative forms: *potamoisi toisin autoisin embainousin*, which can in principle be construed in either of two ways: (1) 'into the same rivers, as they step,' as in my translation, or (2) 'into rivers, as the same (men) step.' […] Since elsewhere Heraclitus makes deliberate use of syntactical ambiguity, it is possible that both constructions are intended here. If so, the ambiguity serves to emphasize a parallel between the identity of the human bathers and that of the rivers; and this parallel would suggest that the men too remain the same only as a constant pattern imposed on incessant flow.[120]

Not only does the string of words ending in *oisi*(*n*) and *ousin* evoke the continuous movement of the stream as the structure of the sentence imitates the rhythm of the river; the ambiguous dative forms also seem to suggest that, like the river itself, the nude bodies that wade through its waters, too, 'scatter and gather' without ceasing. Even though we are *called* the same from childhood to old age, we are always becoming-other. "To become," however, "is never to imitate, nor to 'do like,' nor to conform to a model, whether it's of justice or of truth."[121] Imitation, for example, still implies a subjectification, as one thinks to oneself: 'I still know what I *really* am.' Becoming, on the other hand, involves some sort of delirium, a losing (or spreading) of oneself, whether materially, psychologically, linguistically, or whatever other '-ly'

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[118] "Now of this doctrine that things are constantly changing like flowing rivers there is no sign whatever in the fragments, apart from this fr. 12 and fr. 91 […]. Yet these fragments simply consist of statements about rivers: nothing is said about things in general behaving in the same way […]."

Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 370.

[119] I would like to point out that, in fragment 12, Heraclitus uses a literal repetition of the word 'different' (*ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα*).

Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 53.

[120] Ibid., 166-167.

[121] Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 2-3.

is thinkable. In order to 'survive,' my body needs to kill itself, that is, it needs to replace, little by little, every single organ, tissue, or cell. And similarly for what the Greeks sometimes called the soul; our habits, opinions, and desires also flow untiringly, perhaps through tiny mutations, varying slightly from day to day. Heraclitus' remarkable sensibility allows him to conclude that Nature's 'microoperations' are perpetually at work, even in our supposedly identical 'Selves.' As he proudly flaunts a set of senses that are not numbed by the banality of the milieu, the Presocratic seems to be aware of a "[…] virtual continuum of life, 'the essential element of the real beneath the everyday.'"[122] Our consideration of fragments 12 and 91, in conjunction with Heraclitus' emphasis on the molecular transformations that commonly elude us, allows us to conclude that, indeed, one cannot step twice into the same river.

My own words echo in my head. At the beginning of this chapter, I made a mockery of Parmenides and his lifeless doctrine of Being, and even declared him to abide in a ridiculous illusion. Still, have we not once again met with some metaphysical reverie, albeit not high among the clouds this time, but 'beneath the everyday'? Since "What is real is the becoming itself, […] not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes," and since "Becoming produces nothing other than itself," it might be suggested that Deleuze and Guattari wholly deny the existence of all that bears the name of 'being.'[123] And Heraclitus, too, does not seem to believe in anything persisting, as our brief consideration of two of the river fragments has revealed. But has the Presocratic not told us that "Whatever comes from

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[122] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 110.

[123] This idea ('Becoming produces nothing other than itself') is what Deleuze often calls 'the being of becoming.' The word 'being,' which traditionally bears the mark of eternity and permanence (that is, of changelessness), can, according to Deleuze, only be said of becoming; only becoming 'is,' and only becoming returns as 'the same' (as becoming):

"Returning is being, but only the being of becoming. The eternal return does not bring back 'the same,' but returning constitutes the only Same of that which becomes. Returning is the becoming-identical of becoming itself."

"This is the point to clarify: that a becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself; but also that it has no term, since its term in turn exists only as taken up in another becoming of which it is the subject, and which coexists, forms a block, with the first. This is the principle according to which there is a reality specific to becoming (the Bergsonian idea of a coexistence of very different 'durations,' superior or inferior to 'ours,' all of them in communication)."

Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 41.

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 238.

sight, hearing, learning from experience: this I prefer?"[124] Has Deleuze not also confessed his esteem for the senses: "I have always felt that I am an empiricist, […]?"[125] Indeed, up to now, we have placed a thorough emphasis on our senses. Yet, do our eyes not tell us that our lively and metamorphic world, marked by becoming, is populated by a wide variety of relatively durable beings? Surely, we must admit that not every single body and every single thing is characterised by perpetual flux, right? Albeit for a mere hour, a day, or a lifetime, some things just *are*, aren't they?

The problem of the doctrine of flux is perhaps expressed most eloquently in Plato's *Cratylus*. Therefore, I will not attempt to surpass the words of Socrates, considering that no twenty-five year old philosophy student can eclipse the wit of the gadfly of Athens:

> Socrates:
> Can we, then, if it is always passing away, correctly say that it is this, then that it is that, or must it inevitably, in the very instant while we are speaking, become something else and pass away and no longer be what it is?
>
> Cratylus:
> That is inevitable.
>
> Socrates:
> How, then, can that which is never in the same state be anything? For if it is ever in the same state, then obviously at that time it is not changing; and if it is always in the same state and is always the same, how can it ever change or move without relinquishing its own form?[126]

On haecceities
or, What being means

We haven't gone quite far enough.

In an interview on the philosophy of Heraclitus, Hans-Georg Gadamer emphasises just "[…] how remarkable it is, what we are hearing here from Heraclitus. On the one hand,

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[124] *ὅσων ὄψις ἀκοὴ μάθησις ταῦτα ἐγὼ προτιμέω.* (55)

Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 35.

[125] Deleuze, "Preface to the English language edition," vii.

[126] Plato, *Cratylus*, 439d and 439e, accessed 18 November 2020, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0172%3Atext%3DCrat.%3Asection%3D439d.

he speaks of the river (*Fluss*) in which everything flows, so that Heraclitus, whom later authors in all likelihood understood very one-sidedly, supposedly taught the doctrine of the flux of all things. When we look at the testimonies, however, we see that he rather taught the paradox; that that, which is persistently different water which the stream bed is flowing down, is one and the same river."[127] Indeed, we should have expected that Heraclitus, ever mindful of what his senses tell him, is not solely aware of Nature's molecular operations; he also recognises that the world is composed of relatively durable bodies. Already in the twelfth fragment, the Presocratic spoke of the same (*αὐτοῖσιν*) yet different (*ἕτερα*) rivers, and, in fragment 49a and 84a, we encounter this antithesis once more:

ποταμοῖς τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐμβαίνομέν τε καὶ οὐκ ἐμβαίνομεν εἶμέν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶμεν. (49a)
Into the same rivers we step and do not step, we are and we are not.[128]

μεταβάλλον ἀναπαύεται. (84a)
Changing, it rests.[129]

How, then, should we interpret these two cryptic paradoxes? How to reconcile the doctrine of flux with the world's relatively durable beings? A solution, I argue, lies in the concept of haecceity, as described by Deleuze and Guattari in their chapter '1730: Becoming-intense, becoming-animal, becoming-imperceptible…'. This premise, in turn, evokes a simple question; what is a haecceity?

Cratylus, the fanatic disciple of Heraclitus, boldly contends that one cannot even step *once* into the same river; indeed, there is no river, since, as Socrates puts it, 'that which is never in the same state' cannot be anything. According to the sophist, the river is a mere semblance,

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[127] "Nun, ich führe im Augenblick in diese Situation nur ein, um zu sagen wie merkwürdig das ist, was wir hier von Heraklit hören. Einerseits spricht er von dem Fluss, [in] dem alles dahin strömt, sodass Heraklit, von späteren Autoren höchstwahrscheinlich sehr einseitig verstehend, die Lehre vom Fluss aller Dinge gelehrt hätte. Wenn wir die Zeugnisse ansehen, sehen wir viel mehr, dass er die Paradoxie gelehrt hat; dass das, dass das ständig anderes Wasser ist, dass das Bett des Stromes hinabfließt, ein und derselbe Strom ist."

Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Le radici del pensiero filosofico: Eraclito," interview by Christoph Jermann and Renato Parascandolo, *Enciclopedia Multimediale delle Scienze Filosofiche*, Rai Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1993, audio, 27:18. — The translation is my own.

[128] Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 289.

[129] Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 250.

and the only thing that makes us believe that there is something persistent is its name.[130] Indeed, whereas Parmenides tells us that we are being deceived by our senses, Cratylus says that we are fooled by our language. Unlike Cratylus, however, Heraclitus did not deny the river's existence, as he repeatedly speaks of the same stream: '*This* very same river is what I see,' or in other words, 'What a river!'

> There is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance. We reserve the name *haecceity* for it. A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. […] We say, 'What a story!' 'What heat!' 'What a life!' to designate a very singular individuation.[131]

Perhaps a first answer would be to say that a haecceity is just as much an aesthetic phenomenon as it is a metaphysical concept. Drawn from the work of John Duns Scotus, the concept of haecceity refers to a certain 'thusness' which appears to us. A haecceity shows, in its immediacy, an intensive individuation. Earlier in the chapter, we encountered the 'excessively present' overcoat of Minoes, and it was precisely the intensity's vivid colour that allowed it to distinguish itself from an other: "Intensity is simple and singular, but always related to at least one other intensity from which it detaches itself."[132] Although the bright green garment is worn by a young woman strutting over cat-filled roofs, the overcoat's presence stands out against the *mise-en-scène* as a whole. It is *this* singular overcoat that catches my eye, right here and now; all other pieces of the composition, even though they are still present on the theatre's projection screen and, in a way, visible yet hazy, dissolve into the background. It seems, then, that a haecceity is a decidedly aesthetic phenomenon.[133] But there's more to it than that.

In 'Memories of a Spinozist, I' and 'II,' we learn that a body is defined by two features; longitude and latitude. The longitude of a body refers to "[…] the particle

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[130] "You use names for things as though they rigidly, persistently endured; […]."

Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks*, 52.

[131] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 261.

[132] Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A philosophy of the event*, 127.

