Subjectivity and Matter in the Work of A. N. Whitehead and Gilles Deleuze: Developing a Non-essentialist Ontology for Social Theory

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PhD - 2003

Abstract

This thesis examines the concepts of matter and subjectivity in the works of A. N. Whitehead and Gilles Deleuze, and draws out a non-essentialist version of ontology from their work. It argues that many recent accounts of subjectivity have refused to engage with the material or ontological aspect of subjectivity and that this has led to an over-reliance on 'linguistic constructionism' and 'discursive production'. This has meant that the social sciences have focussed on the 'cultural' body and left the 'biological' body in the realm of the natural sciences. The thesis uses a range of critiques of Butler's *Bodies That Matter* to develop the need for a re-thinking of the relations between materiality, subjectivity and ontology. This re-thinking is carried out through an analysis of the work of Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze. It is argued that although Spinoza's *Ethics* may set the parameters of a non-essentialist ontology, he ultimately fails in his attempt to fully materialise his conception of individuality. Whitehead's 'philosophy of organism' (as set out in *Process and Reality*) is presented as providing a coherent account of existence as a process within which all subjectivity is constituted through a physical and conceptual concrescence. However, his account of the role of language within this process is seen as deficient. It is argued that much of the work of Deleuze is involved with the same concerns as that of Whitehead but that *The Logic of Sense* (1990) is able to produce an account of the position of language which is consonant with Whitehead's ontological approach. The thesis, thereby, contributes to contemporary analyses of subjectivity by developing a theoretical framework within which the materiality of subjectivity can be conceptualized without invoking scientific or essentialist accounts of physicality.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The concept of ontology has a problematic status within social theory.[1] It has often been associated with essentialist claims that there is something fixed and neutral which operates behind the, supposedly, more superficial level of the social or the cultural.[2] The recourse to ontology has thus been seen as a quest for that explanatory ground which underpins the development of either human societies or reveals the quasi-biological causes of human behaviour and interaction. As a result, ontology has been considered, within much of social theory, as counter to both its method and its subject matter. Indeed, as early as 1901, in the preface to the second edition of *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Durkheim is keen to refute the charge of "ontologism"[3] which, by that time, seems to have already become a slur for sociologists. Social theory and sociology have, therefore, attempted to avoid ontological explanations in their attempts to account for differing historical and contemporary descriptions of gender,[4] ethnicity,[5] sexuality,[6] and disability and illness[7].

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[1] And, the same could be said of both philosophy and physics. "'Ontology' and 'metaphysics' have become dirty words in philosophy, as they have in physics." Murphy, T. 1998. 'Quantum Ontology. A Virtual Mechanics of Becoming' in Kaufman, E. and Heller, K. (eds.). 1998. *Deleuze & Guattari. New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy, And Culture*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, p. 215. It should be noted that the term 'social theory' is so imprecise that it runs the danger of losing any analytical purchase. However, the term has been used intermittently throughout this thesis in order to differentiate its arguments from those of science and philosophy.

[2] The reasons for this link, between ontology and essentialism, will be discussed in more detail shortly.

[3] Durkheim, E. 1964. *The Rules of Sociological Method*, The Free Press, London, pp. xli

[4] For example, Riley, D. 1988. *'Am I That Name. Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History*, Macmillan, Basingstoke. Showalter, E. 1987. *The Female Malady. Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980*, Virago, London

[5] For example, Henderson, M. 1992. 'Speaking in Tongues: Dialogics Dialectics and the Black Woman Writer's Literary Tradition', in Butler, J. and Scott, J. (eds.) 1992. *Feminists Theorize the Political*, Routledge, New York, pp. 144-166. Mac an Ghaill, M. 1999. *Contemporary Racism and Ethnicities. Social and cultural transformations*, Open University Press, Buckingham

[6] For example, Scott, J. 1992. 'Experience' in Butler and Scott (eds.) 1992, pp. 22-40. Weeks, J. 1991. *Against Nature. Essays on history, sexuality and identity*, Rivers Oram Press, London

[7] For example, Corker, M. and French, S. 1999 'Reclaiming discourse in disability studies' in Corker, M. and French, S. 1999. *Disability Discourse*, Open University Press, Buckingham, pp. 1-11. This paper utilises 'discursive production' as a conceptual tool to overcome the dyad of socially constructed disability and physical impairment. Also see, Canguilhem, G. 1991. *The Normal and the Pathological*, Zone Books, New York

The main argument of this thesis is that the refusal to engage with ontology within many contemporary theories of subjectivity has led to an over-reliance upon the twin notions of 'social constructionism' and 'discursive production'. This has meant that the social sciences have focussed on the 'cultural' body and left the 'biological' body in the realm of the natural sciences. One major consequence of this, as Fraser[8] argues, is the seeming inability to conceptualize materiality as an element within subjectivity.

As a whole, this thesis is an attempt to re-think the relation between matter, materiality and subjectivity through an evaluation of the works of Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze. This will involve an analysis of their different developments of a non-essentialist ontology. However, it should be stressed that this thesis will not attempt to provide a 'new' ontology to be used throughout social theory. The ambition of this thesis is more limited than that of undertaking a wholesale review of the role of ontology with regard to the human or social sciences. At the same time, one recurrent theme *will* be that of what constitutes the 'social'? But this question will not be posed in abstract. It will be analysed only with regard to the status of this concept in the work of Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze. More specifically, it will be situated within their discussions of the inter-relation of subjectivity and matter, and the place of these within their ontological approaches.

The question of the relation between materiality and subjectivity has already been addressed within feminism, and much of this chapter will be taken up in discussing how a range of recent writers have stressed the need for a re-engagement with ontology. These texts stress the need to develop a non-essentialist ontology which recognizes the political implications of any attempt to account for the materiality of the body. They also stress that such accounts must retain the force of social constructionist descriptions of gender which have problematised essentialist accounts of 'sex'. Hence, it is these recent texts which provide the analytic parameters of this thesis.

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[8] Fraser, M. 2002. 'What is the matter of feminist criticism?' in *Economy and Society*, Volume, 31, Number 4, November 2002: 606-625

However, in order to provide a context for this discussion, it is first necessary to briefly trace why matter and materiality have often been conceptualized as somehow external to, or beyond, the concerns of analyses of the social. This is not intended as a full analysis of this topic but as a schematic review within which certain writers will be taken as emblematic of certain well-defined standpoints.[9] Initially, the influence of Durkheim and Weber will be addressed; this will be followed by a brief discussion of Marx and some of his more recent interpreters. It should be noted that more detailed accounts of such developments are to be found in the work of Baert[10] and Wagner[11] and that it is has not been possible to replicate their depth of analysis here. Nor has it been possible to discuss those who do not conform quite so readily to such a brief and narrow history.

Matter and Materiality in Social Theory

"To become a social scientist is to realize that the inner properties of objects do not count, that they are mere receptacles for human categories."[12] This is Latour's somewhat polemical characterization of the gulf which lies between social theory's attempts to explain the human, social world, and those hard objects which seem to go to make up the physical world. This gulf, he argues, is one consequence of Durkheim's concerted attempt to render sociology as an authentic academic discipline with its own objects of study (its own material) and its own methodology. The objects of sociology, for Durkheim, are social facts, and he stands firm in asserting "**not** that social facts are material things but that they are things by the same right as material things, although they differ from them in type."[13] Thus, from early on in social theory's history, its subject 'matter' gained a distinct, yet peculiar status. Its objects exist and yet they are defined in opposition to the 'hard' matter which is the concern of the natural sciences. Indeed physical matter is left solely

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[9] Nor will this section address any of the positive reasons as to why the relations between matter, subjectivity and ontology might need to be re-thought. Such positive reasons will follow later in the chapter.

[10] Baert, P. 1998. *Social Theory in the Twentieth Century*, Polity Press, London

[11] Wagner, P. 2001. *A History and Theory of the Social Sciences. Not All that Is Solid Melts into Air*, SAGE, London

[12] Latour, B. 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, p. 52

[13] Durkheim, 1964, p. xliii. Emphasis added

to the physical sciences; the social sciences are concerned with some-'thing' else. And yet, sociology was envisaged, by many, as resolutely a *science*; it is just that it has some peculiar objects to study which although not material are still, 'by right', of the same order of validity. "This science, indeed, could be brought into existence only with the realization that social phenomena, although immaterial, are nevertheless real things, the proper objects of scientific study."[14] This 'scientific attitude' established sociology as a distinct discipline with its own material and methodology. But by distancing its subject matter from that of the natural sciences and by describing its own objects of study as 'immaterial', this ensured that the harder it tried, and the more successful were its scientific explanations, the more social theory became divorced from, and unable to account for, physical matter.

One further consequence of this 'scientific attitude' is the need to accept that social facts "have a nature of their own"[15] and the necessity of "learning this nature from them."[16] Durkheim thereby sets out the structural approach to sociology insofar as "if collective forces really exist...[humans are] necessarily obliged to submit to them without being able to modify them."[17] At this level, such forces become self-sufficient entities which offer themselves for perusal and explanation by social theory; they become Newtonian. However, in terms of the social, they become wholly determining of the individual subject; this emphasis upon the external, determinant form of the social as the basis for sociological inquiry still has effects in contemporary social theory, as shall be seen later in this chapter. So, as Latour puts it: "All the sciences (natural and social) are now mobilized to turn the humans into so many puppets manipulated by objective forces - which only the natural or social scientists happen to know."[18]

However, Durkheim was not the only writer to advocate a distinct method and objective for analysing the 'social'.

> 'Sociology'....means the science whose object is to interpret the meaning of social action....By 'social' action is meant an action in which the meaning intended by the

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[14] Durkheim, 1964, p. lvii
[15] Durkheim, 1964, p. lviii
[16] Durkheim, 1964, p. lviii
[17] Durkheim, 1964, p. lviii
[18] Latour, 1993, p. 53

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agent or agents involves a relation to *another* persons' behaviour.[19]

Sociology is a science in that it can "give a causal explanation"[20] of such social action and "the effects which it produces."[21] However, this is not, as with Durkheim, a method which is analogous to that of the natural sciences. Instead, Weber is setting himself within the tradition of *Geisteswissenschaften*[22] which although scientific, in that it searches for cause and effects, is different in both its method and in the objects of its study from that of natural science. One of its main methods is to 'interpret' and that which it interprets is the meaningful behaviour of agents. The intricacies of Weber's position are not important here, although it should be noted that Weber did not consider his approach to be one which focussed on the individual agent but rather the social meaning of their behaviour.[23] What is important is the irruption of the notion of the agent and agency, as opposed to external constraints or structures, as the focus of sociology and social theory. Now, the material of sociology becomes the meaningful behaviour of human agents. There is no place for the objects of the world exhibiting themselves as meaningful within such a scheme. Any meaning they have is granted to them through the human or social realm. Weber's viewpoint is opposed to Durkheim's insistence upon the external, structural status of the social, and heralded the solidification of the great structure/agency debate.

The divisions of this debate hardened throughout the twentieth century. The agency side of this contest, building on the work of Weber, developed through the increasing importance of phenomenology within social theory.

> Max Weber has shown that all phenomena of the socio-cultural world originate in social interaction and can be referred to it. According to him, it is the central task of sociology to understand the meaning which the actor bestows upon his [sic] action....But what is action, what is meaning, and how is understanding of such meaning by a fellow-man [sic] possible...? I submit that any attempt to answer these questions leads immediately with problems with which Husserl was concerned and

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[19] Weber, M. 1980. (ed. Runciman, W). *Selections in Translation*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 7

[20] Weber, 1980, p. 7

[21] Weber, 1980, p. 7

[22] See, Cohen, I. 1996. 'Theories of Action and Praxis', p. 75 in Turner, B. 1996. (ed.). *The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 73-111

[23] "It is a shocking misunderstanding to think that an 'individualistic' methodology implies a certain valuation of 'individualism'". Weber, 1980, p. 21

which he has to a certain extent solved.[24]

So, for Schutz, the phenomena which make up the socio-cultural world are not limited to the meanings and actions of individual agents, instead he extends them to the "intersubjectivity of experience and social action"[25] and thereby establishes a "social phenomenology".[26] And following from Husserl, that which comprises the ultimate element of this social phenomenology is consciousness. Thus the material concerns of social theory become, in this Weberian lineage (which includes Schutz, the early Parsons,[27] and Luckmann),[28] either consciousness itself, or the meaningful interaction between social subjects. Once again, this entails that 'physical' matter, objects and so forth were relegated to those items which have no meaning of themselves and were therefore seen, by many, to be of no concern to social theory. For, from the phenomenological position, it would be impossible to account for matter in itself without reference to some form of collective or inter-subjective representations of the objects of the world. And such collective representations must arise from human consciousness. So, any experience of matter, or theory of materiality, must be predicated, ultimately, upon intentional consciousness. In effect, once again, social theory cannot engage with physical matter on its own terms (though, at this stage, it believes that it has a firm grasp on subjectivity).

Clearly, more recent moves within sociology and social theory have complicated this issue, in their attempts to overcome the structure-agency divide. At the same time, it still seems clear that in some social theory there is a tendency to uncritically accept the 'social' as a somehow self-explanatory term or arena, which thereby operates as the real material of social theory and from which is excluded the physical material of the natural sciences. Giddens[29] might be taken as indicative of this position. Introducing his theory of structuration, he states that:

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[24] Schutz, A. 1967. *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, p. 145

[25] Cohen, 1996, p. 101

[26] Cohen, 1996, p. 101

[27] See, Abell, P. 1996. 'Sociological Theory and Rational Choice Theory' in Turner, 1996, pp. 223-244, but especially, pp. 225-6 for a distinction between Parsons early micro and later, macro, work.

[28] For example, Luckmann, T. 1983. *Life-World and Social Realities*, Heinemann, London

[29] See, for example, Giddens, A. 1984. *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Polity Press, Cambridge

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> The basic domain of the study of the social sciences, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time.[30]

Here Giddens makes the assumption of a 'basic domain' which exists substantially as that which is of interest to social theory. He presupposes that there *is* an object or field which pertains, in abstraction, to the form of social inquiry. Admittedly, such an object or field does not constitute a 'societal totality' but this view does presume that there is, somewhere and somehow, some *thing,* which it is the task of social theory to describe or explain. Supposedly, social theory makes immediate sense because it is posited as that which investigates such a domain. As a result, Giddens visualizes the object, substance or matter of social theory as 'social practices'. By only admitting *social* practices to the domain of social theory, Giddens both presupposes and delimits the procedures and results of any such inquiry. Social theory is that which theorizes the social; the materiality of objects, or subjects, is of no concern.

The work of Latour,[31] once again, can be seen as a sustained critique of Giddens' approach. He characterizes the position of sociologists, such as Giddens, in the following way:

> What else can sociologists do? They can say, for example, that they 'restrict themselves to the study of the social'. They then divide the Leviathan into 'reality levels' leaving aside, for example, the economic, political, technical and cultural aspects in order to restrict themselves to what is 'social'. The black boxes that contain these factors are thus sealed up and no sociologist can open them without stepping outside the field[32]

Latour thus demonstrates how the very act of defining social theory, as an attempt to address the social, delimits its possibilities and restricts it to only finding certain solutions to certain problems.

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[30] Giddens, 1984, p. 2

[31] Callon, M. and Latour, B. 1981. 'Unscrewing the big Leviathan: how actors macro-structure reality and how sociologists help them to do so' in Knorr-Cetina, K. and Cicourel, A. 1981. *Advances in social theory and methodology. Toward an integration of micro- and macro-sociologies,* Routledge and Kegan Paul, Boston, London and Henley; Latour, M. 1991. 'Technology is society made durable', in Law, J. (ed.) 1991. *A Sociology of Monsters,* Routledge, London; Latour, 1993; Latour, M. 1999. *Pandora's Hope. Essays on the Reality of Science Studies,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts. I am grateful to Dr Mike Michael for directing me towards these specific texts.

[32] Callon, and Latour, 1981, pp. 297-8

However, it may be argued that such a critique ignores the alternative version of the relation between materiality, consciousness, nature, and the social which is to be found in the work of Marx. However, the concept of materiality as supposedly embedded in Marx's materialism is not so easy to locate. "Though Marx's *Weltanschauung* is widely called materialistic, Marx himself never dealt with materialism systematically."[33] As Avineri[34] argues, the relation between the material and consciousness is one which has been both extrapolated and misinterpreted by commentators on Marx. Although this is not the place to engage in a full blown analysis of the textual elements of Marx's approach, there are two important points to note. The first is that, despite interpretations to the contrary, Marx was not an advocate of a mechanistic materialism in which consciousness is a mere epiphenomenon or "an embarrassing illusion."[35] In his analysis, the relation of the material and consciousness was always mediated by practical human activity or 'praxis'. "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism...is that the thing, reality or sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object or of contemplation, but not as sensuous human activity, practice".[36] However, this leads on to the second point, which is more problematic; for, in his focus upon human activity as the mediator between matter and the 'ideal', Marx tends to reduce matter to that which operates solely as the basis for the 'human' version of the social. "The standpoint of the old materialism is civil society; the standpoint of the new is human society, or social humanity."[37] "The social reality of nature and human natural science or the natural science of man [sic] are identical expressions."[38] Thus, at this point, Marx *does* become susceptible to Latour's critique, as it is the 'social' which becomes the true, real, manifestation of the material. The material is, therefore, always social and although reality is always material, it is always already social as well. This, once again, delimits the scope of social theory and signals its shift away from concerns with the ontological status of physical materiality. However, as stated above, it is not the texts of Marx which are so important here as the manner

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[33] Avineri, S. 1968. *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 65
[34] Avineri, 1968, pp. 65-70
[35] Barzun, cited in Avineri, 1968, p. 66
[36] Marx, K. 1977. (ed. McLellan, D.) *Selected Writings*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 156
[37] Marx, 1977, p. 158
[38] Marx, 1977, p. 94

in which they have been interpreted and utilised within social theory.

Following the schematic division of social theory into the twin approaches of Durkheim and Weber, as given above, it is possible to identify two such readings of Marx. The influence of Weber, and the importance of analyses of the cultural within social theory, are evident in the work of the Frankfurt School. The justification for this concentration on the culture is that: "The whole world is made to pass through the filter of the culture industry."[39] One consequence of this emphasis is that "natural perceptions have somehow become indissociable from cultural and historical ones."[40] Thus, the material becomes explainable and meaningful only in cultural or historical terms which preclude the possibility of enabling the material to enter into social theory without subsuming it under the realm of its cultural significance. (The problems with predicating the cultural, as that which renders matter intelligible, will be taken up in more detail later on in this chapter).

It is possible to see echoes of Durkheim in Althusser's[41] reading of Marx. On Althusser's account, Marxism is an attempt to overcome humanism, therefore he renders the human subject as an effect of wider ideological structures. "For the corollary of theoretical Marxist anti-humanism is the recognition and knowledge of humanism itself: as an *ideology*."[42] Such ideologies are granted, by Althusser, the status of the material insofar as: "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material."[43] However, Althusser then goes on to distinguish between such 'modes' of materiality: "the material existence of the ideology in an apparatus and its practices does not have the same modality as the material existence of a paving-stone or a rifle."[44] This distinction between levels of materiality becomes especially problematic within Althusser's elaboration of the

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[39] Adorno, T. and Horkheimer, M. 1997, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Verso, London, p. 126

[40] Jameson, F. 1996. *Late Marxism. Adorno, or, The Persistence of the Dialectic*, Verso, London, p. 218

[41] See: Althusser, L. 1984. *Essays on Ideology*, Verso, London; Althusser, L. 1986. *For Marx*, Verso, London

[42] Althusser, 1986, p. 230

[43] Althusser, 1984, p. 40

[44] Althusser, 1984, p. 40

place of the subject within his scheme. Following the Durkheimian emphasis on the social as external to, and yet constitutive of, the individual, Althusser explains subjectivity in terms of its instantiation through ideology. Hence: *"the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects."*[45] Thus, although Althusser does discuss the relationship between matter and subjectivity, he does so at a level of materiality which is divorced from the 'physical' modes of matter of 'paving-stones or rifles'. This engagement with materiality is, thereby, limited to addressing only those modes of matter which are tied up with human subjectivity. Such modes are ontologically distinct from more 'physical' modes ('paving-stones' etc.), which, once again, are no concern of social theory.[46]

A more recent attempt, within the Marxist tradition, to re-engage with ontology and, thereby, to provide a renewed account of the status of matter and materiality within science, social theory and philosophy, is to be found in the work of Bhaskar.[47] In his analyses of the ontological, Bhaskar attempts to avoid empiricism and idealism through his own approach, which has generally been termed as "Critical Realism".[48] This involves a reconsideration of the status of ontology as opposed to epistemology, which Bhaskar argues, has been prioritised by science, social theory and philosophy in their varied quests for knowledge of the world. Bhaskar terms this the "epistemic fallacy"[49] which maintains that: "statements about being can be reduced to or analysed in terms of statements about knowledge".[50] In place of this, Bhaskar aims to demonstrate how a "philosophical ontology is developed by reflection upon what must be the case for science to be possible."[51]

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[45] Althusser, 1984, p. 45

[46] The problems involved in only considering materiality in relation to human subjectivity will be taken up again later in this chapter, through a critique of the work of Butler (Butler, J. 1993. *Bodies That Matter. On The Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, Routledge, London).

[47] Bhaskar, R. 1978. *A Realist Theory of Science*, Harvester Press, Hassocks, Sussex. Bhaskar, R. 1979. *The Possibility of Naturalism. A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*, Harvester Press, Brighton. Bhaskar, R. 1989. *Reclaiming Reality. A Critical Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy*, Verso, London and New York. See also, Collier, A. 1994. *Critical Realism. An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy*, Verso, London and New York

[48] See, Bhaskar, 1989, pp. 180 and ff. and Collier, 1994

[49] Bhaskar, 1978, p.36, Bhaskar, 1989, p.181

[50] Bhaskar, 1978, p. 36

[51] Bhaskar, 1978, p. 39

However, this philosophy of science becomes a question of explaining how science is capable, through experiments, of deriving and explaining the laws by which deeper structures of mechanisms generate patterns of events which are not, in themselves, reliant upon human perception or knowledge. "The central argument of this study, establishing an ontological distinction between causal laws and patterns of events...has turned on the possibility of experimental activity."[52] Hence, Bhaskar's invocation of ontology is more of an attempt to develop a new theoretical axis for a successful science than an inquiry into the ontological in itself. This approach becomes more obvious within Bhaskar's writing on the social sciences. For here, he predicates their ontological basis in terms of society; but he defines society as a "structure...irreducible to but present in the intentional activity of men [sic]."[53] "We can be sure that society exists and confident that it has certain general features...Its existence...is a necessary condition for any knowledge, including knowledge in the natural sciences of everyday life."[54] Bhaskar has, thereby, situated society as the ultimate ontological category without fully attempting to inquire as to what such an ontology might comprise. As a result, his analysis replicates that of Giddens, in that he again posits the social as the ultimate explanatory category. And both are susceptible to Latour's critique, when he states: "Society had to produce everything arbitrarily including the cosmic order, biology, chemistry, and the laws of physics!"[55] Hence the role of social theory becomes to explain every-*thing*, as long as *all* things are envisaged as items which are only fully understandable within their social context. So, all knowledges (including those of the natural sciences) must be explainable by social theory, which thus gains epistemic priority, yet is unable to confront on their own terms the objects of such analyses; for example rocks, chairs, plants and humans (considered as biological entities).

It is, perhaps, this last example which is most pertinent to this chapter. This separation of the social from materiality, has left the task of describing, diagnosing, and defining the human body to the natural sciences. The social sciences may be

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[52] Bhaskar, 1978, p. 244
[53] Bhaskar, 1978, p. 248
[54] Bhaskar, 1989, p. 186
[55] Latour, 1993, p. 55

able to uncover the political and ideological dimensions of gender but biological 'sex' remains firmly in the control of the 'real' sciences. The surrendering of the very physicality of the body to science, by certain sections of social theory, has made it difficult to contest scientific prescriptions and proscriptions on their own terms. Hence, it is within a range of feminist critiques of the sex/gender distinction, and the status of the ontological within this dyad, that the most compelling appeals for a re-appraisal of the inter-relation of matter, subjectivity and ontology have arisen. This signals a narrowing of the concerns of this thesis from Latour's attempts to reconfigure the whole of social theory.[56] The arguments made within this thesis are organised around the relationship between matter, subjectivity and ontology. Clearly, there will be points at which such arguments will have wider relevance, however, these will not constitute the main focus of the thesis.

It will have been noticed that the above discussion of social theory's relation to materiality did not address either linguistic or discursive constructionism. It also summarised Latour's critique of some of the presumptions inherent in much social theory, regarding its status and its subject matter. However, it did not offer any positive reasons as to why the relationship between matter, subjectivity and ontology should be re-assessed. An attempt to redress this balance will follow a brief account of why ontology has become associated with essentialism within social theory.

Ontology and Essentialism

Fuss[57] provides a comprehensive and critical reading of the different roles that essentialism has played within Western thought, culture and society. In doing so she clarifies some of the reasons for social theory's past, and continued, disdain of the ontological. Fuss argues that ontology is often used to provide 'natural'[58] explanations which precede social, historical or cultural ones.

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[56] For example, Latour, 1993

[57] Fuss, D. 1990. *Essentially Speaking. Feminism, Nature and Difference*, Routledge, London

[58] For a fuller analysis of the problem of assigning a single meaning to the concept of 'nature' or the 'natural' see, Soper, K. 1995. *What is Nature? Culture, Politics and the non-Human*, Blackwell, Oxford

Essentialist arguments frequently make recourse to an ontology which stands outside the sphere of cultural influence and historical change. 'Man' and 'woman,' to take one example, are assumed to be ontologically stable objects, coherent signs which derive their coherency from their unchangeability and predictability (there have *always* been men and women it is argued).[59]

Thus the concept of ontology is viewed as essentialist, as opposed to the constructionist arguments deployed by social theory. "Essentialists and constructionists are most polarized around the issue of the relation between the social and the natural."[60] It is therefore possible to understand the antagonism that exists, within social theory, to attempts to reclaim ontology as an important theoretical tool. The very meaning of 'ontology' is used as a marker to differentiate the ground, procedures and epistemology of the natural sciences from those utlilised in investigating the 'social' aspects of humanity. Following such a distinction, it would seem that any reclamation of ontology within social theory would question its whole epistemological field, indeed its very purpose. At the very least, the inclusion of the ontological within social theory would seem to put in jeopardy some of its most important conceptual developments. For example, in relation to analyses of sexuality, the success of social constructionism would seem to have been to: "move us out of the realm of ontology (what the homosexual *is*) and into the realm of social and discursive formations (how the homosexual role is *produced*)."[61]

That is to say, the importance of social theory has been its ability to make apparent the political and historical formations which have led to the appearance of categories such as 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual' thereby undermining normative moral and scientific claims as to the status of those placed within such categories.

It would therefore seem that attempts to outline the importance of the ontological within the social is in danger of reasserting categories which would undermine some of the most productive elements within its own field. The later stages of this chapter will attempt to demonstrate how a reappraisal of the role of ontology such as that offered by this thesis, need not flatly contradict or dismiss many of the analyses of subjectivity which have been developed through the dual notions of social and

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[59] Fuss, 1990, p. 3
[60] Fuss, 1990, p. 3
[61] Fuss, 1990, p. 109

discursive production.[62] At the same time, a range of contemporary theorists will be used to point up the short-comings inherent in social and discursive constructionism, and to outline the claim that the development of a non-essentialist ontology is required in order to further analyses of the relation between subjectivity and matter. But, it is this relationship between matter and subjectivity in certain contemporary analyses that will be discussed prior to an account of the requirements to be met by a non-essentialist ontology.

Butler on Materiality

An important example of an attempt to reconceptualize the relation between matter and subjectivity is to be found in Butler's *Bodies That Matter*.[63] In this text, Butler distances herself from that position of social constructionist assigned to her after the publication of *Gender Trouble*.[64] Butler states that gender constructionism tends to see the social as acting upon a passive nature which, in terms of human sexual difference, is epitomized via the anatomical. This merely replicates masculinist notions: "Is sex to gender as feminine is to masculine?"[65] Rather, on Butler's account, 'sex' has a history, as does the concept of nature. She also argues that linguistic constructionism is caught in a double bind. If language is a cultural phenomenon which is separate from the physical world then, either it cannot gain access to 'sex' as a site upon which it acts and thereby demonstrates the limits of constructionism, or, 'sex' is a pre-discursive fiction which means that everything is already, only linguistic. To put it another way, either it is impossible to get to the body through language (or any other means), or a different kind of subject must be posited elsewhere (discourse must be granted a form of subjectivity in order to create the subject). Butler reduces the various strands of this problematic to one succinct question; 'in what ways is it possible to talk meaningfully about the body?'

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[62] It should be noted that Fuss stresses the limitations of social constructionism throughout her text which is intended as an appraisal of the political possibilities of the selective deployment of essentialism for feminism: "we need both to theorize essentialist spaces from which to speak and, simultaneously, to deconstruct these spaces". Fuss, 1990, p. 118

[63] Butler, 1993

[64] Butler, J. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, London

[65] Butler, 1993, p. 4

Her short answer is; 'through a reconsideration of the materiality of matter':

> What I would propose in place of these conceptions of construction is a return to the notion of matter, not as site or surface, but as *a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter*.[66]

The key words here are 'process', 'time' and 'effect' as these will be taken up in Chapters Four and Five as they are of great importance to the work of Whitehead. However, in this brief consideration of Butler's ideas it is the role of time within Butler's thoughts on materialization that shall be addressed first.

There seem to be two types of time operating within Butler's notion of materialization which she does not clearly indicate as separate. In the quotation given above she forefronts time as a general, historical mode in which matter sediments within the normative requirements which induce certain forms of matter and subjectivity. This normativity makes up the environment where all further subject formations occur. In this regard, time is not just an aggregation of separate moments of time for "the 'past' will be the accumulation and congealing of such 'moments' to the point of their indistinguishability."[67] This is a broad view of time. This is the time of discourse in its efficacity as the producer of normative effects; this is time as the macro configuration of the sedimentation of these effects and their continuing influence in materialization. But within such congealment there must also be those 'acts', those moments within the process that go to make up that process. As shall be seen later on in this thesis, the Whiteheadian questions at this point would be 'what is the ontological status of these acts?' 'Are they individuated within this process or are they false entities which are merely thought of as atomizing a more general flux?' Butler recognizes this distinction but does not make it explicit within the text. "Construction not only takes place *in* time, but is itself a temporal process"[68] whilst also maintaining that "an act is itself a repetition, a sedimentation, and congealment of the past which is precisely foreclosed in its act-like status."[69] So, there is a reconciliation to be made between the exterior temporal process which is exemplified in the inculcation of gendered subject positions (for

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[66] Butler, 1993, p. 9
[67] Butler, 1993, p. 245 (note 8 to p. 10)
[68] Butler, 1993, p. 10
[69] Butler, 1993, p. 244 (note 7 to p. 10)

example masculine, feminine), and the actual, individual renderings of these subject positions on different occasions by specific bodies and subjectivities. Butler approaches this reconciliation through her treatment of the relation of language and matter, and the operation of the name within this relation.

Butler wants it to be possible to talk about matter, to refer to things, and not be adrift in a sea of signification. As she stresses - matter matters; this is its meaning.[70] But can the ability to talk about things/matter be retained without resorting to a philosophical essentialism? The answer, according to Butler, is to rethink carefully what the relation of matter and language entails. "To posit a materiality outside of language, where that materiality is considered ontologically distinct from language, is to undermine the possibility that language might be able to indicate or correspond to that domain of radical alterity."[71]

So, to think that there is a gap between language and the world is to deny that language is of the world. Consequently this pushes the world into a separate realm, unobtainable via language, which ultimately reduces language to an ethereal non-entity and leads toward a form of ineffectual solecism. Thus Butler argues that: "language and materiality are not opposed, for language both is and refers to that which is material, and what is material never fully escapes from the process by which it is signified."[72]

This has narrowed the question down so that it now contains two main elements: 'what is the relation between these two kinds of matter?', and 'are they in fact different forms of matter?' Here, language is conceived as material, and matter is conceived as indicated by, but not reducible to, language. As Butler puts it: "language and materiality are never fully identical nor fully different."[73]

Thus, there are five main issues that are clarified within *Bodies That Matter*. These

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[70] "to know the significance of something is to know how and why it matters, where 'to matter' means at once 'to materialize' and 'to mean'." Butler, 1993, p. 32
[71] Butler, 1993, p. 68
[72] Butler, 1993, p. 68
[73] Butler, 1993, p. 69

are:

1) The questioning of the sex/gender binary as being helpful in accounting for the relation between the natural and the cultural, and the consequent need for a reappraisal of the status of matter.

2) The description of matter as a result of a process of materialization.

3) The importance of the concept of time (and by implication that of space) as part of such a process.

4) The need to theorise language (or the linguistic) as utterly material.

5) The need to engage at a philosophical level with the concepts of matter and subjectivity. For, as has Butler has shown, contemporary analyses of their inter-relation both rely upon and invoke a theoretical field which has its own history, stretching back to Aristotle. As such, this thesis will take the opportunity to review the philosophical concepts and positions which need to be re-oriented in order to develop more telling analyses of the relation between matter and subjectivity.

However, Butler's work has not been unanimously accepted. What now follows is a consideration of certain critiques of her work. This discussion is intended not as a dismissal of Butler's ideas but as a further consolidation and focussing of the themes and concerns of this thesis.

Critiques of Butler

One of the recurrent themes of recent critiques of Butler's writings is that of 'anthropocentrism': "it is precisely the focus on materialisation (rather than on 'substance,' for example...) that critics argue has served to confine Butler's analysis of matter only to an account of *human* materiality."[74]

This short statement contains three important elements of this thesis. These are:
1) The consideration of various attempts (Spinoza, Whitehead, Deleuze) to provide an account of the process through which the items of the universe gain their materiality. This is similar to Butler's concerns as evident in her usage of the term

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[74] Fraser, 2002, p. 613

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'materialisation'.

2) The role of 'substance' in such theories. Is it possible to theorise a general concept of a unique substance of which the present items of the universe are individual modifications? (Spinoza). Or, should the items of matter be the starting point of analysis from which can be drawn out a general theory of the process by which such individualities come to be and to be passed over? (Whitehead).

3) Given that analyses of the relations between matter and subjectivity must in some way be interested in the 'human realm' and the machinations of power and language therein, is it possible to give an account of the processual character of reality which is not predicated upon the 'human' as a privileged aspect of such a theory? (Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze).

A further consideration of a range of analyses of Butler's work will serve to clarify how these issues can be situated within current debates on materiality.

One of the most sustained analyses of both Butler's work and the ideas surrounding the notions of matter, corporeality, power, and subjectivity is to be found in Kirby's *Telling Flesh*.[75] Like Butler, Kirby is striving to think another way through the nature/culture dichotomy with all its accompanying philosophical baggage. "I am critical of an empiricism that perceives data as the raw and unmediated nature of the world. However, I am just as critical of postmodern correctives that regard the apparent evidence of nature as the actual representation of culture."[76]

As shall be seen in Chapter Three, Whitehead also vehemently argues against the philosophical and scientific over-reliance upon sense-perception: "My quarrel with modern Epistemology concerns its exclusive stress upon sense-perception for the provision of data respecting Nature."[77] Whitehead, therefore, also attempts to establish a new way of considering 'nature' without positing it as the neutral provider of data for interpretation or assimilation by human subjects.

To return to the details of Kirby's account; one of the main criticisms that she makes

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[75] Kirby, V. 1997. *Telling Flesh. The Substance of the Corporeal*, Routledge, New York and London. See also, Kirby. V. 1999. 'Human Nature' in *Australian Feminist Studies*, Vol 14. No. 29, 1999, pp. 19-29

[76] Kirby, 1997, p. 2

[77] Whitehead, A. N. 1938. *Modes Of Thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 182

of Butler is that in her attempt to describe how the materiality of signification must be re-thought, in order to explain the process of materialisation, there is a latent rendering of the signifier solely in terms of psychoanalysis. "[This]...reliance upon a psychoanalytic understanding of the sign, or a reading of 'the discursive' that subordinates itself to an unproblematized category of 'the social,' returns us to the very nature/culture, mind/body divisions that are so politically insidious."[78]

In opposition to such a standpoint, Kirby wishes to address certain issues which may offer a way out of such difficulties. For example, she states that "researchers stop short of asking how it is that the cultural context that surrounds a body can also come to inhabit it."[79] She also asks: "is it absurd to assume, that if there is no outside textuality, then the differential of language is articulate in/as blood, cells, breathing, and so on?"[80] It is one major contention of this thesis that whilst Kirby is correct in pointing out the comparative lack of interest in such notions, it is not correct to say that they have always been neglected. Chapter Two, on Spinoza, will outline how he viewed bodies as intimately constituted through their inter-relation with their environment. Secondly, Chapters Four and Five will discuss the various elements that go to make up Whitehead's elaboration of exactly how all individual entities are constituted formally by elements of their environment. Finally, Chapter Eight will examine the place of language in a theory which views individual materiality as the expression of the complex inter-relation of a level of being which is not restricted merely to the 'human' but which is manifest throughout all incidents of individuation.

To return to contemporary analyses, further critiques of Butler are to be found in Cheah's review[81] of Butler's *Bodies That Matter* and Grosz's *Volatile Bodies*,[82] which points up the pressing political implications involved in contemporary discussions of matter, nature and culture:

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[78] Kirby, 1997, p. 5. This also makes Butler susceptible to Latour's critique of Giddens and social theory in general, as outlined above.

[79] Kirby, 1997, p. 4

[80] Kirby, 1997, p. 4

[81] Cheah, P. 1996. 'Mattering' in *Diacritics*, 1996, Volume 26.1 , pp. 108-139

[82] Grosz, E. 1994. *Volatile Bodies. Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis

> [The]..obsessive pushing away of nature may well constitute an acknowledgement-in-
> disavowal that humans may be natural creatures after all. Furthermore, as a
> theoretical position, antinaturalism itself is produced by the polemical energy that
> strives to keep nature at bay....Consequently, antinaturalism works with a
> conventional philosophical definition of nature....the concepts of 'nature' and 'the
> given' are, in fact, neuralgic points, the contested sites around which any theory of
> political transformation is organized.[83]

So, it is the refusal to take on the 'natural' as a contested term, which is not necessarily explainable solely in relation or opposition to the cultural, that limits cultural constructionist critiques to analyses that end up as restatements of an entrenched philosophical position. As a result, it is precisely the questioning and re-thinking of the philosophical concepts that inform the distinctions between nature/culture, mind/body etc, that provides the political animus to the work of Kirby, Cheah etc. and also to this thesis. (Chapters Four, Five and Seven will involve an analysis of the status of the 'given' as that which does not comprise a ground for ontology but can still operate as an element within a non-essentialist ontology).

One of the main philosophical concepts that Cheah identifies as inherent in previous discussions of the nature/culture axis, is that of the distinction between matter and form. Thus, most analyses have concentrated on how it is possible for matter, for nature, to be experienced, known or understood. As shall be seen in Chapter Three, Whitehead construes this position as one deriving from Aristotle whose insistence upon the subject-predicate axis as the grounding of all thought, entails that the form/matter distinction constantly replicates a position where intelligibility is only made possible through the positing of a 'primary substance'.[84] Thus intelligibility and any consequent (human) subjectivity presupposes an external, prior, and in some way more basic, substance. Cheah thereby critiques this mechanistic vision in which the body, indeed all bodies, are part of an external nature and explainable solely in terms of the laws of external causation.

On Cheah's account, Butler re-reads Aristotle in a more hopeful manner than that of Whitehead. "In her syncretization of Foucault/Aristotle, matter is invested with dynamism and said to be open to contestation only because the matter concerned

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[83] Cheah, 1996, p. 108

[84] See, for example, Whitehead, A. N. 1964. *The Concept Of Nature*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 16-25

is the product of sociohistorical forms of power, that is, *of the human realm.*"[85] By identifying how Butler situates changing forms of matter only in the 'human realm', Cheah, like Kirby, uncovers the anthropocentric aspect of Butler's account. This leads to an assigning of a primary dynamism to the cultural, at the expense of the depth of the materiality of matter. Thus, Butler's commentary is reduced to describing the surface of bodies rather than their 'weightiness': "the materiality of the body now designates its contours of intelligibility".[86] Cheah identifies this position as one ultimately *within* rather than challenging established philosophical discourse. "The specter of Kantianism returns precisely because materiality becomes present, is given body, materializes only in being named or signified in language, which cannot quite avoid the role of being an epistemic grid of sorts."[87] There is, therefore, a recourse to the dualistic approach which is more concerned with explaining the significance of matter or nature for human subjectivity rather than asking the question of 'what is the significance of matter for itself'? "What is never once posed in Butler's debate...is the possibility that matter could have a dynamism that is neither the negativity of the unsymbolizable nor reducible to a function of productive form."[88] Here, there is evidence of a shift from a critique of Butler to the need for a theoretical re-assessment along ontological lines. "Philosophically speaking we need an account of the political agency of bodies that no longer respects the form/matter or nature/culture distinctions."[89] It is hoped that this thesis will go some way to offering a method for such a re-thinking.

So, for example, as Wilson[90] argues, the line of thought to be taken is as follows: with regard to matter, that which is required is a re-appraisal of its status considered neither as a universal nor as something which is limited to the human, or based upon human concerns. Any definition of humanness, if such a thing is desired, must proceed from a wider understanding of the activity of matter, and not be predicated upon the agency of humans. Her provocative conclusion is one which shall be built

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[85] Cheah, 1996, p. 113
[86] Cheah, 1996, p. 114
[87] Cheah, 1996, pp. 117-8
[88] Cheah, p. 119
[89] Cheah, p. 121
[90] Wilson, E. A. 1999. 'Introduction: Somatic Compliance - Feminism Biology and Science' in *Australian Feminist Studies*, Vol 14, No. 29, 1999

upon throughout this thesis: "Matter (human, non-human, living, technological) does not simply *have* the capacity to convert, it *is* the capacity to convert. All matter wanders."[91]

And, briefly, this is the scheme by which this thesis will attempt to further such a re-thinking:

The need to give an account of items of matter inherently inter-related and yet part of a wider scheme, without privileging the position of the human mind or body (Spinoza).

The need to account for the utter materiality and facticity of items of matter within a more general ontological position which can also describe the correlate concepts of space and time. (Whitehead)

The need to give an account of the communicability of items of matter in terms of the 'linguistic', and of power relations. In order to avoid the philosophical assumptions described above, such an account must explain such notions not in terms of any philosophical foundationality but in terms of difference. (Deleuze)

There is one more line of inquiry to be made before concluding this section, and that is a review of recent moves made within social theory, to establish a non-essentialist ontology.

Developing a Non-essentialist Ontology

As with Kirby and Cheah, Sandford[92] locates Butler's difficulties in rendering the sex/gender divide as an effect of solely linguistic or cultural practices. "If sex is only *known* through its linguistic/cultural articulation as gender, it must be, in itself, unknowable."[93] Thus, for Butler "the sex/gender divide breaks down through its own epistemic absurdity."[94] However, it is this emphasis on the *how* 'sex' is known that

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[91] Wilson, 1999, p. 16
[92] Sandford, S. 1999. 'Contingent Ontologies. Sex, gender and 'woman' in Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler', in *Radical Philosophy*, September/October 1999, pp. 18-29
[93] Sandford, 1999, p. 23
[94] Sandford, 1999, p. 23

situates Butler strictly within an epistemological framework herself, thereby contributing to her reluctance to address the ontological: "Butler takes this *epistemological* thesis..to dissolve the validity of *any* possible *ontological* claim".[95] Sandford thereby argues that Butler is indeed hostile to ontology, as "an ontological understanding of gender identity is taken to be a falsely essentializing one".[96]

This is not to suggest that Sandford wishes to reinstate traditional ontology within contemporary theory. However, Sandford's position does indicate the continuing relevance, indeed, lure, of ontology as a method for dealing with the materiality of matter which does not reduce itself to the proofs, claims, and problems of epistemology. Sandford sees de Beauvoir as offering a way into re-thinking the materiality of matter through ontology but *only insofar as* this ontology is not essentialist. That is to say, de Beauvoir is prepared to address 'facts', 'science' and 'biology' but this, in itself, does not reduce her analysis to an essentialist one. "The...being-always-already-interpreted of 'the facts of biology' does not, for de Beauvoir, entail the dissolution of their ontological status, and this is because hers is precisely an *existential* - that is, a non-essentialist - *ontology*."[97] However, Sandford's emphasis on the existentialism of de Beauvoir, will not be taken up by this thesis. Instead, it will be argued that there is evidence, in the work of other contemporary writers, of an alternative approach to ontology.

For example, Kerin,[98] again in opposition to Butler, states: "that the question of ontology must continually be raised in order to demonstrate that matter exists in multiple modalities."[99] One of Kerin's objections to Butler's account is that it presumes that natural science exists as one unique entity which can be theorised as such. Rather, Kerin argues that: "it is necessary to think the singularity of various natural sciences as partly responsive to the character of the matter investigated."[100] In the meantime, another reason why Kerin states that multiple

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[95] Sandford, 1999, p. 24
[96] Sandford, 1999, p. 20
[97] Sandford, 1999, p. 24
[98] Kerin, J. 1999. 'The Matter at Hand: Butler, Ontology and the Natural Sciences' in *Australian Feminist Studies*, Vol 14, No. 29, 1999, pp. 91-104
[99] Kerin, 1999, p. 91
[100] Kerin, 1999, p. 91

modalities of matter should be considered is to counter a positioning of a pre-discursive lump of substance as the heavy, pre-discursive guarantor of facticity. "At the very least, a consideration of the differences between forms of matter would call into question the viability of any general approach to matter insofar as pre-discursive matter could not be assumed to be an undivided entity."[101]

The force of this question is vital to this thesis. It will be a recurrent theme as to whether it is possible to theorise a version of substance or materiality which manages to express individual complexity and real difference whilst at the same time providing a genuine ontology which is able to account for all being. A further aspect of this question is whether it is possible to provide a theory of being which does not subsume all being into one explanatory whole (Nature or God, for example). In one sense, the answer to this question will be found in the extent to which the thesis is able to rebut Badiou's charge that Deleuze ultimately replicates Plato's conception of the 'One' rather than reversing it.[102] But it will also be found in discussions of whether Spinoza is fully able to account for the individuality of his modes and the extent to which Whitehead's notion of eternal objects operate as a separate form of reality and thereby replicate a form of neo-Platonism. These questions will be taken up in Chapters Four, Five, Seven and Eight. So: " the task is to find ways of thinking in terms of ontology that do not henceforth operate as a pre-given ground."[103]

The direct relevance of a philosophical re-description of how items of matter communicate can also be found in Jonson's[104] unravelling of some of the theoretical presumptions surrounding current conceptualizations of DNA, or genes. Jonson argues that DNA and genes are often granted the status of basic codes which have written in them the formulae which dictate the process of life. Jonson maintains that on such an approach: "digitally encoded information - is ontologised as life's

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[101] Kerin, 1999, p. 93

[102] "Deleuzianism is fundamentally a Platonism with a different accentuation." Badiou, A. 2000. *Deleuze. The Clamor of Being*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, p. 26

[103] Kerin, 1999, p. 101

[104] Jonson, A. 1999. 'Still Platonic After All These Years: Artificial Life and Form/Matter Dualism' in *Australian Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 29, 1999, pp. 47-61

discarnate essence and origin."[105]   Jonson's aim is to demonstrate that such a theory is simply another rendition of Platonism, in that matter, as it appears and is experienced, is reduced to a mere manifestation of the true reality which resides in the pure origin of DNA or genes: "matter is epistemologically as well as ontologically extraneous to life, and may be unproblematically jettisoned from purview."[106]   Behind such a theory lies a specific concept of causation, namely, that of an irreversible, teleological and external causation where "information flows unidirectionally from the genome to the proteins and enzymes, the material molecules which comprise the phenotype, or body, of the organism"[107].   The resultant conception is one in which "somatic factors...and by extension the body *in toto*, are constructed as passive, inert and constitutively devoid of information."[108]

Within a similar, and yet distinct, line of inquiry, Kember also addresses the relationship between subjectivity, technology, materiality and life with especial reference to the political implications of contemporary figurations of such linkages.[109]   In her critique of the conceptual assumptions of many of the debates over Artificial Life, Kember also calls for a re-engagement with, and a re-conceptualization of, biology and the biological. "This...would seem to indicate the need for a renewed and enhanced feminist engagement with biology which recognizes that biology itself is a complex and not a unified field."[110]   But, like Jonson, Kember is critical of those such as Langton who envisage information as the key to artificial life; a premise founded on the analogy of DNA as the ultimate code which explains all biological life. "At the heart of Alife is the concept of life as information, and this is derived from molecular biology's notions of the genetic code, and its fetishization of the gene as the fundamental unit of life."[111]   Utilising the work

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[105] Jonson, 1999, p. 49

[106] Jonson, 1999, p. 49

[107] Jonson, 1999, p. 50

[108] Jonson, 1999, p. 50

[109] Kember, S. 1998. *Virtual Anxiety. Photography, new technologies and subjectivity*, Manchester University Press, Manchester. Kember, S. 2000. 'Get Alife: Cyberfeminism and the politics of artificial life' in Cutting Edge, The Women's Research Group (ed.) 2000. *Digital Desires. Language, Identity and New Technologies*, I.B. Tauris and Co., London. Kember, S. 2002. 'Reinventing cyberfeminism: cyberfeminism and the new biology', in *Economy and Society*, Volume 31, Number 4, November 2002: 626-641. Kember, S. 2003. *Cyberfeminism and Artificial Life*, Routledge, London and New York

[110] Kember, 2002, p. 628

[111] Kember, 2002, p. 630

of Kerin, Kirby and Barad,[112] Kember has also advocated a reappraisal of ontology: "the question of ontology has to be raised in order to recognise that matter exists in multiple forms."[113] Moreover, Kember's analyses would seem to further the argument that not only is such an ontology needed but that Whitehead's philosophy is directly relevant to such an undertaking.[114] For, in a discussion of the process of materialization, she states that it might be possible to develop "views [that] may reintegrate the body, experience and emotion into an inevitably less computable concept of the organism."[115] As shall be seen throughout Chapters Three, Four and Five, this could be seen as a summary of the task that Whitehead sets himself in developing his 'philosophy of organism'.

For example, Chapter Three will discuss how Whitehead refuses the notion of the gene as an external causal agent: "no *a priori* argument as to the inheritance of characters can be drawn from the mere doctrine of genes."[116] Chapters Four and Five will discuss how Whitehead also offers a way of thinking about the inter-communication of items of matter, which does not predicate a deferred origin as that which explicates contemporary reality.

A further reappraisal of the relation of ontology to subjectivity and matter is to be found in the work of Fraser.[117] She argues that in many accounts of gender "the 'naturalness' of the biological body is hardly challenged"[118] so that the 'cultural' body becomes the object of study for the social sciences and the 'biological' becomes the concern of the natural sciences. Fraser argues that such divisions are not only unhelpful but replicate a way of thinking which itself is historical (and gendered) in that they reproduce the subject/object, active/passive binaries of modern Western thought. By arguing that science essentialises the body and refusing to engage with such notions, there is the danger of essentialising the distinction between sex

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[112] A fuller discussion of the work of Barad follows shortly.

[113] Kember, 2003, p. 185

[114] In *Germinal Life* Ansell-Pearson also points out how Deleuze's 'biophilosophy' attempts to avoid Darwinian or linear conceptions of DNA. See, Ansell-Pearson, K. 1999. *Germinal Life. The difference and repetition of Deleuze*, Routledge, London and New York

[115] Kember, 2000, p. 46

[116] Whitehead, 1938, p. 190

[117] Fraser, 2002

[118] Fraser, 2002, p. 610

and gender thereby leaving the social sciences with a limited field of analysis. There is a need to "address directly...feminism's encounter with 'essentialism'".[119] And in order to accomplish this it will be necessary to "engage with the central concepts - **matter, ontology, and substance** - which are often understood to underpin that stubborn notion."[120] It is precisely these three concepts which provide the theoretical stanchions for this thesis and which lead to the concentration on the works of Spinoza (substance), Whitehead (ontology and matter) and Deleuze (ontology, matter and language). This is not to say that the first moves towards such analyses have not already been made, as is clear from the review given above; and it is within the context of these writers' work that this finds its initial orientation. However, before moving on to consider the methodological issues within this thesis, one further writer will be added to this review.

Barad[121] builds on Bohr's work in quantum mechanics to argue that objects and subjects are not separate but must be conceived of in terms of their "intra-action".[122] She also emphasizes the need to theorise "materiality in a way that does not presume a fixed *a priori* ontological difference between animate and inanimate matter".[123] Much of Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six will be given over to elaborating the philosophical moves that Whitehead makes to provide a theory which fits such criteria. Further, it will be necessary for Whitehead "to address not just how the contours or surface of bodies come to matter"[124] (as Butler seems to do) but also to describe how "'even the very atoms that make up the biological body come to matter'".[125] That is to say, a non-essentialist ontology must not only account for the external contact of items of matter with each other (as Newton has already provided one theory for this);[126] it must also account for how each entity is constituted by other entities. It will be argued that Whitehead fulfils such requisites, namely, to allow for a description of "the ability of molecules, cells, and tissues to

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[119] Fraser, 2002, p. 611
[120] Fraser, 2002, p. 611. Emphasis added
[121] Barad, K. 1998. 'Getting Real: Technoscientific Practices and the Materialization of Reality' in *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, Volume 10, Number 2, 1998: 87-128.
[122] Barad, 1998, p. 99
[123] Barad, 1998, p. 109
[124] Fraser, 2002, p. 617
[125] Barad, cited in Fraser, 2002, p. 617
[126] This will be discussed more fully in Chapter Three

recognise each other and themselves"[127] and the "'ontological there-ness [of] phenomena in the process of becoming'".[128] Crucially, however, in such descriptions it will be necessary to avoid predicating a fixed ground or given upon which such becomings are based.

Yet, it will also be argued that it is not enough to rely on the work of Whitehead alone. For, as will be discussed in Chapter Six, his analysis of the role of language within such an ontology is deficient. So, it is another contention of this thesis that Deleuze's work on language/the linguistic, and expression, is a contemporary extension of Whitehead's thought which is able to take account of more recent moves with regard to the role of language and discourse in relation to subjectivity and matter.

7 The range of theories and depth of philosophical analysis that are evident in the texts of the writers reviewed in this section have one final consequence for the procedure of this thesis. In order to produce the fullest account of the relationship between matter and subjectivity, it will be necessary to engage, in detail, with the philosophical positions which could inform the re-engagement with ontology. Hence the main body of this thesis will be taken up with some close textual analysis of the work of Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze.

Methodology

In terms of methodological procedure, when researching a thesis on a non-essentialist ontology in the work of Whitehead and Deleuze, it is tempting to construe the concept of ontology as the object of some kind of historical study. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault[129] identifies various historical approaches which could be adopted; these are outlined below, in terms of their relevance to this thesis.

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[127] Fraser, 2002, p. 620
[128] Barad, cited in Fraser, 2002, p. 616
[129] Foucault, M. 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Tavistock, London, pp. 3-17

To undertake such a comparison of different conceptions of ontology, in the usual historical fashion, would be to indulge in a version of the history of ideas or at least the history of philosophy. Such an analysis could take one of several paths. One would be that of continuity; this would mean initiating an analysis which sought to render various texts on ontology as a more or less coherent series or chain. It would demonstrate how ideas about ontology developed in response to earlier works by either building on them, refining them, or attempting to refute them. A major problem with such an approach is that it would presuppose the existence of the phenomenon under investigation, or at least its 'representation' in ideas. Ontology itself would be ascribed an ontological status prior to any scrutiny of it within the thesis.

A second and seemingly opposed strategy would be to stress the discontinuity involved in a chronologically sequential series of texts. This line of argument would stress that what was meant by 'ontology' in an earlier text is, in fact, radically different from that which is meant by 'ontology' in a later text. This approach would perhaps maintain that it is impossible to state what exactly was 'meant' by ontology in any temporally distant text. The reasons given would stress the historical particularity of each era. This entails the view that past epochs had their own cultural specificity, language and modes of thought which have now been so transformed that they can no longer be uncovered, accessed or grasped in their original meaningfulness.

Neither of these approaches have been adopted within this thesis, for the following reasons. Foucault states that both of these approaches share a common error. "In fact, the same problems are being posed in either case, but they have provoked opposite effects on the surface. These problems may be summed up in a word; the questioning of the *document*."[130] Foucault is warning against the over-reliance upon texts as self-sufficient entities which either, within themselves, contain truth or truths about what was thought in the past or, between themselves, mark the development of truth or truths over time. Whilst this thesis does not directly adopt Foucault's twin

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[130] Foucault, 1972, p. 6

methods of 'archaeology' and 'genealogy',[131] it does recognise the force of his criticisms of traditional historical approaches as well as the usefulness of his definitions. In one sense genealogy represents the 'how' and why' of analysis but only after having established an archaeological site which indicates the 'where'. However this 'where' is not the usual delimitation of a historical or academic field and does not search for that which motivates the texts being scrutinised. Such an approach does not attempt to identify what is *really* meant, "it does not seek another, better-hidden discourse".[132]

So, for example, in Chapter Two of this thesis when Spinoza's *Ethics*[133] is analysed, it is not approached as if it harbours any secret truths which need to be uncovered, nor will his text be reassessed in terms of the traditional philosophical canon. By focussing on the relation of ontology, subjectivity and matter it should be possible to be aware that what is said by Spinoza about these matters is no more than what is said in the text. Indeed, one main purpose of this analysis of Spinoza is to establish a common field within which both Whitehead and Deleuze operate, as they both make many references to his work. In Foucauldian terms, ontology will function as a way of establishing a problematic as to how matter and subjectivity have been conceptualised.[134]

Before leaving Foucault there is a final point worth making. This thesis involves

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[131] In 1983 Foucualt gave a lecture entitled 'The Culture of the Self' at Berkeley in which he stated "I have never stopped doing archaeology. I have never stopped doing genealogy. Genealogy defines the target and the finality of the work and archaeology indicates the field with which I deal in order to make a genealogy." Cited in Mahon, M. 1992. *Foucault's Nietzschean Genealogy*, SUNY, Albany, note 93, p.105

[132] Foucault, M. 1972, p. 139

[133] Spinoza, B. de, 1955. *The Ethics*, in, *On The Improvement Of The Understanding. The Ethics. Correspondence* (translated by Elwes, R.), Dover Publications, New York. Part I. Prop. XI. Note. (p. 53). I have used this translation for all but one of the references from *The Ethics* and *Correspondences* contained in this thesis. At points I have consulted another translation of *The Ethics* which is to be found in: Spinoza, B. 1992. *The Ethics. Treatise On The Emendation Of The Intellect. Selected Letters*, Hackett Publishing, Indianapolis. I have done this to confirm or to clarify certain issues in my own mind where the Elwes translation seemed unclear.
I have followed the convention of using Spinoza's own method for referencing *The Ethics* namely, indicating which Part of The Ethics is being referred to (Part I to Part V). This is followed by the Proposition, Axiom, Definition, Corollary, Note or Proof. I have then indicated the page number, in brackets, which refers to the Elwes edition. The *Correspondence* is referenced in Latin numerals. The first numeral refers to the ordering offered in the Elwes edition, the second to that of the Van Vloten edition as cited by Elwes (see, Spinoza, 1955, p. 275).

[134] See Foucault, M. 1992, *The Use of Pleasure. The History of Sexuality Volume 2*, Penguin, London, pp 8-13

some detailed analyses of certain elements of both Whitehead and Deleuze's texts. Again, the aim of such passages is not to uncover their 'truthfulness' by unearthing a secret meaning. The purpose is to render more plainly the relations of subjectivity and matter and to ontology. This attempt relies upon a distinction Foucualt makes between the interpreter and the interpretation:

> Whilst the interpreter must descend, like an excavator, the movement of interpretation, in contrast, rises higher and higher providing an overview which leaves depth spread out below, more and more visible; and depth is now reconstituted as a totally superficial secret.[135]

The method used to make such interpretations will follow a more Deleuzean line, insofar as he states that: "a philosophical theory is an elaborately developed question, and nothing else; by itself and in itself it is not the resolution to a problem".[136] Certain elements of a certain set of texts must be rendered in a specific way to ally them to the concerns of this dissertation. Each of the writers addressed, namely Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze will be approached in terms of outlining the 'elaborately developed question' that they are asking and this will then be tied in with the general questions of this thesis as outlined earlier in this chapter. This approach will enable the thesis to gauge not only the force of each question being asked but also the extent to which one writer is able to respond to, or develop more elaborately, the questions posed by the others. In this sense, the broad methodological procedure of the thesis could be said to be a comparative textual analysis. Before concluding this chapter with a general literature review, it is necessary to explain in more detail the reasons why Whitehead has been chosen as the main constituent of this thesis.

Contemporary References to Whitehead

Within recent years there has been a marked growth in interest (in terms of references at least) in Whitehead's philosophy. These mainly brief allusions

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[135] Foucualt, M. 1967, 'Nietzsche, Freud, Marx' in *Nietzsche*, Royaumont, Paris, pp 186-7 (My translation)

[136] Deleuze, G. 1991. *Empiricism and Subjectivity. An Essay On Hume's Theory Of Human Nature*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 106

indicate the relevance of his work to contemporary issues such as the relationship between biology, science and philosophical conceptions of matter, objects and subjectivity. For example, Haraway has stated that: "Alfred North Whitehead was a great influence on me".[137] Also, in her first published work (1976)[138] Haraway traces the importance of Whitehead for Needham (a developmental biologist) who in turn was one major factor in the development of her own thought.[139] Since then, in a discussion of what she terms "gene fetishism"[140] Haraway, critiques the widespread understanding of the gene as the ultimate determinant of all forms of life. In doing so, she utilises an important term, coined by Whitehead: "The third strand in my helical spiral of gene fetishism is spun out of what Whitehead called the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness'[141]."[142]

Latour also makes reference to Whitehead in his work. For example: "I'd like to establish an entirely different model for the relations between humans and nonhumans by borrowing a term from Alfred North Whitehead, the notion of *proposition*".[143] Also: "Here, I am politicizing the critique made by Whitehead of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities".[144] The first statement makes direct allusion to Whitehead's specific understanding of the term 'propositions' which will be taken up in Chapter Six. The second quotation points to the need not to accept Whitehead simply at face value. That is, Latour warns against merely seeing Whitehead's philosophy as 'the solution' to certain problems. There is a need 'to politicize' Whitehead: for the purposes of this thesis, there is a need to re-figure Whitehead's texts so that they might be useful for contemporary analysis. This is one of the reasons why Deleuze is also to be addressed as a counter-

[137] Haraway, D. 2000. *How Like A Leaf*, Routledge, London, p. 21.

[138] Haraway, D. 1976. *Crystals, Fabrics, and Fields. Metaphors of Organicism in Twentieth-Century Developmental Biology*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London

[139] For example: "Whitehead is an important philosopher for Needham's conception of his task. His organic materialism emphasized the primacy of organism over atom." Haraway, 1976, p. 45

[140] Haraway, D. 1997. *Modest_Witness@Second_Millenium.FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™ Feminism and Technoscience*, Routledge, London, p. 142, and pp. 141-148 passim

> [141] Whitehead's defines the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness' as "the accidental error of mistaking the abstract for the concrete." Whitehead, A. N. 1933. *Science and the Modern World*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 64.

[142] Haraway, 1997, p. 146

[143] Latour, B. 1999a, p. 141.

[144] Latour, B. 1999b. *Politiques de la nature. Comment faire entrer les sciences en démocratie*, Éditions La Découverte, Paris, p. 315 (*n.* 49 which refers to p. 69) [My translation].

balance to the danger of treating Whitehead as a self-explanatory answer to certain theoretical questions.

As early as 1979, Stengers stated (in an article co-written with Prigogine and republished in 1997) that: "We have found inspiration from a certain number of philosophers...Gilles Deleuze...and Whitehead."[145] This is perhaps the first statement to indicate the co-relevance of Whitehead and Deleuze that will be explored throughout this thesis. Stengers and Prigogine[146] writing together again, in 1984, commented on how Whitehead demonstrates "the connection between a philosophy of *relation*...and a philosophy of *innovating becoming*."[147] These ideas will be taken up in Chapters Four and Five. More recently, Stengers, in the introductory essay to a collection of articles on Whitehead,[148] *has* focussed upon a more detailed examination of Whitehead's thought and once again this is notable for the links that it makes with Deleuze. Reviewing Deleuze, and Deleuze and Guattari's, various discussions of Whitehead, Stengers states that:

> I will attempt to show how the creation of concepts, the tracing of the plane of immanence, the invention of conceptual personae [all notions that derive from Deleuze or Deleuze and Guattari] provide the most direct access to Whitehead's philosophical system.[149]

These accounts[150] provide this thesis with an initial orientation in terms of the need for a sustained analysis of Whitehead and the close inter-relation of his work with that of Deleuze which will be taken up in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine.

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[145] Stengers, I. 1997. *Power and Invention. Situating Science*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, p. 55

[146] Prigogine, I. and Stengers, I. 1984. *Order Out Of Chaos. Man's New Dialogue With Nature*, Heinemann, London

[147] Prigogine and Stengers, 1984, p. 95

[148] Stengers, I. 1994 'Introduction' in *L'Effet Whitehead*, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, pp.7-26

[149] Stengers, 1994, p.10 [My translation]. Stengers has also published, in late 2002, a whole text devoted to Whitehead which has not been translated from the original French. Given that the majority of this thesis was completed before this publication and it has, unfortunately, not been possible to use this text as a resource for this thesis.

[150] There are other interesting recent references to Whitehead, such as: "There are...powerful resonances, I have belatedly realized, with Whitehead's (1929) philosophy of the organism". Michael, M. 2000. *Reconnecting Culture, Technology and Nature*, Routledge, London, p. 149; and: "Fatigue cannot be explained away as the expression of particular political interests. It exists, as Whitehead would say, as a stubborn fact." Barry, A. 2002. 'The anti-political economy' in *Economy and Society*, Volume 31, Number 2, May 2002, p. 276. See also, Barry, A. 2001. *Political Machines. Governing A Technological Society*, Athlone, London, p. 58

Before concluding this section on the evident influence of Whitehead on certain contemporary writers, it is necessary to comment upon one who does not fit in so easily to the trajectory outlined up to this point. "Whitehead...provides a much stronger metaphysical basis for the kind of materialist dialectical understanding of spatio-temporality for which I am searching."[151] This statement by Harvey is shortly followed by another which qualifies the force of the previous endorsement: "Unfortunately, his lack of interest in the dialectical tradition *per se*...denied him some of the insights that Leibniz provides."[152] Thus, although Harvey's explicit consideration of Whitehead's work is longer than that most,[153] his resolute attachment to dialectics entails that his analysis ultimately departs from Whitehead's attempts to render a philosophical position which avoids positing the negative as constitutive.

The preceding, and brief, review of the citations of Whitehead is intended to serve two purposes. Firstly, it seems clear that the number of references to Whitehead, and yet the lack of a fully developed account of his work within the realm of contemporary analyses of the social, would suggest the need for such a sustained analysis. Whitehead has been 'under-theorised'; this thesis is intended as an initial move to correct this situation. Secondly, it is clear from these citations and from the theorists discussed earlier on in this chapter, that Whitehead is already being utilised as a resource by social theorists. This thesis is presented as an opportunity to provide a sustained examination of his relevance, which others have already noted. Before proceeding to this, however, it is still necessary to locate the work of Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze in relation to their major commentators. This discussion will comprise the final section of this introductory chapter.

Literature Review

The analysis of Spinoza, in the following chapter, stands as a delineation of the

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[151] Harvey, D. 1996. *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*, Blackwell, Oxford, p. 256.
[152] Harvey, 1996, p. 256.
[153] Harvey, 1996, pp. 50-5, pp.73-5, pp. 256-268

primary questions and problems that accompany the development of a non-essentialist ontology. It will not, however, be argued that Spinoza 'discovered' such an ontology. This is one reason why Wolfson's[154] detailed account of the influence of medieval and scholastic thought upon Spinoza has been used as the main secondary text in the reading of the *Ethics*.[155] This analysis of Spinoza will also serve as a point of comparison between Whitehead and Deleuze, outside of their own texts, in that both attempt to deal with the problems associated with Spinoza's philosophy. These comparisons will run throughout the remainder of the thesis.