[133] It should be noted, however, that a haecceity (or an intensity) is not simply 'aesthetic,' considered as a mere semblance behind which a more truthful world conceals itself. Rather, a haecceity is, as Deleuze would say, the *being* of the (aesthetic) phenomenon, as the notion subsumes 'mere' appearance and (what Parmenides would call) 'true being' under the selfsame concept.

aggregates belonging to that body in a given relation; these aggregates are part of each other depending on the composition of the relation that defines the individuated assemblage of the body."[134] Although Deleuze and Guattari refuse to name the various particles, parts, or particle aggregates that compose a body, I shall use atoms as an example in order to aid my interpretation of the concept of longitude.[135]

Nature's bodies are composed of particles. As a lonely atom flutters through the void, it may encounter an other with which it can form a chemical compound. Atoms attract and desire to form bonds together, a nuptial, perhaps. Whereas hydrogen is rather romantic and prefers just one parter, other atoms are more libertine, depending on the number of electrons that compose the atom's shell. The physicist Ernest Rutherford likened the atom to a miniature solar system, as a cloud of 'celestial' electrons travelled in orbit around the atom's nucleus.[136] A molecule, in turn, might be envisioned as a galaxy; a cell, a cluster of galaxies. These molecular structures, in turn, compose a small microcosm; our body — a teeming population of atoms. Even though an atom is entangled in a molecular bond, it is ceaselessly involved in what is called a 'molecular vibration' as the atoms of a molecule move relative to one another in a periodic pattern. Thus, our body's particles are perpetually in motion and, in this sense, in flux; 'the dance of atoms,' as Lucretius wrote, simply knows no repose. In

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[134] Shortly after, the same is said in a slightly different way. The longitude of a body is then defined as "[…] the sum total of the material elements belonging to [a body] under given relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 256 and 260.

[135] "Substantial or essential forms have been critiqued in many different ways. Spinoza's approach is radical: Arrive at elements that no longer have either form or function, that are abstract in this sense even though they are perfectly real. They are distinguished solely by movement and rest, slowness and speed. They are not atoms, in other words, finite elements still endowed with form. Nor are they indefinitely divisible. They are infinitely small, ultimate parts of an actual infinity, laid out on the same plane of consistency or composition. They are not defined by their number since they always come in infinities. However, depending on their degree of speed or the relation of movement and rest into which they enter, they belong to a given Individual, which may itself be part of another Individual governed by another, more complex, relation, and so on to infinity."

Deleuze and Guattari most likely refrain from naming the particles that compose a body's longitude because the word 'particle' does not, or not only, refer to (sub)atomic portions of matter in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Rather, a particle is something that is able to enter into a relationship with something else, that is, with another particle, forming a more or less consistent bond together. Thus, even though they are not scientifically classified as bosons, leptons, or quarks, Deleuze and Guattari also mention the books of Virginia Woolf as examples of particles. As 'sign-particles,' her works were able to infect a culture largely ruled by virile norms:

"When Virginia Woolf was questioned about a specifically women's writing, she was appalled at the idea of writing 'as a woman.' Rather, writing should produce a becoming-woman as atoms of womanhood capable of crossing and impregnating an entire social field, and of contaminating men, of sweeping them up in that becoming. Very soft particles — but also very hard and obstinate, irreducible, indomitable."

Ibid., 253-254 and 276.

[136] Ernest Rutherford, "The electrical structure of matter," *Science* 58 (1923): 215.

order to illustrate the motion in which the packs of particles swarm, Deleuze and Guattari often use the word 'vortex,' and although mad particles may escape and regather somewhere else, it is precisely these relations of movement and rest, of speed and slowness, that allow us to have 'a' body at all.[137] Indeed, if we were not moving all the time, we would fall apart:

καὶ ὁ κυκεὼν διίσταται μὴ κινούμενος. (125)
Even the barley-drink disintegrates if it is not moved.[138]

Once more, we encounter one of Heraclitus' mundane, or even homely, examples. The ancient Greek drink of *κυκεών* is a brew made of white barley meal, grated goat's-milk cheese, and Pramnian wine, and its different ingredients solely bind through stirring.[139] The drink's "[…] consistency depends upon the continuation of this motion," as Kahn mentions, and if the wooden ladle's stir would cease, the brew's unity would slowly crumble. In that case, the *κυκεών* would no longer be *κυκεών*, but an unappetising mess.[140] A continuous stirring, then, ensures *κυκεών*'s consistency: "[…] what Deleuze and Guattari call consistency," Brian Massumi tells us, is "[…] not in the sense of a homogeneity, but as a holding together of disparate elements."[141] Similarly, our body subsists, or rather consists, only by virtue of the lively motion of its countless atoms; if the body would stop moving, it would fall apart and decompose, as morsels of matter let loose and drop to the fertile soil, allowing Nature to refashion its materials once more. It is precisely the atoms' ceaseless movement which allows there to be a body, albeit it temporarily. In conjunction with Heraclitus' one-hundred and twenty-fifth fragment, it seems that fragment 84a is not a paradoxical *explanandum*, but rather

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[137] "[…] *speed* […] *constitutes the absolute character of a body whose irreducible parts (atoms) occupy or fill a smooth space in the manner of a vortex*, […]."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 381.

[138] Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 255.

[139] Homer, *The Iliad and the Odyssey*, trans. Samuel Butler (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 2013), 182.

[140] Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 194.

[141] Massumi, "Translator's foreword: Pleasures of philosophy," xiv.

an *explanans*, albeit an incredibly concise and cryptic one: Changing, a body rests; we are all barley-drink.[142]

Let us continue with the second feature of a body; its latitude. The latitude of the body refers to "[…] the affects of which [a body] is capable at a given degree of power, or rather within the limits of that degree."[143] The concept of affect can be interpreted in various ways; I will restrict myself to two examples. Let's start with a simple question; what makes an alcoholic an alcoholic? The fact that he or she drinks a lot. Now, what makes a philosopher a philosopher? The fact that he or she thinks a lot. To be sure, philosophers also know their fair share of worldly chores; they breathe, they heat, they eat. They knit and fuck. But what makes a person a philosopher is that he or she thinks a lot; it's always a matter of quantity. Yet, and allow me to return to the example of the alcoholic again, an alcoholic can overstep his or her own limits. As Deleuze tells us, an alcoholic is someone who never stops saying '*Allez! C'est le dernier!*' Still, an alcoholic will always attempt to reach the second to last, or penultimate, drink; if he succeeds, he has reached his goal, and can contentedly start drinking again the next day. However, it *has* to be the penultimate drink, since "[…] to go past the ultimate would place him outside of his arrangement."[144] Indeed, if the alcoholic fails, if he miscalculates and misevaluates, if he goes beyond his own capacity and drinks his genuine, and very morbid, last drink, his body will collapse; a limit is passed, and his body can no long endure the ethanol's vicious affects. After this threshold is transgressed, a transformation takes place; the collapse, or even death, of the alcoholic's body. The body breaks down.

Still, a deluge of affects does not necessarily have to result in a breakdown; it could also provoke a breakthrough. Physical or physicochemical forces or substances are not the only things that affect us. Imagine that you are at one of Kanye West's concerts, at the Saint Pablo Tour, for example. The crowd, dispersed in small, conversing groups, starts to get restless; the self-proclaimed 'greatest human artist of all time' still hasn't showed up. Suddenly,

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[142] I am not suggesting that Heraclitus was an atomist; other Presocratic philosophers such as Leucippus, Democritus, or even Anaxagoras better suit this title. However, in *Qualitative change in pre-Socratic philosophy*, W.A. Heidel, too, notes that the Ephesian's obscure writings might be better understood through an atomist lens: "Heraclitus presents many difficulties to the student who would interpret him. Most of these vanish, however, when one sees in him, what in his point of view he undoubtedly was, one of the series of Ionic philosophers of nature, laying the foundations of the corpuscular theory, […]."

W.A. Heidel, "Qualitative change in pre-Socratic philosophy," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 19 (1906): 350.

[143] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 256.

[144] "Pas l'ultime; passer l'ultime le mettrait hors de son arrangement."

Gilles Deleuze, "B comme boisson," interview by Claire Parnet, *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, Arte, 1996, audio, 4:17. — The translation is my own.

however, West looms up from the orange-hued smoke, and appears on the industrial installation floating a few metres above the crowd. Pastor T.L. Barrett's choir starts singing softly in the background, and the first bass tones of *Father Stretch My Hands Pt. 1* start playing. When the song's premature climax, Metro Boomin's producer tag ('If Young Metro don't trust you, I'm gon' shoot you'), hits at last, the delirious mass erupts in a single, unorchestrated voice. The animalistic body of audience is swept up by "[…] a circulation of impersonal affects, an alternate current that disrupts signifying projects as well as subjective feelings."[145] The scattered groups become a single pack of wolves, and it is for this reason that music is a key to becoming-revolutionary. This is not a breakdown. This is a breakthrough.[146]

The two Spinozist souvenirs, or rather *devenirs*, conclude in a different kind of memories; 'Memories of a haecceity.' Here, we learn that, in Nature, only haecceities dwell. A rather long passage illustrates the point, but one that is too good not to cite as a whole:

> We must avoid an oversimplified conciliation, as though there were on the one hand formed subjects, of the thing or person type, and on the other hand spatiotemporal coordinates of the haecceity type. For you will yield nothing to haecceities unless you realize that that is what you are, and that you are nothing but that. […] You are longitude and latitude, a set of speeds and slownesses between unformed particles, a set of nonsubjectified affects. You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year, *a life* (regardless of its duration) — a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm, a pack (regardless of its regularity). Or at least you can have it, you can reach it. A cloud of locusts carried in by the wind at five in the evening; a vampire who goes out at night, a werewolf at full moon. It should not be thought that a haecceity consists simply of a decor or backdrop that situates subjects, or of appendages that hold things and people to the ground. It is the entire assemblage in its individuated aggregate that is a haecceity; it is this assemblage that is

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[145] The human being is not an atom, but in the body of the crowd, he or she is a mere particle. In an undated essay, Leibniz offers two more examples of such multiplicities: "An aggregate of substances is what I call a *substantiatum*, like an army of men or a flock of birds, and such are all bodies."

G.W. Leibniz, "From the letters to Des Bosses (1712 – 16)," in *Philosophical Essays*, ed. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), 200.

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 244.

[146] "I think I'm in a stronger place, than I ever, than I ever was, after the, the breakdown, or, how I like to say, the breakthrough."

"Madness need not be all breakdown. It may also be breakthrough…"

Kanye West, "kanye west / charlamagne interview," interview by Charlamagne tha God, *Kanye West*, YouTube, 1 May 2018, audio, 0:32, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxwfDlhJIpw.

Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 131.

> defined by a longitude and a latitude, by speeds and affects, independently of forms and subjects, which belong to another plane. It is the wolf itself, and the horse, and the child, that cease to be subjects to become events, in assemblages that are inseparable from an hour, a season, an atmosphere, an air, a life. The street enters into composition with the horse, just as the dying rat enters into composition with the air, and the beast and the full moon enter into composition with each other. […] Climate, wind, season, hour are not of another nature than the things, animals, or people that populate them, follow them, sleep and awaken within them. This should be read without a pause: the animal-stalks-at-five-o'clock. The becoming-evening, becoming-night of an animal, blood nuptials. Five o'clock is this animal! This animal is this place![147]

Earlier, I likened the human body to a well-oiled machine or factory, and even called it a small microcosm. Still, I should have known that "Likening the living to a microcosm is an ancient platitude."[148] Surely, the body knows many intricate mechanisms, which have been described and explored throughout the ages by history's anatomists, cutting up dead bodies and dissecting its fleshy little pieces, which they studied for hours (they are quite the freaks).[149] They discovered the workings of our throbbing organs, of the beating heart, of our lungs and our liver, of our pancreas and our kidneys. As body parts push and pull, contract and expand, this bodily automaton continues at a microscopic level, as even cells execute a programmed self-destruction (apoptosis). It truly seems that living bodies are "[…] machines in their least parts, to infinity."[150] Likewise, Nature "[…] bears a great resemblance to an animal or

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[147] "Flows of intensity, their fluids, their fibers, their continuums and conjunctions of affects, the wind, fine segmentation, microperceptions, have replaced the world of the subject."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 162 and 262-263.