Following this analysis of Spinoza, the following four chapters, which make up the bulk of this thesis, are concerned with outlining the work of Whitehead. The main text to be used is *Process and Reality,*[156] although references will be made to some of his other texts in order to develop or clarify his ideas. One aim of these chapters is to introduce the work of Whitehead to social theory. For, although 1,868 articles, edited collections and books had been written on Whitehead by 1977,[157] none of these addresses his importance for analyses of the social, and the trend continues to this day. Until now, there seem to have been three approaches to analyses of Whitehead: attempts to outline Whitehead's philosophy as a totality; discussions of aspects of Whitehead's work; comparisons of Whitehead with other writers.

Holistic interpretations of Whitehead's work are to be found in writers such as, Burgers,[158] Emmet,[159] Hartsthorne,[160] Kline,[161] Leclerc,[162] Lowe,[163] Lucas,[164] Pols,[165]

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[154] Wolfson, H. 1962. *The Philosophy of Spinoza. Unfolding the Latent Processes of His Reason*, Harvard University Press, London. The more 'traditional' Anglo-American analyses of Hampshire, S. 1988. *Spinoza. An Introduction to His Philosophical Thought*, Penguin, London, and Wilson, M. 1996. 'Spinoza's theory of knowledge' in Garrett, D. 1996. *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 89-141, have not been ignored but have not been viewed as relevant to the arguments of this thesis.

[155] Spinoza, 1955

[156] Whitehead, A. N. 1978. *Process and Reality. An Essay In Cosmology*. (Gifford Lectures of 1927-8). Corrected edition (eds. Griffin, D. and Sherburne, D.), The Free Press, New York, p. xii. This edition has been used as it corrects the numerous errors of previous ones. As such, much of the text contains correction, additions, notes, etc. which are marked by various insertions in the text such as *. As a matter of course, these have not been included within citations from this text.

[157] See, Woodbridge, B. 1977. *Alfred North Whitehead: A primary-secondary bibliography*, Philosophy Documentation Center, Ohio

[158] Burgers, J. 1965. *Experience and conceptual Activity. A Philosophical Essay Based Upon the Writings of A.N. Whitehead*, The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts

[159] Emmet, D. 1981. *Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut

and Sherburne.[166] Clearly, there is much scholarship and much of philosophical interest in these texts. However, the emphasis on understanding Whitehead's work within a fixed and traditional philosophical canon, which is to be found in many of these texts,[167] does not enable their work to be applied immediately to the realm of the social. One notable exception is that of Leclerc.[168] In the course of this thesis, although these other texts will be referred to sporadically, it is that of Leclerc which has been found to provide the clearest explanations of Whitehead's philosophy.

Another important secondary text for this thesis is that of Ford[169] in which he clarifies the shift in Whitehead's thinking up to the publication of *Process and Reality*. This work has been important in identifying the need to distinguish between the texts of Whitehead. As such, this thesis will focus upon the arguments developed mainly in *Process and Reality*, in order to provide both clarity and a thorough assessment of its implications.

The second approach to 'Whitehead studies' is that of focussing upon one aspect of his philosophy. Examples of such analyses are to be found in Jones[170] and Nobo.[171] Nobo's text is particularly interesting in that he recognizes the importance of Spinoza for Whitehead, and the latter's attempts to reconcile some of the problems within Spinoza's philosophy: "the philosophy of organism inverts

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[160] Hartsthorne, C. (ed.) 1972. *Whitehead's Philosophy: Selected Essays, 1935-1970*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln

[161] Kline, G. (ed.) 1963. *Alfred North Whitehead: Essays on His Philosophy*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey

[162] Leclerc, I. 1958. *Whitehead's Metaphysics. An Introductory Exposition*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London

[163] Lowe, V. 1962. *Understanding Whitehead*, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore

[164] Lucas Jr, G. 1989. *The Rehabilitation of Whitehead. An analytic and historical assessment of process philosophy*, SUNY, Albany

[165] Pols, E. 1967. *Whitehead's Metaphysics. A Critical Examination of Process and Reality*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale and Edwardsville

[166] Sherburne, D. W. 1966. *A Key to Whitehead's Process and Reality*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and London

[167] This does not apply to Burgers (1965) whose work is an attempt to draw out the relevance of Whitehead for science.

[168] Leclerc, 1965

[169] Ford, L. S. 1984. *The Emergence of Whitehead's Metaphysics 1925-1929*, SUNY, Albany

[170] Jones, J. 1998. *Intensity. An Essay in Whiteheadian Ontology*, Vanderbilt University Press, Nashville and London

[171] Nobo, J. L. 1986. *Whitehead's Metaphysics of Extension and Solidarity*, SUNY, Albany

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Spinoza's point of view by making the modes superior to the substance."[172] However, Nobo still remains within the established philosophical tradition and is therefore of limited use to this thesis.

The third method of explicating the ideas of Whitehead is through comparisons with other authors. These authors with whom he is compared vary widely; from Wordsworth[173] to Hegel[174] to Bradley[175] to Prigogine and Barth.[176] There is also to be found an application of Whitehead's philosophy to computer programming structures.[177] Notable, not least for its absence from the bibliographies of the vast majority of Whitehead commentators is Kleinbach's comparison of Whitehead with Marx.[178] This text details how Whitehead's notion of the 'superject' can be viewed as an element within a social process whereby pre-existing material/physical relations go to make up contemporary humans and consciousness thereby contributing and directing, creatively, the process of human history. There is much of interest here with regard to an approximation of Whitehead to social theory but the insistence upon the centrality of a Marxian analysis does, inevitably, preclude certain crucial aspects. For example, the insistence upon human history as manifesting the pinnacle of the 'meaning' of existence both limits the analysis and tends to lead Whitehead in a humanistic direction.

With regard to Deleuze, this thesis will concentrate upon, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*,[179] *Difference and Repetition*,[180] *The Logic of Sense*,[181] and *Foucault*.[182] The aim is to establish the similarities of Deleuze's work with that of Whitehead, and

[172] Nobo, 1986, p. 171

[173] Cappon, A. 1985. *Action, Organism and Philosophy in Wordsworth and Whitehead*, Philosophical Library, New York

[174] Christensen, D. 1989. *Hegelian/Whiteheadian Perspectives*, University Press of America, Lanham

[175] McHenry, L. 1992. *Whitehead and Bradley. A Comparative Analysis*, SUNY, Albany

[176] Kirk, J. 1993. *Organism as Reenchantment. Whitehead, Prigogine and Barth*, Peter Lang Inc., New York

[177] Henry, G. 1993. *Forms of Concrescence. Alfred North Whitehead's Philosophy and Computer Programming Structures*, Associated University Presses, London and Toronto

[178] Kleinbach, R. L. 1982. *Marx via Process. Whitehead's potential contribution to Marxian Social Theory*, University Press of America, Washington D.C.

[179] Deleuze, 1991

[180] Deleuze, G. 1994. *Difference and Repetition*, Athlone Press, London

[181] Deleuze, G. 1990. *The Logic of Sense*. Athlone Press, New York

[182] Deleuze, G. 1988. *Foucault*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis

to assess the extent to which Deleuze can provide some solutions to the problems with Whitehead's work which will be identified in Chapter Six.

To turn to the secondary texts on Deleuze,[183] in terms of this thesis, there seems to be some agreement upon two important issues; Deleuze's version of empiricism and his development of a non-foundational ontology. Within this thesis, Spinoza will be interpreted as a particular kind of empiricist, as will Whitehead. Hence, the reading of Deleuze's empiricism is an important element as well. Both Hayden[184] and Marks[185] have provided thorough accounts of this. For example, Hayden describes Deleuze's empiricism as non-essentialist as it is constituted by "an immanent and living continuity of qualitative difference."[186] As shall be seen throughout Chapters Four and Five, this statement could equally be applied to Whitehead. The status of Deleuze's ontology is explicitly addressed by Boundas,[187] Hardt[188] and Murphy[189] amongst others. One aim of these texts is to re-establish ontology as a viable form of analysis which does not entail a return to phenomenology or an essentialism of consciousness: "to reject Hegelian ontology is not to reject ontology *tout court*".[190]

However, with regard to this thesis, the two most important commentators on Deleuze are Ansell-Pearson[191] and Badiou.[192] Although Badiou does not launch a

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[183] Those texts which have pointed up the relevance of Deleuze to social theory have done so, mostly, in terms of the work of Deleuze and Guattari, rather the texts of Deleuze on his own Goodchild, P. 1996a. *Deleuze and Guattari. An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*, SAGE Publications, London; Bogue, R. 1989. *Deleuze and Guattari*, Routledge, London

[184] Hayden, P. 1998. *Multiplicity and Becoming. The Pluralist Empiricism of Gilles Deleuze*, Peter Lang Publishing Inc., New York

[185] Marks, J. 1998. *Gilles Deleuze. Vitalism and Multiplicity*, Pluto Press, London

[186] Hayden, 1998, p. 89

[187] Boundas, C. 1996. 'Deleuze-Bergson: an Ontology of the Virtual', in Patton, P. (ed.). 1996a, *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 81-106

[188] Hardt, M. 1993. *Gilles Deleuze. An Apprenticeship in Philosophy*, UCL Press Limited, London

[189] Murphy, 1998

[190] Hardt, 1993, p. xiii

[191] Ansell-Pearson, K. 1997a. *Viroid Life. Perspectives on Nietzsche and the Transhuman Condition*, Routledge, London; Ansell-Pearson, K. (ed.) 1997b. *Deleuze and Philosophy. The Difference Engineer*, Routledge, London; Ansell-Pearson, 1999; Ansell-Pearson, K. 2000. 'A blazing apostle' in *Radical Philosophy*, Volume 103, pp. 51-3; Ansell-Pearson, K. 2002. *Philosophy And The Adventure Of The Virtual. Bergson and the time of life*, Routledge, London and New York; Ansell-Pearson, K. and Mullarkey, J. 2002. 'Introduction' in Ansell-Pearson, K. and Mullarkey, J (eds.). 2002. *Henri Bergson: Key Writings*, Continuum, New York and London, pp. 1-45

[192] Badiou, 2000

whole-hearted attack on Deleuze, he does attempt to demonstrate that, despite his best efforts, Deleuze remains within the ambit of Platonism. "Deleuzianism is fundamentally a Platonism with a different accentuation."[193] Badiou is not suggesting that there is nothing 'new' in the work of Deleuze, but that he does not accomplish the task that he set himself. This argument will be taken up in much more detail in Chapters Four, Five, Seven and Eight, where it will be argued that Whitehead, though sympathetic to Plato, is a committed Deleuzean. Hence, there is no need for a 'return to Plato' if there is already a conception of Deleuze (via Whitehead) which can avoid the label of Platonism. In order to make such an argument, this thesis will draw on the work of Ansell-Pearson who has already made a similar case in defence of Deleuze against Badiou, not using Whitehead but Bergson.[194]

Initially, Ansell-Pearson utilised Deleuze as providing some "most impressive interpretations of the teaching of the eternal return".[195] After further comparisons of the Deleuze and Nietzsche,[196] he then concentrated on Deleuze himself. In *Germinal Life*,[197] the emphasis is upon modern conceptions of life, biology and organism.[198] This reading of Deleuze is especially relevant to this thesis in its comparison of Whitehead and his 'philosophy of organism' with that of Deleuze, as it establishes, in detail, the non-essentialist aspects of Deleuze's ontology.

> The radical notion of repetition that is being put forward in the text [*Difference and Repetition*] must deal with the seemingly implacable 'laws of nature' posited by both modern philosophy and modern biology....It is with the notion of repetition that Deleuze seeks to give primacy to the dissolution of form and the freeing of life from entropic containment in organisms and species.[199]

And, within this approach, Ansell-Pearson argues, Deleuze is intent on both countering certain scientific accounts of life and in furthering a conception of being which is not reducible to an ultimate explanatory ground such as "a DNA

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[193] Badiou, 2000, p. 33

[194] Ansell-Pearson, 2000, Ansell-Pearson, 2002

[195] Ansell-Pearson, K. 1994. *An Introduction to Nietzsche as a Political Thinker*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 113

[196] Ansell-Pearson, 1997a

[197] Ansell-Pearson, 1999

[198] "The biophilosophical aspects of Deleuze's thought have to be taken seriously". Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p. 4

[199] Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p. 81

mythology."[200]

Another important work is Ansell-Pearson's recent text on Bergson (and Deleuze).[201] This text comprises a dual reading of Bergson and Deleuze, using both to inform each others work. It is clear, from this text, that there are great similarities between the work of Whitehead and Bergson.[202] Whitehead himself notes his indebtedness to Bergson and states that one element of *Process and Reality* is to "rescue..[Bergson's] type of thought from the charge of anti-intellectualism."[203] However, the connections between their work have not been dealt with in this thesis for two reasons. First, the similarities and dissimilarities between Whitehead and Bergson are so nuanced that any comparison of the two would have to be so detailed that it might obscure the arguments which this thesis is trying to develop. [204] Second, the comparison of Bergson with Deleuze has already been addressed by Ansell-Pearson. This is not to say that these commentaries will be ignored; for both *Germinal Life* and *Philosophy And The Adventure Of The Virtual*[205] provide the clearest discussion of the distinction between the virtual and the actual which is an integral element of Deleuze's philosophy, and hence they will be drawn on in Chapters Seven and Eight.

There are only two texts that deal explicitly with the relation between Deleuze and Whitehead. Clark's[206] piece focusses on the role of God within both Whitehead and Deleuze's work. This limits its scope and Clark ends up describing Deleuze's universe as a "distinctly postmodern avatar of polytheism".[207] On the other hand, Villani attempts a broader comparison of the two writers and notes Deleuze's

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[200] Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p. 9

[201] Ansell-Pearson, 2002

[202] For example: "in addition to the moving whole of this material extensity we also speak of bodies with clearly defined outlines - they have their own substance and individuality - and that move in terms of their relations with each other." Ansell-Pearson, 2002, p. 144. As shall be seen in Chapters Four and Five, this could equally be a description of Whitehead's extensive continuum and the creation of actual entities out of, and yet within, it.

[203] Whitehead, 1978, p. xii

[204] This also entails that Deleuze's text dedicated to an analysis of Bergson has not been addressed in this thesis.

[205] Ansell-Pearson, 1999, 2002, respectively

[206] Clark, T. 1999. 'A Whiteheadian Chaosmos: Process Philosophy from a Deleuzean Perspective' in *Process Studies*, Volume 28/3-4 (Fall-Winter 1999), pp. 179-194

[207] Clark, 1999, p. 192

admiration for Whitehead, a feeling which he dates back to *Difference and Repetition*.[208] The first and major similarity between the two is identified, by Villani, as their both approaching philosophy with a "sense of adventure."[209] This adventure is characterized by an *"assault on common sense"*[210] and their rethinking of the dualisms inherent in the history of philosophy. An important element of both of their work is their common refusal of the subject-object dichotomy: "for it is not that there is matter on the one hand and the soul [l'âme] on the other, rather there are physical-mental events."[211] However, this refusal of subjectivity does not entail that either Deleuze or Whitehead are not interested in some notion of the singular or the 'individual': "to deny subjectivity is not to deny individuality"[212]. Villani believes that it is their approach to mathematics and how this informs their concepts of the infinite that underpins the similarities between Whitehead and Deleuze.[213] So it is that, for both Whitehead and Deleuze, difference is multiplicity.[214]

There is one final piece of writing on Whitehead that should be mentioned. This is Deleuze's short but incisive reading of him in *The Fold*.[215] This brief chapter manages to crystallize many of the main points of Whitehead's philosophy. However, Deleuze's references to Whitehead are not confined to that portion of the text. He also briefly discusses Whitehead's term of "'superject'"[216] and makes the very Whiteheadian point that there are "active primary units, that actualize a virtuality or a potential, and that are in harmony with each other without being determined by each other."[217] At the same time, Deleuze's rendering of Whiteheadian terms do not serve as an introduction to the work of Whitehead, rather it is a utilisation of his work. As such, it has not been dealt with in a separate section within this thesis, though it does point to the congruence between the two writers (which is one of the contentions of this thesis). This congruence shall be

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[208] See Villani, A. 1996. 'Deleuze et Whitehead' in *Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale*, 101 ème année/No. 2, Avril/Juin 1996, p. 245

[209] Villani, 1996, p. 246. All translations from this piece are my own.

[210] Villani, 1996, p. 247. (In italics in the original)

[211] Villani, 1996, p. 247

[212] Villani, 1996, p. 249. ["désubjectiver n'est pas désindividuer"]

[213] Villani, 1996, p. 250

[214] "la théorie de la différentielle, celle de la mulitplicité." Villani, 1996, p. 250

[215] Deleuze, G. 1993. *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*, Athlone Press, London, pp. 76-82

[216] Deleuze, 1993, p. 20.

[217] Deleuze, 1993, p. 103

returned to in later chapters, but it is the Spinoza's discussions of the inter-relation of materiality and individuality within ontology that shall be turned to first.

Chapter Two

Spinoza

Hayden characterizes an important element of Spinoza's work in the following way: "As presented by Deleuze, the strength of Spinoza's system rests upon the double inclusion of ontology in ethics and ethics in ontology, reflected in the fact that Spinoza's major metaphysical treatise is entitled *Ethics*."[1] However, this thesis is not solely concerned with a Deleuzean reading of Spinoza. As will become evident, Spinoza was also a major influence upon the work of Whitehead. At the same time, this thesis *is* interested in the development of a non-essentialist ontology and so the purpose of this chapter is to analyse those elements within *The Ethics* which can be identified as integral to the formations of the work of both Deleuze *and* Whitehead with regard to achieving this aim.

This chapter is divided into seven sections. The first of these is a general discussion of Spinoza's *The Ethics*.[2] This is then followed by six sections; 'The Uniqueness of Substance (The Univocity of Being)'; 'God and Power'; 'The Passage from the Infinite to the Finite (The Question of Individuality)'; 'Bodies, the Mind and Nature'; 'Common Notions'; 'Conclusion: Immanence and Immanent Causality'. Each of these sections will involve a close reading of those parts of *The Ethics* which develop the arguments put forward in the introductory section 'Spinoza and the Social'.

Spinoza and the Social

As indicated by Hayden, the best way to approach the radical consequences of Spinoza's work is through a recognition of his attempt to conflate ontology and ethics. This conflation maintains that the way in which *every* thing comes to be and

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[1] Hayden, 1998, p. 56

[2] This introductory section 'Spinoza and the Social' is intended to outline the core elements of *The Ethics* which are deemed to be of relevance to this thesis. It is not offered as a detailed textual analysis; this is to be found in the following sections. As such, general references and quotations are provided but it should be borne in mind that these are not presented as sufficient, in themselves, for a reading of *The Ethics*.

continue in its existence is always implicated in the interrelation of itself with other things. The integral condition of the existence of *any* thing will involve its continued reliance upon, or its omission of, other items which surround it. This points to the manner in which Spinoza will develop a non-essentialist ontology.

Spinoza's starting point is his insistence, contra Descartes, that there can only be one substance.[3] This substance is, of itself, that infinity which makes possible all being, meaning, purpose and action. Whilst it might appear that Spinoza's infinite substance indicates a universalizing, rationalist approach, in this chapter, Spinoza will be interpreted as an empiricist; as will Whitehead and Deleuze in subsequent chapters. What is of interest, is the manner of their empiricism. It shall be argued that Spinoza's work implies that any understanding of the 'world-as-it-is'[4] (or any element, item or phenomenon of the world-as-it-is) cannot be gained through a reduction of it to some general underlying principle which explains the world once and for all. Rather, Spinoza outlines an initial procedure for an analysis which seeks to interpret any item in the world.

Spinoza's insistence upon the uniqueness of substance is not a reduction of all existence to one simple moment of explanation which requires no further elaboration. The uniqueness of substance is a refusal of the discrimination of levels of being or meaning. It is in this sense that it can be associated with the term 'the univocity of being'.[5] If thought and extension are of the same substance,[6] as Spinoza contends, then there is no hierarchical positioning of the mind and body.

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[3] *"There cannot exist in the universe two or more substances having the same nature or attribute."* Spinoza, 1955. Part I. Prop. V. (p. 47)

[4] 'The world-as-it-is' is a phrase that will be used throughout this chapter. It is a loaded term and is not intended to refer to the 'really real' world posited by either naive science, Kant's noumena or any other conception of unadulterated reality. In the context of this discussion it is designed to stand, very broadly, for the goal of any purposeful study within social theory or philosophy; it is assumed that social theory, in some way, hopes to give an account, maybe not of the 'world' (as this might stand for a universal) but of elements or events within it. For Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze 'the world-as-it-is' is some kind of process. After this initial definition, it shall no longer be put in inverted commas.

[5] A fuller discussion of the 'uniqueness of substance' and the related concept of 'the univocity of being' will be given later in this chapter.

[6] "...though two attributes are, in fact, conceived as distinct - that is, one without the help of the other - yet we cannot, therefore, conclude that they constitute two entities, or two different substances." Spinoza, 1955. Part I. Prop. X. Note (p. 51).
"It follows....That extension and thought are either attributes of God or...accidents (*affectiones*) of the attributes of God." Spinoza, 1955, Part I. Prop. XIV. Corollary II. (p. 55). See also, Part II. Propositions I and II. (pp. 83-4)

If form and matter are not essentially separate or distinct entities, then there will not be different levels of reality which explain away the present (although there will be different intensities of the same reality).[7] The univocity of being insists that although the world contains entities which are distinct from each other, there is a commonality to the manner of their being, or coming to be. The difficulty for Spinoza, Deleuze and Whitehead is to give an account of the absolute reality of the individual items of the world which does not dissolve into a more general explanation of the universe as a single entity.[8]

What Spinoza will make clear is that any attempt to explain the world-as-it-is, with an analysis which presupposes the existence of a specific realm of meaning, will be, in some way, to replicate the misconception that there can be more than one substance. To view either physics or social theory (for example) as distinct arenas which are capable of explaining the world on their own, is to bring to bear an unjustifiable, if implicit, form of transcendence. Such an approach will always invoke unsustainable (in Spinozist terms) concepts which rely upon a metaphysical apparatus which predicates, if not a duality of substance, then, at least, a hierarchy of reality with the corresponding trace of an external form of transcendence.[9] Always to reduce the meaning of the world to its social meaning is to misrecognise the complexity of reality in terms of its interrelatedness.

So, whilst it is true that Spinoza wants to give an account of the real existence of real things in the world, he does so in a way which stresses their implication in the complexity of those relations which constitute both their individuality and, at the same time, their reliance upon other things for their individuality. "All modes, wherein one body is affected by another body, follow simultaneously from the nature

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[7] "The more reality or being a thing has the greater the number of its attributes". Spinoza, 1955, Part I. Prop. IX. (p. 50)

[8] This is precisely the charge of Badiou against Deleuze: that he never managed to give an account of the reality of individuals which did not, ultimately, figure as no more than passing examples of an over-arching unity. "It is as though the paradoxical or supereminent One immanently engenders a procession of beings whose univocal sense it distributes, while they refer to its power and only have a semblance of being." Badiou, 2000, p. 26

[9] An 'external form of transcendence' means, for Spinoza, one which predicates God as separate or prior to substance. It represents an explanation of the operations of power as external to the items under scrutiny. As shall be seen in Chapter Three, Whitehead offers a similar critique of the concept of 'primary substance'. Chapters Seven and Eight will discuss Deleuze's notion of 'transcendental empiricism'.

of the body affected and the body affecting."[10] Following from his establishment of substance as unique, unitary and infinite, Spinoza's task is to delimit the actual existence of items in the world-as-it-is. There are two main consequences of this attempt. One serves to reinforce the eminently political nature of Spinoza's work whilst the other presents a major problem for his system. The problem can be summarized as Spinoza's difficulty in describing how the finite objects of the world can be produced as separate, discrete entities, from the infinity of substance. This shall be considered in the section 'The Passage from the Infinite to the Finite'.

For the moment, given that there is only substance and that this substance is identified, by Spinoza, with God,[11] then the actual existence of the world-as-it-is will always be suffused with some notion of power. Of course, this will ultimately rely upon a conception of God as an entity with power,[12] but this is not an immediately problematic position as it is Spinoza's peculiar conception of God as substance which is of interest. This shall be addressed in the section 'God and Power'. For Spinoza the only things which share in existence are substance and its modifications (the contemporary objects of the world), which he terms 'modes': "substance and modes form the sum total of existence".[13] Spinoza spends much time in discussing their concomitant existence. That is, he tries to establish how this unity of substance is compatible with the apparently discrete objects of the immediate world. The problem is that of explaining 'how the one becomes the many and the many become the one'; a theme which will run through the work of Whitehead and Deleuze.

For Spinoza, any inquiry into the world-as-it-is, is not a question of discovering the real essence, or meaning of things in themselves, but of assessing the complexity of the combination of relations which constitute them. The being, meaning or essence of objects is not hidden within but is to be discerned through the intensity of their interrelations, i.e. the extent to which they partake of the power implicit in

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[10] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop. XIII. Axiom I. (p. 94)

[11] Spinoza, 1955, Part I. Prop. XI. (p. 51)

[12] *"God's power is identical with his essence.* Spinoza, 1955, Part I. Prop. XXXIV. (p.74). *"Whatsoever we conceive to be in the power of God, necessarily exists."* Ibid. Part I Prop. XXXV. (p. 74)

[13] Spinoza, 1955. Part I. Proposition XV. Proof. (p. 55)

substance. With regard to subjectivity and matter, any analysis must focus (according to a Spinozist) not on the abstract concept and not on the object itself but on the specific renderings of power as exhibited in the complexity of the inter-connectedness of those items located in that space under scrutiny. It will become a question of discerning what relations are involved in this place at this time, and how and why such interrelations have achieved materiality.

Crucially, there is no concept of negativity as constitutive in Spinoza.[14] The 'other' is never invoked as an element or explanation of being. Rather, that which is not incorporated in a specific rendering of matter is no more and no less than that which demarcates the possibility of *these* specific relations having been otherwise. So the negative is not an item within the object or subject; insofar as it can be conceived, the negative comprises the potentiality of specific interrelations having been or becoming different. This is what Spinoza and Deleuze mean by their concept of affirmation.[15] It is also another element of the ethical aspect of Spinoza's work; action, responsibility and so forth are not to be denied but nor are they to be privileged as abstracts which constrain each individual at each moment. Such concepts will become derivations of the actual formations of subjectivity through the alternative combination, de-assembling and renewed combination of specific relations. This approach advocates a preparedness to confront the intricacy of the data presented as aspects of a reality which exhibits the machinations of power but is not immediately, or fully explainable, as social.

Although this thesis will not deal directly with Spinoza's epistemology it will address one important element of his writings on knowledge. This will involve a discussion of the 'common notions' which signal the move from the existence of individual

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[14] "Thus, in so far as we refer the individuals in nature to this category [Being], and comparing them one with another, find that some possess more of being or reality than others, we, to this extent say that some are more perfect than others. Again, in so far as we attribute to them anything implying negation...we, to this extent, call them imperfect, because they do not effect our mind do much as the things we call perfect, not because they have any intrinsic deficiency....For nothing lies within the scope of a thing's nature, save that which follows from the necessity of the nature of its efficient cause". Spinoza, 1955, Part IV. Preface. (p. 189)

[15] See, for example, Spinoza, 1955. Part III. Propositions XXV and XXVI. (pp. 147-8) and Deleuze, G. 1992. *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, Zone Books, New York, pp. 53-5 and p. 272. Such ideas are also manifest in Whitehead's concept of 'de-cision' as an aspect of the formation of subjects. This will be addressed in Chapter Four.

bodies or items of matter to a nascent theory of the possibility of rationality.[16] What is of interest for this thesis is the priority of the body in such an analysis. Through his invocation of common notions, Spinoza explicates the absolute involvement of the bodily with any conception of rationality, and the possibility of knowledge. "The human body can undergo many changes, and, nevertheless, retain the impressions or traces of objects".[17] What these common notions indicate is that it is only through some sort of agreement between the body, considered as an item of matter, with those things that it encounters, that any form of abstraction to the level of rationality and individual subjectivity is possible. This will involve a discussion of the complicity of the part and the whole. What this position delineates is a refusal of both any form of strict nominalism (or simple empiricism) or a theory of abstract universals (simple rationalism). Spinoza outlines a position which Deleuze also ascribes to Duns Scotus.[18] Here, it is the very commonality and yet distinctness of bodies as neither exempla of a universal nor as separate, self-identical items, which enables both the real existence of singulars and the possibility of their making sense (to each other and to humans). To jump a long way ahead, the existence of discourse is neither a universal system explainable on its own terms and without recourse to its elements; nor is it the mere aggregate of those items within it. The existence of both is correlate and complicit. It is the common notions which represent the specifically 'human' position within such operations; that which is 'human' is based on the complexity of its bodily power. The manner of the inter-involvement of the body and knowledge as implications of the uniqueness of substance (the univocity of being) rely upon the final, yet crucial, Spinozist concept which pervades the whole of his work, namely 'Immanence'. This notion, with especial reference to Spinoza's understanding of causality, will provide the cement which binds all the previous elements together. As such, it will be discussed at the end of the final section 'Immanence and Immanent Causality'.

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[16] See, Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Props. XXXVII, XXXVII and XXXIX. (pp. 109-111)

[17] Spinoza, 1955, Part III. Postulate II. (p. 130)

[18] See Deleuze, 1992, pp 42-3, 62-3, and 66-7

The Uniqueness of Substance (The Univocity of Being)

Spinoza's systematic geometric method means that *The Ethics* is presented as sets of Definitions, Axioms, Propositions, Proofs, Corollaries and Notes, and he habitually makes use of 'Q.E.D.' as the apparently absolute proof of his position. Often, the very manner of his argument is taken as evidence of his being a rationalist.[19] This is not a position which will be adopted in this analysis. Rather, a similar line to that of Wolfson's will be taken when he states that Spinoza "was no mystic, no idealist of the kind to whom everything that kicks and knocks and resists is unreal. He was, many views to the contrary notwithstanding, a hard-headed, clear-minded empiricist, like most of the mediaevals".[20] It is this interest in that which kicks, in the physicality of the world, and the attempt to formulate a means by which it can be studied, that is of interest here. It is this which signals the first element of the relevance of Spinoza to the inter-relation of matter and subjectivity. Whilst it might appear, at points, that he is engaged solely in the most abstract metaphysical speculation, it must always be borne in mind that Spinoza is attempting to give an account of the absolute interrelation of being, along with the ethical implications of actual being, as it is encountered or experienced in the world. By emphasizing this empiricist aspect of Spinoza's work it will be possible to elucidate the integral status of the ethical within his metaphysical conceptions.

"Besides God no substance can be granted or conceived."[21]

This is one of Spinoza's initial assertions and states that all that exists ultimately partakes of one thing, and that this thing is 'substance'; this substance is God. Spinoza is a monist. That which is of interest for this analysis is what is meant by this unity of substance. As stated earlier, Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze will all face the problem of explicating how the many things which make up contemporary reality can be seen as distinct from any notion of a 'one'. This is an integral move

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[19] "Spinoza is seen as an uncompromising rationalist whose philosophy leaves no room for morality, religion or common sense." Lloyd, G. 1996. *Spinoza and The Ethics*, Routledge, London, p.14. This, however is not Lloyd's own position.

[20] Wolfson, 1962. Volume I, p. 74

[21] Spinoza, 1955. Part I. Prop. XIV. (p. 54)

in developing an ontology which is also able to account for difference between items of materiality which are not grounded on something more basic and external. A recurrent theme throughout such discussions will be that of 'the univocity of being'. This is a term derived from the work of Duns Scotus. "There has only ever been one ontology, that of Duns Scotus, which gave being a single voice."[22] Whilst it is beyond the scope of this chapter to elaborate fully the implications of the notion of 'univocity of being', some initial moves can be made.

As a concept, univocity is intended to enable metaphysics to avoid the dualisms evident in writers such as Descartes and Kant. The core claim of univocity is that there is only one manner of being, or coming to be. Anything that exists has something in common (namely the manner of its coming into existence).[23] What the univocity of being enables is a radically democratic expression of empiricism.[24] It contends that difference *between* items of matter is real; that difference is meaningful and cannot be discounted. Yet such difference also relies upon inter-connection, as the constitution of individuals relies upon their inter-relation with other individuals. "Every particular thing, like the human body, must be conditioned by another particular thing to exist and operate in a fixed and definite relation".[25]

It is important, at this point, to note that the discussion of being as single or unitary might well be problematic. Much work will be needed to avoid homogenising all possible aspects of being. This thesis is not intended to endorse the replacement of one school of philosophy with another, already entrenched, if slightly less well known, line of thought. That is to say, the 'univocity of being', as a concept, must be treated carefully if it is to avoid replicating established philosophical presumptions concerning unity and identity. Irigaray, for example, has clearly identified the masculinist assumptions at work in many of the ideas surrounding the

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[22] Deleuze, 1994, p.35

[23] "A single voice raises the clamour of being." Deleuze, 1994, p. 35. Interestingly, Badiou's recent book on Deleuze is entitled *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*

[24] This is a central aspect of the 'radical empiricism' of William James. "The statement of fact is that the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive, are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more so nor less so, than the things themselves." James, W. 1978. *Pragmatism, a new name for some old ways of thinking, and The Meaning of Truth, a sequel to Pragmatism,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, p.173

[25] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop. XXXI. *Proof.* (p. 107)

concepts of unity and identity.[26] It is also clear that a simple reduction of the possibilities of existence to mere exempla of an underlying unity, would run the risk of reducing *any* concept of difference to that of a mere difference *within* a wider manifestation of unity. This would invoke a version of essentialism and the remainder of this chapter will assess the extent to which Spinoza is successful in avoiding such a critique.

God and Power

As has been seen, Spinoza is a monist and subsequently he needs to invigorate his substance with some notion of power so that it does not flounder as some inert and static entity. Spinoza needs to set the universe in motion: he has to imbue his universe with the possibility of differentiation within its uniqueness. If Spinoza simply states that God is substance and substance is the universe, then he has not got very far in explaining how it is that the world has taken on the form that it presently does; nor will he be able to explain why the world, or the items within it, change. Without some further development, Spinoza's substance and the univocity of being will amount to no more than an undifferentiated theological mass. There are two interlinked ways in which Spinoza attempts to avoid such a position. One comes from his elaboration of the properties of God and substance, the other from his placement of humans (subjectivity) within substance.

As stated earlier, Spinoza identifies God with substance. "By God, I mean a being absolutely infinite - that is, a substance consisting in infinite attributes".[27] God, therefore, *is* substance, and he is *expressed* through its attributes. There are an infinite number of these attributes, necessarily, as to delimit their number would be to limit the power of God: to specify the number of attributes would be to incarcerate the infinite.