[148] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 95.

[149] Julien Offray de la Mettrie, for example, prescribes the following, quite appalling, experiment (based on an equally horrifying corporal punishment) in order to convince his readers that the living body is, in fact, a machine:

"6. Chancellor Bacon, a first-class author, speaks in his *History of Life and Death* of a man convicted of treason whose heart was torn out while he was still alive, and thrown into the flames; this muscle first leapt vertically to a height of one and a half feet, but then, losing force, it leapt less high each time, for seven or eight minutes.

7. Take a chick still in its egg and tear out its heart: you will observe the same phenomena in more or less the same circumstances. The warmth of one's breath alone reanimates an animal on the point of death in a pneumatic engine. The same experiments that we owe to Boyle and Steno can be done on pigeons, dogs, rabbits, pieces of whose hearts move just like whole hearts. The same movement can be seen in the torn-off paws of moles."

Julien Offray de la Mettrie, *Machine Man and other writings*, trans. Ann Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 27.

[150] Leibniz, "The principles of philosophy, or the Monadology (1714)," 221.

organized body," or so Philo tells us in David Hume's *Dialogues concerning natural religion*, evoking the authority of ancient philosophers who portrayed the world as the body of God: "[It] seems actuated with a like principle of life and motion. A continual circulation of matter in it produces no disorder: A continual waste in every part is incessantly repaired: The closest sympathy is perceived throughout the entire system: And each part or member, in performing its proper offices, operates both to its own preservation and to that of the whole. The world, therefore, I infer, is an animal, […]."[151] However, in spite of the similarities between the human body and the divine one, in ancient times…

> … the comparison between microcosm and macrocosm was […] a comparison between two closed figures, one of which expressed the other and was inscribed within the other. At the beginning of *Creative Evolution,* Bergson completely alters the scope of the comparison by opening up both ends. If the living being resembles the world, this is true, on the contrary, insofar as it opens itself to the opening of the world; if it is a whole, this is true to the extent that the whole, of the world as of the living being, is always in the process of becoming, developing, coming into being or advancing, and inscribing itself within a temporal dimension that is irreducible and nonclosed.[152]

To be sure, as an intensive phenomenon, a haecceity is a perfectly singular individuation, an 'excessively present' being that appears before our eyes; it is the 'same' river, *this* river. It is *this* overcoat, or *this* body. Yet, the factory does not end at its brick walls; the body does not end at its skin, as a haecceity necessarily communicates with its 'outside.' Even though, at first sight, a singular body may seem "[…] distinct from the organic individual forms that cut up (*découpe*) *a priori* the empirical field," Nature does not stop, but penetrates a multitude of membranes, intruding the most secluded parts of our supposedly intangible, isolated 'Self.'[153] I, too, am the 'animal-stalks-at-five-o'clock.' A whole network of machinic relations allows me to be present in the world, but these very relations also alienate me from 'myself' in various ways. The often presupposed concept of an autonomous individual is largely based on conveniently forgetting the vigour of these relations. 'Your' body betrays you; the abstract elements that have neither form nor function, as seen in footnote 135, belong to a given Individual (an

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[151] David Hume, "Dialogues concerning natural religion," in *Principal writings on religion including Dialogues concerning natural religion, and The natural history of religion*, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 72-73.

[152] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 95-96.

[153] Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A philosophy of the event*, 127.

animal, for example), but this Individual, in turn, may itself be part of another Individual governed by another, more complex, relation (the 'animal-stalks-at-five-o'clock'). A werewolf howls at the full moon; he can't help it, he simply *has* to cry. A part attaches to an other part, neither of which are fragmented wholes, forming a machine. Every partial body (which is, again, perfectly complete) fulfils a different function depending on the assemblage it enters, as it lacks a predetermined identity. You and your supposedly impermeable boundaries that commence at your skin and tightly seal off your putative Self are not rigorously separated from the world, but the singular 'I' which appears both to ourselves and to others is instead invariably exposed to other haecceities that leave their mark upon your body. Becoming, it seems, "[…] is at once a perfect individuality, and […] this individuality is overlapping and never ceases to communicate with others."[154] This, then, is Nature's paradox.[155]

✻ *A linguistic intermezzo*, *II* — In the past two chapters, our vocabulary has grown considerably. We have made use of many of Deleuze and Guattari's outlandish concepts, all of which are thoroughly related; a haecceity is an intensity; an intensity is a singularity; a singularity is a multiplicity; and a multiplicity, in turn, is a pack. In spite of their bewildering character, however, the concepts always refer to the same thing, a body, each time revealing one of its different features. An intensive haecceity, for example, refers to the sensory 'thusness' of a body (one that will eventually fade); a singularity to its unique, simple, and individuated character; a multiplicity highlights the body's internal difference. *A Thousand Plateaus* is marked by remarkably visual language, and the authors' meticulous choice of words is a crucial part of understanding the, at times, incomprehensible concepts. They are not just for show.

Something that is often overlooked, however, is the authors' use of both 'verbalised' nouns and 'substantivised' verbs. In the chapter '1914: One or several wolves?,' Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly speak of 'a swarming' or 'a teeming' in order to illustrate their idea of the human body as multiplicity, and in '1730: Becoming-intense, becoming-animal, becoming-

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[154] Ibid., 127.

[155] Nature doesn't make sense to us; we have to make sense *of it* somehow, a flawed sense, that is: "[…] the territory as the condition of 'knowledge,' *ratio cognoscendi*, is always in disjunction with the earth. The territory is German, the Earth Greek."

"We sorcerers know quite well that the contradictions are real but that real contradictions are not just for laughs."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 244 and 339.

imperceptible…' the phrase 'a wolfing' makes an appearance in relation to the concept of haecceity. Such verbalised nouns and substantivised verbs fall into the linguistic category of the participle. Recently, Heidegger provided me with further insight in this grammatical concept, as he analyses the Greek participle *ὄν*, or 'being' (*Seiende*), which he (unsurprisingly) deems to be 'the participle of all participles.'[156] As Heidegger shows us, the word *ὄν*…

> […] has the character of a participle. The word 'participle' is the Roman translation of something that the Grecian grammarians signified through *ἡ μετοχή*: 'participation.' The word *δῦνόν*[, for example,] is characterised by participation because it, as the word that it is, can participate both in the part of speech that is called a 'noun' or 'substantive,' and in the part of speech of which the participle itself is a derivation — namely, the verb, or 'time-word.' Thus, for example, 'the smelling' (*das Duftende*) is on the one hand that which emits smell — say, the rose — but also the activity itself of emitting the smell, the activity by which the rose smells.[157]

Heidegger continues, and concludes that the participle *ὄν*, derived from the infinitive *εἶναι*, or 'to be' (*Sein*), is used by Heraclitus not "[…] substantively, but rather verbally."[158] I would say, however, that a participle's vigour is precisely the fact that it bears a certain ambiguity; whereas Heidegger rejects the noun (*Substantiv*) in favour of the verb (*Zeitwort*), I would argue that a participle embodies both. In this sense, the grammatical concept aptly echoes the nature of things, appearing both as relatively durable and secluded figures, and as marked by the perpetual workings of becoming.[159] It certainly seems that, according to Heraclitus, "[…] the philosopher can best describe the ambivalent nature of things by resorting to ambivalent

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[156] "The participle *τὸ ὄν* — i.e., the being, i.e., being — is the participle of all participles, because the word 'being' is the word of all words."

Martin Heidegger, *Heraclitus: The inception of Occidental thinking, and Logic: Heraclitus' doctrine of the logos*, trans. Julia Goesser Assaiante and S. Montgomery Ewegen (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 46.

[157] Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 43.

[158] Ibid., 46.

[159] "There are pass-words beneath order-words. Words that pass, words that are components of passage, whereas order-words mark stoppages or organized, stratified compositions. A single thing or word undoubtedly has this twofold nature: […]."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 110.

language."[160] As participles of a paradoxical Nature, we are all an eventful be*ing*: "The wolf," Deleuze and Guattari tell us, "[…] is a wolfing. The louse is a lousing, and so on."[161] The river, in turn, is a rivering; Nature (*Natura*) is a naturing (*naturans*), as Spinoza had already figured out a long time ago. We are 'a swarming' of lively particles, or 'a teeming' defined by breakdowns and by breakthroughs, provoked by the affects that traverse us. We are, moreover, 'a crawling' in and over each other, a sexual union of bodies and of packs; we are an animal in bed. Ultimately, the concept of haecceity gives a new answer to the question of what being means.

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[160] In *Heraclitus' bow composition*, Celso Vieira, too, mentions that "Heraclitus offers […] the experience of a cryptic text that imitates its cryptic object, […]. The aim of the text, to demonstrate the nature of things, is to be achieved through the imitation of the nature of things in such a way that those who learn how to interpret the text learn also how to interpret nature."

Celso Vieira, "Heraclitus' bow composition," *The Classical Quarterly* 63 (2013): 477.

Kirk, "Heraclitus's contribution to the development of a language for philosophy," 75.

[161] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 239.

The unthinkable

Not too long ago, I read Spinoza's 'The worm in the blood.' Mainly seduced by the work's odd, or even freaky, title, I hoped it would recount some kind of fantastic fable, devised by Spinoza's ingenious mind. The 'tale' instead turned out to be a letter written in the year 1665, addressed to 'the most noble and learned gentleman,' going by the name of Henry Oldenburg. In his letter, Spinoza replies to Oldenburg's admittedly very valid question of how, precisely, the author of the *Ethics* was so sure "[…] that each part of Nature agrees with the whole to which it belongs and coheres with the others."[162] In response to Oldenburg's question, Spinoza conceded that, indeed, he had not inquired into every single one of Nature's parts, spending most of his days inside, either polishing his precious lenses or contemplating the mysteries of Nature and the divine.

During this contemplation, however, Spinoza formulated a thought that Deleuze and Guattari described as 'unthinkable.'[163] By means of his 'cumbersome' geometric order, Spinoza laid out a plane upon which all other thoughts arise, and fade away again.[164] Still, it would be a mistake to presume that only our thoughts come-to-be upon this 'unlimited One-All,' as Deleuze and Guattari also call it. It is a plane where everything moves; animals live here, and plants, and colours and sounds, too; it is where letters, words, and even whole languages flourish and wane again, like the tastes and touches and the fleeting desires that are aroused upon this plane. Parts and particles dance here. Everything that happens, happens on this plane.

Spinoza's plane knows many names. Even though the author of the *Ethics* himself prefers the name *Deus*, *sive Natura*, one might call also it the plane of consistency, or of composition, or perhaps the plane of immanence. (To be sure, a large number of transcendent Somethings have been and will be fabricated here. Sooner or later, however,

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[162] Benedict de Spinoza, "VIII. The worm in the blood," in *A Spinoza reader: The Ethics and other works*, ed. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 82.

[163] "Is there a 'best' plane that would not hand over immanence to Something = *x* and that would no longer mimic anything transcendent? We will say that *the* plane of immanence is, at the same time, that which must be thought and that which cannot be thought."

Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, 59.

[164] "But before I begin to demonstrate these things in our cumbersome geometric order, I should like first to show briefly here the dictates of reason themselves, so that everyone may more easily perceive what I think."

Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics* IV, Prop. 18, Schol.

every single transcendent will be devoured again.)[165] One might call it the Earth, the Body without Organs, or the Abstract Machine, which ceaselessly makes and unmakes. I will simply call it the plane of Nature. Since the plane is, in a way, infinite, I am not really sure what else to tell you about it. I am not even sure if I truly understand it; thinking about the plane makes me dizzy, as if experiencing the Kantian sublime. Everything that I could possibly say would be said, not about this plane, but on this plane. For that reason, I will be content to consider only one of its peculiarities, a peculiarity that Heraclitus expressed with a single word; *ἕν*.

After our inquiry into the various characteristics of *πάντα* in the first and second chapter, it is now time to return to the fragment at the heart of my thesis:

οὐκ ἐμοῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστιν ἓν πάντα εἶναι. (50)
Listening not to me but to the *λόγος* it is wise to agree that all things (*πάντα*) are one (*ἕν*).

Heraclitus' *πάντα* is not only defined by difference, relation, and becoming, but also by *ἕν*. Still, Heraclitus was not the only Presocratic thinker whose natural philosophy contained a concept of *ἕν*. Nietzsche even asserts that the thought 'all things are one' makes Thales the first Greek philosopher.[166] According to Thales, water is the primal origin of all things; everything that we see around us is, in truth, an alteration of this single, shape-shifting element. Anaximander takes this idea even further, insisting that all earthly creatures have somehow escaped from the *ἄπειρον*, an eternal and ontologically singular Being. For this grave misdeed, all coming-to-be is punished by destruction and gradual decay, to be ultimately swallowed back into 'the One.' Considering these two examples, it might be suggested that the work of the Presocratics is afflicted with the 'specifically European disease' of transcendence, which severely opposes *A Thousand Plateaus*' emphasis on immanence.[167] Indeed, were one to take the words of Heraclitus at face value, the rather mystic utterance *ἓν πάντα εἶναι* would fit strikingly well with both Thales' and Anaximander's 'One,' since "The Greek words could be translated 'one thing is all things,'" as Kirk writes in his interpretation of the fiftieth fragment (while immediately remarking, however, that this translation would not accord with the rest of

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[165] "Although it is always possible to invoke a transcendent that falls outside the plane of immanence, or that attributes immanence to itself, all transcendence is constituted solely in the flow of immanent consciousness that belongs to this plane. Transcendence is always a product of immanence."

Gilles Deleuze, *Pure immanence: Essays on a life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Urzone, Inc., 2001), 30-31.

[166] Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks*, 39.

[167] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 18.

Heraclitus' aphorisms.)[168] By relating three fragments in which the word *ἕν* appears to the concepts of becoming-imperceptible, the disjunctive synthesis, and the plane of Nature, I hope to show that the relation between *πάντα* and *ἕν* in the work of Heraclitus is not a relation of transcendence, but is instead inherently marked by immanence. These three concluding fragments, in turn, will finally allow me to uncover what 'all is one' means.

Before I begin, however, it might be useful to answer a rather obvious question; what on Earth is immanence? Although I will not refer to Spinoza's definitions and axioms, retracing how, precisely, the eighteenth proposition of the *Ethics* is able to confirm with Euclidian certainty that "*God is the immanent*, *not the transitive*, *cause of all things*," I would like to touch upon two things considered by Deleuze in his book *Expressionism in philosophy: Spinoza*; the immanent cause and the univocity of being.[169]

In the chapter 'Immanence and the historical components of expression,' Deleuze opposes the immanent cause to the emanative cause. An emanative cause is defined by the fact that, although the cause *does* remain in itself, that which it produces does not. For example, 'the One' of Neoplatonism, the cause of all causes, grants being to all that is, but is itself beyond its gift. Since the One (or the Good, symbolised in Plato's story by the sun, shining high and brightly in the sky) is altogether indescribable, it does not have anything 'in common' with the many earthly beings that emanate from it, Plotinus argues.[170] As the emanative cause of all things, the One of Neoplatonism is an example of what Deleuze calls a 'One-above-being.' However, "What defines an immanent cause," Deleuze writes, "is that its effect is in it — in it, of course, as in something else, but still being and remaining in it. The effect remains in its cause no less than the cause remains in itself."[171] As the immanent cause of all things, Spinoza's God is not Someone who lingers in his lofty home, the firmament, high above that which he creates; instead, God expresses himself *in himself*. Expressive immanence seems to be defined by four concepts: Things do not emanate from,

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[168] Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 68.

[169] Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics* I, Prop. 18.

[170] In truth, even the names 'the One' and 'the Good' are impermissible, since both oneness and goodness are predicates that are positively attributed to this unknowable *x* (affirming what it is, as opposed to solely affirming what it is not).

[171] In the *Korte verhandeling*, Spinoza uses the term *inblijvende oorzaak* instead of *causa immanens*. I thought this translation might be helpful for Dutch readers.

Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 172.

but rather (1) inhere in God, who (2) complicates them all (that is, nothing can be 'outside' of God, but all remain in him). Moreover, all things (3) explicate God, who expresses himself in the world (he is in everything). Lastly, God is (4) implicated in things, meaning that every thing 'implicates,' or opens itself to, all the others; a body does not exist in and of itself, but through and for an equally relative other. Since God is ontologically one, all things are bound together in him, and every thing is involved in the production of all other things.[172]

Divine immanence, moreover, implies a univocity, or equality, of being: "For it is the same Being that is present in the God who complicates all things according to his own essence, and in the things that explicate him according to their own essence or mode."[173] Because there is no transcendent principle, a One-above-being from which an ordered *scala naturae* emanates, beings do not have more or less being depending on how far they are removed from the cause of causes. Instead, being is equally present in all of Nature's different beings; a rainbow, a subatomic particle, or an Arabic letter, for example, are not more or less 'in being' than the internet, a demon, or the fragrance of *Chanel N°5*. Or, as Deleuze puts it in 'Zones of immanence': "Being is univocal, equal. In other words, every entity is equally being, in the sense that each actualizes its power in immediate vicinity with the first cause. The distant cause is no more: rocks, flowers, animals, and humans equally celebrate the glory of God in a kind of sovereign an-archy."[174]

Drugs, disjunction, and *de werkelijkheid*

In 'The worm in the blood,' Spinoza likens how we generally perceive the world to the eyesight of a little worm. Imagine that there is a microscopic creature living in one of our

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[172] Spinoza infers that, since no two substances can share an attribute and since there necessarily exists a substance consisting of infinite attributes (God), there can only be one Substance which, in turn, comprises everything else.

"God expresses *himself* in the world; the world is the expression, the explication, of a God-Being or a One who is. The world is carried into God in such a way that it loses its limits or finitude, and participates directly in divine infinity."

Deleuze, *Expressionism in philosophy*, 175-176.

[173] "[God] thus produces things in the very forms that constitute his own essence. […] Things in general are modes of divine being, that is, they implicate the same attributes that constitute the nature of this being." A 'human' thought (*gedachte*), for example, does not differ in nature from one of God's (or Nature's) thoughts; it is simply a finite 'mode' of the divine attribute of thought (*denken*).

Ibid., 176 and 180.

[174] Gilles Deleuze, *Two regimes of madness: Texts and interviews 1975 – 1995*, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006), 261.

veins. While wriggling its way through our body, Spinoza tells us, the tiny parasite would be able to distinguish every single blood cell, red or white, by sight. During its stay in this dark, humid microcosm, the little worm "[…] would live in this blood as we do in this part of the universe, and would consider each particle of the blood as a whole, not as a part. It could not know how all the parts of the blood are regulated by the universal nature of the blood, and compelled to adapt themselves to one another, as the universal nature of the blood requires, so that they agree with one another in a definite way."[175] However, Spinoza wonders, are we not just as oblivious as the little worm? Just as the microscopic creature is completely unaware of something like 'blood' at all and merely sees the various particles that calmly flow past it, we, too, are ignorant of the partial nature of ourselves and the things that surround us. In all our vanity, we do not realise that we are not simply made of body parts; we *are* body parts. As we have seen in the previous chapter, a 'whole' body, such as our own, is itself a part of a larger machinic assemblage which, in turn, also belongs "[…] to a given Individual, which may itself be part of another Individual governed by another, more complex, relation, and so on to infinity."[176] Thus, Spinoza concludes, "[…] the whole of *Natura naturata* is nothing but a unique entity, from which it follows that man is a part of Nature that must cohere with the rest."[177]

τοῖς ἐγρηγορόσιν ἕνα καὶ κοινὸν κόσμον εἶναι τῶν δὲ κοιμωμένων ἕκαστον εἰς ἴδιον ἀποστρέφεσθαι. (89)
The world of the waking is one (*ἕνα*) and shared, but the sleeping turn aside each into his private world.[178]

Whereas Spinoza evokes the crude perception of invertebrates, Heraclitus uses "The image of sleep […] to give a more drastic expression to the idea of cognitive alienation," Kahn tells us.[179] In the previous chapter, we saw how the Presocratic thinker rebuked *οἱ πολλοί* for not being able to notice what, in fact, happened right before their eyes; the ceaseless workings of becoming. In fragment 89, however, Heraclitus criticises the worm-like senses of the masses

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[175] Benedictus de Spinoza, "Letters: September 1665 – September 1669," in *The collected works of Spinoza, Volume II*, ed. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 19.

[176] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 253-254.

[177] Baruch Spinoza, *The principles of Cartesian philosophy and Metaphysical thoughts*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1998), 127.

[178] Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 31.