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[26] See, Irigaray, L. 1985a. *Speculum of the Other Woman,* Cornell University Press, Ithaca; Irigaray, L. 1985b. *This Sex Which Is Not One,* Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

[27] Spinoza, 1955, Part I. Definition VI (p. 45)

Spinoza states that the human mind can only conceive of two attributes; thought and extension.[28] These are not two distinct entities, nor are they anything different from substance itself as "substance thinking and substance extended are one and the same substance, comprehended now through one attribute, now through the other."[29] Thought and extension are the same 'thing' (they are both aspects of substance) conceived of in different ways. This is a critical aspect of the later enunciation of the mind/body relation. It is in this respect that Spinoza begins to position the human individual within his theory of substance. The limit is set upon the human and not upon God as an expression of substance. The attributes are expressions of God's power, which is identical with the infinity of substance. "*God, or substance, consisting of infinite attributes, of which each expresses eternal and infinite essentiality, necessarily exists*"[30] and "the power of God, by which he and all things act, is identical with his essence."[31] This is how Spinoza initially manages to endow his conceptual scheme with potency and with differentiation. Matter, in terms of bodies, is imbued with power or force as it, and they, are the limited expression of the totality of existence itself (and this is ultimately God). "For, as the potentiality of existence is a power, it follows that, in proportion, as reality increases in the nature of a thing, so also will it increase its strength for existence."[32] So, the infinity of substance enables a dispersion of essence in that it is always deferred to the absolute infinity which necessarily comprises substance. Here Spinoza can be seen to be attempting a re-placement of the ontology of essence and thereby developing a non-essentialist ontology. This can be concluded from his rejection of a transcendent God and his avowal of a God whose power is infinite and yet immanent.[33] It is the expression of God within reality that articulates reality's constitution. "God's power is identical with God's essence in action."[34]

Power confers the ability to act or exist, it does not emanate from the actual existence of things in the world. That which exists does exist, it is real, but its

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[28] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Props. I and II. (pp. 83-4)
[29] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop VII. Note. (p. 86)
[30] Spinoza, 1955, Part I. Prop. XI (p. 51)
[31] Spinoza, 1955, Part I. Prop. XXXIV. *Proof.* (p. 74)
[32] Spinoza, 1955, Part I. Prop XI. Note. (p. 53)
[33] A more detailed discussion of 'immanence' will follow toward the end of this chapter.
[34] Spinoza, 1955, Part II Prop. III. Note. (p. 84)

existence is not necessary (except for substance or God, for which it is). A thing or a body, insofar as it exists, is a manifestation of essence but it is not a necessary manifestation of essence; it could have been otherwise, it has conditioned existence. "Whatsoever exists expresses God's nature or essence in a given conditioned manner...whatsoever exists, expresses in a given conditioned manner God's power, which is the cause of all things, therefore an effect must...necessarily follow."[35] An individual thing cannot be understood or conceived as an independent entity whose existence or essence is necessary in its own right, although its existence and essence are sufficient in its own right (a posteriori). Any given thing is always dependent upon its situatedness within a causal nexus and hence on operations of power, in that it is always affected by external causes. It is vital to notice that in no way does Spinoza offer any priority to the human mind or body within this general scheme. Spinoza's ontology is thus non-essentialist insofar as it eschews the notion of any given or fixed status of being to the physical items of the universe. The consequences of Spinoza's work are aptly summed up by Gatens:

> The distinctions between artifice and nature, human and non-human, will not be of interest on an ethological[36] view since these terms too will be analysable only on an immanent plane where distinctions between one thing and the next amount to kinetic or dynamic differences.[37]

As opposed to assuming that there are discrete realms of the 'social' and the 'natural', either or both of which sit behind contemporary reality acting as ontological guarantors, it is necessary to re-consider the implication of the social and the physical through a focussing upon the effectuality of both.

To return to Spinoza; with regard to the specific elements of his argument which clarify the relations between subjectivity and matter, the following passage identifies the primacy of the external over the individual. That is to say, it evidences Spinoza's notion that the starting place for any investigation is not to be the concept

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[35] Spinoza, 1955, Part I. Prop. XXXVI. Proof. (p. 74). The relation of individuality and causation will be discussed further on.

[36] 'Ethology' is also the term that Deleuze employs to describe Spinoza's approach. See, for example, Deleuze, G and Guattari, F. 1994. *What is Philosophy?*, Verso, London, pp. 72-3

[37] Gatens, M. 1996. 'Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference, Power', p. 167 in Patton, P. (ed.) 1996a.

of the self-fulfilled entity. Rather, any inquiry, be it philosophical, 'physical' or sociological, must take account of those external relations which have made the immediate being of that thing possible:

> Things which are produced by external causes, whether they consist of many parts or few, owe whatsoever perfection or reality they possess solely to the efficacy of their external cause, and therefore their existence arises solely from the perfection of their external cause, not from their own.[38]

There are thus at least two aspects of the multiplicity of Spinoza's monism. One is the absolute infinity and unknowability, in themselves, of the attributes which express the essence of substance as a unity. This entails a multiplicity rather than an atomism of thought and the body which, as an individual rendering of aspects of substance, has a differentiated yet real[39] existence within an unknowable (to the human mind) unity. This is linked to a second aspect of Spinoza's multiplicity in that there is no assigning of necessary essence to individual modes or bodies in terms of their existence as *these* modes or bodies at *this* place and at *this* time. For Spinoza, those 'things' which are encountered in the universe, those things which constitute everyday reality, are modifications of substance. It is in these terms that he refers to them as 'modes'. They are unique renderings of substance, which partake of essence in one sense, but their existence consists primarily in their being particular examples of the infinite mutability of substance.

The task now at hand is to assess how it is that Spinoza supports his contention that the individual reality of the modes can proceed from his previous analysis of the uniqueness and infinity of substance. That is, how can there be real individuals within the univocity of being?

The Passage from the Infinite to the Finite (The question of individuality)

Spinoza locates simple bodies within substance as modifications of that substance

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[38] Spinoza, 1955, Part I Prop. XI. Note. (p. 53)

[39] The question of the 'reality' of the modes and the attributes touches upon the scholastic debate of the reality of universals; realism versus nominalism. Wolfson traces Spinoza's thought back to these scholastic debates and the work of Jewish and Arabic philosophers such as Moses ha-Levi, Avicenna and Maimonides. (Wolfson, 1962, Volume 1, pp. 148-153)

under the attribute of extension. The causes which specify particular modifications are themselves determined by other modifications, and other causes, which are themselves determined by other modifications, and other causes, which are themselves determined, and so on to infinity, to the infinity of substance. "Again this cause or this modification...must in its turn be conditioned by another cause, which is also finite, and has a conditioned existence, and, again this last by another...and so on to infinity."[40] Spinoza is addressing a specific problem here. Throughout *The Ethics* he has attempted to delineate how it is that the infinity of God or substance explains the existence of every thing in the universe. Considered as such, the objects of the universe, including the mind and body of humans, are simply modifications of this infinity and eternality. Whilst this approach may provide an account of reality which displaces certain anthropocentric misconceptions, it faces the difficulty of accounting for how the infinite becomes modified into those objects which occur within the universe, without limiting or compromising the infinity of substance that is God. That is, if substance is God and is therefore infinite, how can Spinoza explain the reality of mind and matter without either making all existence immediately dependent upon God's existence, or without limiting the power of God by describing existence in terms of self-sufficient areas of being which are dislocated from God's existence. In Spinozist terms the problem can be stated thus; how do the infinite attributes become finite modes? In more general philosophical terms; how do universals become particulars.[41] As Wolfson puts it: "if individual things follow from God, then, since God is infinite, where does their finiteness come from?"[42] For Deleuze, "the status of modal essences relates to a strictly Spinozist problem, concerning absolutely infinite substance. This is the problem of passing from infinite to finite."[43] Wolfson and Deleuze both identify the problem as involving the question of a "principle of individuation (*principium*

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[40] Spinoza, 1955, Part I Prop. XXVIII. Proof (p. 67)

[41] As shall be seen in Chapter Three, this is a problem which Whitehead deals with at length. For him, a major part of the problem lies in the fact that the question is always asked in subject-predicate terms. Like Spinoza, he sees this as a misconception which arises from the imposition of human assumptions (in terms of grammatical form) upon reality itself. For Whitehead, it is 'eternal objects' which will explain the relation of the finite to the eternal, the particular to the universal. In common with Spinoza one part of his solution is the assertion that, in some sense, all objects contain aspects of the eternal (See Chapter Five)..

[42] Wolfson, 1962, Volume 1, p.388

[43] Deleuze, 1992, p. 198

individuationis)[44] or "whether there is another type of modal distinction, presenting an intrinsic principle of individuation."[45] This might seem to be no more than inconsequential metaphysical rambling and to have no importance for this thesis, but its relevance is, in fact, stark.

This whole issue is an example of the contest over identity and addresses the question of how it is possible (or what it means) to be an individual, if this is possible at all. It involves the social, political and historical implications of the concept of individuality. For example, one aspect of this contest is described by Fraser thus:

> Individuality in particular, and the concomitant processes of individualization - including self-knowledge and conscience, responsibility for the 'self', guilt, shame and remorse - are key practices whose longstanding endurance has been documented by a variety of theorists (including Michel Foucault, Nikolas Rose, Zygmunt Bauman, and feminists, such as Sandra Bartky, Judith Butler and Elspeth Probyn).[46]

Individuality is clearly a matter of concern and interest for social theory, and analyses of it are involved in a political battle over more than just a metaphysical question about singularity.

In his account, Spinoza divides the passage from the infinite to the finite into three sections. The first of these is what he terms the 'immediate infinite modes'. These closely correspond to his previous discussion of the infinite and are described as: "in thought, absolutely infinite understanding; in extension, motion and rest".[47] The immediate infinite modes describe the abstract conditions to which any given modification, under any particular attribute, must adhere. For example, under the attribute of extension any finite mode will always be at motion or rest.

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[44] Wolfson, 1962, Volume 1, p. 392

[45] Deleuze, 1992, p. 196, also cf. pp 192-199. Throughout this thesis Whitehead's 'actual entities' will be seen as an attempt to render a principle of individuation within a system of process which addresses certain problems which Spinoza seems unable to answer. This problem of individuation is central to any theory which describes the world, social relations, history etc. in terms of process, progress, flow, flux, interrelation etc. Deleuze addresses this problem specifically in the discussion of Spinoza referred to here and throughout *Difference and Repetition*. It is a problem he traces back to the work of Duns Scotus. It is the problem of giving an account of the real and effective existence of subjects/subjectivities/objects which do not just dissolve into a wider explanation of chains of signs and shifting boundaries. In terms of social theory, this thesis views the principle of individuation within a system of process as crucial to any later elaboration of the possibility of political positioning/responsibility and ethics.

[46] Fraser, M. 1996. PhD Thesis, p. 294. Published as Fraser, M. 1999, *Identity Without Selfhood. Simone de Beauvoir and Bisexuality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

[47] Spinoza, 1955. Letter LXVI (LXIV) (p. 399)

The second concept that Spinoza invokes in his elaboration of the passage from the infinite to the finite is that of the 'mediate infinite modes'. It is these mediate infinite modes which are supposed to bridge the gap between the infinity of substance and the individuality of the modes. As such, they occupy a pivotal role within *The Ethics*, yet Spinoza does not spend much time explaining quite what they might be. Indeed it is not apparent that Spinoza ever uses the term 'mediate infinite mode'. The section of *The Ethics* which discusses the passage from the infinite to the finite is mainly to be found in Part I, Propositions XXI, XXII and XXIII[48] which deal with the immediate infinite modes, mediate infinite modes and finite modes respectively. However, only one example of a mediate infinite mode is ever offered by Spinoza. This is: "the sum of the whole extended universe (*facies totius universi*), which, though it varies in infinite modes, yet remains always the same."[49] (*'Facies totius universi'* is often translated as 'the face of the whole universe'[50]). However, this example is not to be found in the main text of *The Ethics*; Spinoza only uses this phrase in a letter to Tschirhausen.[51] As stated above, the text of *The Ethics* which does address the concept of the mediate infinite modes (i.e. Proposition XXII) is not only remarkably concise (especially when compared with Propositions XXI and XXIII), it does not directly mention any such thing as a 'mediate infinite mode'.

The full text of Proposition XXII, in the translation being used here, is:

> *Whatsoever follows from any attribute of God, in so far as it is modified by a modification, which exists necessarily and as infinite, through the said attribute, must also exist necessarily and as infinite.*
> Proof.- The proof of this proposition is similar to that of the preceding one.[52]

At the same time it is clear that the term 'mediate infinite mode' is widespread in the literature on Spinoza and has been for some time.[53] Joachim, whose text was

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[48] Spinoza, 1955, pp. 64-5

[49] Spinoza, 1955, Letter LXVI (LXIV), pp. 399-400

[50] See, for example, Spinoza, cited in Lloyd, 1996, p. 42

[51] Spinoza, 1955, Letter LXVI (LXIV), p. 398

[52] The text of the Latin version of the same proposition is: "Quidquid ex aliquo Dei attributo, quatenus modificatum est tali modificatione, quae et necessario et infinita per idem existit, seuqitur, debet quoque et necessario et infinitum existere." Cited in Joachim, H. 1964. *A Study Of The Ethics Of Spinoza*, Russell and Russell, New York, p. 75, Note 2. I am not able to read Latin but there do not seem to be any words or phrase in this passage which stand out as directly relating to 'mediate infinite modes'.

[53] The term 'mediate infinite modes' is used by, amongst others; Hampshire, 1988, p. 65, Lloyd, 1996, who does not use the term directly but talks of "Things produced mediately through some infinite modification", p. 42; Deleuze, 1990, p. 105 and p. 235.

originally published in 1901, deploys the term as needing no etymological or semantic explanation.[54] He seems to assume that it is clear that 'mediate infinite mode' is an accepted rendering of the concepts Spinoza introduces in Proposition XXII. Perhaps the solution to this problem is to be found in Wolfson's analysis.[55] Writing in 1934, he states that: "This distinction between immediate and mediate infinite modes...does not occur in all the writings of Spinoza....But the **distinction** between immediate and mediate finite modes is referred to several times in the *Ethics*".[56]

It is clear that whilst the precise term 'mediate infinite mode' is not used, it can, indeed it must, be drawn out of the text in order to facilitate the passage from the infinite to the finite. If this is not done, then God will remain the immediate cause of all items in the universe, which is clearly not what Spinoza intends.[57] For, anything *immediately* caused by God must be infinite in itself. If this were not the case then God's infinity (and power) would be limited. At the other end of the scale, and as has been discussed earlier, Spinoza is a 'hard-headed empiricist'. He wants to give a full account of the inter-relational reality of those items of the world as they currently exist. But such items (bodies, things etc.) cannot be infinite in themselves as this would be to lose any purchase on an adequate description of power as it is currently manifested in the (social) world: "that which is finite, and has a conditioned existence, cannot be produced by the absolute nature of any attribute of God; for whatsoever follows from the absolute nature of any attribute of God is infinite and eternal."[58]

So, the mediate infinite modes are characterized (by the commentaries on *The Ethics*, at least) as that which bridge the gap between these two positions. This is why the question as to whether they are directly enunciated by Spinoza is so important. In one sense, Wolfson makes it clear that they are not. In his analysis

[54] Joachim, 1964, p. 75 and p. 87, note 2

[55] Wolfson, 1962, Volume I, pp. 243-7 and 378-80

[56] Wolfson, 1962, pp. 273-4 [my emphasis]

[57] "But that which is finite, and has a conditioned existence, cannot be produced by the absolute nature of any attribute of God; for whatsoever follows from the absolute nature of any attribute of God is infinite and eternal". Spinoza, 1955, Part I. Proposition XXVIII. *Proof.* (p. 67)

[58] Spinoza, 1955, Part I. Proposition XXVIII. *Proof.* (p. 67)

of Proposition XXII, he states: "**What he** [Spinoza] **means to say is this**: The modes which follow from the immediate modes must be eternal and infinite like the immediate modes themselves. Thus there are two kinds of eternal and infinite modes, namely, immediate and mediate."[59]

There are two crucial aspects to this which highlight the issues involved in the passage from the infinite to the finite. Firstly, Wolfson makes it clear that the text of *The Ethics* is not at all clear as to whether Spinoza conceives of the 'mediate infinite modes' as a distinct moment in the passage from the infinite to the finite.[60] Therefore, it is necessary to *read them into* the text. The second point is related to the first. It is possible to interpret that which is usually termed 'the mediate infinite modes' as a description of an aspect of Spinoza's more general system which is not, of itself, separate from it: Spinoza did not envisage such modes as a decisive step in his argument in the way in which they are considered nowadays.

Wolfson claims that perhaps Spinoza did not provide a detailed explanation of the principle of individuation because "he did not think it necessary for him to do so."[61] Wolfson argues that it is possible that Spinoza believed either that there is enough discussion of the question of individuation within the various versions of monism which precede Spinoza's to preclude his having to address the issue directly or, Spinoza left it up to individual readers to "discover for themselves some essential difference between his own particular kind of monism and the other kinds of monism".[62] Neither of these solutions seem particularly helpful and, in terms of this thesis, they merely indicate the importance of the work of Whitehead and Deleuze as offering more extensive accounts of this problem.

To return to Spinoza's sole example of a mediate infinite mode namely, 'the face of the whole universe', it is clear that, here, Spinoza does seem to be approaching the problem from an angle which does not grant immediate priority to the infinite. Instead, the mediate infinite mode is seen as a 'sum of the whole extended

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[59] Wolfson, 1962, Volume I, p. 379. My emphasis.
[60] Wolfson, 1962, Volume I, p. 392
[61] Wolfson, 1962, Volume I, p. 392
[62] Wolfson, 1962, Volume I, pp. 392-3

universe'; perhaps it is some kind of aggregate. But this aggregate cannot be identical with God or substance, as these are always defined in terms of the infinite. This is a conception of the extended universe, of matter, as a composite entity which comprises the totality of the modifications of matter at a given time. As such, the relations which inhere in substance at this time, are different from those at other times; the face of the universe changes but, ultimately, is comprised of the same thing, substance.[63] This might comprise an adequate description on its own terms, but when considered as an element within Spinoza's more general theory, there is still the problem of how, exactly, these mediate infinite modes operate. That is to say, they are supposedly introduced as that which explains the move from the infinite to the finite but the example of 'the face of the whole universe' is described more in terms of the finite than the infinite. This just seems to be an inversion of Spinoza's approach rather than an explanation of the passage from the infinite to the finite. Lloyd comments that "it remains unclear exactly how Spinoza's single example of the face is supposed to clarify the relations between 'absolutely infinite intellect' and the mediated modes of thought."[64] As such, it seems that Spinoza is unable, within his system, to account for the real existence of the individuals of the world.

Deleuze does not always envisage this as an insurmountable objection to the relevance of Spinoza's work in his comprehensive and sympathetic account of both the passage from the infinite to the finite and of this combination of relations into 'the face of the whole universe'.[65] However, even Deleuze makes it clear that he is reading the principle of individuation into Spinoza's work. "One may be permitted to think that, while he does not explicitly develop such a theory, Spinoza is looking toward the idea of a distinction or singularity belonging to modal essences as such."[66]

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[63] Spinoza is explicit in insisting that substance, considered as infinite, is not an aggregate of its modifications at any given time, as shall be seen at the end of this chapter. So, the introduction of a notion of an aggregate, at this point in the argument, seems to demonstrate even more fully the difficulties involved in Spinoza's attempts to explain the move from the infinite to the finite.

[64] Lloyd, 1996, p. 43

[65] See Deleuze, 1992, especially pp. 191-272. However, it should also be noted that Deleuze, does, at other points see the 'finity' of the modes as problematic for Spinoza. For example, Deleuze, 1994, p 40, 304

[66] Deleuze, 1992, p. 197

It must, therefore, be stressed that within *The Ethics* there is a tension, if not a problem, of how Spinoza moves from his definition of substance as infinite to an elaboration of the existence of individual objects. It is precisely this difficulty which is addressed by Whitehead and Deleuze. Spinoza's own position at this point in the argument is aptly summarised by Wolfson.

> There is no such thing as the procession of the finite from the infinite in Spinoza. God or substance is to him an infinite logical crust which holds together the crumbs of the infinite number of the finite modes, and that crust is never broken through to allow the crumbs to escape or emanate. Infinite substance by its very nature contains within itself immediate infinite modes, and the immediate infinite modes contain within themselves mediate infinite modes, and the mediate infinite modes contain within themselves the infinite number of finite modes, which last are arranged as a series of causes and effects. In such a conception of an all-containing substance there can be no question as to how the finite came into existence out of an infinite any more that there can be a question as to how substance came into existence. Substance is *causa sui*, and its nature is such that it involves within itself three orders of modes - immediate infinite, mediate infinite, and finite. The question as to how things come into existence can logically appear only within the finite modes, and the answer to this, as given by Spinoza, is that each finite mode comes into existence by another finite mode, and so on to infinity, but the entire infinite series is ultimately contained in God, who is *causa sui*, through the mediate and immediate infinite modes. Things are finite by the very fact that they are parts of a whole which is infinite.[67]

From this it can be clearly seen that, whilst Spinoza might envisage no problem with his move from the infinite to the finite, there is a question, for contemporary theory, as to the nature of that power which enables his substance to be *causa sui*. It seems that it is precisely the conflation of substance with God that elides the need for a discussion of how Spinoza invigorates his monism. The limit of Spinoza's theory, for contemporary analyses, is its inability to 'substantiate' the concept of multiplicity. It is a question of the materiality of Spinoza's matter. Spinoza's version of individuality does not gain a level of materiality which is 'really' separate from the attributes of an infinite substance. It will be through the later analyses of Whitehead and Deleuze that such demands will be addressed.

At the same time, although Spinoza's philosophy is often seen as being presented as a systematic whole, it does not necessarily follow that the identification of one problematic aspect entails that the rest of his work becomes redundant. There is

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[67] Wolfson, 1962, Volume I, p.398

much of interest in his discussion of the interrelations of the finite modes (bodies). This, as well as his discussion of the mind as the idea of the body, will now be considered in more detail.

Bodies, the Mind and Nature

"Bodies are distinguished from one another in respect of motion and rest, quickness and slowness, and not in respect of substance."[68]

"All modes, wherein one body is affected by another body, follow simultaneously from the nature of the body affected and the body affecting".[69]

It is crucial for Spinoza that the interaction of bodies, of matter, occurs through an 'affection', which always proceeds through an operation of force. In fact, the definition of a body relies upon its capacity to affect, or to act upon, another body. A body, or an item of matter, cannot be defined in isolation. This 'interrelation of bodies' as the definition of the immediately existing items of matter will be further explored in the following discussion of the mind as the idea of the body.

"So also, a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, though expressed in two ways."[70] This is a consequence of the uniqueness of substance with an infinite number of attributes. Substance is one but is not limited: there is only one God but there are an infinite number of ways in which this uniqueness can be expressed. It is the limitation of humanity that it only apperceives two of these; thought and extension. So a 'thing' and the correlate idea of that 'thing' represent two sides of the same coin, but it is a coin with an infinite number of sides. This concept takes on added significance when applied to the human body. If the human body is understood as a composite of other simple

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[68] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Lemma I. p. 93
[69] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Lemma III. Axiom I. (p. 94)
[70] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop VII. Note. p. 86

bodies which still attains some kind of unity, then, insofar as this composite body is an individual, the idea of it, under the attribute of thought, will fully constitute the mind. The mind is no more and no less than the idea of the body: "mind and body...are one and the same individual conceived now under the attribute of thought, now under the attribute of extension."[71] Initially, this can be seen as a prioritization of the body in that it is through the body that the first level of knowledge of the external world comes about. Such bodily 'knowledge' results from Spinoza's claim that it is through the affecting of the body by external forces (in terms of other bodies which impinge upon it and upon which it impinges) that it is both constituted and changed. This activity of the body, this continual affection, is the exercise of power. "The human body can be affected in many ways, whereby its power of activity is increased or diminished".[72] At the same time it must be stressed that it is not a case of the body affecting the mind, nor of the mind affecting the body. They are the same 'thing' conceived of under different attributes. The importance of Spinoza's position, with regard to human subjectivity, is that it considers the materiality of the body as an integral aspect of his philosophy.

The positioning of the body within his philosophy has at least two key consequences. Firstly, the body draws its power, and continues to exist, through its interdependence on other bodies. "The human body stands in need for its preservation of a number of other bodies, by which it is continually, so to speak, regenerated."[73] Secondly, given that the mind is the body conceived under a different attribute, it is necessary to devise a method through which the power that resides in the body can be analysed.[74] Spinoza states that this power is derived from the body's affectivity which itself is derived from the speed and intensity of its experience of other bodies. He comments that "no one has hitherto laid down the limits to the power of the body, that is, no one has yet been taught by experience what the body can accomplish solely by the laws of nature, in so far as she[75] is

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[71] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop XXI. Note. p.102.

[72] Spinoza, 1955, Part III. Postulate I. (p. 130)

[73] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Postulate IV. (p. 97)

[74] Chapter Five will discuss Whitehead's account of the status of the human body which, in many ways, is similar to that of Spinoza.

[75] As has been noted earlier, there are many presumptions about gender implicit in much philosophy.

regarded as extension."[76]

"*Desire is appetite with consciousness thereof.*"[77] Desire is the fulcrum of the mind and the body. That which explains the differentiation of reason and the emotions is desire. If appetite is an affect of the body as substance, under the attribute of extension, then desire is appetite conceived of under the attribute of thought, as the mind is the idea of the body. So it is that Spinoza can say: "Desire is the essence of a man [sic]...that is, the endeavour whereby a man [sic] endeavours to persist in his [sic] own being."[78]

This introduces the concept of 'conatus'. This is the striving of the individual to continue in its own existence, and *this*, for Spinoza, is the definition of being.[79] Emotions represent the activity of the body and its attempts to persist by becoming more active. Just as the body becomes more active and gains more power through its affection of, and by, other bodies, so the mind, as the idea of the body, follows a similar path. As Spinoza puts it:

> so long as the mind conceives things, which increase or help the power of activity in our body, the body is affected in modes which increase or help its power of activity...consequently...the mind's power of thinking is for that period increased or helped.[80]

Just as the boundaries of the body become blurred as it is defined through, and derives its existence from, its affecting and being affected by other bodies, so the location of the mind is to be rethought. Its location, like of that of the body, is a question of its engagedness with other elements of its relevant attribute. It is not a question of the mind having an inside or an outside and this, obviously, applies to the body as well. Both have become the locus of an individual rendering of their attributes (they are modifications of substance) and are defined, and gain this individuality, through their affection of and by those forces which constitute other bodies or ideas. Subjectivity comprises both physical and conceptual interrelatedness.

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[76] Spinoza, 1955, Part III. Prop. II. Note. (p. 132)

[77] Spinoza, 1955, Part III. Prop. IX. Note. (p. 137)

[78] Spinoza, 1955, Part IV. Prop. XVIII. *Proof.* (p. 200)

[79] Chapter Four will address how Whitehead envisages the becoming of each actual entity as a creative striving for being.

[80] Spinoza, 1955, Part III. Prop. XII. Proof. (p. 139)

Of course, given the earlier discussion of the problems inherent in Spinoza's move from the infinite to the finite, and its corollary, the passage from the finite to the infinite, as addressed above, this definition of subjectivity as inter-relatedness cannot be accepted at face value. Nevertheless, it does establish a way of addressing the inter-relations of matter and subjectivity within a non-essentialist ontology which will be worked upon, and elaborated, by Whitehead and Deleuze. Spinoza's work, functions (in terms of this thesis) as a delineation of an arena within which these two writers' work can be compared and assessed. It is with this in mind that the following discussion of Spinoza's 'common notions' proceeds.

Common Notions

The first move in this discussion of Spinoza's 'common notions' must be to explain more fully what he means by an idea: "by ideas I do not mean images such as are formed at the back of the eye, or in the midst of the brain, but the conceptions of thought."[81] Or, as Deleuze puts it: "it is difficult to respond to those who wish to be satisfied with words, things, images, and ideas."[82] So, ideas are not constituted by words or images. "The essence of words and images is put together by bodily motions, which in no wise involve the conception of thought."[83] This suggestion that there is a disjunction between ideas as aspects of the infinite and the physicality of words and images, will become a conjunction in the work of Deleuze, when he distinguishes the complicity of the articulable and the visible in the establishment of knowledge and its relation to subjectivity.[84]

Adequate ideas comprise the second kind of knowledge for Spinoza. The first kind is that of opinion or imagination. Such knowledge is concerned with the particular and is always inadequate as it does not correspond to substance as it is (this kind of knowledge is not an expression of God's essence). The second kind of knowledge involves adequate ideas. Their adequacy (and hence truthfulness) relies upon their, in some way, partaking of substance as it is expressed under the

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[81] Spinoza, 1955, Part. II. Prop XLVIII. Note (p. 120)
[82] Deleuze, 1990, p. 20
[83] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop. XLIX. Note. (p. 122)
[84] See Deleuze, 1988, pp. 47-69. This will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

attribute of thought (God has *this* particular idea "in so far as he constitutes the essence of our mind; consequently...we say that such an idea is true."[85]) So adequate ideas constitute knowledge. That which bridges Spinoza's rather abstract discussions of adequate ideas and 'real human knowledge' are the 'common notions'. As Lloyd puts it, they are "the vehicle of adequate knowledge".[86] The closest that Spinoza comes to a definition of these common notions is contained in Part II. Propositions XXXVII, XXXVIII and XXXIX, along with their Notes, Proofs, and Corollaries. The Propositions are as follows:

"That which is common to all...[87] and which is equally in a part and in the whole, does not constitute the essence of any particular thing."[88]

And:

"Those things, which are common to all, and which are equally in a part and in the whole, cannot be conceived except adequately."[89]

And:

"That, which is common to and a property of the human body and such other bodies as are wont to affect the human body, and which is present equally in each part of either, or in the whole, will be represented by an adequate idea in the mind."[90]

These common notions are not 'concepts' as generally conceived. Spinoza is explicit that universal concepts such as man, horse etc. are more like mnemonics. Such universals do not adequately express 'the truth of the world' as they do not correspond to what is actually universal, or common to all things. Also such universals tend to vary from one person to another.[91] In contrast, common notions *do* reside in the whole, in all those things to which they refer but also, and crucially, they also reside in the part, in the particular thing itself. Proposition XXXVII states that the existence of common notions does not rely upon the particular thing in itself

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[85] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop XXXIV. Proof. (p. 108)
[86] Lloyd, 1996, p. 67
[87] This omission merely indicates Spinoza's references to his own text and is left out simply to avoid confusion.
[88] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop XXXVII (p. 109)
[89] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop XXXVIII (p. 109)
[90] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop XXXIX (p. 110)
[91] See Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop. XL. Note. (pp. 111-3)

as this would be to limit their capacity to exist to that particular thing. That is, common notions would have no more to express than the reality of that thing and would themselves be no more than an amalgamation or grouping of particular characteristics. If they were, they would be no more than those supposed universals such as the concept 'horse'. However, given that common notions do express more than an abstract concept which is then imposed upon particular things, the fact that they inhere in the particular thing is critical. So, as Proposition XXXVIII states, they reside in both the part and the whole and it is this which grants them their adequacy. And, as has been seen, this adequacy is the basis for their reality.[92] Perhaps the most important element of these common notions is contained in Proposition XXXIX. Here, Spinoza reasserts, as he does throughout *The Ethics* the role of the body within his philosophy. As Lloyd points out, the "bodily capacity to retain traces is the source of the possibility of forming the 'common notion' of reason."[93]

What writers such as Wilson[94] and Hampshire[95] tend to obscure is the centrality of the body both to Spinoza's philosophy, as a whole, and to his conception of individual human subjectivity, in particular. As Spinoza states: "there is no real distinction between this idea and the emotion or idea of the modification of the body, save in conception only."[96] Knowledge of the world is not simply arrived at through the mind's capacity to conceive of the world; knowledge of the world is based upon experience of emplacement within the world and this is reliant upon the body's effective existence within an ever-changing world. Such existence centres on the commonality of certain aspects of the body with certain aspects of the world: physicality is (conceptually, at least) prior to individual human reason (Prop. XXXIX). So, "that, which is common to and a property of the human body and external bodies, and equally present in the human body and in the said external body and in the whole, there will be an adequate idea of".[97] And, "the mind is fitted

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[92] Chapter Six will discuss how 'eternal objects' play a similar role within Whitehead's philosophy.
[93] Lloyd, 1996, p. 58
[94] See, Wilson, 1996, p.95
[95] See, Hampshire, 1988, p. 80
[96] Spinoza, 1955, Part IV. Prop. VIII. *Proof.* (pp. 195-6)
[97] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop. XXXIX. Proof. (p. 110)

to perceive adequately more things, in proportion as its body has more in common with other bodies."[98] There is a need to unravel the intricacy and intensity of power relations that embroil and define the constitution of any given complexity of bodies, both human and non-human.

At this stage, such a view might seem to reduce the philosophy of the body to some notion of physics or mathematics. If Spinoza does do this, then it is only with a specific understanding of the term 'physics'.[99] "Everything in Nature is 'physical': a physics of intensive quantity...a physics of force, that is, a dynamism through which essence asserts itself in existence, espousing the variations of the power of action."[100] Hence, one of the great moves of Spinoza's philosophy is to delineate a physics of the body which is not solely physical but also social, in that bodies are defined by their inter-relation. This is an important moment in the development of a non-essentialist ontology as it indicates how a 'substantial' analysis of the body, in terms of both matter and subjectivity, can be initiated without recourse to regarding either the body, the social or the physical as fixed or given.

Conclusion: Immanence and Immanent Causality

To return to Spinoza's theory of the interaction of the body with the world, it still remains to identify *how* such interaction occurs. There are two main, yet interlinked, elements to his analysis, both of which run throughout and underpin much of *The Ethics*; their importance to any analysis of Spinoza (and to this thesis) must be stressed. They are the concepts of 'immanence' and its corollary, immanent causation.

"God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things."[101] Here, 'indwelling'

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[98] Spinoza, 1955, Part II. Prop. XXXIX. Corollary. (p. 111)

[99] Whitehead, analogously, uses the notion of 'geometry' to detail the relation of the human body to its surroundings: see Chapter Five.