[179] Ibid., 99.

for something else. Whereas the rest of the Ephesians saw a world of distinct forms (a temple here, an olive tree there…), Heraclitus was proud to declare that *he*, on the other hand, understood that this world was not filled with secluded figures. Heraclitus saw a single continuum, a sole organism whose fleshy little gears and springs perform a variety of tasks as long as the cogs of the cosmos keep spinning. But didn't Parmenides portray a similar 'One' in his ontological poem? In the 'Way of Truth,' Parmenides portrays the world as a continuous sphere, which, he maintains, is the only true Being; 'what is' can obviously not be interrupted by 'what is not,' since 'what is not' is not, his argument goes. Thus, the Eleatic philosopher deduces, the world must be a continuum.[180] "Unlike Parmenides," however, Heraclitus…

> … did not deny the existence of the 'many things' of the phenomenal world, though he considered that wisdom lay in being able to regard them synthetically. To see the connexion between things and not their separation would presumably be just as stupid […] as the common, almost universal, fault of seeing the separation and not the connexion.[181]

Whereas Eleatic monism presents a continuum without parts (a single, indivisible Atom, so to speak), Heraclitus' 'one' simply seems to suggest that the world's seemingly severed parts are inherently related. As we saw in the first chapter, *πάντα*'s bodies, or Nature's differences, are intricately entangled in a relational web.[182] Rather than dismissing the sensory apparatus of the sluggish masses as deceitful, Heraclitus tried to *change* our perception of things, which is why he rambles on about the senses so much in his work *On Nature*. The Ephesian knew that if he could convince his audience that even the most disparate things, such as life and death or day and night, are in fact deeply interwoven, other things would perhaps be accepted more easily following these drastic examples. Heraclitus' 'world of the waking' did not lie hidden in

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[180] W.K.C. Guthrie, *A history of Greek philosophy: Volume II, The Presocratic tradition from Parmenides to Democritus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 33.

[181] "The use of the word *σοφόν* [in fragment 50] emphasizes once again that […] the perception that all things are really one, is not a philosophical luxury but a pragmatical necessity for men. They themselves are connected with their surroundings, and their relations with those surroundings are obviously improved if this connexion is understood."

Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 71 and 176.

[182] "Each multiplicity is symbiotic; its becoming ties together animals, plants, microorganisms, mad particles, a whole galaxy."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 250.

some veiled land to which only the soul can ascend, but could, and still can, be perceived by anyone who wishes.

Yet it was Carlos Castaneda, Deleuze and Guattari tell us, who most vividly portrayed "[…] the existence of a molecular perception to which drugs give us access (but so many things can be drugs): […]."[183] Under the guidance of a Yaqui sorcerer, Castaneda's experimentations with psychoactive cacti revealed a disorienting world of quivering lines, warped colours, and distorted sounds. The experimentations of drug users have laid bare a lively drama of visual and sonorous microperceptions that ordinarily escape our nervous system. Still, it should be mentioned that Deleuze and Guattari do not incite their readers to inject syringes full of heroin into their arms, quite the contrary. Instead, the two authors recommend the utmost caution, or perhaps even advise against the use of drugs. The drug addict, namely, lies completely passive on the floor of his room, unable to do anything without the regular 'hit' on which he relies. Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari ask the following question: "Could what the drug user […] obtains also be obtained in a different fashion […], so it would even be possible to use drugs without using drugs, […]?"[184]

The answer to this question is, I think, *A Thousand Plateaus* itself; by simply opening the book on a page of your choice, you are able to experience an ecstasy in the most original sense of the word.[185] Especially the book's tenth chapter, '1730: Becoming-intense, becoming-animal, becoming-imperceptible…', and the concept of becoming-imperceptible in particular, might arouse an almost psychedelic experience. But what does becoming-imperceptible mean?

> Becoming-imperceptible means many things. […] A first response would be; to be like everybody else. Becoming-everybody/everything (*tout le monde*) is to world (*faire monde*), to make a world (*faire un monde*). […] in other words, to find one's proximities and zones of indiscernibility. […]; it is the haecceity into which one slips and that slips into other haecceities by transparency. […] To reduce oneself to an abstract line, a trait, in order to find one's zone of indiscernibility

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[183] Ibid., *A Thousand Plateaus*, 227.

[184] "Drug addicts continually fall back into what they wanted to escape: a segmentarity all the more rigid for being marginal, a territorialization all the more artificial for being based on chemical substances, hallucinatory forms, and phantasy subjectifications. Drug addicts may be considered as precursors or experimenters who tirelessly blaze new paths of life, but their cautiousness lacks the foundation for caution."

Ibid., 166 and 285.

[185] Whereas the Greek word *στάσις* denotes a 'standing still,' *ἔκστασις*, on the other hand, effects a displacement of one's 'proper' position or, in other words, a deterritorialisation.

> with other traits, and in this way enter the haecceity and impersonality of the creator. One is then like grass; one has made the world, *tout le monde*, into a becoming, because one has made a necessarily communicating world, because one has suppressed in oneself everything that prevents us from slipping between things and growing in the midst of things.[186]

First, Deleuze and Guattari assert that becoming-imperceptible would mean 'to be like everybody else.' At first glance, this remark might seem strange coming from two authors that time and time again emphasise the significance of difference. However, 'to be like everybody else' does not mean that one should conform to a homogeneous and uniform flock, or perhaps form an eerie hive mind, for that matter. Rather, becoming-everybody/everything stresses the ability to recognise that one forms part of *tout le monde*, which could be translated literally as 'everybody,' but also creatively (and, in a sense, overly literally) as 'the world as a whole.' In the previous chapter, we deserted the idea of the individual defined by 'proper' characteristics in favour of a haecceity composed of lively particles and intensive affects. Yet, a haecceity is always part of what Deleuze and Guattari call 'assemblage haecceities' or even 'interassemblage haecceities.' Haecceities slip into haecceities slipping into haecceities, as if the world were an enormous kaleidoscope; you see your anatomy disintegrate and the faces around you dissolve, as you slowly lose your Self, become imperceptible, and gently merge with an intimately related Nature, or God ('the haecceity and impersonality of the creator').[187] It is at this moment that one has truly become every body and every thing.

Still, I am not my cat. Nor am I Heraclitus. I am not Spinoza, I am not Leibniz, I am not Nietzsche. And surely, I am not Deleuze. How, then, am I one with Nature? How am I part of the whole world? Or rather, how *am* I the whole world (since I am becoming every body and every thing)?

In the passage describing in what sense, exactly, one becomes *tout le monde*, Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly mention certain 'zones of discernibility.' Now, the word 'zone' is already very vague. A zone lacks rigorous boundaries, a zone goes over into something else. When one has found one's proximities and zones of indiscernibility, one is no longer sure

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[186] "It is by conjugating, by continuing with other lines, other pieces, that one makes a world that can overlay the first one, like a transparency. Animal elegance, the camouflage fish, the clandestine: this fish is crisscrossed by abstract lines that resemble nothing, that do not even follow its organic divisions; but thus disorganized, disarticulated, it worlds with the lines of a rock, sand, and plants, becoming imperceptible."

Ibid., 279-280.

[187] The impersonality of the creator, as emphasised by Deleuze and Guattari, likely refers to Spinoza's *Deus*, *sive Natura*, the non-anthropomorphic divinity that comprises 'a necessarily communicating world.'

whether to answer the question 'Is it a part of me?' in the positive or in the negative. My question concerning whether I am Deleuze or not is answered in the negative in the sense that I am neither physically embodying him, nor mindlessly copying his works, typing them out word for word. Still, the question is answered in the positive when one notices tiny 'spores,' bearing the name of Deleuze, eject from his oeuvre (the spore sac) into the world. These little seeds may, perchance, infiltrate my being and make contact with certain receptacles, implanting themselves into my brain. An encounter with something strange, something unexpected, might hit and infect me, 'making love' before even exchanging a single word.[188] You are no longer either *x* or *y*, but there is a fissured contact, like in a chemical transmission of neurotransmitters (beautifully called *overdrachtstoffen* in Dutch) between two neurons that nevertheless do not touch. When I enter the proximity of Deleuze, the exact boundary between 'him' and 'I' becomes indiscernible.

Indiscernible, however, does not mean indistinct. Nature's plenum does not result in the undifferentiated because, when two bodies meet, each will express the encounter in its own manner. A symbiotic relation between two differences does not render them identical, but simply brings them into contact with each other while simultaneously preserving the disjunction between the two bodies: "[… the disjunction] causes each term to pass into the other following an order of asymmetrical reciprocal implication that does not resolve itself into an equivalence, nor into a higher-order identity."[189] This paradox is given the name of disjunctive synthesis, as the very being of Nature's relations: "A disjunction that remains disjunctive, and that still affirms the disjoined terms, that affirms them throughout their entire distance, *without restricting one by the other or excluding the other from the one*, is perhaps the greatest paradox."[190]

A disjunctive synthesis, that doesn't sound very logical:

> Deleuze criticizes the discipline institutionalized under this name for abusively reducing the field of thought by restricting it to the puerile exercise of recognition, and for justifying a self-

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[188] "Becoming is to emit particles that take on certain relations of movement and rest because they enter a particular zone of proximity. Or, it is to emit particles that enter that zone because they take on those relations. A haecceity is inseparable from the fog and mist that depend on a molecular zone, a corpuscular space. Proximity is a notion, at once topological and quantal, that marks a belonging to the same molecule, independently of the subjects considered and the forms determined."

Ibid., 273.

[189] Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A philosophy of the event*, 168.

[190] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 76.

> contented and obtuse good sense under whose gaze everything in experience that threatens to undermine the two principles of contradiction and the excluded middle is branded a pure nothingness, […].[191]

Rather than shunning logical thinking altogether, however, Deleuze desires "[…] a new logic, definitely a logic, but […] without leading us back to reason."[192] Born in the sixth century BC in the ancient city of Ephesus, Heraclitus wrote and thought in a time in which the laws of thinking had not yet been formulated by Aristotle, whom Heidegger awards the honourable title of 'father of logic.' Therefore, Heidegger notes that those who call themselves logicians often have trouble making sense of the contradictory utterances of the Presocratic writer: "[…] the 'normal' thinking of the understanding that thinks 'logically' is able to decide nothing regarding Heraclitus's saying, owing to the fact that, precisely by and through its appeal to the authority of the logical, it precludes the possibility of a decision, […]."[193] This Aristotelian nightmare reveals itself perhaps most vividly in the tenth fragment of Heraclitus' work:

συλλάψιες ὅλα καὶ οὐχ ὅλα συμφερόμενον διαφερόμενον συνᾷδον διᾷδον ἐκ πάντων ἓν καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντα. (10)
Things taken together (*συλλάψιες*) are whole and not whole, something which is being brought together and brought apart, which is in tune and out of tune: out of all things can be made a unity (*ἐκ πάντων ἓν*), and out of a unity, all things (*καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντα*).[194]

In order to accommodate every single contradiction, Heraclitus even goes out of his way and introduces a neologism, *διᾷδον*, meaning 'singing disharmoniously.' The word of interest here, however, is *συλλάψιες*, which might be one of Heraclitus' own conceptual creations.[195] As such, translations vary more than any other reading of the Presocratic's obscure phrases. Diels simply translates *Verbindungen*, whereas Kahn offers us the word 'graspings.' And in *Héraclite ou*

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[191] Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A philosophy of the event*, 170.