[100] Deleuze, 1992, p. 233

[101] Spinoza, 1955, Part I. Prop. XVIII. (p. 62)

is taken as meaning 'immanent' as it is in other translations.[102] So; "*God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things.*"[103] God is not the transient cause of all things because, if he were, then God would be limited to merely being the state of the universe as it is now. This would be to conflate God with the existence of the universe as momentarily expressed in the objects presently existing. This would be to curtail the power of God and to rob the universe of its potentiality to be otherwise, i.e. of the very notion of power. God, and hence substance, is not the sum total of the objects of the universe. At the same time, God is not separate from the existence of the objects in the universe. In some way he is in indwelling or immanent to their existence. This specific conception of causation is not one of individual, self-sufficient bodies bumping into one another. To understand immanent causation it must be realized that that which causes is, partially, *in* that which is affected.[104] To analyse causation, it is necessary to isolate that which is interrelated rather than that which is causing and that which is caused.

As has already been discussed, there are problems associated with some of the aspects of Spinoza's philosophy which lie behind such a position, namely, the whole question of the passage from the infinite to the finite. Such problems must be borne in mind but they do not immediately refute Spinoza's conceptions of immanence and immanent causes. Instead, this analysis will attempt to elaborate his ideas with especial regard to their relation to the common notions.

In what sense can it be said that God is immanent to all things, that he is indwelling in all things? Wolfson states that "the immanence of God does not mean that God is in all things as the soul is in the body, but rather that all things are in God as...the parts are in the whole."[105] However, as has been seen in the discussion of the passage from the infinite to the finite, this does not mean that God is the immediate cause of everything that exists now, of the world as it is in terms of human

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[102] The reason that the Elwes (Spinoza, 1955) translation has been used as the primary source here is that it maintains a consistency of quotations within this thesis. Also, the sense of 'indwelling' adds to the connotations associated with the concept of 'immanence'.

[103] Spinoza, 1992, Part I. Prop. XVIII. (p. 46)

[104] The following chapter will discuss how Whitehead also attempts to overcome Aristotle's statement that: "'A substance is not present in a subject.'" Whitehead, 1978, p. 50

[105] Wolfson, 1962, Volume I. pp. 323-4

perception (under either the attribute of thought or extension); nor does this entail that God is merely the sum of the parts of the universe, God is not an aggregate. To reduce God to the universe, as it is *now,* would be to limit the power of God and to reduce the process of the universe to a static aggregate of the presently existing modes. Such modes would have no reason to exist in their present and specific form of modification and would have no possibility of changing. It is precisely because God is immanent to the universe but not reducible to it, that power permeates it. Power is within substance, as the always present condition of its particular existence, but is not exhausted by this particular rendering of substance at this instance or as *this* space.[106]

> Being thus the immanent cause of all things in the sense that He is inseparable from them but still logically distinct from them, God may also be said to transcend them according to the old meaning of the term 'transcendence,' namely' that of being logically distinct and more general.[107]

To sum up:

> Spinoza's substance is a transcendent immanence. Spinoza's substance is thus a whole transcending the universe, the latter being the sum of the modes, and the relation of substance to the universe is conceived by him after the manner of the relation of the whole to the part, the whole in this case being a universal of a special kind, a real universal.[108]

And, in a passage which directly links (although with qualifications) this discussion to Duns Scotus' concept of the univocity of being, Deleuze summarizes Spinoza's position thus:

> What is in another thing and what is in itself are not asserted in the same sense, but being is formally asserted in the same sense of what it is in itself and what it is in something else....Further still, this common being is not in Spinoza, as in Duns Scotus, a neutralized being, indifferent between finite and infinite....Rather is it the qualified Being of substance, in which substance remains in itself, but modes also remain as in something else. Immanence is thus the new figure that the theory of univocity takes on in Spinoza.[109]

Substance, therefore, *is* power and matter. Extension is constituted through the melding of power and the material; the existence of 'things' will be analysable only in terms of inter-relation. Space is not an external region or something to be filled or inhabited. Contemporary extension is an expression of the past, present and

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[106] In this respect, Spinoza's notion of power will become Whitehead's notion of 'creativity' and will inform the transcendental aspect of Deleuze's 'transcendental empiricism. This will be discussed in Chapters Four and Seven respectively.

[107] Wolfson, 1962, p. 325

[108] Wolfson, 1962, pp. 74-5

[109] Deleuze, 1992, pp. 165-6

future intricacy of power, matter and subjectivity. However, as has been seen throughout this chapter, it is not clear that Spinoza is able to provide a full account of what material subjectivity might entail as he is unable to describe fully how such individual subjectivity proceeds from the utter infinity that is his God or substance. It will, therefore, be up to Whitehead and Deleuze to provide more detailed accounts of the relation of matter and subjectivity within a non-essentialist ontology.

Chapter Three
Whitehead on Philosophy and Science

As seen in the Introduction to this thesis, many secondary texts on Whitehead tend to focus on outlining and explaining the technical terms and concepts in Whitehead's work and attempt to clarify or critique either aspects, or the totality, of his philosophy. As such, the reader can often find themselves lost amidst a bewildering array of definitions, categories and concepts. Indeed, Deleuze once wrote: "I only remember being dazzled by the great surge of bizarre categories at the beginning of *Process and Reality*....What a book!"[1] In an attempt to avoid this scenario, this chapter is designed to introduce Whitehead's work through an analysis of his critique of earlier philosophical and scientific positions. This is intended to provide a basis from which a fuller understanding of the positive aspects of Whitehead's philosophy will follow, in subsequent chapters. It is also intended to allow for a comparison of the similarities and disagreements with the work of Spinoza, as discussed in the previous chapter. It is also hoped that this initial exploration of Whitehead's critical position will enable the specific elements of the work of Deleuze to be approached in a more focussed manner in later chapters.

The chapter is divided into three main sections, although each of these has its own sub-sections. After the brief 'Introduction' which attempts to situate Whitehead in relation to the elements of Spinoza's metaphysics, the first main section discusses various elements of 'The Subject-Predicate Axis' with reference to Aristotle's notion of 'primary substance'. The main body of the chapter deals with the development of the concept of 'dead nature' through certain scientific and philosophical theories, most characteristically those of Newton, whose work, and its consequences, are considered at length. This is followed by a discussion of the status of science and philosophy in the work of Whitehead. The chapter concludes with a brief analysis of Whitehead's critique of past theories of the concept of space and a short introduction to the positive aspects of Whitehead's philosophy which follow in

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[1] Deleuze, in a letter cited by Villani, in Villani, 1996, p. 245 (My translation)

Chapter Four.

Introduction

Whitehead owes much to the work of Spinoza, however he states that there is an elemental problem with Spinoza's metaphysical theory. This problem corresponds to the 'passage from the infinite to the finite' as outlined in the previous chapter. As has been identified, it is difficult for Spinoza to account for the full materiality of his modes given the priority that he assigns to the infinite in *The Ethics*. Whitehead characterizes Spinoza's position thus: "He starts with one substance, *causa sui*, and considers its essential attributes and its individualized modes, i.e., the *'affectiones substantiae.'* The gap in the system is the arbitrary introduction of the 'modes'."[2]

Whitehead seeks to redress this situation by making what he terms 'stubborn fact'[3] the focus of his philosophy. The adequate explanation of 'stubborn fact' is perhaps the ultimate aim of his work. The following quotation is offered as both a starting point and a summary:

> In these lectures 'relatedness' is dominant over 'quality.' All relatedness has its foundation in the relatedness of actualities; and such relatedness is wholly concerned with the appropriation of the dead by the living....This is the doctrine that the creative advance of the world is the becoming, the perishing and the objective immortalities of those things which jointly constitute *stubborn fact*.[4]

Like Spinoza, Whitehead envisages those things which constitute reality (stubborn fact) as constituted by their relatedness. Unlike Spinoza, he commences with an attempt to explain such relatedness in terms of those items which constitute immediate reality as opposed to commencing with a theory of the uniqueness of substance from which such reality is derived. Rather, Whitehead's explanation relies on the assertion that it is the notion of *process* which offers the key to understanding reality; hence the title of his major work *Process and Reality*.

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[2] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 7-8
[3] "We are governed by stubborn fact." Whitehead, 1978, p.129, and *passim*
[4] Whitehead, 1978, pp. xiii-xiv

In order to effect such an analysis Whitehead proposes "the philosophy of organism [which] is a recurrence to pre-Kantian modes of thought."[5] From this view follows the detailed analyses of Descartes, Newton, Locke and Hume which run throughout *Process and Reality*.[6] Through these analyses, Whitehead suggests that he has uncovered two fatal flaws which have condemned subsequent philosophical and scientific enquiries to misunderstand the elemental part that process plays in reality. These are the 'Sensationalist Doctrine' and the 'Subjectivist Doctrine'. Whitehead does not completely reject all the elements of these approaches but he does maintain that both of these implicitly or explicitly rely upon or replicate the subject-predicate approach to metaphysics and epistemology. And it is this subject-predicate mode of thinking which will now be considered in more detail.

The Subject-Predicate Axis

The subject-predicate approach is one that fundamentally and primarily splits the world in two. On one side there is that which knows or perceives, on the other is that which is known or perceived. "The subject is the knower, the object is the known. Thus, with this interpretation, the object-subject relation is the knower-known relation."[7] Philosophy and science by their emphasis on one or both sides of this axis have been forced: to describe reality in terms of pure data (e.g. scientific or logical positivism); to base their theories on the primacy of human mind (e.g. Descartes, phenomenology); to attempt to reconcile dual aspects of the subject-predicate axis, whilst still retaining its status as the 'true' way in which the world is ordered and known (e.g. Kant). "All modern philosophy hinges round the difficulty of describing the world in terms of subject and predicate, substance and quality, particular and universal."[8]

Whitehead maintains that it is the pervasive influence of Aristotelian logic and its reliance upon a conception of a 'primary substance' which leads to the subject-

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[5] Whitehead, 1978, p. xi

[6] See, especially, Whitehead, 1978, pp. 130- 160. These analyses also build on the chapter 'The Century of Genius' in *Science and the Modern World*, Whitehead, 1933, pp. 49-70

[7] Whitehead, A. N. 1967. *Adventures of Ideas*, Free Press, New York, p. 175

[8] Whitehead, 1978, p. 30

predicate axis. He cites a dictum of Aristotle to sum up what is meant by this notion of primary substance: "'A substance is not present in a subject.'"[9] Thus, the universe is comprised of two fundamental (and fundamentally different) realms. There is the realm of substance, things, objects etc. which comprise the physical (natural) world. In contradistinction to this is the realm of subjects which perceive, know, cognicize this other realm (or fail in all of these). In some respects Kant is emblematic of both of these positions and their problems, in that his philosophy attempts to make sense of absolute subjectivity, absolute objectivity and absolute reality (noumena). As such he represents the apotheosis of the subject-predicate mode of thought.

Whitehead, in no uncertain terms, states that the influence of Aristotle is not only widespread but pernicious. "The evil produced by Aristotelian 'primary substance' is exactly this habit of metaphysical emphasis upon the 'subject-predicate' form of propositions."[10] Throughout *Process and Reality*, Whitehead is intent on outlining a different view of substance which will elude the division of the world into knower and known. Before approaching the way in which Whitehead attempts to do this it is necessary to examine in more detail the reasons for, and consequences of, the tacit acceptance of Aristotle's concept of substance through an analysis of the Sensationalist and Subjectivist principles.

The Sensationalist Principle

"The sensationalist principle is, that the primary activity in the act of experience is the bare subjective entertainment of the datum, devoid of any subjective form of reception. This is the doctrine of *mere* sensation."[11]

Here, Whitehead is focussing upon the role of sense-perception in terms of (human) experience and any consequent subjectivity. "My quarrel with modern Epistemology concerns its exclusive stress upon sense-perception for the provision of data".[12]

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[9] Whitehead, 1978, p. 50
[10] Whitehead, 1978, p. 30
[11] Whitehead, 1978, p. 157
[12] Whitehead, 1938, p. 182

Whitehead does not reject sense-perception as an important route to analysing experience and subjectivity. What he is pointing out is that, when considered as *mere* data, sense-perception is mute, in that it acts solely as a source of information but does not, of itself, provide the key by which such information can be analysed. That is, the sensationalist principle considers that sense-data is of itself enough to furnish a complete understanding of the world. Whitehead's argument against the strict adherence to this principle is that it leaves out the manner in which such information is delivered, received and organized. As such, the sensationalist principle views sense-data as dead, as inert, and this is the approach which much of modern science has adopted in its search for objectivity. Hence the apparent struggle for the social sciences and the humanities to account for the meaningfulness of the data it considers. To reiterate, according to Whitehead, this entails that sense-perception is unable to account for the meaningfulness of its data; it can only account for the existence of the data itself. Whitehead assigns this 'discovery' to Hume.[13] It will be for Whitehead to account for how such meaningfulness can be implanted within such data by avoiding the subject-predicate axis entirely. This will be discussed in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

The Subjectivist Principle

"The subjectivist principle is, that the datum in the act of experience can be adequately analysed purely in terms of universals."[14]

As opposed to the sensationalist principle which prioritizes sense-data, the subjectivist principle prioritizes that which experiences such sense-data. And that which experiences such data is some kind of a subject. The primacy of the subject as a distinct entity entails that, when it is confronted with the 'outside' world, it does not do so on equal terms with that world. Instead, it does so on its own terms and on the terms of all other members of that class of subjects. The subject therefore becomes a universal (e.g. mind, rationality, consciousness, innate morality etc.) which then qualifies that which is perceived, i.e. the particulars which constitute the

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[13] Whitehead, 1938, p. 182. Also, see Whitehead, 1978, p. 157 and Whitehead, 1938, p. 182
[14] Whitehead, 1978, p. 157

'outside' world: "those substances which are the subjects enjoying **conscious** experiences provide the primary data for philosophy, namely, themselves as the enjoyment of such experience. This is the famous subjectivist bias which entered into modern philosophy through Descartes."[15]

Of the three premises which inform the subjectivist principle, the most salient at this point is: "The acceptance of Aristotle's definition of primary substance, as always a subject and never a predicate".[16] So, with the subjectivist principle the focus is upon the individual mind as the primary element of existence and analysis. According to such a position, the outside world becomes a set of inert objects, strictly separated from the experiencing subject. There are (according to Whitehead) two dangers implicit in such an approach:

One is that the possibility of the objects of the world being considered as experiencing subjects in their own right is denied.

The second is that the world becomes impossible to experience *as it is* and so becomes unknowable or reduced to appearance.[17]

This outline of the criticisms which Whitehead makes of these principles is intended as a first step to an understanding of the philosophical position which he himself adopts. It should be stressed that he does not reject either of these principles entirely, instead he appropriates certain elements of each into his "reformed subjectivist principle".[18]

The Reformed Subjectivist Principle

Simply stated, Whitehead's reformed subjectivist principle is as follows: "that apart from the experiences of subjects there is nothing, nothing, nothing, bare nothingness."[19] This statement goes to the heart of Whitehead's philosophy of

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[15] Whitehead, 1978, p. 159. Emphasis added

[16] Whitehead, 1978, p. 157

[17] Whitehead outlines these consequences as characteristic of Kant's philosophy. See Whitehead, 1978, p.156 and 190

[18] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 160, 166-7, 189

[19] Whitehead, 1978, p. 167

organism. Rather than positing a universe of self-sufficient objects which it is the task of subjects (specifically human subjects) to perceive or know, Whitehead envisages a universe replete with subjects; including those entities usually conceived of as objects. There are thus two main aims of the philosophy of organism. One is to give an account of how it is that all matter, all existence, everything (in the sense of *every thing*) can be described in terms of subjectivity. The second is to describe how the actual reality of such subjects is not to be conceived in terms of fixed, inert entities (i.e. as a mere refiguring of the concept of objects) but in terms of their experience of other subjects. That is, it is subjectivity, or the process of a subject's experience of other subjects, which constitutes reality. This is the barest of sketches of Whitehead's philosophy of organism. A full discussion of this work will take up much of Chapters Four, Five and Six. But, in order to follow the train of Whitehead's argument, it is necessary to take a couple of steps back to isolate those elements of his thought which lead him to this position. As has been seen, one of the first of these is his rejection of the sensationalist and subjectivist doctrines. One of the main reasons for this is that both approaches, especially when placed within the subject-predicate mode of thought, lead to a dead, inert, and meaningless concept of nature.

Dead Nature[20]

In order to follow how the concept of a dead nature was arrived at, Whitehead outlines those concepts which have informed historical conceptions of matter. It is the legacy of Greek philosophy, for Whitehead, which is the underlying explanation of the seventeenth century formulation of the nature of matter which endures to this

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[20] The concept of nature as dead has been discussed by various theorists. Adorno and Horkheimer comment on how Enlightenment thought reduced matter to an object which could be mastered: "From now on, matter would at last be mastered without any illusion of ruling or inherent powers, of hidden qualities." Horkheimer, M. And Adorno, T. 1973. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Allen Lane, London, p. 6. Perhaps more significantly, in terms of this thesis, Merchant has traced the effect of conceiving nature as dead with especial reference to the lack of any sense of the 'organic' which further points to the importance of Whitehead's attempt to delineate a 'philosophy of organism': "The removal of animistic, organic assumptions about the cosmos constituted the death of nature - the most far-reaching effect of the Scientific Revolution. Because nature was now viewed as a system of dead, inert particles moved by external, rather than inherent forces, the mechanical framework itself could itself legitimate the manipulation of nature." Merchant, C. 1983. *The Death of Nature. Women, Ecology and The Scientific Revolution*, Harper and Row, p. 193

day.[21] Aristotle is paraphrased, by Whitehead, as defining substance as "'the ultimate substratum which is no longer predicated of anything else."[22] Again, this is the realm of the subject-predicate axis; but this time it is not the subject qua human subject which is primary. As such, this is almost an inversion of the subjectivist principle. This inversion occurs as a result of Aristotelian logic's reliance upon all true propositions being expressed in the subject-predicate mode. So, it is substance qua ultimate physicality, or the basis of matter, which is primary. It is this which underpins the individuation or elaboration of substance as items or objects.[23] In terms of sense-perception this entails that what is present to humans are the attributes of such a substance. "The unquestioned acceptance of the Aristotelian logic has led to an ingrained tendency to postulate a sub-stratum for whatever is disclosed in sense awareness, namely, to look below what we are aware of for the substance in the sense of the 'concrete thing.'"[24] "In this way, the exclusive reliance on sense-perception promotes a false metaphysics."[25] That is, the philosophical and scientific emphasis upon perception as the royal road to knowledge or understanding replicates the misconception that *underneath* experience is a basis which placidly subtends that experience "so that the course of nature is conceived as being merely the fortunes of matter in its adventure through space."[26] The result is the conception that it is the attributes of matter which are present to, and the basis for, human perception, knowledge and consciousness.

The Aristotelian notion of primary substance led, according to Whitehead, to the 'old' scientific and philosophical conceptions of space and time which characterized matter as follows: "There are bits of matter, enduring self-identically in space which is otherwise empty. Each bit of matter occupies a definite limited region....The essential relationship between bits of matter is purely spatial. Space itself is

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[21] "The history of the doctrine of matter has yet to be written. It is the history of the influence of Greek philosophy on science." Whitehead, 1964, p. 16

[22] Whitehead, 1964, p. 18

[23] It may seem that in these terms Whitehead is arguing against the whole conception of substance as held by Spinoza. However, whilst it is clear that Spinoza's thought was influenced by Aristotle (See, Wolfson 1962), it is also clear that he is attempting to describe a substance which is not static.

[24] Whitehead, 1964, p. 18

[25] Whitehead, 1967, p. 219

[26] Whitehead, 1964, p. 20

eternally unchanging"[27] This conception is not to be construed as some idle theoretical abstraction as: "This commonsense notion still reigns supreme in the work-a-day life of mankind. It dominates the market-place, the playgrounds, the Law Courts, and in fact the whole sociological discourse of mankind."[28]

As such, Whitehead seeks to clarify the presuppositions which subtend such commonsense notions and he finds his main material in the work of Newton and Hume. "Combining Newton and Hume[29] we obtain a barren concept, namely a field of perception devoid of any data for its own interpretation, and a system of interpretation, devoid of any reason for the concurrence of its factors."[30] Following Newton's mapping of the universe, there arises a conception of nature which, of itself, can offer no reason for its being as it is. There are two sets of reasons which Whitehead provides as to why this conception should be rejected, one scientific, the other philosophical, although the two are inter-related. It is these inter-related reasons that will now be addressed.

Newton and Objects

Whilst stating that Newton's methodology was an "overwhelming success",[31] Whitehead argues that his theory "left Nature still without meaning or value....there was no reason for the law of gravitation."[32] Here Whitehead is describing the absolute separation of fact and value which, he argues, characterizes much of modern thinking. On the one side is science, on the other are the social sciences, philosophy and the humanities. The 'success' of Newton's scheme lies in its apparent ability to predict the motions of all objects. However, taken on its own terms, his account can provide no reasons as to **why** his system is justified. Given that Newton's aim was to account for the apparently arbitrary motion of self-identical

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[27] Whitehead, 1938, p. 179
[28] Whitehead, 1938, pp. 177-8.
[29] That is, combining Newton's attempt to map the universe in terms of universal forces with Hume's 'discovery' approximately a century later that "Sense-perception does not provide the data in terms of which we interpret it." Whitehead, 1938, p. 182
[30] Whitehead, 1938, p. 184
[31] Whitehead, 1938, p. 183
[32] Whitehead, 1938, p. 183

objects in the universe, his 'success' lies in establishing a system which does apparently do so. But, he is only able to do this by adding another level of (explanatory) arbitrariness, that of the stresses between objects which go to make up his theory of gravity. That is to say, Newton seems to account for the motion of objects but can only do so by adding another fact, the law of gravity, which is itself unexplained.

> The arbitrary motions of the bodies were thus explained by the arbitrary stresses between material bodies, conjoined with their spatiality, their mass, and their initial states of motion. By introducing stresses - in particular the law of gravitation -...he greatly increased the systematic aspect of nature. But he left all the factors of the system - more particularly, mass and stress - in the position of detached facts devoid of any reason for their compresence.[33]

As has been seen, Newton's position is a consequence of Whitehead's application of the sensationalist doctrine (that, of itself, data can provide no reason for its being as it is). Whitehead argues that Newton 'adds on' gravity as the unexplainable element which makes his system work. What follows now is a discussion of Newton's approach to objects and, in the following section, the associated concept of "secondary qualities"[34] which was developed to account for the consequences of Newton's theory. Whitehead is interested in how these, and the subject-predicate axis amount to a solidification of the concept of a dead nature.

> Newtonian physics is based upon the independent individuality of each bit of matter. Each stone is conceived as fully describable apart from any reference to any other portion of matter. It might be alone in the Universe, the sole occupant of a uniform space. But it would still be the stone that it is. Also the stone could be adequately described without any reference to past or future. It is to be conceived fully and adequately as wholly constituted within the present moment.[35]

Clearly, this is a succinct and forceful account of that which has been termed an 'object' and this definition has recognizable influences in not only science but also philosophy and the social sciences. An object, according to those who ascribe to the Newtonian view, is that kind of thing which is totally describable and makes sense on its own terms. Insofar as it makes sense on its own terms, this will be a result of the uniqueness of its essence or its internal relations as opposed to the external relations which somehow link it to the other objects of the universe. The

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[33] Whitehead, 1938, pp. 183-4
[34] Whitehead, 1964, p. 27
[35] Whitehead, 1967, pp. 156

internal relations or essence of an object are that which constitute and guarantee its identity and these can be located outside of the object's particular or given existence at any point in time or space. The paper on which this is written could be envisaged as such an object. If this were the case then it would have a separate identity from its particular, contextual existence as a page in this thesis. There would be something about it which would mean that if it had been never been used (for example, if it had been discarded as containing too many mistakes), or if someone else had used it in their thesis, or if it were still in its package, or if it were the only piece of paper left in the world...it would still be the **same** piece of paper. It is what it is and it is where it is.

On such a view, the task of science is to map all such objects in the universe. The task of philosophy is to account for how subjects gain knowledge of such objects. This view also entails that the rather complex task of the social sciences would be either to account for the inter-relation of subjects in a manner which considers them as equivalent to objects or, to account for the meaningful inter-relation of such subjects conceptualized in contradistinction to such objects.[36] Thus, even an account of subjectivity alone, unless it refuses to define subjectivity in terms of its difference to objects, will be subsumed within this subject-predicate axis. Such insidious pervasiveness is, for Whitehead, "The evil produced by the Aristotelian 'primary substance'".[37] This is why this thesis has decided to focus upon Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze who all attempt to avoid such a dualism. It also points to the importance of the lack of negativity in their philosophy and their avowal of affirmation. This follows from the denial of the 'other' as constitutive in singularity or individuality, as this presupposes the distinction between inside and outside which forms part of the subject-predicate, subject-object dichotomy. That is, by positing an exterior realm against which subjectivity is defined, this entails that the non-inclusion of this exterior realm will serve as the basis for identifying and defining the identity of that individual. This, thereby, invokes a negation of the external as the guarantor of self-identity. Such negative definitions of singularity will

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[36] Again, this is a rather schematic account of the history of all of these disciplines but it is intended to give a flavour of the critique which Whitehead is implicitly making.

[37] Whitehead, 1978, p. 30

always arise, according to Whitehead, when the subject-predicate mode is utilized. Against this approach, Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze all try to render individuality in terms of the combination of disparate elements.

Secondary Qualities and their Consequences

Within the seventeenth century scientific doctrines on matter, there developed certain elements that complicated, yet reinforced, the fundamental split between inert nature and the human subject or mind. "Systematic doctrines of light and sound as being something proceeding from the emitting bodies were definitely established, and in particular the connexion of light with colour was laid bare by Newton."[38] This outlook maintains that matter comprises the primary reality which is 'out there' and which is to be known by the mind. At the same time, it also confounds the manner in which the relation between the known and the knower is to be understood. For, now the relation is not to be identified as that of the mind merely perceiving the attributes of an otherwise inert matter. Rather, the relation between knower and known is to be conceived as one in which matter, in some way, transmits attributes of itself to the mind, via sense perception, whilst itself remaining the same. Also, there is the second difficulty of accounting for the fact that what is perceived (by the mind) is different to that which is transmitted; "we do not even perceive what enters the eye."[39] So, light particles or waves enter the eye and are focussed on the retina but what is perceived is not 'light particles' but a specific colour (for example, green) but 'green' itself does not seem to enter the eye. Here is to be found the grounding of the theory of secondary qualities as developed from the seventeenth-century onward. Whitehead summarizes this doctrine as follows: "The colour and the sound were no longer in nature. They are the mental reactions of the percipient...Thus nature is left with bits of matter, qualified by mass, spatial relations, and the change of such relations."[40]

On such a theory 'greenness' is what Whitehead terms a "psychic addition".[41] "The

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[38] Whitehead, 1964, pp. 26-7
[39] Whitehead, 1964, p. 27
[40] Whitehead, 1938, p. 180
[41] Whitehead, 1964, p. 29

theory of psychic additions would treat the greenness as a psychic addition furnished by the perceiving mind, and would leave to nature merely the molecules and the radiant energy which influence the mind towards that perception."[42] It is this apparent dichotomy which has led to what Whitehead calls the "bifurcation of nature".[43] This bifurcation of nature is loosely analogous to the distinction between natural science on the one hand and the social sciences and humanities on the other. Within this bifurcation there are the utterly effective facts of science and, on the other, the realm of meaningful human action which it is supposedly the task of the social sciences and the humanities to decipher. This could be characterized as another example of the notion of primary substance in that science views nature as primary whilst the social sciences and humanities, in heterodox and conflicting ways, posit 'humans' as the primary substance.[44] There is thus an apparently unbridgeable gulf between the two; although there lingers the suspicion that, ultimately, that which science reports upon (namely molecules, cells, genes etc.) must in some way take priority, as it is they which underpin the real reality of the universe. It is precisely this bifurcation, this unbridgeable gulf, which Whitehead attempts to re-describe throughout his work.

> What I am essentially protesting against is the bifurcation of nature into two systems of reality, which in so far as they are real, are real in different senses. One reality would be the entities such as electrons which are the study of speculative physics. This would be the reality which is there for knowledge; although on this theory it is never known. For what is known is the other sort of reality, which is the byplay of the mind. Thus there would be two natures, one is the conjecture and the other is the dream.
>
> Another way of phrasing this theory which I am arguing against is to bifurcate nature into two divisions, namely into the nature apprehended in awareness and the nature which is the cause of awareness. The nature which is in fact apprehended in awareness holds within it the greenness of the trees, the song of the birds, the warmth of the sun, the hardness of the chairs, and the feel of the velvet. The nature which is the cause of awareness is the conjectured system of molecules and electrons which so affects the mind as to produce the awareness of apparent nature. The meeting point of these two natures is the mind, the causal nature being influent and the apparent nature being effluent.[45]

And what is crucial, in this account, is the role that this specific notion of effective

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[42] Whitehead, 1964, pp. 29-30

[43] Whitehead, 1964, p. 30. Chapter II of *The Concept of Nature* (1964) is entitled 'Theories Of The Bifurcation of Nature', pp. 26-48

[44] Although Whitehead does not make this explicit reading of the doctrine of primary substance, it is implicit in his critique of Aristotelian modes of thought. This rendering of primary substance either in terms of a subject which subtends all experience or as an ultimate substantial ground which guarantees the existence of all items of matter will be utilised throughout this thesis.

[45] Whitehead, 1964, pp. 30-1

causality has. In a similar vein to Spinoza, Whitehead argues against the idea of a causality which presumes that one self-identical and separate entity effects another self-identical and separate entity in an external way. This is the position which Newton adopts and which leads to a universe "shivered into a multitude of disconnected substantial things....But substantial thing cannot call unto substantial thing"[46] For, on this account of causality there will always be a 'bifurcation of nature' and the underlying assumption of a primary substance.

The Status of Science and Philosophy in Whitehead

This chapter has reviewed Whitehead's analysis of certain doctrines of matter without making much of a distinction between that which is philosophical and that which is scientific. This is symptomatic of Whitehead's approach and he does not always draw strict boundaries between the two. He does not believe that either science or philosophy can, on their own, fully theorize reality. As such, he uses elements of each to critique the other. A fuller commentary on his understanding of the relation between the two now follows.

Whitehead states that modern science, by moving away from the direct use of sense-perception as the primary method of inquiry, has developed a new conceptual apparatus.[47] As a historian of the philosophy of science,[48] Whitehead expends much time in delineating the influence of philosophical concepts upon science and vice versa. It is not one of the aims of this thesis to outline explicitly the development of such ideas. However, it should be noted that Whitehead sees the two realms as closely interrelated. Indeed, it is precisely philosophy's reliance upon concepts which are now out-dated (in scientific terms), that has led to the apparent dichotomy between the sensationalist and the subjectivist doctrine, and the seeming impasse created by the subject-predicate axis. At the same time, Whitehead does not grant science any immediate priority in accessing the 'truth of

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[46] Whitehead, 1967, p. 133

[47] "Modern physics has abandoned the doctrine of Simple Location....There is a focal region, which in common speech is where the thing is. But its influence streams away from it with finite velocity throughout the utmost recesses of space and time." Whitehead, 1967, p. 157. See also , Whitehead, 1938, pp. 185-201.

[48] Although this aspect of Whitehead's thought is to be found throughout his works, it is most clearly expounded in *Science and the Modern World*, Whitehead, 1933.

the world'. He also maintains that science itself relies upon out-dated concepts which lead to confusions similar to those he identifies in current philosophy:

> For example, when geneticists conceive genes as the determinants of heredity. The analogy of the old concept of matter sometimes leads them to ignore the influence of the particular animal body in which they are functioning. They presuppose that a pellet of matter remains in all respects self-identical whatever be its changes of environment.[49]

Whitehead maintains that modern science has overturned much of Newton's conceptual approach. "The story commences with the wave-theory of light and ends with the wave-theory of matter."[50] The resultant contemporary conception of objects, space and matter is as follows:

> in the modern concept the group of agitations which we term matter is fused into its environment. There is no possibility of a detached, self-contained local existence. The environment enters into the nature of each thing. Some elements in the nature of a complete set of agitations may remain stable as those agitations are propelled through a changing environment. But such stability is only the case in a general, average way. This average fact is the reason why we find the same chair, the same rock, and the same planet enduring for days, or for centuries, or for millions of years.[51]

So, for Whitehead, one of modern science's most important roles is that of disproving the Hume-Newton axis and of providing a new way of thinking philosophically. However, this is a task that science on its own cannot complete. As has been seen in the example of the gene, science still invokes concepts of matter which inform earlier versions of science and are thus incompatible with its contemporary conceptual framework: "in the present-day reconstruction of physics fragments of the Newtonian concepts are stubbornly retained. The result is to reduce modern physics to a sort of mystic chant over an unintelligible Universe."[52]

As such, the status of science is not exactly determined within Whitehead's work. Sometimes it can seem as if he simply accepts the theories of modern physics, especially as they fit in with his own philosophical scheme. However, this is not the case. For Whitehead, there is a duality in the status of science.

According to Whitehead, there is that which is 'discovered' by dint of scientific

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[49] Whitehead, 1938, p. 189. This point is also made by Haraway when she refers to such conceptions of genes as evidence of "gene fetishism", Haraway, 1997, pp. 145-147

[50] Whitehead, 1967, p. 156

[51] Whitehead, 1938, pp. 188-9

[52] Whitehead, 1938, p. 185

inquiry but this does not mean that what is discovered is True in any transcendental sense. That is, science is not a homogenous project which gains access to utter reality, rather it is a collection of specific or 'special' sciences. "Each science confines itself to a fragment of the evidence and weaves its theories in terms of notions suggested by that fragment."[53] The success or otherwise of each scientific 'discovery' is judged in terms of its effectivity. That is, in its ability to alter the conditions of that science (its techniques, concepts and technologies). Conceptually, each science is involved in abstraction. "Now an abstraction is nothing else than the omission of part of the truth. The abstraction is well founded when the conclusions drawn from it are not vitiated by the omitted truth"[54] Thus a science can be true but not True. "Thus the certainties of Science are a delusion. They are hedged around with unexplored limitations."[55] And, it would seem that the only way of judging whether or not a science, or any other discipline, has drawn a conclusion 'vitiated by the omitted truth' is through philosophy. Thus Whitehead reserves for himself the right to accept certain aspects of scientific theories as true but, also to set limitations upon their claims to truth-hood. So, "the autonomy of the natural sciences has its origin in a concept of the world of Nature, now discarded."[56] Whitehead thereby maintains the right of philosophy to judge, and establish, theories which even if not True, then are at least truer than those of science.[57]

Thus within the special sciences there are confusions which arise from the admixing of new objects and old concepts. "Our handling of scientific doctrines is controlled by the diffuse metaphysical concepts of our epoch."[58] The gene is a case in point. Whitehead states that if the modern scientific concept of matter is accepted then "no *a priori* argument as to the inheritance of characters can be drawn from the mere doctrine of genes."[59] This admixture results in confusion and caution over the

[53] Whitehead, 1938, p.178
[54] Whitehead, 1938, p. 189
[55] Whitehead, 1967, p. 154
[56] Whitehead, 1968, p. 19
[57] 'Truer' in the sense that "Science only deals with half the evidence provided by human experience. It divides the seamless coat - or, to change the metaphor into a happier form, it examines the coat, which is superficial, and neglects the body which is fundamental." Whitehead, 1938, p. 211. The importance of the body in Whitehead's philosophy will be discussed in Chapter Five.
[58] Whitehead, 1967, p. 154
[59] Whitehead, 1938, p. 190. Again this is a point taken up by Haraway, directly from Whitehead's work. See Haraway, 1997, pp 146-7

ability, or lack of it, if biologists and scientists alike assign the function of causality to genes. If Whitehead's account is accepted then the disputations which arise over genes, DNA, biology etc. are not so much arguments over environmental versus genetic factors as witness to the retention, within the general theory (or acceptance) of the existence of genes, of an outdated concept of matter and its associated theory of causation. This problem arises from the fact that genetics uses some of the tools and concepts of modern science but not others. This leads to its inability to express itself except in abstractions which are 'vitiated by the omitted truth' thereby promoting a misunderstanding of what a gene is, what it can do, and what it can cause (if anything). One of the tasks of philosophy, according to Whitehead, is to point up such confusions and to attempt to develop a conceptual apparatus which will avoid such errors.

Conclusion: Space and Simple Location

In terms of space, Whitehead maintains that it is once again the notion of a primary substance that infuses most concepts of space and thereby influences subsequent approaches to issues such as 'simple location' and objects. Once more, it is Newton who provides the basis for Whitehead's exposition of simple location. "This is the full Newtonian concept....It is the thorough-going doctrine of 'simple location' and of 'external relations'."[60] As has been discussed, simple location refers to the belief that each item of matter as a distinct, self-sufficient unity, and as such it inhabits precisely that portion or region of space which it fills out in terms of its self-identity. This position relies on the primacy of internal relations as that which are essential to the existence or meaning of each item of matter. Every object is what it *is* when this being is defined in terms of its internal constitution and consistency. Thus, that which has to be accounted for by both physics and philosophy is the spatial inter-relation of the *external* aspects of discrete items of matter. Consequently, causation is always conceived of as that which impinges upon the externality of each object.[61]

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[60] Whitehead, 1967, pp. 156-7

[61] Of course, such a view is directly opposed by Spinoza through his account of immanent causation.

On such accounts, the occupation of space by an extended object is limited to the extendedness of that object itself, rather than its inter-relation and changing relations with other objects. That is, such spatial occupation is not normally assigned to events. "This relation of occupation is not usually stated for events but for objects....Pompey's statue would be said to occupy space, but not the event which was the assassination of Julius Caesar."[62] A fuller account of Whitehead's specific understanding of the term 'event' and some of the difficulties associated with this will follow in Chapter Eight.

For the moment, Whitehead cites many objections to the concepts of simple location and external relations.[63] One of the most important of these is that concept of space which accompanies a description of items of matter as occupying simple locations replicates a version of Aristotle's primary substance. Thus, Whitehead wishes to argue against the idea that the substance which underpins all perception is already *in* space, (that is, substance as the *primary* substance which subtends the possibility of materiality). As he puts it: "scientists (including philosophers who were scientists) in conscious or unconscious ignoration of philosophy presupposed this substratum, *qua* substratum for attributes, as neverthele s [sic] in time and space."[64] One of the main elements driving Whitehead's critique is his adherence to his version of relativity theory. The importance of Whitehead's understanding of relativity will be taken up in the next chapter as will his own theory of space and time.

This present chapter was intended to describe the critical position which Whitehead adopts in relation to the history of philosophy and science, and to outline his critique of earlier theories. The following two chapters will outline the positive aspects of his philosophy, through an analysis of his major philosophical work, *Process and Reality*.

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[62] Whitehead, 1964, p. 36
[63] Whitehead, 1964, pp. 20-5
[64] Whitehead, 1964, p. 21. In the edition of *The Concept of Nature* used for this thesis, the first 's' of the word 'nevertheless' is omitted.

Chapter Four

Whitehead's Theory of Becoming

The preceding chapter dealt with the critical position that Whitehead adopts in relation to the history of philosophy and science. As has been seen, it is a central tenet of his philosophical outlook that the respective status of objects and subjects has to be re-thought. In opposition to Spinoza, Whitehead wants to concentrate on, "stubborn facts",[1] items of matter, the very 'stuff' of materiality. This chapter will analyse how Whitehead sets out to describe the existence of such stubborn fact in terms of its 'becoming'. Chapter Two pointed out up the shortcomings involved in locating an infinite and unique substance as the ultimate guarantor of individuality. And, as indicated in the preceding chapter, Whitehead identifies such approaches as deriving from the Aristotelian notion of a primary substance which logically stands behind, and is the final cause or explanation of materiality. This primary substance can take the form of a supposedly deeper, more fundamental level of materiality either at the physical level or the subjective level. In the latter case there is a positing of a form of consciousness, rationality, or quasi-ideal explanatory realm from which proceeds the mapping of the real world. Examples of the former position (a physical/material rendering of primary substance) are to be found in the work of those who describe DNA, genes, etc. as the key to life, to current physical manifestations; that is, living organisms.[2] Examples of the second position (a subjective/intelligible rendering of primary substance) are to be found in, amongst others, the work of Butler[3] who seems to place the materiality of the linguistic signifier as the ultimate explanatory realm.

Both of these positions can be seen as essentialist insofar as they require a ground upon which to commence their theorising. The demands for the rest of this chapter are therefore clear: namely, to outline and assess Whitehead's theory of becoming and the extent to which it avoids basing its metaphysics in some form of a ground

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[1] Whitehead, 1978, p. xiii

[2] Ansell-Pearson, 1999, Jonson, 1999 and Kember 2002, 2003 all provide more detailed expositions and critiques of such positions (see Introduction)

[3] For example, Butler, 1993. See Chapter One for a fuller discussion of this.

or essence.

Process and Reality

Perhaps the clearest clues as to the main elements of Whitehead's philosophy are to be found in the title of his major work. That which he is attempting to explain is how reality, or the stubborn fact that presents itself in the universe, can be consistently theorised within a theory of the universe as dynamic. Whitehead states that: "the history of philosophy...tends to ignore the fluency, and to analyse the world in terms of static categories."[4] Whitehead sees this tendency as an inimitable part of the history of Western philosophy and modern science (as discussed in the previous chapter), resulting in the position where much of Western philosophy and science has falsely rendered the universe into a class of discrete Newtonian objects.

Whitehead's positive attempt to develop a theoretical conception of the dynamic status of the universe which is consistent with the existence of genuine items of matter proceeds as follows:

> we have transformed the phrase 'all things flow' into the alternative phrase, 'the flux of things.'...in the sentence 'all things flow,' there are three words - and we have started by isolating the last word of the three. We move backward to the next word 'things' and ask, What sort of things flow? Finally we reach the word 'all' and ask, What is the meaning of the 'many' things engaged in the common flux, and in what sense, if any, can the word 'all' refer to a definitely indicated set of these many things?[5]

These questions sum up one main trajectory of this thesis. They signal the attempt to describe a mode of being which does not rely upon a static concept of objects or subjects but which characterizes them as elements within a wider network of flux. They raise the question of how individuality, and the substantiality of individuals, can be accounted for within such a flux. Finally, they introduce the wider question as to whether such accounts rely upon a Platonic concept of the universe as a unity from which all items of matter proceed.

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[4] Whitehead, 1978, p. 209
[5] Whitehead, 1978, p. 208

In his analysis, Whitehead schematically divides the history of philosophy into two camps:[6] those who have focussed on the static, permanent aspect and thereby elaborated the concept of substance as primary (for example, Aristotle and especially his medieval interpreters); those who have concentrated on the shifting aspect of the universe (for example, Heraclitus). Whitehead's approach will differ from both of these in that "the two lines of thought cannot be torn apart in this way".[7] And, as such, it is his analysis of Plato that is the most interesting and important in terms of this thesis. "Plato found his permanences in a static, spiritual heaven, and his flux in the entanglement of his forms amid the fluid imperfections of the physical world."[8] Not only is this a statement of the complexity of the Platonic systematization, it also encapsulates the conceptual positions, and their political consequences as epitomized in various strands of contemporary science. One such consequence is the tacit reliance upon the essentialist ontology inherent within such versions of Platonism. That is to say, it clarifies the reliance upon an external (quasi-spiritual, godlike) explanatory realm which is implicit in many accounts of the stability and uniqueness of objects. For example, the harping back to DNA as the code, key to life, of which the physical is simply a temporary and, by association, imperfect manifestation. For example: "in both Langton's and Ray's [both 'Artificial Life' scientists] theses, logical form - digitally encoded information - is ontologised as life's discarnate essence and origin. Concomitantly, material substance is styled as code's inessential, merely accidental or secondary supplement."[9] "This equation or reduction is premised on Langton's Platonic distinction of form from matter".[10] In opposition to any position which denigrates the physical as implicitly inferior, Whitehead states: "I believe that Plato's authority can be claimed for the doctrine that the things that flow are imperfect in the sense of 'limited' and of 'definitely exclusive of much that they might be and are not.'"[11]

Whilst Whitehead does use the term 'imperfect' here, it is important to note that he only does so in order to introduce the notion of the 'limitedness', 'definiteness' and

[6] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 208-9
[7] Whitehead, 1978, p. 209
[8] Whitehead, 1978, p. 209
[9] Jonson, 1999, p. 49
[10] Kember, 2002, p. 632
[11] Whitehead, 1978, p. 209

'the possibility of being different', as necessary components of individuality. Whitehead does not view 'imperfection' as pejorative in the way that Plato does; he does not see the constitution of individuality as inferior to a higher realm of reality. This would be to directly contradict his own position with regard to the notion of a primary substance. So, this statement of Whitehead's understanding of Plato demonstrates that he has a very specific reading of the Platonic theory of forms **and** that he is aware that his reading may contradict more traditional ones. This is clear from his use of the phrase 'I believe' but is given even more weight if the preceding sentence is also cited, namely: "In any assertion as to Plato I speak under correction".[12] Again, this demonstrates Whitehead's awareness that his rendering of Plato may be open to contestation by 'Plato scholars'. However, this does not entail that Whitehead is 'wrong', rather that he is utilising certain aspects of Plato to furnish his own theory. As shall be seen below, it is this particular reading of Plato, and the specific elements of Platonic thought that Whitehead chooses to render his own, which may lead to his ability to side-step some of the difficulties associated with Platonism (external unity, and the imperfection of physical reality etc.). In turn, as will be discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight, this may enable a reading of Deleuze's involvement with Platonism in such a way that avoids Badiou's charge that Deleuze ultimately fails to reverse Platonism.

For the moment it is crucial to note that the Whitehead's elaboration of his philosophy of organism, in terms of actual entities as the ultimate moments of existence, is first and foremost a **philosophical** argument. "In our reference to the actual world, we rarely consider an actual entity."[13] That is to say, his construction of a non-essentialist ontology is, initially at least, an attempt to avoid the metaphysical pitfalls that he has outlined in the history of western philosophy and science. His final position is to assert that: "Every actual entity is in its nature essentially social"[14] and "the laws of nature are the outcome of the social environment."[15] This might sound like music to some social theorist's ears, however

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[12] Whitehead, 1978, p. 209

[13] Whitehead, 1978, p. 198

[14] Whitehead, 1978, p. 203. Exactly what it means for an actual entity to be 'social' will be taken up later in this chapter in the section on 'The Withness of the Body' and again in the next chapter.

[15] Whitehead, 1978, p. 204

it also signals a great danger within the texts of Whitehead. For, actual entities do not correspond to things in universe such as chairs, tables or inequality. Whitehead's position is initially philosophical, in that he discusses what it means for any item to exist. The great move that he makes is to declare that all existence is *social*. But to immediately apply such a notion to that which is usually referred to as 'social' is both to misunderstand the force of his critique and to jeopardize the successful development of the work of Whitehead. To greet such statements with over-hasty applications would be in danger of reasserting the social as that ultimate ground upon which every thing is raised, thereby invoking an explicitly essentialist ontology.[16] Thus, this chapter will proceed with an analysis of the philosophical elements of Whitehead's texts, but only as a first step.

At the same time, it should be noted that Whitehead does not always strictly adhere to any distinction between the metaphysical realm and the more specifically human realm. He does, at one point, indicate his awareness that he often takes human experience as characteristic of all experience and becoming, and also points to the need for an awareness that such presumptions are not always justified:

> we have...tacitly taken human experience as an example upon which to found the generalized description required for metaphysics. But when we turn to the lower organisms [i.e. actual entities] we have first to determine which among such capacities fade...into irrelevance...by comparison with human experience which is our standard.[17]

However, Nobo states that Whitehead is "a far from careful writer"[18] and this is certainly evident in those sections on Descartes, Locke and Hume where he uses examples which seem to refer to human experience as explanatory of the existence of actual entities, but does not signal that such examples might not be immediately applicable. Such examples are aids to understanding rather than concrete examples.[19] Over the course of the next three chapters, the moments at which such 'carelessness' arise will be indicated when they arise.

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[16] See Latour's critique of social theory as outlined in the Introduction
[17] Whitehead, 1978, p. 112
[18] Nobo, 1986, p. 1
[19] See, Whitehead, 1978, pp. 51-60, pp. 130-156

The Ontological Principle and the Principle of Relativity

Process and Reality is primarily an attempt to explain in what sense that which exists, exists. It is the facticity of fact and not facts *qua* objects which is of interest. Whitehead establishes this procedure through what he terms "the ontological principle".[20] "This ontological principle means that actual entities are the only *reasons*; so that to search for *reason* is to search for one or more actual entities."[21] "The ontological principle, as here defined, constitutes the first step in the description of the universe as a solidarity of many actual entities."[22] So it is that Whitehead establishes the core of the task facing him. From the starting point of the very stuffness of matter he will derive his metaphysic. Following his critique of the main strands of the history of philosophy, Whitehead debars the possibility of accessing an exterior realm of explanation. He will attempt to build his theoretical system without predicating an anterior substance which is deeper than the actual items of the world, and without assigning a generative subjectivity to a special kind of being from which the meaning of the world proceeds. Whitehead insists that "'Actual entities'...are the final real things of which the world is made up. There is no going behind actual entities to find anything more real."[23] This accords with the Spinozist and Deleuzean notion of the univocity of being in that **all** existence is to be accounted for in the same manner; there is no hierarchy of being. At the same time, this might seem to suggest that Whitehead is committing the sin of assigning the level of a primary substance to such actual entities and thereby replicating an essentialist ontology rather than developing a non-essentialist one. The way in which he attempts to avoid such criticism is through his adoption of the principle of relativity.[24]

The principle of universal relativity[25] directly traverses Aristotle's

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[20] Whitehead, 1978, p. 13 and passim
[21] Whitehead, 1978, p. 24
[22] Whitehead, 1978, p. 40
[23] Whitehead, 1978, p. 18
[24] Whitehead, 1978, p. 22 and passim
[25] Within *Process and Reality*, it is not exactly clear the extent to which Whitehead differentiates between a 'principle of relativity' and a 'universal principle of relativity' and such a distinction does not bear upon this argument here; however, Whitehead does seem to distinguish between both of these and "the 'relativity theory' of modern physics" (Whitehead, 1978, 65). The distinction is much clearer in an earlier work; Whitehead, A .N. 1922. *The Principle of Relativity with applications to Physical Science*, Cambridge University

dictum, 'A substance is not present in a subject.' On the contrary, according to this principle an actual entity *is* present in other actual entities....The philosophy of organism is mainly devoted to the task of making clear the notion of 'being present in another entity.'[26]

This notion of 'relativity' will be addressed further throughout this chapter. For the moment, it should be noted that Whitehead uses this principle as a solution to the problem of 'primary substance', in that he eschews a universe which contains either objects or subjects, and proffers a universe replete with entities whose very being is dependent upon their inter-relation: "it belongs to the nature of a 'being' that it is a potential for every becoming."[27] It is to the composition and 'being' of such entities that this analysis shall now turn.

Actual Entities

"'Actual entities...are the final real things of which the world is made up. There is no going behind actual entities to find anything more real. They differ among themselves"[28] This statement confirms Whitehead's initial premise; that analysis must start with individuation, with the very stuff of the universe considered as individual items of matter. It also indicates that some notion of 'difference' is integral to Whitehead's definition of actual entities and of existence. Following from this, Whitehead states that there is a plurality of actual entities which have the same level of existence but are not mere modifications of one unchanging substance. "Thus the ultimate metaphysical truth is atomism. The creatures are atomic....But atomism does not exclude complexity and universal relativity. Each atom is a system of all things."[29] This is similar to Spinoza's account, in that Whitehead is attempting to delineate the manner in which all items of the universe derive their individuality from their inter-relation. But Whitehead retains the emphasis on atomism as primary, thereby avoiding the problem, initially at least, of the passage from the infinite to the finite: "the philosophy of organism is pluralistic in contrast

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Press, Cambridge which is introduced as "an exposition of an alternative rendering of the theory of relativity.... which entirely cuts away the causal heterogeneity of these [spatio-temporal] relations which is the essential of Einstein's later theory." (Whitehead, 1922, p. v)

[26] Whitehead, 1978, p. 50
[27] Whitehead, 1978, p. 22
[28] Whitehead, 1978, p. 18
[29] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 35-6

with Spinoza's monism".[30] However, this does leave Whitehead with the major task of moving from the atomic to the general or the universal. Or, as he puts it, "How can concrete fact exhibit entities abstract from itself and yet participated in by its own nature?"[31]

One first move in Whitehead's answer to this question is to be found in his use of the term 'creatures' (as in the citation above). It must be borne in mind that Whitehead refers to his overall system as a 'philosophy of organism' and that, within this system, the concept of 'life' and what it means to be alive is a very specific one. For the moment, there are two crucial elements to be established with regard to his use of the term 'creature'. Firstly:

> It is fundamental to the metaphysical doctrine of the philosophy of organism, that the notion of an actual entity as the unchanging subject of change is completely abandoned.[32] An actual entity is at once the subject experiencing and the superject of its experiences. It is subject-superject and neither half of this description can for a moment be lost sight of.[33]

Thus, every 'thing' insofar as it is an actual entity is a superject; this is how it is constituted as something which exists. The term 'superject' is a crucial element of Whitehead's understanding of the concepts of materiality and subjectivity. Put simply, it involves a rendering of subjectivity as the resultant of a process which is not governed by the pre-existence of a choosing subject (as the subject is a result of this process). Instead, the term 'superject' suggests that which is thrown above or beyond the immediate. Subjectivity is the "past hurling itself into a new transcendent fact. It is the flying dart...hurled beyond the bounds of the world."[34] It is the act of being thrown from the past into the future which constitutes being; the being of becoming. Subjectivity is not so much a question of what something or someone is, but what they are becoming and, concomitantly, what they are "ceasing to be."[35] And, such subjectivity is not limited to humans. It is an integral element within the universe. This, therefore, widens the grasp of what it means to be a creature, for all that exists is an actual entity, is atomic, is a creature. Every 'thing'

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[30] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 73-4
[31] Whitehead, 1978, p. 20
[32] This follows from Whitehead's rejection of both the subjectivist and the sensationalist principles.
[33] Whitehead, 1978, p. 29
[34] Whitehead, 1967, p. 177
[35] Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 112

insofar as it *is* a thing, insofar as it gains the status of matter, is an organism and thereby a subjectivity (in terms of constituting a superject). But, there is no concept of an enduring subjectivity which subtends different experiences. So, each subject must be created anew on each occasion.

> The ancient doctrine that 'no one crosses the same river twice' is extended. No thinker thinks twice; and, to put the matter more generally, no subject experiences twice.[36]
>
> Actuality in perishing acquires objectivity, while it loses subjective immediacy.[37]
>
> In the organic philosophy the notion of repetition is fundamental.[38]

Of these three citations, the first two are offered as a summation of the preceding discussion, the last is offered as an initial indication of the similarity of Whitehead's position with that of Deleuze. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven but, for the moment, given that Whitehead has asserted that the creatures 'differ among themselves' and that repetition is fundamental, it is possible to point to links with *Difference and Repetition* such as: "an identity, produced by difference, is determined as 'repetition'. Repetition in the eternal return, therefore consists in conceiving the same on the basis of difference."[39]

The second crucial move in establishing how an individual entity can 'exhibit entities abstract from itself and yet participated in by its own nature' also relates to Whitehead's use of the term 'creature'. For, closely associated, for Whitehead, with this the word 'creature' is that of 'creativity'.

> 'Creativity' is the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact....It lies in the nature of things that the many enter into a complex unity....
>
> 'Creativity' is the principle of *novelty*. An actual occasion[40] is a novel entity diverse from any entity in the 'many' which it unifies. Thus 'creativity' introduces novelty into the content of the many, which are the universe disjunctively....
>
> The ultimate metaphysical principle is the advance from disjunction to conjunction, creating a novel entity other than the entities given in disjunction. The novel entity is at once the togetherness of the 'many' which it finds, and also it is one among the disjunctive 'many' which it leaves; it is a novel entity, disjunctively among the many

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[36] Whitehead, 1978, p. 29. This example of a 'thinker' as a way of describing the nature of existence of all actual entities is an early example of Whitehead's usage of familiar philosophical examples to explicate the more abstract elements of his metaphysical stance. It should be noted that, strictly speaking, Whitehead is not, as yet, entitled to use examples of humans or consciousness and that latching on to such examples as immediately applicable might end in both misappropriation and confusion.

[37] Whitehead, 1978, p. 29

[38] Whitehead, 1978, p. 137

[39] Deleuze, 1994, p. 41. Further comparison will be taken up in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine.

[40] 'Actual occasion' is Whitehead's term for an actual entity in respect to its having duration. See, Whitehead, 1978, p. 73

entities which it synthesizes.[41]
There are many 'beings' in disjunctive diversity.[42]

So:

It ['Creativity'] is that ultimate notion of the highest generality at the base of actuality.[43]

The notion of 'Creativity' is clearly a central one for Whitehead and there are important points which will be addressed immediately.

At first sight this all-embracing usage of the concept of 'Creativity' seems to be problematic. Whitehead refers to it as 'the universal of universals' although elsewhere, like Spinoza, he is at pains to point out that the distinction between universals and particulars is not clear cut.[44] If Whitehead is relying upon 'Creativity' as an external, explanatory 'thing' which precedes or subtends actuality, is he resorting to a primary substance akin to that of Aristotle? In one sense the answer is 'yes' in that 'creativity' is an element within the "Category of the Ultimate [which] replaces Aristotle's category of 'primary substance.'"[45] However, the other elements which make up this category are 'many' and 'one'[46] and it is Whitehead's formulation of these, together with his notion of 'creativity' (none of which can be separated from the other) that will enable him to retain the dynamism of his process philosophy and his elaboration of 'stubborn fact'. For, this Category of the Ultimate is intended to **replace** not replicate any Aristotelean notion of primary substance.

The 'One'

"The term 'one' does not stand for 'the integral number *one*,' which is a complex special notion."[47] This closely relates to the distinction between the real and the numerical which Deleuze locates in the work of Spinoza. "From the opening pages

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[41] Whitehead, 1978, p. 21. Again, such statements will be compared, later on, with the those of Deleuze such as "the whole question, and rightly so, is to know under what conditions the disjunction is a veritable synthesis", Deleuze, 1990, p. 174

[42] Whitehead, 1978, p. 21

[43] Whitehead, 1978, p. 31

[44] "every so-called 'universal' is a particular in the sense of being just what it is, diverse from everything else; and every so-called 'particular' is universal in the sense of entering into the constitutions of other actual entities." Whitehead, 1978, p. 48

[45] Whitehead, 1978, p. 21

[46] Whitehead, 1978, p. 21

[47] Whitehead, 1978, p.21

of the *Ethics*, he [Spinoza] shows that real distinctions are never numerical but only formal...and conversely that numerical distinctions are never real".[48] As substance is infinite, it is impossible to assign a numerical distinction to it *qua* substance. Numerical distinctions can only be modal, i.e. derivative of substance. Real distinction is to be found within substance in terms of its attributes, but this distinction is qualitative and not numerical: "by making of the real distinction between attributes a numerical distinction between substances, one carries over mere *distinctions of reason* into substantial reality."[49] So, to divide the world up in terms of one table, two chairs, is to impose, *a posteriori*, a (rational) conception of the way the universe is divided up into objects. But such divisions of such objects are not in themselves real; for these divisions rely upon a conception of the world as containing a class of self-identical, inert objects. Dividing the world up in this way therefore replicates a version of Aristotle's primary substance. So, Whitehead also differentiates between the real and numerical:

"The term 'one'....stands for the general idea underlying the indefinite article 'a or *an*,' and the definite article '*the*,' and the demonstratives '*this* or *that*,' and the relatives '*which* or *what* or *how*.' **It stands for the singularity of an entity.**"[50]

Here, there is no Spinozist insistence upon the infinity of substance or the attributes as the guardians of this level of reality. Rather, there is a move toward the concept of singularity. Whitehead does not often use this term but it is a useful one on two counts. First, it helps to indicate that his notion of an actual entity is based upon a concept of individuality but differentiates it from those concepts of individuation which rely upon the internal consistency of objects (Newton etc). Instead, Whitehead's interest is in how such singularity is premised upon the admission of, and the rendering of, the 'external' world into one element, quantum or singularity. This approach enables the description of individuation as real (though not numerically distinct) whilst also accounting for the operations of wider influences in such individuation. Although the notion of 'qualitative difference' is integral to both Whitehead and Spinoza's theories of individuation, real distinctions occur, for Whitehead, both within the 'many' and in the distinction between the 'one' and the 'many'; this is not the case for Spinoza who has difficulty accounting for the reality

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[48] Deleuze, 1994, p. 40.
[49] Deleuze, 1992, p. 36.
[50] Whitehead, 1978, p. 21. Emphasis added.

of the 'many'. The second reason why the term 'singularity' is of relevance is that it is one taken up by Deleuze, although not in direct reference to his reading of Whitehead. For example: "A world already envelops an infinite system of singularities selected through convergence."[51] Such similarities will be taken up in Chapters Seven and Eight.

The 'Many'

"The term 'many' conveys the notion of 'disjunctive diversity'; this notion is an essential element in the concept of 'being'. There are many 'beings' in disjunctive diversity."[52]

Once again, this is almost an inversion of the Spinozist position. For rather than postulating a unitary substance, prior to individuation, Whitehead characterizes the wider realm within which the individuation of an entity occurs as disjoined and diverse. The entities are 'different among themselves.' That which does tie them together is the process by which they become entities and hence there is a version of the univocity of being invoked here. But this univocity is not predicated of a unique substance but rather a 'disjunctive diversity'. Or, as Deleuze puts it: "The univocity of Being does not mean that there is one and the same Being; on the contrary, beings are multiple and different, they are always produced by a disjunctive synthesis, and they themselves are disjointed and divergent".[53]

Thus, the emphasis for both Whitehead and Deleuze is on a multiplicity of entities which constitute that out of which individuation is produced. The many is a disjunctive diversity out of which arise individual entities which pass and become elements within another disjunctive diversity. This is the meaning of 'process'. Seen in these terms, it is possible to reappraise Whitehead's notion of 'Creativity' which initially seemed problematic. For now, 'Creativity' becomes no more than the term which is used to describe the very fact that the universe is not static; things do

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[51] Deleuze, 1994, p. 277
[52] Whitehead, 1978, p. 21
[53] Deleuze, 1990, p. 179

not stay the same. It must be remembered that, in direct opposition to Aristotle, Whitehead has posited the creative **process** by which the many become the one and the one the many as the Ultimate. So substantiality does not reside behind this process but is rendered through it. One reason that Whitehead adopts the term 'Creativity' is to avoid deterministic, evolutionary notions and to allow for genuine subjectivity within his schema: "'Creativity' is the principle of *novelty*."[54] On each occasion that an entity arises, it is new, it is not simply an exemplum of a more general pattern, the playing out of a larger plan, or a mutation. It has a more complex relation to its environment.[55]

Now that some of the wider and more abstract aspects of *Process and Reality* have been introduced, it is necessary to turn to Whitehead's more sustained analysis of actual entities and his theory of 'becoming'.

Actual Entities: How they come to be

Before proceeding with this analysis, it is worth reiterating how such a metaphysical discussion fits in with the aims of this thesis. That which follows is intended to outline an approach to an ontological position which focuses upon process and becoming as the ultimate characterization of being. It aims to avoid a positing of subjects or objects as the starting point for meaning, instead it commences with 'flux' but moves quickly to an account of the enduring nature of matter. From this will follow an account of the human body in relation to such an ontology. In this respect, this analysis answers the demands for an non-essentialist ontology, as outlined in the Introduction; an ontology which is able to avoid a foundationalist basis but is also sufficiently robust to provide for subsequent research into the very' physicality' of the body.[56]

Given that an actual entity is not a 'thing', as commonly thought, and, to further complicate matters, is to be defined in terms of its process, Whitehead faces the

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[54] Whitehead, 1978, p. 21
[55] See, 'Organism and Environment', (Part I, Chapter IV), Whitehead, 1978, pp. 110-129
[56] Whitehead's account of the body will be discussed in the next chapter.

task of offering a way into thinking about the status of such entities. His response is to state that: "*how* an actual entity *becomes* constitutes *what* that actual entity *is*....Its 'being' is constituted by its 'becoming'. This is the 'principle of process.'"[57]

There are two elements of importance in this statement. The first, which shall be developed in Chapter Seven is its striking similarity to certain assertions of Deleuze. For example:

> We have to reflect for a long time to understand what it means to make an affirmation of becoming. In the first place it is doubtless to say that there is only becoming....But we must also affirm the being of becoming, we say that becoming affirms being or that being is affirmed in becoming.[58]

Secondly, there is the emphasis upon the '*how*' of becoming. Whitehead is rejecting both the sensationalist and the subjectivist axes here, in that being is neither located in the object itself nor in the subject which 'perceives' it. This leaves becoming as primary. But this is not an inert becoming: it is not the mere passage of matter in flux. The key to Whitehead's concept of becoming is that each becoming occurs in a specific environment and in a specific fashion. That which both enables becoming and differentiates *this* becoming from any other is the way in which that becoming unfolds. Such differences are not numeric but they are real. In order to account for this prioritisation of the '*how*' of becoming, Whitehead introduces the notion of 'prehensions': "the first analysis of an actual entity, into its most concrete elements, discloses it to be a concrescence of prehensions, which have originated in the process of becoming. All further analysis is an analysis of prehensions."[59]

But what *is* a prehension? In one sense, and at theoretical level it must be asserted that a prehension *isn't*, in that it is only a element in an actual entity and it is only in actual entities that they have the level of being where they can be said to exist.[60] But this is not a satisfactory explanation on its own. So, Whitehead goes on to state that:

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[57] Whitehead, 1978, p. 23

[58] Deleuze, G. 1983. *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Athlone Press, London, p. 23

[59] Whitehead, 1978, p. 23

[60] Although prehensions are detailed by Whitehead as one of the categories of existence, see Whitehead 1978, p. 22

every prehension consists of three factors: (a) the 'subject' which is prehending, namely, the actual entity in which that prehension is a concrete element; (b) the 'datum' which is prehended; (c) the 'subjective form' which is *how* that subject prehends that datum.[61]

Following from the earlier discussion of Whitehead's concept of the subject as superject and his non-prioritisation of objects as the ground or data of subjectivity, it is possible to make a first move in delineating his theory of prehensions. Before doing so, one point must be noted; Whitehead's attempt to define an actual entity, necessarily, focuses upon the scenario of *one* actual entity insofar as it could be *any* actual entity. Thus it might appear as if such an entity has no place, no history, as if it comes from nowhere. But: "According to the ontological principle there is nothing which floats into the world from nowhere. Everything in the actual world is referable to some actual entity."[62] The apparent dislocation of Whitehead's first analysis of actual entities in terms of prehensions, is a methodological rather than a metaphysical point in that "philosophy is explanatory of abstraction".[63] That is to say, it is necessary for him to isolate one example from the multiplicity of becomings which make up the actual universe, as an explanatory device. In doing so, he does not discuss those becomings which have gone into the constitution of that entity, that is, its history.

Going against the remarks made at the beginning of this chapter, which insisted upon the metaphysical aspect of Whitehead's theory of actual entities as not immediately applicable to that which is normally thought of as 'human' or 'social', the following example is offered as a clarification, rather than a description, of the process of existence. In this sense, it follows Whitehead's lead in using examples which do not strictly relate to the issue under discussion.[64]

Whitehead's theory of the divisibility of actual entities into prehensions might be characterized as follows:
'Someone is listening to some music produced through a CD player.'
The main prehensions here, according to Whitehead's schema described above,

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[61] Whitehead, 1978, p. 23
[62] Whitehead, 1978, p. 244
[63] Whitehead, 1978, p. 20
[64] Whitehead, 1978, p. 112

are:

(a) the person listening to the music

(b) the music that is being listened to

(c) the way in which the music is being listened to

None of these elements comprise either objects or subjects as they are elements within the process which goes to make up an actual entity. So it is not a 'person' (or a 'someone') in terms of a subject who is listening (as the subjectivist principle would argue). The music that is being listened to is an integral element within the formation of that subject. Further, it is not simply an admixture of the music and the person which makes up the subject (as the sensationalist principle would argue). The crucial element is the way in which the music is received. For example, the 'listener' is receiving the music in an inattentive way; they are becoming bored. Or, the 'listener' is receiving the music in a relaxed manner; they are becoming tired.

There is also an emphasis on the materiality of such prehensions. This follows from Whitehead's denial of the pre-existence of a listening subject, and his emphasis on the music as an integral element within the process of the *real* constitution of that subject. Whitehead also stresses the manner in which these elements are combined or integrated. None of these elements of the process are separate, nor do they have any ontological priority; they all go together to create the superject, for example, a bored listener.