[192] Gilles Deleuze, *Essays critical and clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998), 82.

[193] Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 87.

[194] Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 168.

[195] "*σύλλαψιες* in fr. 10 is rarer and could be his own formation. […] A great part of Heraclitus's philosophy is implicit in this single word *συλλάψιες*, […]."

Kirk, "Heraclitus's contribution to the development of a language for philosophy," 73.

la séparation, Jean Bollack and Heinz Wismann decided to translate *συλλάψιες* in an (un)surprisingly poststructuralist manner, as *assemblages*. Regardless of these wavering translations, the word *συλλάψιες* likely derives from *σύναψις*, or perhaps from *συλλαβή*.[196] *σύναψις*, first of all, is generally translated as 'contact.' But, Heraclitus conveys by means of his unusual adaptation, even though the 'syllaptic' relation between two differences does compose a single body (*ὅλα*), the composing 'others' do not lose their distinct character (*οὐχ ὅλα*); two partial bodies are 'being brought together' *and* 'being brought apart,' as the pair of participles *συμφερόμενον διαφερόμενον* suggests. *συλλαβή*, secondly, means 'that which is taken together' and especially, but not solely, concerns combinations of letters, which is why *συλλαβή* is often translated as 'syllable.' A syllable might be regarded as a simple composition of written letters that are still distinctly visible, making the relation between the assembled letters an example of a disjunctive synthesis.[197] Just like letters and words, bodies and things, too, are quite meaningless without the relational composition in which they are embedded and, like the twenty-four letters of the Greek alphabet, are able to form a staggering, if not endless, number of combinations; we do not know what a body can do, nor do we know what a word can mean.

It should be mentioned that Kirk's translation of fragment 10 definitely works in my favour. A rather literal rendition of the Greek words would read 'out of one (thing) all things,' which would make a transcendent interpretation of the *Fragments* more viable. As I see it, however, the poetic reversal that concludes Heraclitus' tenth aphorism (*ἐκ πάντων ἓν καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντα*) is meant not solely, or not even primarily, stylistically, but instead emphasises that neither *ἕν* nor *πάντα* holds sway; Heraclitus' 'one' does not refer to some veiled, primal element that underlies all things (the material monism of the Milesians), nor to Someone who lingers in a lavish bronze palace on the peaks of Mount Olympus, high above the many creatures of the earthly world (Homer's 'sire of gods and men,' Zeus).[198] Instead, Heraclitus

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[196] Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 172-173.

[197] "We witness a transformation of substances and a dissolution of forms, a passage to the limit or flight from contours in favor of fluid forces, flows, air, light, and matter, such that a body or a word does not end at a precise point."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 109.

[198] Heraclitus makes a mockery of traditional religion and its rites in several of his fragments:

[…] *καὶ τοῖς ἀγάλμασι δὲ τουτέοισιν εὔχονται ὁκοῖον εἴ τις τοῖς δόμοισι λεσχηνεύοιτο οὔ τι γινώσκων θεοὺς οὐδ' ἥρωας οἵτινές εἰσι.* (5) They raise their voices at stone idols as a man might argue with his doorpost, they have understood so little of the gods.

Heraclitus, *Fragments*, 87.

presents a thoroughly interwoven Nature in which every body unavoidably envelops every thing.[199] This idea appears perhaps most conspicuously in the Presocratic's forty-first fragment; whereas in both fragment 10 and fragment 50 Heraclitus opposes the concept of *πάντα* to *ἕν*, in fragment 41 *πάντα* encounters *itself*:

ἓν τὸ σοφόν. ἐπίστασθαι γνώμην ὅκη κυβερνᾶται πάντα διὰ πάντων. (41)
Wisdom is one thing: to be skilled in true judgment, how all things are steered through all (*πάντα διὰ πάντων*).[200]

Fragment 41 seems, to me, to be the most outspoken example of immanence in all of Heraclitus' *Fragments*. Although Deleuze and Guattari would certainly not underwrite the fragment's unspoken determinism, as implied by the verb *κυβερνάω* (to steer), it should be noted that the verb's inflection, *κυβερνᾶται*, is in the middle voice. As opposed to most modern European languages, ancient Greek does not merely know an active and a passive voice ('Camus writes a play' versus 'A play is written by Camus'). Instead, the bygone language also knows what is called the middle voice, where the grammatical subject performs an action that affects him or herself, and which is somewhat akin to French reflexive verbs (*je m'appelle*…; 'I call myself…' as opposed to 'My name is…'). However, the Greek middle voice and the Greek passive voice do not differ in form, that is, their conjugations are the same; *ἐγείρεται ἡ γυνή*, for example, can be translated as 'The woman is awakened' or as 'The woman awakens (herself).' Only the context (such as the word *ὑπό* (by) followed by a genitive noun) would make clear whether a translator should read a 'medium-passive' verb actively or passively. Since

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[199] "If we consider the essences of finite modes, we see that they do not form a hierarchical system in which the less powerful depend on the more powerful, but an actually infinite collection, a system of mutual implications, in which each essence conforms with all of the others, and in which all essences are involved in the production of each."

Deleuze, *Expressionism in philosophy*, 184.

[200] In his *Lives of eminent philosophers*, Diogenes Laertius (who most likely had access to an intact copy of Heraclitus' *Περὶ φύσεως*) opposes the Presocratic's forty-first fragment to the following aphorism, with which it stands in striking contrast: "Much learning does not teach understanding; else would it have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, or, again, Xenophanes and Hecataeus." Diogenes' persuasive connection, in turn, implies that fragment 41 deals with human wisdom; *ἓν τὸ σοφόν* does not allude to some all-knowing divine being, 'the only wise.'

πολυμαθίη νόον οὐ διδάσκει. Ἡσίοδον γὰρ ἂν ἐδίδαξε καὶ Πυθαγόρην αὖτίς τε Ξενοφάνεά τε καὶ Ἑκαταῖον. (40)

Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of eminent philosophers*, *Volume II*, trans. R.D. Hicks (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1931), 409.

Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 386.

Heraclitus' forty-first fragment definitely seems to suggest that *πάντα* is at the same time the grammatical subject and the direct object (*lijdend voorwerp*) of its own operation, a more accurate translation of the phrase *ὅκη κυβερνᾶται πάντα διὰ πάντων* would read 'how all things steer *themselves* through all.' Moreover, we must not forget that we are talking about *πάντα*, that is, about everything (or even about the 'everythings'); as such, we cannot exclude anything, anything transcendent that would somehow lie 'outside' of everything.[201] In conjunction with the fact that Heraclitus boldly insists that, in spite of the polymaths' zealous erudition, they still do not fathom the only thing that is truly wise (illustrating the importance of fragment 41), these two considerations seem to suggest that the work of Heraclitus is inherently marked by immanence: "Immanence is immanent only to itself and consequently captures everything, absorbs All-One, and leaves nothing remaining to which it could be immanent."[202]

At the beginning of this chapter, I briefly considered Deleuze's portrait of 'the prince of philosophers,' and his interpretation of Spinoza's immanent cause in particular. In *Difference and Repetition*, however, Deleuze betrays of the author of the *Ethics*, since Spinoza's Substance still resembles something like an enduring identity. Moreover, despite being an immanent rather than an emanative cause, Substance, or God, does remain the sustaining cause of all that exists: "[…] there still remains a difference between substance and the modes: Spinoza's substance appears independent of the modes, while the modes are dependent on substance, but as though on something other than themselves. Substance must itself be said *of* the modes and only *of* the modes."[203] Deleuze chooses to abandon the concept of Substance in favour of universal self-modification (that is, Nature, but not *of* Nature): "It is not a question of an existence that changes modes, but of an existence whose mode is to suspend every mode: […]," Zourabichvili explains.[204] It is for this reason that, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the plane of Nature is often described as a teeming amalgam of 'flat' multiplicities. Deleuze and Guattari emphasise numerous times that the plane is not a ground, substratum,

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[201] The Presocratic philosophers were the first to consider, not this or that thing, but every thing. That is what the Presocratics did; they made theories of everything.

[202] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, 45.

[203] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 40.

[204] Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A philosophy of the event*, 170.

or underlying surface.[205] Accordingly, whereas in the introduction to this chapter I remarked that everything moves 'upon' Spinoza's plane, I should have written instead that everything *is*, or rather composes, the plane of Nature: "The plane has no other regions than the tribes populating and moving around on it."[206]

But isn't this boring, a world without any transcendence? Doesn't the plane of Nature present a flat, two-dimensional world, a futile and miserable steppe in which nothing lasts forever? Such a conclusion, however, would be premature. Allow me to illustrate why by means of the following passage, as cited from *A Thousand Plateaus*' third chapter, in which Deleuze and Guattari ask the following question; who does the Earth think it is?:

> There is no biosphere or noosphere, but everywhere the same Mechanosphere. […] there is no fixed order, and one stratum can serve directly as a substratum for another […]. Or the apparent order can be reversed, with cultural or technical phenomena providing a fertile soil, a good soup, for the development of insects, bacteria, germs, or even particles. The industrial age defined as the age of insects … It's even worse nowadays: you can't even tell in advance which stratum is going to communicate with which other, or in what direction. […] if we consider the plane of consistency we note that the most disparate of things and signs move upon it: a semiotic fragment rubs shoulders with a chemical interaction, an electron crashes into a language, a black hole captures a genetic message, a crystallization produces a passion, the wasp and the orchid cross a letter … There is no 'like' here, we are not saying 'like an electron,' 'like an interaction,' etc. The plane of consistency is the abolition of all metaphor; all that consists is Real.[207]

The phrase 'all that consists is Real' noticeably exposes the occasional shortcomings of the English language, as words such as 'real' and 'reality' do not sufficiently convey what 'being real' means.[208] In Dutch, 'the real' could be translated as *het werkelijke*, which aptly evokes the

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[205] "Its unity has nothing to do with a ground buried deep within things, nor with an end or a project in the mind of God. […] What we are talking about is not the unity of substance but the infinity of the modifications that are part of one another on this unique plane of life."

Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 254.

[206] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, 36-37.

[207] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 69.

[208] "It is very much to the point that the German term for the sum total of everything […] is *Wirklichkeit*, a much more expressive word than *Realität*."