Of course, this is to somewhat over-simplify. It is envisaged as the barest sketch of Whitehead's ideas. For example, what if the person is sitting in an uncomfortable chair, or can smell fresh coffee, or the light is too bright, or is eating bitter chocolate? These will all influence not only the manner in which the music is received but the range of (physical) prehensions available. This will both limit and extend the range of potential outcomes (superjects). More importantly, this discussion of 'how' prehensions are felt and their relationship to potentiality also refers to Whitehead's notion of 'eternal objects'. A full discussion of these has been left out of this chapter in order to focus on Whitehead's theory of becoming. However, the next chapter will be given over to a much fuller discussion of these 'eternal objects' and their place within Whitehead's philosophy.

What is crucial to this analysis, both for Whitehead and for this thesis, is the utter integration of the prehension and the 'subject', and their indissolubility in terms of their actual existence.

> A feeling[65] cannot be abstracted from the actual entity entertaining it. This actual entity is termed the 'subject'[66] of the feeling. It is in virtue of its subject that the feeling is one thing. If we abstract the subject from the feeling we are left with many things. Thus a feeling is a particular in the same sense in which each actual entity is a particular. It is one aspect of its own subject.[67]

Prehensions "express the most concrete mode of analysis applicable to every grade of individual actuality."[68] It should be noted that Whitehead's analysis is focussing on the status of actual entities here; the example given above of the music listener is not an example of such an actual entity. Rather it is an example of what Whitehead sporadically refers to as an "'event'".[69] "I shall use the term 'event' in the more general sense of a nexus of actual occasions, inter-related in some determinate fashion in one extensive quantum. An actual occasion is the limiting type of event with only one member."[70] Thus the reality of the contemporary world is comprised of events of some kind; as to whether Whitehead's concept of the 'event' is a workable one will be discussed in Chapter Eight. For the moment, it should be noted that single actual entities are rarely, if ever, encountered; rather actual entities are encountered in terms of societies of actual entities, as shall be discussed in the next chapter.

To return to the example of the 'music listener', another problem with this explanation is that it tends towards the notion that becoming is progressive. 'Someone is becoming tired, someone is becoming hungry'; as if these are elements within a form of unfolding time. This is certainly not Whitehead's view:

> There is a prevalent misconception that 'becoming' involves the notion of a unique

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[65] In the course of his argument Whitehead substitutes the word 'feeling' for that of prehension. He seems to do this once it is plain, via his repeated usage of the term 'prehension', that 'feeling' is not to be conceived of as analogous to 'emotion'.

[66] On the next page, as a timely reminder of the difficulty of this term, Whitehead states: "The term 'subject' has been retained because in this sense it is familiar in philosophy. But it is misleading. The term 'superject' would be better." Whitehead, 1978, p. 222. Following Whitehead, within this thesis the term 'subject' will be used intermittently and interchangeably with that of 'superject' in order to avoid over-use of terminology. But, for the most part, the term 'subject' should be read as 'superject'.

[67] Whitehead, 1978, p. 221

[68] Whitehead, 1978, p. 19

[69] See, for example, Whitehead, 1978, p. 73, p. 230

[70] Whitehead, 1978, p. 73

seriality for its advance into novelty....Recently physical science has abandoned this notion....In these lectures the term 'creative advance' is not to be construed in the sense of a uniquely serial advance.[71]

Whitehead maintains that time is not a continuous flow and indeed cannot be because then there would be no becoming of an actual entity. In order to fully address this issue and its consequences it will be necessary to focus upon the question of where and when becoming occurs.

Becoming and the Extensive Continuum

"The actual occasions are the creatures which become, and they constitute a continuously extensive world. In other words, extensiveness becomes, but 'becoming' is not itself extensive."[72]

Whitehead is arguing against those who focus upon the flows and mobility of the world[73] and solely address becoming, as well as those such as Spinoza who prioritise infinite substance as the 'real' condition of the universe out of which appear its modifications. In both accounts, that which is stressed is the almost universal nature of becoming, at the expense of the ability to account for immediate items of matter. Whitehead asserts that it is easy to describe the world simply in terms of motion, flux, infinity or becoming. What is difficult is squaring such an account with immediate physicality. He cites Zeno's paradox of the arrow to clarify his point.[74] He sees the challenge of Zeno's paradox in the following terms: If, like the flight of an arrow, becoming is conceived of as infinitely divisible then it is impossible to describe that becoming as a single entity. For, given its infinite divisibility it will always be possible to conceive of a prior moment of becoming which is separate from a later moment of becoming. These will then constitute at least two separate entities within becoming thereby shattering any notion of a unity (and consequently any univocity) of becoming (and hence being), as it will be

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[71] Whitehead, 1978, p. 35

[72] Whitehead, 1978, p. 35

[73] For example, Urry, J. 2000. *Sociology Beyond Societies. Mobilities for the twenty-first century*, Routledge, London

[74] Whitehead, 1978, p. 35 and pp. 68-70 and Whitehead, 1933, p.170-1

possible to infinitely divide that becoming:

> Consider, for example, an act of becoming during one second. The act is divisible into two acts, one during the earlier half of the second, the other during the later half of the second. Thus that which becomes during the whole second presupposes that which becomes during the first half-second. Analogously, that which becomes during the first half-second presupposes that which becomes during the first quarter-second, and so on indefinitely. Thus if we consider the process of becoming up to the beginning of the second in question, and ask what then becomes then no answer can be given....There is therefore nothing which becomes.[75]

Thus, those who insist on the primacy of flux and motion without presenting an account of the temporality of becoming are unable to satisfactorily explain the being of that flux. Their concepts melt into ineffectuality and nothingness. Again, this points to the importance of Whitehead in correcting Spinoza's position, by focussing on 'stubborn fact' and on the materiality of becoming, to explain both fixity and motion. Whitehead's solution is to state that: "There is a becoming of continuity, but no continuity of becoming."[76] Or, to put it another way:

> The conclusion is that in every act of becoming there is the becoming of something with temporal extension; but that act itself is not extensive, in the sense that it is divisible into earlier and later acts of becoming which correspond to the extensive divisibility of what has become.[77]

Arguing against Kant, Whitehead claims that space and time are not the a priori conditions which enable the possibility of apperception.[78] Rather, space and time are products of becoming. They constitute the universe as extended but such extension is not the foundation for such becomings. "The actual entity is the enjoyment of a certain quantum of physical time."[79] "There is a spatial element in the quantum as well as a temporal element. Thus the quantum is an extensive region."[80] Whitehead cites William James in support of his argument:

> Either your experience is of no content, of no change, or it is of a perceptible amount of content or change. Your acquaintance with reality grows **literally** by buds of drops of perception. Intellectually and on reflection you can divide these into components, but as immediately given, they come totally or not at all.[81]

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[75] Whitehead, 1978, p. 68

[76] Whitehead, 1978, p. 35

[77] Whitehead, 1978, p. 69

[78] "It [space] must therefore be regarded as the condition of the possibility of appearances, and not as a determination dependent upon them. It is an *a priori* representation which necessarily underlies outer appearances." Kemp Smith, N. 1986. *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (Trans. Kemp Smith, N.), Macmillan, London, p. 68. Kant applies the same argument to time, see Kemp Smith, 1986, p. 77

[79] Whitehead, 1978, p. 283

[80] Whitehead, 1978, p. 283

[81] Whitehead, 1978, p. 68. Emphasis added.

Either it is accepted that the world is a fixed entity and change is no more than the appearance of change, or change is genuine and a genuine element of experience. Given that the latter is most probably the case, then either it is accepted that there is continual change, flux, or motion, in which fixity is illusion: on such an account there is nothing but a mass of data (a stream of consciousness) and experience is no more than the continual passing of inert data. Or, it is accepted that some form of individuation within experience occurs. If this is the case, then this is only possible if such experience comes in pulses or packages ('buds or drops'). Such pulses can, of course, be analysed, a posteriori, into their constituent elements. But their actual occurrence (their existence as actual entities) is not divided in itself. "The actual entity is divisible, but is in fact undivided."[82] These ideas shall be more fully discussed in the section below on the 'extensive continuum'.

The Extensive Continuum

"This extensive continuum is one relational complex....It underlies the whole world, past present and future."[83]

This may seem to come from a foundationalist or essentialist perspective, in that it seems to suggest that the extensive continuum is that ground which subtends all existence. However, this is certainly not Whitehead's position, as indicated by the term 'relational'. At the very heart of that which might seem to be a replication of Aristotle's primary substance, Whitehead insists on relationality. He also states that: "It [the extensive continuum] is not a fact prior to the world".[84] It is not another rendering of an infinity prior to its modifications as Spinoza would have it. For Whitehead, this extensive continuum *is* infinite, in that it is not bounded or determined by any other element. But it is not infinite in any transcendental sense. Instead it is: "'real' because it expresses a fact derived from the actual world and concerning the actual contemporary world. All actual entities are related according

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[82] Whitehead, 1978, p. 227
[83] Whitehead, 1978, p. 66
[84] Whitehead, 1978, p. 66

to the determinations of this continuum".[85]

The facticity of this reality results from the extensive continuum being comprised wholly of actual entities. "Actual entities atomize the extensive continuum."[86] However, the extensive continuum considered as an agglomeration of actual entities refers to actual entities not in terms of process, in terms of their becoming but in terms of their already having become. In his initial summary of his philosophy of organism, Whitehead states that: "actual entities 'perpetually perish'[87] subjectively, but are immortal objectively."[88] An actual entity's being lasts only as long as its becoming. When it has become it dies; insofar as it is no longer becoming, it no longer has any being. But this does not mean that it disappears. On the contrary, it then becomes an element in the possible creation of new entities, it is established as the possible element which new becomings may use as the data for their own becoming. As such it passes from being a subject to being an object. "Thus subject and object are relative terms."[89] It is in this latter sense that it acquires 'objective immortality' and as such constitutes an element within the extensive continuum.

At this point, it should be remembered that one of the tasks that Whitehead set himself was to describe how, contra Aristotle, it is possible to describe how "an actual entity *is* present in other actual entities."[90] And it is this notion of the subject becoming object and then providing the basis for other subjectivities that is one of the main ways in which he seeks to accomplish this; (this is one aspect of his principle of relativity). So, building on the work of Locke, Whitehead states that: "the 'power' of one actual entity on the other is simply how the former is objectified in the constitution of the other."[91] So, the very constitution of subjectivity (and objectivity) is embroiled in power. So, he argues that: "the problem of perception

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[85] Whitehead, 1978, p. 66
[86] Whitehead, 1978, p. 67
[87] This is a term that Whitehead borrows from Locke, for a discussion of this see Whitehead, 1978, pp. 51-60
[88] Whitehead, 1978, p. 29
[89] Whitehead, 1967, p. 176
[90] Whitehead, 1978, p. 50, see Chapter Three for a fuller discussion of this
[91] Whitehead, 1978, p. 58

and the problem of power are one and the same, at least so far as perception is reduced to mere prehension of actual entities."[92] And, more generally: "life is robbery."[93]

Following his explicit attempt to prioritise 'stubborn fact', to avoid Spinoza's problem of 'adding-on' modes within a description of the infinite, Whitehead returns to the becoming of actual entities. "Actual entities atomize the extensive continuum."[94] In this respect the extensive continuum operates as a field of potential for the becoming of an actual entity:

> In the mere continuum there are contrary potentialities; in the actual world there are definite atomic actualities determining one coherent system of real divisions throughout the region of actuality.[95]

Thus, a distinction must be made between the abstract notion of potentiality, as that which informs the process and creativity of the universe (i.e. the 'mere continuum'), and the 'region of actuality.' For it is the latter which comprises the contemporary actualizations of such potentiality within which the creation of actual entities occur. This means that although Whitehead posits an unlimited potentiality throughout the universe, the 'real' actualizations of such potentiality occur in reference to a world which is in some way bounded. These issues will be taken up throughout the next chapter where Whitehead's understanding of the relation between potentiality and eternal objects will be addressed. This discussion will then be developed throughout the remainder of the thesis, especially Chapters Seven and Eight, which will discuss Deleuze's understanding of the virtual and the actual.

So, the extensive continuum is not to be thought of as a flat field of potentiality from which serially arise sets of actual entities. For, this would suggest an already existing set of spatial and temporal relations in which the extensive continuum coheres. But it must be remembered that time and space come to be with the becomings of actual entities, that is, in pulses. In order to avoid the notion of a serial advance and in accordance with his principle of relativity, Whitehead asserts that: "so far as physical relations are concerned, contemporary events happen in

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[92] Whitehead, 1978, p. 58. It should be remembered that **all** actual entities 'perceive'.
[93] Whitehead, 1978, p. 105
[94] Whitehead, 1978, p. 67
[95] Whitehead, 1978, p. 67

causal independence of each other."[96] In order to outline a theory which avoids both the sensationalist principle and the subjectivist principle, in order to be able to describe those acts or experiences which constitute the becomings of actual entities, Whitehead must describe each act or experience as an individuating individual: "*experience* involves a *becoming*, that *becoming* means that *something becomes*, and that *what becomes* involves *repetition* transformed into *novel immediacy*."[97] Each moment of experience is individuating in that it atomizes the extensive continuum; it is individual precisely to the extent that it manages to accomplish this. The arising of one actual entity presupposes that it is unique and that it will, on its own, define both time and space. It is therefore in 'causal independence' of all other actual entities, in that it is not defined by the same world as other entities, precisely because it defines its own world . This definition of an actual entity as entirely relative and yet concrete is further explained by Whitehead thus: "The actual entity is the enjoyment of a certain quantum of physical time"[98] and "in respect to space, it means that every actual entity in the temporal world is to be credited with a spatial volume for its perspective standpoint."[99] Also: "[The]...genetic passage from phase to phase is not in physical time....physical time expresses some features of the growth, but not *the* growth of the features."[100]

Whitehead calls this the "epochal theory of time."[101] This theory conceives time not as a continual flow but as a procession of quanta, literally packages or pulses of time, which supersede each other. However, such supersession does not take place *in* time, rather such pulses constitute time. Time (and space) are not the realms within which occasions occur; occasions create times and spaces. There is, thus, no 'serial advance' of time or common sharing of space. Rather, there are constant irruptions and passings of manifold, inter-related events which manifest themselves temporally and spatially. There are two crucial aspects of these statements. One is the definition of both subjectivity and objectivity in terms of

[96] Whitehead, 1978, p. 61
[97] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 136-7
[98] Whitehead, 1978, p. 283
[99] Whitehead, 1978, p. 68
[100] Whitehead, 1978, p. 283
[101] Whitehead, 1978, p. 286. See also, Whitehead, 1978, pp. 68-9

standpoint. The other is the utter relativity of time, space and such standpoints as the formative element of the universe.

Although, at this point, it may not be immediately possible to apply Whitehead's ideas, it should be noted that his notion of 'standpoint' does have resonance with certain contemporary concepts. And, it could well signal an important way in which his work could be utilised. For example, theorists such as Harding,[102] and Haraway[103] have developed theories of standpoint feminism. In Whiteheadian terms, the aim of such theories is to deny the primacy of a (male) conception of subjectivity which founds itself on the subjectivist principle. That is to say, a conception which dislocates such subjectivity from the material world in order to gain objective knowledge of such a world. This is a clear replication of the subject-predicate, knower-known axis, which can be traced back to Aristotelian metaphysics and logic. The arguments of Harding and Haraway accord with those of Whitehead, in that they argue that such claims to objectivity serve not just as political arguments which are gender-biased, in terms of promulgating a masculinist version of knowledge, but that they constitute a basic metaphysical error. By 'bifurcating nature' in terms of objects and subjects, in order to guarantee valid knowledge, many scientists and philosophers miss the elemental fact that the universe is processual. Once this error is rectified, it becomes clear (on Harding, Haraway and Whitehead's accounts) that the notion of standpoint is a concept which better serves to account for the way in which the world is constituted, experienced and 'really is'. Thus, a standpoint philosophy guarantees more valid knowledge. "Every actual entity in its relationship to other actual entities is in this sense somewhere in the continuum, and arises out of the data provided by this standpoint."[104]

However, it must be pointed out that, once again, it is too early to apply Whiteheadian notions such as 'standpoint' to contemporary analyses. This example

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[102] See, for example, Harding, S. 1986. *The Science Question in Feminism*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes; especially, pp. 136-162 (Chapter 6: 'From Feminist Empiricism to Feminist Standpoint Epistemologies'). And, Harding, S. 1991. *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York; especially, pp. 138-163 (Chapter 6: '"Strong Objectivity" and Socially Situated Knowledge').

[103] See, for example, Haraway, D. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*, Routledge, London, pp. 183-201

[104] Whitehead, 1978, p. 67

is intended to indicate some avenues of inquiry that Whitehead's work might offer. The manner in which such applications may be deployed will be more fully discussed in Chapters Five and Nine.

So, to return to the metaphysical level, and in order to explain quite what is meant by such a standpoint, it is necessary to proceed to the second element of the previous quotation namely, Whitehead's usage of the concept of relativity:

> Curiously enough, even at this early stage of metaphysical discussion, the influence of the 'relativity theory' of modern physics is important. According to the classical 'uniquely serial' view of time, two contemporary actual entities define the same actual world. According to the modern view no two actual entities define the same actual world. Actual entities are called 'contemporary' when neither belongs to the 'given' actual world defined by the other.[105]

That is to say, the classical theory of time envisages a linear progression in which time proceeds uniformly. In such a conception two things were contemporary if they inhabited the same segment of time and space. Colloquially speaking and once again jumping to the 'human' level, two students could be referred to as contemporaries if they attended the same school at the same time. That is to say, they inhabited the same time and place and this spatio-temporal locale was simply a segment of the larger spatio-temporal realm of the universe considered as that ultimate vessel which is occupied by all objects. On such accounts time is the measure by which such objects are said to co-exist or endure. Whitehead rejects this concept in an example of his sporadic uses of the findings of modern science to further his argument. However, in doing so, he makes it plain that although he adopts the relativistic notion of space and time as a scientific and philosophical position, this may not accord with everyday experience:

> The differences between the actual worlds of a pair of contemporary entities, which are in a certain sense 'neighbours,' are negligible for most human purposes. Thus the difference between the 'classical' and the 'relativity' view of time only rarely has any importance.[106]

So, although the theory of relativity might only be observable in cases such as "the perihelion of mercury, and the positions of the stars in the neighbourhood of the sun,"[107] this does not mean that there is not a myriad of time-space systems which

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[105] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 65-6
[106] Whitehead, 1978, p. 66
[107] Whitehead, 1964, p. 169

are normally ignored. In terms of developing a non-essentialist ontology, this adoption of relativity is of vital importance, as it allows for the concrete existence of actualities which do not rely on a common locus for their definition. That which unites all entities is the manner in which they come to be, i.e. the univocity of being. This does not comprise an enduring essence or characteristic, as that which informs the 'nature' of that entity. Each entity is defined anew on each occasion. So: "no two actual entities originate from an identical universe, though the difference between the two universes only consists in some actual entities, included in one and not in the other".[108]

Thus the two school contemporaries are not constantly 'contemporary' on the relativistic account. Rather, at some times and points they are and at other times and points they are not. This entails that, Whitehead's theory allows for the description of an entity as inhabiting differing spatial and temporal systems concurrently.[109] Another way of approaching this question is not to start with the actual entity but with a collection of actual entities (or actual occasions) in terms of what Whitehead calls a 'duration'. "A duration is a complete locus of actual occasions in 'unison of becoming,' or in 'concrescent unison.' It is the old-fashioned 'present state of the world.'"[110] The next chapter will discuss how such 'unisons of becoming' can translate, through Whitehead's notion of the grouping of actual entities into 'societies', into those enduring objects such as rocks, plants and humans which seem to punctuate the world.

However, Whitehead's notion of duration or unison of becoming is not synonymous with the classical notion of duration or 'present state of the world'. On such a view there would be one duration at one given 'time' and all contemporaries would inhabit that duration. Against this position, Whitehead argues that contemporary physics has shown how: "According to modern relativistic views, we must admit that

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[108] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 22-3

[109] The term 'concurrently' is perhaps unfortunate here in that it has temporal overtones. It is intended to describe the possibility of different time-space systems existing not at the same time or place, clearly, but with respect to one actual entity.

[110] Whitehead, 1978, p. 320

there are many durations...in fact, an infinite number".[111] If this were not the case then extensiveness would consist of an individual, flat plane lying inert. Whitehead is opposing the classical scientific notion wherein there is a continuous transmission of energy which somehow exhibits itself as individual items of matter. Hence: "the notion of continuous transmission in science must be replaced by the notion of immediate transmission through a route of successive quanta of extensiveness."[112] Or: "All flow of energy obeys 'quantum' conditions."[113]

So, the extensive continuum is replete with actuality, and pulsates time and space. And such actuality is to be conceived of as some kind of quanta which although atomistic are not to be conflated with atoms. For this would be to replicate the initial metaphysical (Aristotelian-Newtonian) error regarding the substantiality of matter. In such a view:

> Each atom was still a stuff which retained its self-identity and its essential attributes in any portion of time - however short, and however long - provided that it did not perish. The notion of the undifferentiated endurance of substances with essential attributes and with accidental adventures was still applied. This is the root doctrine of materialism: the substance, thus conceived, is the ultimate actual entity.[114]

It is this conception which Whitehead is attempting to replace through his deployment of the notion of process. But crucially, within such process there is utter actuality, materiality, individuality - actual entity. Such actual entities become and they perish. Within their becoming they constitute those acts of existence which make up the world as it is. They do not inhabit space and time but manifest quanta of space and time. It is in these terms that Whitehead can argue that "an actual entity never changes".[115] "Thus an actual entity never moves: it is where it is and what it is."[116]

An actual entity is the locus of existence, the very moment of materiality and subjectivity; through its becoming it defines what, where and when it is. However, in an important sense, the "analysis of an actual entity is only intellectual"[117] in that

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[111] Whitehead, 1978, p. 320
[112] Whitehead, 1978, p. 307
[113] Whitehead, 1978, p. 309
[114] Whitehead, 1978, p. 78
[115] Whitehead, 1978, p. 79
[116] Whitehead, 1978, p. 73
[117] Whitehead, 1978, p. 227

the isolation of *one* actual entity, in terms of existence, is only possible in theoretical terms, it is not how the world is experienced. That which is to be encountered in the world is some form of 'grouping' or 'togetherness' of actual entities. Such 'groupings' will be discussed in the following chapter.

For, although this chapter has looked at Whitehead's theory of becoming, it has done so mainly in terms of outlining his general philosophical position. That is to say, the analysis has outlined the conditions which an actual entity must fulfil in order to become an actual entity, but it has not fully addressed how these coalesce into what are usually referred to as enduring objects (rocks, plants, humans etc.). Also it has not addressed a key aspect of Whitehead's work, namely, the status of potentiality in his philosophy. The answers to such questions lie, in Whitehead's view, in the concept of 'eternal objects'. The next chapter will involve a detailed discussion of the role of these in Whitehead's philosophy. In conclusion to this chapter, the following quotation is offered as a summary of Whitehead's theory of becoming and being, in terms of the extensive continuum, but it also points to the difficulty that he has to overcome to provide an account of an individuality which is discrete from the potentiality from which it arises and yet in which it partakes.

> Every actual entity in its relationship to other actual entities is...somewhere in the continuum, and arises out of the data provided by this standpoint. But in another sense it is everywhere throughout the continuum; for its constitution includes the objectifications of the actual world and thereby includes the continuum; also the potential objectifications of itself contribute to the real potentialities whose solidarity the continuum expresses. Thus the continuum is present in each actual entity, and each actual entity pervades the continuum.[118]

This chapter has outlined the broad scope of Whitehead's theory of becoming through a discussion of the status of actual entities as atomic elements which are constituted through their inter-relation. It is this inter-relation that also provides the general scheme of contemporary existence (the extensive continuum) from which individual entities arise and to which they return, thereby transforming this continuum. Whitehead has also accounted for space and time within his scheme; they are not pre-existing categories but are produced through the becomings of actual entities. However, as mentioned above, Whitehead still has to address how actual entities group into more recognizable entities and to explain the role of

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[118] Whitehead, 1978, p. 67

potentiality. These shall be taken up in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Whitehead on Eternal Objects

One of the most important elements of Whitehead's argument, as introduced in previous chapters, is his rejection of the subject-predicate axis. Instead, the subject and subjectivity[1] are to be seen as physical and temporal moments in the overall process that constitutes the universe. At the same time, Whitehead is clearly interested in delineating a philosophical approach that can account for what is normally termed the human subject. As such, humans may well be a more concentrated and complex instance of this process but they are not different in kind. "Mankind [sic] is that factor *in* Nature which exhibits in its most intense form the plasticity of nature."[2] However, **all** 'things' are superjects and that which constitutes all superjects are prehensions; Whitehead describes these prehensions in terms of 'feelings'. These are not emotions and certainly not 'human' emotions, rather they are the mode of transmission from one entity to another, or the inter-relation of entities as the constitution of all entities. "The operations are directed *from* antecedent organisms and *to* the immediate organism. They are 'vectors,' in that they convey the many things into the constitution of the single superject."[3] Or to put it in more familiar philosophical terms:[4]

> Descartes...conceives the thinker as creating the occasional thought. The philosophy of organism inverts the order, and conceives the thought as a constituent operation in the creation of the occasional thinker. The thinker is the final end whereby there is the thought.[5]

The complex relation that Whitehead envisages between the facticity of the world and the constitution of the conceptual, and the role that eternal objects play in this, will be a major element of this chapter. It is in these discussions that that which is normally thought of as the 'social' will be re-approached. As will be seen, eternal

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[1] Or 'superjectivity' in Whitehead's terms.

[2] Whitehead, 1967, p. 78

[3] Whitehead, 1978, p. 151

[4] Terms which, again, presuppose that the human level replicates the level of actual entities; a presupposition which is not immediately taken up by this thesis. Hence this and the following chapter will attempt more fully to describe the particular place of human subjectivity within Whitehead's overall scheme.

[5] Whitehead, 1978, p. 151

objects play an important role in describing how a superject can be both created and creative. In this way, this chapter will move beyond Whitehead's theory of becoming as comprising the facticity of being to a position where Whitehead describes the relation of such facticity of becoming to the potentiality of the universe.

One immediate consequence of Whitehead's approach is to reassert the importance of ontology over epistemology in describing subjectivity. "In the philosophy of organism knowledge is relegated to the intermediate phase of process."[6] But this is not simply 'human' knowledge. "Every actual entity has the capacity for knowledge, and there is graduation in the intensity of various items of knowledge".[7] Such statements may represent the end-point of Whitehead's argument and there are various stages that he has to go through to arrive at such a position. Eternal objects are a vital component of how Whitehead manages to move through these stages. However, it should be noted that nowhere in *Process and Reality* does Whitehead devote a separate section to an analysis of eternal objects. Their role and status is interwoven throughout his more general elaboration of the philosophy of organism. As such, some of the sections of this chapter will, necessarily, approach eternal objects obliquely.

In order to situate the importance of eternal objects in Whitehead's work, the first section of this chapter will reassess the place of prehensions within Whitehead's philosophy of organism. This will be followed by a brief discussion of how Whitehead's envisages that actual entities combine into 'societies' to produce enduring, large-scale entities. The majority of the chapter will be taken up with assessing the various expositions of eternal objects that Whitehead provides throughout *Process and Reality*. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the 'situatedness' of the human body within Whitehead's philosophical scheme.

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[6] Whitehead, 1978, p. 160
[7] Whitehead, 1978, p. 161

Prehensions Revisited

As stated above, Whitehead often uses the term 'feeling' in place of 'prehension'. Indeed, Part III of *Process and Reality* is entitled 'The Theory Of Prehensions' but all its sub-sections have headings such as 'The Theory of Feelings' and 'The Primary Feelings'.[8] With this in mind, the terms 'feeling' and 'prehension' shall be used interchangeably throughout this discussion.

"A 'simple physical feeling' entertained in one subject is a feeling for which the initial datum is another single actual entity, and the objective datum is another feeling entertained by the latter actual entity."[9] This is a re-assertion of Whitehead's earlier position, namely that prehensions are the basis for the inter-relation of actual entities. However, Whitehead is clearer in this analysis that that which he is describing can be thought of as some kind of perceptive inter-relation. For: "a simple feeling is the most primitive type of an act of perception, devoid of consciousness."[10] However, it must be remembered that Whitehead's thoughts on perception are likely to differ greatly from those of other philosophers, given his denial of the subject-predicate axis. Consequently, his notion of perception is not one which includes any notion of representation. For: "'representative perception' can never, within its own metaphysical doctrines, produce the title deeds to guarantee the validity of the representation of fact by idea."[11] This is because the very separation of that which is represented (the object) from that to which it is represented (the subject) will always resort to either the subjectivist or the sensationalist principle. Against such a position, Whitehead maintains that "a simple physical feeling is one feeling which feels another feeling."[12] Subjects do not perceive objects. Rather, subjects (superjects) are formed through such prehensions, or through the 'perceptions' of a green leaf (for example). But this is only the first step in the argument. To simply state that subjects are formed as agglomerations of prehensions is to replicate the sensationalist position in that the

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[8] See Whitehead, 1978, pp. 219-280
[9] Whitehead, 1978, p. 236
[10] Whitehead, 1978, p. 236
[11] Whitehead, 1978, p. 54
[12] Whitehead, 1978, p. 236

subject is a complex of mute sensations or prehensions.

For Whitehead, that which is prehended is not inert matter, instead, prehensions are the *feeling* of another entity. Such feeling is not passive data but is that which contributes to the concrescence of that entity, in its act of experience: "Feelings are 'vectors'; for they feel what is *there* and transform it into what is *here.*"[13] It is in this most literal sense that "life is robbery".[14] A major element of Whitehead's answer to his own demand to describe how "an actual entity *is* present in other actual entities",[15] is to argue that:

> the subjective form of a physical feeling is re-enaction of the feeling felt. Thus the cause passes on its feeling to be reproduced by the new subject as its own and yet inseparable from the cause. There is a flow of feeling.[16]

Thus, in a move similar to Spinoza's usage of the notion of immanent causality, the definition of individuality presupposes the inter-relation not just of cause and effect but of a passing of feeling. To summarise:

> A feeling cannot be abstracted from the actual entity entertaining it. This actual entity is termed the 'subject' of the feeling. It is in virtue of its subject that the feeling is one thing. If we abstract the subject from the feeling we are left with many things. Thus a feeling is a particular in the same sense in which each actual entity is a particular. It is one aspect of its own subject.[17]

It is difficult to think of concrete examples of Whitehead's ideas at this point. The closest that it seems possible to come is in terms of poetry. Indeed Whitehead states: "Philosophy is akin to poetry....In each case there is reference to form beyond the direct meanings of words."[18] For example, Andrew Marvell in his poem 'The Garden' wrote of "Annihilating all that's made To a green Thought in a green shade".[19] Here, there is a move beyond the subject as that which thinks the world, thereby creating its world. Rather, the world constitutes thought but not in terms of data being inertly received passively and innocently. The world does not determine

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[13] Whitehead, 1978, p. 87. In the text of *Process and Reality* the single inverted comma comes before the punctuation whereas it does not on page 151 (See note 3 to this chapter). This might be explained by the fact that it is a semi-colon which follows the word 'vector' but it points to slight inconsistencies in the text which have been replicated in the citations used in this text.

[14] Whitehead, 1978, p. 105

[15] Whitehead, 1978, p. 50

[16] Whitehead, 1978, p. 237

[17] Whitehead, 1978, p. 221

[18] Whitehead, 1938, pp. 237-8

[19] Marvell, A. 1985. 'The Garden' in Gardiner, H. (ed.) *The Metaphysical Poets*, Penguin Books, London, p. 257

the subject. Instead there is an utter combination of the world as given for that experient, namely the garden, and the constitution of that subject on that occasion. Thus, the greenness of the garden becomes an integral element in the constitution of that thinker. It is in this sense that the thought of that thinker on that occasion is green. For, as Whitehead states: "We enjoy the green foliage of the spring greenly".[20]

More generally, it is clear that Whitehead is attempting a move away from a philosophy of representation to one in which re-enactment, or the passing on, physically, of materiality is central. "In the organic philosophy the notion of repetition is fundamental."[21] But this is not blind repetition or the eternal return of the *same*, as, under the category of 'Creativity' discussed in the previous chapter, each rendition of this physicality is novel. In Deleuzean terms, as shall be discussed in Chapter Seven, it is a question of repetition in terms of difference. Such views are reiterated by Whitehead in his discussion of the 'public and private'. Rather than seeing them as dichotomous, Whitehead differentiates between moments in the passage of prehensions from subject to subject. "The theory of prehensions is founded upon the doctrine that there are no concrete facts which are merely public, or merely private."[22] The separation of private and public into two distinct, spatial realms hinges upon the delimitation of space as prior to the instantiation of entities. Instead, Whitehead sees entities as instantiating space; the privacy and publicity of prehensions are moments in an on-going process. The 'public', for Whitehead, is the extensive continuum, which presents itself as that set of completed actual entities from which a novel actual entity may arise. The process of combining a certain number of prehensions into a unit is the creation of a new subject and it is this becoming which is 'private'. But this privacy is only a moment, and this moment is that which constitutes its subjectivity. Once this moment is over it becomes public and is now a possible datum for novel actual entities. "Prehensions have public careers, but they are born privately."[23] There is, therefore, no solid interiority to the subject as usually defined; for once subjectivity

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[20] Whitehead, 1967, p. 250
[21] Whitehead, 1978, p. 137
[22] Whitehead, 1978, p. 290
[23] Whitehead, 1978, p. 290

is achieved it becomes a public fact. "All origination is private. But what has been thus originated, publicly pervades the world."[24] Whitehead's account of prehensions is an attempt to describe the becoming, passing away and endurance of actual entities in terms which not only avoid the subject-predicate axis but which are able to account for the materiality of such subjects. However, this is a peculiar version of materiality, and it is one which begs the question of the role of the mental or conceptual within such a theory.

Familiarly with Whitehead, he attempts to situate the mental aspect without recourse to subject-object distinctions which he characterises as: "The disastrous separation of body and mind, characteristic of philosophical systems...derived from Cartesianism".[25] Instead, Whitehead deems the 'mental' to be an integral element within the becoming, or concrescence, of all actual entities, not solely those which go into the make up human subjectivity.