Arthur Schopenhauer, *The world as will and representation*, *Volume I*, trans. Christopher Janaway, Judith Norman, and Alistair Welchman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 29.

the effective, or operative, nature of a thing; although a number, a memory, or a philosopher's metaphysical reveries might not be composed of matter, they still *do* something. Is Alice real, and is Wonderland? Is Dionysus real and in the same manner? To the ancients, he obviously was, although not every Greek citizen was happy with the improper rituals devoted to this rather vulgar god.[209] Are extraterrestrials, are apocalyptic predictions, are ghosts real? Kids see ghosts sometimes. Is Spinoza real? I am inclined to say yes; despite being no longer with us, Deleuze has shown in many of his works that the Dutch metaphysician is still very much alive. In one way or another, everything that is, *does* something, and it is in this sense that it forms part of reality; it 'works' in *de werkelijkheid*: "[…] whoever finds himself directly looking at [this truth] must at once move on to the Heraclitan conclusion and say that the whole nature of reality (*Wirklichkeit*) lies simply in its acts (*Wirken*) and that for it there exists no other sort of being."[210]

When one notices that reality is composed of all that is real, the disenchanted world in which we presently find ourselves suddenly transforms into a lively cacophony, full of experimentations and encounters between disparate beings, giving birth to something new. To describe this, the only words that come to my mind are 'a cosmic orgy.' Others would simply say *ἕν πάντα εἶναι*, although I don't think Heraclitus knew what he was saying when he uttered these words. (Or perhaps he did; in that case I am not giving him the credit he deserves.) Others again evoke the plane of immanence, or the Body without Organs, a single abstract Animal, or perhaps the absolute Outside, outside of which there is nothing; how much more obscure can it get? To be sure, one may say many things of *A Thousand Plateaus*. One may say that it is badly written, or pseudoscientific; that it is a disorienting work, lacking in structure; or that it is pure nonsense. One may even hate it. One cannot say, however, that *A Thousand Plateaus*, the book that screams immanence from its every page, is lifeless, or uneventful. One cannot say that it is boring. In the first book of his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle affirms that

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[209] *εἰ μὴ Διονύσῳ πομπὴν ἐποιοῦντο καὶ ὕμνεον ᾆσμα αἰδοίοισιν ἀναιδέστατα εἴργασται.* […]. (15)
If it were not Dionysus for whom they march in procession and chant the hymn to the phallus, their action would be most shameless. […].

Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 81.

[210] Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks*, 53.

philosophy starts with a sense of wonder.[211] Yet, whereas many metaphysical doctrines merely start with wonder, the works of Heraclitus and Deleuze *end* in a sense of wonder, too.

> To believe, not in a different world, but in a link between man and the world, in love or life, to believe in this as in the impossible, the unthinkable, which nonetheless cannot but be thought: 'something possible, otherwise I will suffocate.'[212]

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[211] "It is through wonder that men now begin and originally began to philosophize; wondering in the first place at obvious perplexities, and then by gradual progression raising questions about the greater matters too, e.g. about the changes of the moon and of the sun, about the stars and about the origin of the universe."

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 982b, accessed 5 March 2021, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0052%3Abook%3D1%3Asection%3D982b.

[212] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The time-image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), 170.

What else is there to say?

μὴ εἰκῇ περὶ τῶν μεγίστων συμβαλλώμεθα. (47)
Concerning the highest things, let us not collect our words out of the blue, that is, rashly.[213]

Up to now, I have largely considered the *ὄντα* of ontology, that is, I have considered beings and their being. Up to now, quite frankly, I have neglected one of the most crucial, and most ingenious, parts of Heraclitus' philosophy; the *λόγος*. Hunched over thick books and papyrus scrolls for hours, philologists, philosophers, and classicists alike have tried with all their academic might to answer a deceptively simple question; what does *λόγος* mean? Several scholars, in turn, have proposed an interpretation of the *λόγος* as some sort of 'cosmic law' or 'divine reason' (as advocated by Daniel W. Graham, G.S. Kirk, and M. Marcovich). However, besides the fact that the word *λόγος* was not at all, or not yet, used as 'principle' or 'reason' in the sixth century BC, this reading also severs the Greek word's original relation to language; a quite literal translation of the word *λόγος*, which stems from the verb *λέγειν* (to say), would read 'that which is said,' and accordingly, *λόγος* is often translated as 'word,' but may also refer to narratives or doctrines, for example.[214] In his *Early Greek philosophy*, John Burnet dismisses the cosmic law reading as 'a Stoic adulteration,' and instead favours a rather simple interpretation, taking the word's linguistic undertones to heart. And in his study on *The Presocratic philosophers*, Jonathan Barnes, too, interprets Heraclitus' use of the word *λόγος* in 'an ordinary and metaphysically unexciting way'; according to the two authors, whenever Heraclitus speaks of a *λόγος* in his *Fragments*, he is simply referring to an ancient doctrine on Nature.[215] In fragment 87, for example, the word certainly appears to conform to its ordinary use: "A fool loves to get excited on any *λόγος*."[216] Here, Heraclitus definitely seems to suggest

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[213] Heidegger and Fink, *Heraclitus seminar, 1966 / 67*, 14.

[214] "[…] proponents of the cosmic-law interpretation (on which the term denotes a 'general principle' or 'formula of all things' structuring the cosmos) require that we take Heraclitus to have used '*logos*' in a way unattested in any other text of similar age and altogether detached from its most common use of his time."

Johnstone, "On '*logos*' in Heraclitus," 20-21.

[215] John Burnet, *Early Greek philosophy* (London: A. & C. Black, Ltd., 1930), 143.

Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic philosophers* (London: Routledge, 1982), 44.

[216] *βλὰξ ἄνθρωπος ἐπὶ παντὶ λόγῳ ἐπτοῆσθαι φιλεῖ.* (87)

Kahn, *The art and thought of Heraclitus*, 57.

that *οἱ πολλοί* are deceived *en masse* by the beguiling musings of Homer or the cosmological myths of Hesiod, whose writings included numerous poetic explanations of the natural wonders to be found in the Greek world. Moreover, the interpretation of Burnet and Barnes seems to rhyme with Heraclitus' use of the word *λόγος* in the very first fragment, which, historians conjecture, most likely holds the opening words of Heraclitus' book. Ancient scholars often introduced their inquiry by explicitly referring to their own work (or *λόγος*) and despite his hate for sheepish conformism, Heraclitus, too, appears to follow this academic tradition:[217]

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον. γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν ἐοίκασι πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῦμαι […]. (1)

Although this *λόγος* holds forever, men always prove to be uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and when once they have heard it. For although all things (*πάντων*) happen according to this *λόγος*, they are like people of no experience, even when they experience such words and deeds as I explain, […].[218]

Taking the literary etiquette of Ionian prose into account, the word *λόγος*, just as in fragment 87, could again simply be read as 'discourse'; this time, however, Heraclitus does not condemn the foolish tales that the poets were spewing out, but instead seems to refer to his own treatise. Still, there is something strange about what Heraclitus tells us in fragment 1. Not only does he insist that the *λόγος* is eternal (*ἀεί*), the Presocratic thinker also stresses that even *before* having heard his doctrine, people generally do not understand the *λόγος*, alluding once more that the *λόγος* is something that has existed long before his own narrative. Another peculiarity regarding the *λόγος*, moreover, appears in the Presocratic's fiftieth fragment. Here,

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[217] "[…] when Heraclitus begins his proem with a reference to his own *logos* he is following a literary tradition well established among early prose authors. The oldest surviving parallel is the preamble to a work of Hecataeus (the *Historiai* or *Genealogiai*) which began with these words: 'Hecataeus of Miletus says as follows. I write these things as they seem to me to be true. For the *logoi* of the Greeks are, in my judgment, many and ridiculous.' The fifth-century treatise of Ion of Chios begins: 'The starting point of my *logos*: all things are three, and nothing more or less than these three.'"

Ibid., 96-97.

[218] The first phrase of fragment 1, 'Although this *λόγος* holds forever,' is part of Kahn's translation; the rest of the aphorism is translated better by Kirk; I have made a combination of both.

Ibid., 29.

Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 33.

Heraclitus makes an odd distinction between *his* words, between *his λόγος*, and the *λόγος* that one would do well to listen to:

οὐκ ἐμοῦ ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας ὁμολογεῖν σοφόν ἐστιν ἓν πάντα εἶναι. (50)
Listening not to me but to the *λόγος* it is wise to agree (*ὁμολογεῖν*) that all things (*πάντα*) are one (*ἓν*).[219]

Again, Heraclitus seems to suggest that the *λόγος* is something separate from anything he has to say: 'Do not listen to me,' the Ephesian tells his audience. 'Instead, heed the *λόγος*!' In conjunction with Heraclitus' remarks in fragment 1, this aphorism certainly seems to rule out the interpretation of Burnet and Barnes, compelling us to repeat the earlier posed question; what does *λόγος* mean?

Despite often being accused by a tribunal of historiographers of academic lawlessness and etymological *Spielerei*, the person who, I think, unveiled an often overlooked clue regarding Heraclitus' *λόγος* was Martin Heidegger. In his lectures on *Heraclitus's doctrine of the logos*, Heidegger carefully considers Heraclitus' use of the compound word *ὁμολογεῖν* in fragment 50, which he splits up into its two composing parts, *ὁμόν*, meaning 'the same,' and the verb *λέγειν* (whose modification, *-λογεῖν*, bears an even stronger phonetic echo of the word *λόγος*). Thus, whereas many editions of the *Fragments* choose to translate *ὁμολογεῖν* as 'to agree with,' Heidegger, on the other hand, reads 'to say the same as.' Heidegger contends that it is this verb, *ὁμολογεῖν*, with which Heraclitus articulates the human relation to the *λόγος*, the meaning of which remains as of yet undecided: "Fragment 50 speaks of the relation of the human to 'the *λόγος*.' This relation has the way of *ὁμολογεῖν*. Thus, a *λόγος* appertains to the human, whose *λέγειν* reaches all the way to 'the *λόγος*.'"[220] Moreover, Heidegger notes sharply, *ὁμολογεῖν* necessarily presupposes a prior *λέγειν*; if the *λόγος* is something that we can repeat or mimic, that means that the *λόγος* itself must speak first.[221] Although at this point Heidegger's

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[219] Ibid., 65.

[220] "According to [fragment 50], the *Logos* is something audible, a kind of speech and a voice, but clearly not the voice of a human, […]."

Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 187 and 232.

[221] "Rather, *ὁμολογεῖν* remains a *λέγειν* which always and only lays or lets lie whatever is already, as *ὁμόν*, gathered together and lying before us; this lying never springs from the *ὁμολογεῖν* but rather rests […] in the *λόγος*."

Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek thinking*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1975), 67.

interpretation diverges from my own as he begins to retrace the etymology of the verb *λέγειν* in detail (or, as he himself would prefer, tries 'to think the word as the Greeks themselves would have thought it'), his keen remarks concerning Heraclitus' subtle use of *ὁμολογεῖν* in fragment 50 have revealed an important clue in deciphering the *λόγος* of Heraclitus. Indeed, if we relate to the *λόγος* through *ὁμολογεῖν*, that is, by saying the same as the *λόγος*, then it is not unreasonable to assume that the *λόγος* itself says something, too. Taking Heidegger's reading of *ὁμολογεῖν* into account, it might be suggested that Nature speaks a language of its own, a language which, despite being not understood by the oblivious masses, can be listened to by anyone who wishes. (It is in this sense that the *λόγος* is 'common,' as Heraclitus tells us in his second fragment.[222] Similarly, you could say that our human language is *the* common property; it is owned by no one, yet used by everyone.) This language, or *λόγος*, of Nature is something separate from anything Heraclitus has to say and, since it is eternal, obviously existed long before the Presocratic's own narrative (explaining, in turn, how *οἱ πολλοί* prove to be uncomprehending even *before* they have heard Heraclitus' discourse on the *λόγος*). Yet, when one carefully listens to, or 'reads,' Nature's language, it is wise to say the same; 'all things are one' (something that a mute 'cosmic law' simply cannot utter). Heraclitus regards the world as having a language of its own, a language that can be read and put into words, which he did, according to himself. Undoubtedly, Heraclitus thought he had figured it all out. In that sense, the Greek thinker was ultimately unable to avoid the 'specifically European disease' of transcendence; if it were up to Heraclitus, all ontological thinking might as well end on the very day on which he deposited his *Περὶ φύσεως* (the only book that he has ever written) in the great temple of Artemis; it was done, the universe had been unravelled.[223]

Still, whether or not Heraclitus believed that Nature speaks an eternal language is not what concerns me here, not primarily at least. Rather, I wish to emphasise the fact that the Presocratic writer figured that we relate to this *λόγος*, or language, of Nature by means of our own language, that is, by *ὁμολογεῖν*: "[…] Heraclitus specifically determines the relationship of

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[222] […] *τοῦ λόγου δ' ἐόντος ξυνοῦ ζώουσιν οἱ πολλοὶ ὡς ἰδίαν ἔχοντες φρόνησιν.* (2)
[…] although the *λόγος* is common the many live as though they had a private understanding.

Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 57.

[223] "No longer content with handing over immanence to the transcendent, we want it to […] fabricate it itself. In fact this is not difficult — all that is necessary *is for movement to be stopped*. Transcendence enters as soon as movement of the infinite is stopped."

Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, 47.

the human to the *λόγος* as *ὁμολογεῖν*."[224] Heraclitus wished to say the same as the *λόγος*, that is, he tried to translate the language of the cosmos into our own. And he knew all too well that he had to put this extraordinary language of Nature in mysterious, and almost undecipherable, words; Heraclitus describes an obscure Nature, which requires the use of participles, the middle voice, and strange concepts such as 'the everythings,' *heccéité*, or *συλλάψιες*; an intimately related Nature, to be represented in separate yet thoroughly interwoven aphorisms which can be detangled and retangled in order to weave all kinds of meaningful compositions; a bewildering, paradoxical Nature which has simply no regard for the law of non-contradiction. As I see it, it was Heraclitus who first introduced the theme of language into ontological thinking.

Allow me to conclude my thesis by sharing my initial response to *A Thousand Plateaus*. "Of the *λόγος* which is as I describe it, men always prove to be uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and when once they have heard it."[225] Indeed, Heraclitus' first fragment poignantly describes my first encounter with Deleuze and Guattari's work during the first week of the course on *Ecophilosophy*. We needed to read its first chapter, 'Introduction: Rhizome,' and as a new and unsuspecting philosophy student, I naively started reading the 'mere twenty-three pages,' unknowing of what was to come. After a few paragraphs, however, I was utterly appalled by the unreadable mess the authors had composed. The text was filled with unintelligible words, as it spoke of rhizomes, multiplicities, bodies without organs, of wasps and of wolves, of horses and of ticks. As Deleuze and Guattari rambled on about strata and territories, lines of flight, a plane of consistency, intensities, and mad particles, I could not help but wonder: Why can't they just write normally?

I recently found the answer to my question on the eleventh page of the book, in the very chapter I needed to read. As opposed to Heraclitus, who intended to mirror the world in his work *On Nature*, Deleuze and Guattari write in their introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* that "[…] the book is not an image of the world. It forms a rhizome with the world, there is an aparallel evolution of the book and the world; the book assures the deterritorialization of the world, […]."[226] A book is not apathetic, it is not cut off from reality. Books do no longer, or rather not at all, describe the world from some secluded, far removed position (an inner

[224] Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 221.

[225] Kirk, *Heraclitus: The cosmic fragments*, 33.

[226] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 11.

sphere of literature, so to speak), but function as little machines which are inserted in and attached to *de werkelijkheid*, in which a work works: "[…] the greatest force of language was only discovered once a *work* was viewed as a machine, producing certain effects, amenable to a certain use."[227] Maybe the metaphysical works of history somewhat resemble the *First Encyclopedia of Tlön* (*Vol. XI. Hlaer to Jangr*), as 'summarised' by Jorge Luis Borges in *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*. In his story, Borges shares his fortuitous discovery of a colossal encyclopaedia, comprised of dozens of books and composed by a secret society of some of history's greatest thinkers, and whose philosophical system is so elegant, so graceful, so sensible and orderly, that it has succeeded in enthralling the whole world. Accordingly, "A scattered dynasty of recluses has changed the face of the earth — and their work continues."[228] It might be suggested that Deleuze and Guattari have likewise attempted a great 'deterritorialisation of the world.' Yet *Anti-Oedipus*, inspired by the protests of 1968, failed, at least according to Deleuze.[229] Perhaps *A Thousand Plateaus* left a more vivid imprint on what we call reality. And perhaps I share Deleuze and Guattari's ambition, even though I don't like to admit it (I think it bears witness to a slight delusion of grandeur). Either way, what I wish to say is that metaphysics should not be understood as 'pure thinking,' whatever that may mean. What I wish to say, and what I hopefully *have* said, is that metaphysics is a question of life:

> The philosopher of the future is the explorer of ancient worlds, of peaks and caves, who creates only inasmuch as he recalls something that has been essentially forgotten. That something,

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[227] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 108.

[228] "Contact with Tlön, the *habit* of Tlön, has disintegrated this world. Spellbound by Tlön's rigor, humanity has forgotten, and continues to forget, that it is the rigor of chess masters, not of angels. Already Tlön's (putative) 'primitive language' has filtered into our schools; […]. Numismatics, pharmacology, and archæology have been reformed. I understand that biology and mathematics are also awaiting their next avatar. … A scattered dynasty of recluses has changed the face of the earth — and their work continues. If my projections are correct, a hundred years from now someone will discover the hundred volumes of *The Second Encyclopedia of Tlön*.

At that, French and English and mere Spanish will disappear from the earth. The world will be Tlön. That makes very little difference to me; through my quiet days in this hotel in Adrogué, I go on revising (though I never intend to publish) an indecisive translation in the style of Quevedo of Sir Thomas Browne's *Urne Buriall*."

Jorge Luis Borges, *Collected Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 81.

[229] "*Anti-Oedipus* is post '68: it was a time where things were churning, a time of research," Deleuze reflects eight years after the book's publication in a conversation with Catherine Clément. "There's a very strong reaction today. It's a whole economy of publishing; a new politics imposing conformity. […] Journalism has taken more and more power from literature. […] This is really the year of our historical legacy and in this respect *Anti-Oedipus* was a total failure." A few years earlier, Guattari lamented the growing popularity of 'all these politics of presence and prestige,' even confiding to his diary that 'I resent Gilles for having dragged me into this mess.' Obviously, the book did not have the revolutionary effect that he had hoped for.

Robert Castel, *Le psychanalysme: L'ordre psychanalytique et le pouvoir* (Paris: Flammarion, 1981), 274.

according to Nietzsche, is the unity of life and thought. It is a complex unity: one step for life, one step for thought. Modes of life inspire ways of thinking; modes of thinking create ways of living. Life *activates* thought, and thought in turn *affirms* life. Of this Presocratic unity we no longer have even the slightest idea. We now have only instances where thought bridles and mutilates life, making it sensible, and where life takes revenge and drives thought mad, losing itself along the way. Now we only have the choice between mediocre lives and mad thinkers.[230]

'*Metafysica*, *wat heb je dáár nou aan*?'

Metaphysics, I think, can be seen as a form of literary art, as something creative. It creates modes of thinking. The poetic fragments of the Presocratics, or the amusing tales and allegories of Plato; the wonderful essays of Leibniz, who imbued everything, from the smallest portions of matter to the crudest boulders, with a life of its own; or the manuscripts and letters of Spinoza, who demonstrated that every body and every thing is part of a divine Nature, of the same body of God; these works are not only great pieces of literature (onto-stories, perhaps).[231] They also define and at times defy what we can and cannot see, what we can and cannot think. Even though I didn't intend to, at least not when I began working on my thesis, I have written an introduction to metaphysics. It is not an introduction because my thesis is simple or accessible, although I do hope that it is enjoyable to read. And perhaps it is not so much an introduction *to* metaphysics, but rather an introduction *of* metaphysics, an introduction of metaphysics to my friends, my family, and to whoever happens to read this. Because I think that metaphysics concerns everybody and everything. (It is for that reason that I wanted to write my thesis as an experiment in pop philosophy.) I have tried to show that metaphysics is not at all esoteric, abstract, or estranged from the 'real' world. And because I decided that I could not show what metaphysics is, what it means and what is at stake, without the help of genuine metaphysicians, I chose two works as examples, one of the oldest

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[230] "Heraclitus was the first philosopher to introduce the idea of *φρόνησις* and to put it on a level with *σοφία*: that is, he connected knowledge of Being with insight into human values and conduct, and made the former include the latter."

Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The ideals of Greek culture*, *Volume I: Archaic Greece: The mind of Athens*, trans. Gilbert Highet (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), 180.

Deleuze, *Pure immanence*, 66-67.

[231] "[…] I believe that it is consistent with neither order nor with the beauty or reasonableness of things for there to be something living, that is, acting from within itself, in only the smallest portion of matter, when it would contribute to greater perfection for such things to be everywhere."

G.W. Leibniz, "On nature itself, or On the inherent force and actions of created things, toward confirming and illustrating their dynamics (1698)," in *Philosophical Essays*, ed. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989), 163.

and one of the newest. Perhaps one may conclude from my thesis that philosophy still dwells upon the same themes as two thousand years ago. But I hope that something else has become clear. I hope to have shown that the question 'What does being mean?' is not at all vague or meaningless; that we may relieve ourselves from rigorously defined answers, and pose the question concerning being, *de vraag naar het zijn*, once more. What else is there to see, and to think? What else is there to say? Because I wonder if we really live in the best of all possible worlds. Is *this* world really the best possible of all? What a joke.

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