> In each concrescence [of an actual entity] there is a twofold aspect of the creative urge. In one aspect there is the origination of simple causal feeling; and in the other aspect there is the origination of conceptual feelings. These contrasted aspects will be called the physical and mental poles of an actual entity. **No actual entity is devoid of either pole**; though their relative importance differs in actual entities. Also conceptual feelings do not necessarily involve consciousness....
> Thus an actual entity is essentially dipolar, with its physical and mental poles; **and even the physical world cannot be properly understood without reference to its other side, which is the complex of mental operations.** The primary mental operations are conceptual feelings.[26]

Thus, the mental and the physical are two aspects of the concrescence and the existence of a material entity. If materiality is only achieved through the becoming of an actual entity and such a becoming involves the concrescence of prehensions or feelings, then the mental and the physical are both 'material' in the sense that they are jointly necessary to constitute materiality. This is how Whitehead argues that conceptual feelings do not inhabit a separate realm from the physical.[27]

To assign conceptual feelings to a separate realm would simply replicate the mind/body division within the becoming of actual entities. It must also be

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[24] Whitehead, 1978, p. 310. See also, Deleuze, 1993, p. 78
[25] Whitehead, 1978, p. 246
[26] Whitehead, 1978, p. 239. Emphasis added, twice.
[27] This is also similar to Spinoza's distinction between the attributes of thought and extension.

remembered that the arising of each novel actual entity occurs in response to an already settled world of completed actual entities. Thus, that which is presented as the datum for becoming is a material unity of the physical and mental pole. It is in this sense that Whitehead argues that "conceptual feelings must be derived from physical feelings."[28] And: "It is a matter of pure convention as to which of our experiential activities we term mental and which physical....there is no proper line to be drawn between the physical and the mental constitution of experience."[29] However, this does not fully explain the way in which conceptual feelings are integrated in an actual entity or even quite what might constitute them. The short answer to this question is: "A conceptual feeling is feeling an eternal object".[30] The relation between conceptual feelings and eternal objects will be returned to later in the chapter after a brief analysis of the manner in which actual entities co-exist to form those objects which are normally considered to make up the physical world.

Societies

Whitehead's theory of actual entities is designed to account for the reality of 'stubborn fact' within a universe which is characterized by continual process. As such, it is an abstract theory of the conditions of existence. Clearly, actual entities do not comprise the physical world as encountered. It is therefore necessary for Whitehead to relate this high abstraction to the contemporary world. He needs to explain the existence of larger, longer-lasting elements within the universe, such as rocks and plants, and that which is normally termed 'human'. Hence Whitehead introduces the term 'society':

> A 'society,' in the sense in which that term is here used, is a nexus with social order; and an 'enduring object,' or 'enduring creature,' is a society whose social order has taken the special form of 'personal order.[31]

So, chairs, dogs, humans etc. are societies of actual entities; in order to form such a society they must exhibit some common characteristic. This argument is similar to that of the 'common notions' of Spinoza, in that societies guarantee the continued

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[28] Whitehead, 1978, p. 247. This precise formulation will be discussed later in this chapter.
[29] Whitehead, 1928, p. 23
[30] Whitehead, 1978, p. 239
[31] Whitehead, 1978, p. 34

existence of an actual entity only insofar as such individuality is possible only with reference to a more general scheme. So the conditions for the existence of a society are as follows:

> (i) there is a common element of form illustrated in the definiteness of each of its included actual entities, and (ii) this common element of form arises in each member of the nexus by reason of the conditions imposed upon it by its prehensions of some other members of the nexus, and (iii) these prehensions impose the condition of reproduction by reason of their inclusion of positive feelings of that common form.[32]

This is not to suggest that there is only one 'society' in an enduring object such as a human. Whitehead deploys the term "structured society"[33] to account for such creatures. "The notion of a society which includes subordinate societies and nexūs with a definite pattern of structural inter-relations must be introduced. Such societies will be termed 'structured.'"[34]

The human body is a structured society in that it includes various subordinate societies yet seems to have some level of individuality. At certain points, certain elements of the body will be involved in a 'unison of becoming', as discussed in the previous chapter. This will produce a level of individuality. But, in this analysis Whitehead provides another account of such individuality. As has been seen, a society exhibits a 'common form' but this is a specific usage of the word. Indeed, Whitehead unites the aims of Plato and Aristotle in terms of form:

> Both for Plato and Aristotle the process of the actual world has been conceived as the real incoming of forms into real potentiality, issuing into that real togetherness which is an actual thing....It is not the beginning of matter of fact, but the incoming of social order.[35]

Form, therefore, is an integral element within both the individuality and the generality of an actual entity and a society. As with Spinoza's common notions, Whitehead posits an inter-relation of individuality and generality without which neither can exist or survive. Or, a Deleuze puts it: "'Good' macroscopic form always depends on microscopic processes."[36] Thus, the very materiality of any individual item is social, in that it requires more than itself to physically exist. "All of these

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[32] Whitehead, 1978, p. 34
[33] Whitehead, 1978, p. 99 and passim
[34] Whitehead, 1978, p. 99
[35] Whitehead, 1978, p. 96
[36] Deleuze, 1993, p. 88

societies presuppose the circumambient space of social physical activity."[37] The social is not something which is added on, it is a necessary element of the materiality of individuality.

> Every actual entity is in its nature essentially social; and this in two ways. First, the outlines of its own character are determined by the data which its environment provides for its process of feeling. Secondly, these data are not extrinsic to the entity; they constitute that display of the universe which is inherent in the entity.[38]

One thing must partake of other things to be constituted as individual. Individuality presupposes commonality. And, in answer to the question of what constitutes this commonality, Whitehead clearly states that: "The common element of form is simply a complex eternal object exemplified in each member of the nexus."[39]

So that which defines both individuality and the combining of individuals into those societies which constitute the enduring objects of the world, such as chairs, dogs and humans, are eternal objects or complex eternal objects.

The two previous discussions of 'Prehensions' and 'Societies', although not explicitly concerned with eternal objects, both found it necessary to introduce these in order to follow the details of Whitehead's analysis. This points to the importance of eternal objects for a full understanding of his philosophy of organism. As such, the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to an analysis of their role in *Process and Reality*.

Eternal Objects

"The eternal objects are the pure potentials of the universe; and the actual entities differ from each other in their realization of potentials."[40]

This is the most precise and the most succinct reference to eternal objects that Whitehead provides in *Process and Reality*. Eternal objects are that which translate

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[37] Whitehead, 1967, p. 206
[38] Whitehead, 1978, p. 203
[39] Whitehead, 1978, p. 34
[40] Whitehead, 1978, p. 149

the potential of the extensive continuum into the actuality of contemporary entities. They bridge the apparent gap between the disjunctive diversity of the many and the unity of the one, under the category of 'Creativity'. However, the full role of eternal objects, for Whitehead, are not fully explained by this citation. Much of the remainder of this chapter will involve a detailed analysis of why Whitehead requires eternal objects within his version of a non-essentialist ontology.[41]

The term 'eternal objects' was not first coined in *Process and Reality*; they are introduced in *Science and the Modern World*. But they are only *introduced* as no theory of them is developed there. This approach is duplicated in *Process and Reality*. Unlike many other elements within his philosophy of organism, Whitehead does not define eternal objects, he does not provide any separate section dedicated to their analysis. In one of his first (oblique) references to them, in *Science and the Modern World*, he states:

> Every scheme for the analysis of nature has to face these two facts, *change* and *endurance*. There is yet a third fact to be placed by it, *eternality*, I will call it. The mountain endures. But when after ages it has been worn away, it has gone. If a replica arises, it is yet a new mountain. A colour is eternal....It comes and it goes. But where it comes it is the same colour. It neither survives nor does it live. It appears when it is wanted. The mountain has to time and space a different relation from that which colour has.[42]

The analysis of Whitehead up until this point has discussed the notions of change and endurance; it has described his theory of being and how this related to a specific conception of space and time. It has also outlined how his understanding of the existence of enduring objects, such as mountains, entails the notion of the social or a society. Earlier, it outlined his critique of secondary qualities as proposed after Newton's work. As is clear from this quotation, such analyses do not exhaust Whitehead's philosophy. In the formation of any entity there is another element, that of eternality. This is not an abstract eternality which surrounds items of matter or which envelops them. It does not exist in a separate realm from the enduring entities of the world, it only exists *in* the enduring entities of the world. But such eternality is not limited to, or by, the existence of such entities. It is in this sense that it is eternal. Whitehead argues that this eternality must not be

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[41] I am grateful to Isabelle Stengers for pointing out to me the benefits of approaching eternal objects in terms of *why* Whitehead needs them within his philosophy.

[42] Whitehead, 1933, p. 107

considered as some ethereal, ever-present set of forms which constantly exist in their own right, occasionally deigning to partake of the lower level of physical actuality which constitutes the (human) world. However, they are 'abstract.'

> By 'abstract' I mean that what an eternal object is in itself...is comprehensible without reference to some particular occasion of experience. To be abstract is to transcend particular concrete occasions of actual happening. But to transcend an actual occasion does not mean being disconnected from it. On the contrary, I hold that each eternal object has its own proper connection with each such occasion, which I term its mode of ingression into that occasion.[43]

Clearly, the analysis being presented in this thesis is being given an anti-Platonic slant in its elaboration of Whitehead's conception of eternal objects; emphasis is being laid on their **not** replicating his notion of a purer realm of forms. In order to fully explain why such a reading is being adopted here, the following discussion will again review Whitehead's position with regard to Plato (and Aristotle).

As discussed previously, there is an ambiguity within the texts of Whitehead as to his relationship to Plato. For example, at points he is quite explicit that his eternal objects **are** Plato's forms: "I use the phrase 'eternal object' for what in the preceding paragraph of this section I have termed a 'Platonic form.'"[44] And he goes on to say: "eternal objects...constitute the Platonic world of ideas."[45] If Whitehead's eternal objects **were** merely a replication of Plato's forms, then this would present serious problems for one argument of this thesis, especially in relation to his importance for Deleuze. Thus, it must be stated that Whitehead's understanding of Plato is a very specific one. He clearly asserts that: "In any assertion to Plato I speak under correction";[46] which suggests that he is more concerned with elaborating his own theory than indulging in pedantic arguments as to exactly what Plato 'meant'. Importantly, in the same passage, Whitehead dismisses precisely that aspect of Plato's theory of forms which is also criticized by Jonson,[47] Kember,[48] and Irigaray,[49]

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[43] Whitehead, 1933, p. 197
[44] Whitehead, 1978, p. 44
[45] Whitehead, 1978, p. 46
[46] Whitehead, 1978, p. 209
[47] Jonson, 1999
[48] Kember, 2002, p. 632
[49] "...the doctors of old, teaching through symbols and mystic representations, exhibit the ancient Hermes with the generative organs always in active posture; this is to convey that the generator of things of sense is the Intellectual Reason-Principle: the sterility of Matter, eternally unmoved, is indicated by the eunuchs surrounding it in its representation as the All-Mother." Irigaray, 1985a, p. 179

especially in relation to its consequences. Here he challenges:

> the Platonic tendency to separate a static spiritual world from a fluent world of superficial experience. The later Platonic schools stressed this tendency: just as the mediaeval Aristotelian thought allowed the static notions of Aristotle's logic to formulate some of the main metaphysical problems in terms which have lasted till today.[50]

It is not the intention of this thesis to resort to an analysis of the 'original' texts of Aristotle and Plato in order to resolve this question. It is the effects of their texts that are of importance. This thesis is involved in sketching a mode of analysis which is of use within the realm of contemporary social theory; it is not intended as another move in the philosophical match of Aristotle versus Plato. But it should be noted that Whitehead offers an alternative term in place of that of 'eternal objects' which might help avoid their 'universal' and Platonic overtones: "If the term 'eternal objects' is disliked, the term 'potentials' would be suitable."[51] The relation between eternal objects and potentiality, indicated at the start of this section, shall be addressed in more detail later in this chapter.

So, on Whitehead's particular reading of Aristotle and Plato, what unites their enterprises is that: "the process of the actual world has been conceived as a real incoming of forms into real potentiality, issuing into that real togetherness which is an actual thing."[52] This may seem a peculiar synthesis in respect to most readings of Aristotle and Plato. Maybe it is, but it further explains the role that eternal objects play within his work. Namely, they are that integral element of the process of becoming which transforms what is potential into what is actual: they are that which give definiteness to individuality. At the same time they are abstract, they "transcend particular concrete occasions of actual happening."[53] They are vital elements of the empirical and yet they are transcendental. Eternal objects therefore

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[50] Whitehead, 1978, p. 209.   There are, throughout *Process and Reality* other statements which also make his distance from Plato clear. For example, "There is not just one ideal 'order' to which all actual entities should attain and fail to attain." Whitehead, 1978, p. 84. Perhaps, the ambiguity of Whitehead's stance is best summed up as follows: "The notion of one ideal arises from the disastrous overmoralization of thought under the influence of fanaticism, or pedantry.   The notion of a dominant ideal peculiar to each actual entity is Platonic." Whitehead, 1978, p. 84

[51] Whitehead, 1978, p. 149

[52] Whitehead, 1978, p. 96

[53] Whitehead, 1933, p. 197

offer a crucial link with Deleuze's "'transcendental empiricism'",[54] and his delineation of the virtual and the actual,[55] as shall be discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight.

However, the question which, once again, faces Whitehead is that of 'What is an eternal object?' And this will be very difficult to answer, given that Whitehead makes it clear that "eternal objects tell no tales as to their ingressions."[56] So, in one sense, this question is impossible to answer, in that eternal objects do not exist except on those occasions when they ingress into a particular entity. Indeed, it should be noted that the majority of Whitehead's discussions of eternal objects focus on their relation to, and prehension by, actual entities. But actual entities are never encountered as such. Simple eternal objects display a basic metaphysical fact of the universe, namely, that it is in process; that all that *is*, only exists in so far as it becomes; furthermore, that creativity is that which characterises such becoming. But, it is only later and with complex and relational eternal objects that larger scale societies such as humans can be described. So, for the moment the role of eternal objects within process is as follows:

> In this process the creativity, universal throughout actuality, is characterized by the datum from the past; and it meets this dead datum - universalized[57] into a character of creativity - by the vivifying novelty of subjective form selected from the multiplicity of pure potentiality. In the process the old meets the new, and this meeting constitutes the satisfaction of an immediate particular individual.
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> Eternal objects in any of their modes of subjective ingression are then functioning in the guise of subjective novelty meeting the objective datum from the past.[58]

This is why, although Whitehead does not state this quite so plainly, it is not possible to define or give names to eternal objects. Hence the lack of a separate section of *Process and Reality* devoted to them. However, in a perhaps unguarded moment in *Science and the Modern World*, which predates *Process and Reality*, Whitehead does give the clearest examples of what he means by eternal objects.

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[54] See, Deleuze, 1994, p. 56, Deleuze, 2001, p. 25. This is a term which Deleuze does sometimes use to describe his philosophy. However, it is a term which is used more by commentaries on Deleuze than by Deleuze himself. See, for example, Boundas, C. 1991. 'Translator's Introduction' in Deleuze, G. 1991, pp. 1-19. And; Hayden, 1998, pp. 5-35 (Chapter 1: 'Transcendental Empiricism and the Critique of Representation').

[55] Indeed, in a commentary on Whitehead, Deleuze describes eternal objects as "pure Virtualities that are actualized in prehensions." Deleuze, 1993, p. 79

[56] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256

[57] This is another occasion on which Whitehead uses the term 'universal' against his usual abhorrence of the term.

[58] Whitehead, 1978, p. 164

"[The] interfusion of events is effected by the aspects of those eternal objects, such as colours, sounds, scents, geometrical character, which are required for nature and are not emergent from it."[59] However, by the time of the publication of *Process and Reality* Whitehead is less plain in his definitions of eternal objects:[60] "qualities, such as colours, sounds, bodily feelings, tastes, smells, together with the perspectives introduced by extensive relationships, are the relational eternal objects".[61]

So, eternal objects are not simply concerned with sense data, as was suggested in *Science and the Modern World*. Eternal objects **do** have something to do with sense data, insofar as they help explicate the relation of actual entities to the general creativity of the universe, through their expression of potentiality. But, they also seem to have something to do with the body, as well as being implicated in the perspective or standpoint which is an integral element of the constitution of an actual entity:

> The bare mathematical properties of the extensive continuum require an additional content in order to assume the rôle of real objects for the subject. This content is supplied by the eternal objects termed sense-data....these sense-data are eternal objects playing a complex relational rôle.[62]

This aspect of eternal objects shall be discussed further in the section on 'The Withness of the Body'. What is of importance here is the distinction that Whitehead makes between complex, eternal objects and a 'simple' eternal object. The latter are referred to as "the lowest category of eternal object...[which]...do not express a manner of relatedness between other eternal objects."[63] Such eternal objects express the metaphysical status of an eternal object as a basic component within the process by which an actual entity comes to be. That is, like actual entities, such eternal objects are never encountered and therefore cannot be named, but they are necessary for the whole philosophical approach of the philosophy of organism. Whitehead terms such eternal objects "'sensa'".[64] And Whitehead describes their philosophical purpose as follows: "each sensum shares the characteristic common

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[59] Whitehead, 1933, p. 129

[60] The text of *Process and Reality* was based on the Gifford lectures which Whitehead gave in 1927-8 and was first published in 1929, three years after the publication of *Science and the Modern World*.

[61] Whitehead, 1978, p. 61

[62] Whitehead, 1978, p. 62

[63] Whitehead, 1978, p. 114

[64] Whitehead, 1978, p. 114

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to all eternal objects, that it introduces the notion of the **logical variable**, in both forms, the unselective 'any' and the selective 'some.'"[65]

One reason why Whitehead chooses the terms 'sensum' and 'sensa' is to differentiate them from the notion of sense-perception.

> The seventeenth-century physics, with the complexities of primary and secondary qualities, should have warned philosophers that sense-perception was involved in complex modes of functioning. Primitive feeling is to be found at a lower level....In sense-perception we have passed the Rubicon, dividing direct perception from the higher forms of mentality, which play with error and thus found intellectual empires.[66]

There is a crucial distinction between eternal objects considered as sensa, as 'logical variables' which underpin the whole notion of process, and complex, relational eternal objects which are in some way related to sense-perception. Sensa perform the role of guaranteeing, at a metaphysical level, the principle of process, via the abstract notion of potentiality, within a general system of becoming punctuated by divergent moments of individual subjects. It is this sense that they are 'logical' rather than actual. This is not to say that they do not occur, rather that they are never encountered. On the other hand, complex eternal objects are linked with some notion of sense-data through their relations with conceptual feelings. Such relations will be discussed in more detail later on in this, and the next, chapter.

However, this distinction does not always seem quite so sharp within *Process and Reality*. As has been seen, Whitehead does refer to colours when discussing eternal objects, even when he is talking about the becoming of a single actual entity; an instance when the term 'sensum' might have been more appropriate. However, when Whitehead *is* discussing sense-perception, as opposed to sensa, it must be remembered that this it definitely not simple visual perception, nor is it perception which comes from a subtending, pre-existing subject. Rather, such perception (through prehensions) makes up the subject-superject.

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[65] Whitehead, 1978, p. 114. Emphasis added.
[66] Whitehead, 1978, p. 113

Eternal Objects and Multiplicity

As stated previously, Whitehead does not provide a separate section in *Process and Reality* which is dedicated to eternal objects. This means that any analysis of them must proceed through a range of discussions which address those instances within the text which most clearly explain their status. And, Whitehead comes closest to a definition of them, through a discussion of Locke's philosophy: "The fundamental notion of the philosophy of organism is expressed in Locke's phrase, 'it is past doubt there must be some real constitution, on which any collection of simple ideas co-existing must depend."[67] Whitehead describes the 'fundamental notion' in the following comparison with Locke:

> Locke makes it plain...that by a 'simple idea' he means the ingression in the actual entity (illustrated by 'a piece of wax,'[68] 'a piece of ice,' 'a rose') of some abstract quality which is not complex (illustrated by 'softness,' 'warmth,' 'whiteness'). For Locke such simple ideas *coexisting* in an actual entity, require a *real* constitution for that entity. Now in the philosophy of organism...the notion of a real constitution is taken to mean that the eternal objects function by introducing the multiplicity of actual entities as constitutive of the actual entity in question.[69]

Thus eternal objects are that which give specificity to an actual entity. A piece of wax is not just an inert piece of wax, it is a piece of wax in a certain way; it is warm in the hand, for example. Such warmth is not essential to the existence of wax per se; it could be cold in the hand. But, it *is* integral to the existence of that piece of wax at that time and that place. At the same time, warmth or whiteness are not limited by the existence of that particular piece of wax. They are, in this sense, abstract. However, they do not exist separately from the individual occasions in which they occur. There is no separate realm of warmth, whiteness or softness. These are not Plato's ideal forms. Thus the constitution of an individual entity involves the real ingression of eternal objects.

There is a striking similarity in both the concepts, and the examples used to explain them, with certain elements of the work of Deleuze and Guattari. In a rough

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[67] Whitehead, 1978, p. 59

[68] Whitehead is referring to a passage Book II, Chapter II, Section I, in Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. See Locke, J. 1988. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, J.M. Dent, London, p. 45

[69] Whitehead, 1978, p. 59

approximation, they substitute the term "accidental forms"[70] for that of eternal objects, for example: "accidental forms are susceptible to *more or less*...more or less white, more or less warm."[71] They go on to state that:

> A degree of heat is a perfectly individuated warmth distinct from the substance or subject that receives it. A degree of heat can enter into a composition with a degree of whiteness, or with another degree of heat, to form a third unique individuality distinct from that of the subject[72]....A degree, an intensity, is an individual, a *Haecceity* that enters into composition with other degrees, other intensities, to form another individual.....But do these degrees of participation not imply a flutter, a vibration in the form itself that is not reducible to the properties of a subject?[73]

Thus, accidental forms (eternal objects) are that which provide individuality to the becoming of an entity which pre-dates its individuation into a subject or superject. Such elements of becoming are not abstract, but nor are they simply concrete; they comprise that which defines the quality of the individual and participate intimately in the actual constitution of that individual but are not reducible to it. They comprise the 'how' of becoming and characterize the 'vibratory' or vector nature of becoming. (The similarities between the work of Deleuze and that of Whitehead will be taken up in Chapter Seven).

To recap: "eternal objects function by introducing the multiplicity of actual entities as constitutive of the actual entity in question."[74] Two questions follow from this statement: 'Do eternal objects constitute a **single** realm within themselves?' And; 'What is a multiplicity?' Whitehead provides the answer to the first question in the following way: "There is not...one entity which is merely the *class* of all eternal objects. For if we conceive of any class of eternal objects, there are additional eternal objects which presuppose that class but do not belong to it."[75] Like Spinoza, Whitehead does not want to view eternality (i.e. the 'eternal' aspect of eternal objects) in terms of an aggregate. To posit the eternal as the accumulation of existing entities is to take away the 'eternalness' of eternity in that it is reduced to a collection of contemporary existents. As such, it loses its ability to explain

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[70] Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. 1988. *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Athlone Press, London, p. 253

[71] Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 253

[72] Deleuze and Guattari are thus delineating the concept of a 'pre-individual singularity'. Deleuze's usage of this term will be discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight.

[73] Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 253

[74] Whitehead, 1978, p. 59

[75] Whitehead, 1978, p. 46

anything beyond contemporaneity and cannot go beyond such immediate boundedness. Whitehead could also be seen as attempting to avoid Russell's critique of Frege, more commonly known as Russell's paradox.[76] This states that either a class is a member of itself or not, although the vast majority are not. For example, the class of horses whilst concerned with horses is not itself a horse. However, the class of classes *is* a class; that is, if you add up all the classes (that of dogs, that of cats etc.) then they will make up the class of classes. The problem arises with the class of all classes which are not members of themselves. The question is: "Is the class of all classes that are not members of themselves a member of itself?" If yes, no. If no, yes."[77] Whitehead's familiarity with such problems might be one reason for his assertion that eternal objects do not constitute a universal class as this would exceed the level of existence which he wishes to assign to them. It would also create a logical impasse for his philosophy.

The answer to the second question ('What is a multiplicity?') is as follows:

> A multiplicity is a type of complex thing which has the unity derivative from some qualification which participates in each of its components severally; but a multiplicity has no unity derivative *merely* from its various components.[78]

And:

> A multiplicity merely enters into process through its individual members. The only statements to be made about a multiplicity express how its individual members enter into the process of the actual world. Any entity which enters into process in this way belongs to the multiplicity, and no other entities do belong to it. It can be treated as a unity for this purpose, and this purpose only....A multiplicity has solely a disjunctive to the actual world. The 'universe' comprising the initial data for an actual entity is a multiplicity. The treatment of a multiplicity as though it had the unity belonging to an entity...produces logical errors.[79]

Eternal objects considered as a multiplicity do not have the unity of a class. ('There is not...one entity which is merely the *class* of all eternal objects.'); they do not inhabit a separate realm of reality, a Platonic unity. However, as a 'hard-headed empiricist',[80] Whitehead is concerned with the process by which eternal objects

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[76] Whitehead wrote *Principia Mathematica* with Russell and would clearly be aware of the this paradox. See, Whitehead, A. N. and Russell, B. 1973, *Principia Mathematica to *56*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

[77] Lacey, A. R. 1990. *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, Routledge, London, p. 211

[78] Whitehead, 1978, p. 46

[79] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 29-30. This might also suggest that eternal objects might not be as 'eternal' as they might at first appear. They could themselves change. This is not a point that Whitehead makes explicit but it could be read into certain sections of his analysis, see Whitehead, 1978, p. 92, p. 327

[80] In the sense that Wolfson describes Spinoza in such terms (Wolfson, 1962, p. 74).

enter into the constitution of actual entities. On each occasion that this occurs, there will be a complexity of eternal objects, but on each occasion these will be different. Also, the 'whole' universe, in the Newtonian sense, is not presented on each occasion. Each occasion is a particular, and a particular universe will be offered as data for the nascent actual entity. It is this sense that there is a multiplicity of eternal objects which have a 'derivative unity' not an actual unity. This derivative unity effects the actuality of that specific entity. But the multiplicity of eternal objects does not consist in a unity which is simply derived from its constitution of that actual entity. If this were the case, then its unity would be that of a class, namely, 'the *class* of all eternal objects' and it is this multiplying of levels of existence which 'produces logical errors.' That which does unite all entities is the univocity of being in terms of the process by which they come to be. So, the 'universes' which the divergent multiplicities of eternal objects manifest are not distinct, in the sense of being discrete. Rather, each actual entity is elemental in terms of their becoming, and it is this which unites not the universe but the extensive continuum.

> Every actual entity in its relationship to other actual entities is in this sense somewhere in the continuum, and arises out of the data provided by this standpoint [through the ingression of a multiplicity of eternal objects]....Thus the continuum is present in each actual entity, and each actual entity pervades the continuum.[81]

Following from this, Whitehead argues that multiplicities, including complexes of eternal objects have a 'disjunctive relationship to the actual world.' That is, the process of becoming is some kind of synthesis but it is one founded upon disjunction. Also, statements about such multiplicities, insofar as the latter do not constitute entities, will also be disjunctive. The similarities of this position with Deleuze's concept of "disjunctive synthesis"[82] will be discussed in Chapter Eight. So, once again to return to the definition of eternal objects given above, namely: "eternal objects function by introducing the multiplicity of actual entities as constitutive of the actual entity in question."[83] Now that Whitehead's understanding of the term 'multiplicity' has been outlined, it is necessary to ask, *how* eternal

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[81] Whitehead, 1978, p. 67

[82] Deleuze, 1990, p. 174 and passim. The later analysis will focus upon statements of Deleuze such as "But the whole question, and rightly so, is to know under what conditions the disjunction is a veritable synthesis". Deleuze, 1990, p. 174. Deleuze's analysis of 'statements' will be taken up in Chapter Eight.

[83] Whitehead, 1978, p. 59

objects manage to perform such a function. And the clearest answer that Whitehead provides is: "their ingression expresses the *definiteness* of the actuality in question."[84]

Definiteness

Up to this point, this analysis has focussed on Whitehead's theory of the 'being of becoming' and the 'becoming of being', and has introduced his notion of eternal objects as integral elements within the process that makes up becoming. However, it has not addressed the precise role that eternal objects play. As cited above, one vital element of eternal objects is to provide 'definiteness'. And, as has been seen, Whitehead commences his analysis with 'stubborn fact', he is interested in the utter materiality of the world. However, as has been seen, there is another element to his theory, namely: "'Actuality' is the decision amidst 'potentiality.'"[85] This analysis will now turn to the correlate notions of 'decision' and 'potentiality'.

Each actual entity arises out of a world which precedes it, and from which it will establish a standpoint in the extensive continuum. In this sense there is, for each actual entity, a world which is "'given'".[86] This is not a fundamental ground of being, for that which is given will differ for all actual entities and, secondly, that which is given does not exist prior to the becoming of an actual entity, as that which is given is produced through the admission of certain prehensions into that actual entity. Thus Whitehead is able to remain within the ambit of a non-essentialist ontology. In the creation of an actual entity there is a 'decision' as to which elements of the given will be admitted into that entity and which will not. But: "The word 'decision' does not here imply conscious judgement".[87] Clearly, not *every* thing can be part of the becoming of an actual entity, but at the same time, the non-inclusion of

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[84] Whitehead, 1978, p. 29

[85] Whitehead, 1978, p. 43

[86] Whitehead, 1978, p. 42 and passim. For Deleuze, on his reading of Hume this will become the question of how "*the subject is constituted inside the given.*" Deleuze, 1991, p. 107. This will be taken up in Chapter Seven.

[87] Whitehead, 1978, p. 43

certain elements does not mean that subjectivity is based on negativity. As with Spinoza, the creation of individuality is one of combination and affirmation: "there is no consciousness without reference to definiteness, affirmations, and negation."[88] And, for Whitehead (and Deleuze) such 'decisions' are not made consciously, instead, consciousness is a consequence of such decisions.[89] So, the 'given' refers to the potentiality ordained by the becomings of previous actual entities. Each actual entity is a specific carving out from such potentiality, and this constitutes a 'decision' but not a decision made by a subject: "The word is used in its root sense of a 'cutting off.'"[90] The subject is a consequence of a de-cision.

Thus, associated with this notion of a 'given' which is not fixed, which is not the ground of being, is the concept of "'potentiality'".[91] The importance of eternal objects as potential cannot be over-stated. Indeed, as seen earlier, Whitehead states that: "The eternal objects are the pure potentials of the universe."[92] Whitehead's definition of such 'potentiality' is therefore crucial for any understanding of eternal objects. "'Potentiality' is the correlate of 'givenness.' The meaning of 'givenness' is that what *is* 'given' might not have been 'given'; and that what *is not* 'given' *might have been* 'given.'"[93]

To recap: in each becoming of an actual entity, there is a concrescence of specific elements from a given 'universe' and these elements come together in a specific manner. However, it is not necessary that *these* elements came together in *this* manner. "The individuality of an actual entity involves an exclusive limitation."[94] This limitation is a consequence of the decision of an actual entity which is not based upon negativity but upon the combination of a variety of previously divergent elements into an individual unity. Things, literally, could have been different; things are not different but they could have been. This is not so much a rendition of the

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[88] Whitehead, 1978, p. 243. By 'negation' Whitehead means not negativity as such, but the non-inclusion of certain prehensions within an entity.

[89] See previous note (for Whitehead) and: "All consciousness is a matter of threshold." Deleuze, 1993, p. 88

[90] Whitehead, 1978, p. 43

[91] Whitehead, 1978, p. 43 and passim

[92] Whitehead, 1978, p. 149

[93] Whitehead, 1978, p. 44

[94] Whitehead, 1978, p. 45

concept of possibility but rather of that of potentiality. And, that which encompasses such potentiality are eternal objects. "These potentialities are the 'eternal objects.'"[95] Thus eternal objects are that which ingress into actual entities thereby carving out an actual entity from the realm of potentiality. Eternal objects facilitate the move from the potential to the actual.[96] However, this is not a pure potentiality, it is not a separate realm, it must always be conceived of in relation to the 'givenness' of the settled world of actual entities which have already become. "Apart from 'potentiality' and 'givenness,' there can be no nexus of actual things in process".[97] Thus potentiality and givenness constitute the immediacy of process, or to put it another way, they constitute the "plane of immanence"[98] within which individuals are embodied, again and again and again. "The alternative is a static monistic universe, without unrealized potentialities; since 'potentiality' is then a meaningless term."[99]

Whitehead's aim is to describe a continually re-forming universe through the process of becoming. There is no one-off, infinite space from which individualities are derived, as Spinoza would have it. By starting with stubborn fact, with the plethora of actual entities which become, perish, and from which new entities arise, he predicates a manifold of spaces and times which express both potentiality and givenness over and over, (through the 'plane of immanence'). "Thus the philosophy of organism is pluralistic in contrast with Spinoza's monism".[100] This is the condition of the universe in process. "Eternal objects in any one of their modes of subjective ingression are then functioning in the guise of subjective novelty meeting the objective datum from the past."[101]

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[95] Whitehead, 1978, p. 45

[96] "For a potential or virtual object, to be actualised is to create divergent lines which correspond to - without resembling - a virtual multiplicity." Deleuze, 1994, p. 212. So, instead of 'potential' and 'actual', Deleuze refers to the 'virtual' and the 'actual'. The similarities with Whitehead's account are clear. For Whitehead, that which mediates the virtual and the actual are eternal objects. Such similarities will be expanded upon in Chapter Eight.

[97] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 45-6

[98] For example: "The virtual is no longer the chaotic virtual but rather virtuality that has become consistent, that has become an entity formed on a plane of immanence that sections the chaos. This is what we call the Event....it is a virtual that is real without being actual, ideal without being abstract." Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 156

[99] Whitehead, 1978, p. 46

[100] Whitehead, 1978, pp.73-4

[101] Whitehead, 1978, p. 164

Eternal objects are that which mediate between the past and the present, between the settled world and the actual world, between potentiality and actuality, through the introduction of novelty. This novelty is twofold. First, it refers to the individuality of that actual entity in that the elements of which it is comprised are 'new' as they are composed of divergent elements (prehensions, feelings) combined in a way not accomplished previously. They are not new in the sense of being created *ex nihilo*. Secondly, each actual entity is novel, in that it combines these elements in a specific manner, in relation to the settled world. This is not an inert reception of data.[102] The feelings are felt. An impatient person prehends their universe in a different manner to a calm person. Worlds are felt calmly, impatiently, angrily and so on (to use a 'human' example again). This novelty derives from eternal objects.

> The one eternal object in its two way-function, as a determinant of the datum and as a determinant of the subjective form[103], is thus relational. In this sense the solidarity of the universe is based on the relational functioning of eternal objects.[104]

Not only are eternal objects encountered as multiplicities, they are also relational. This again points to a stark distancing of eternal objects from Plato's forms. It is their multiplicity and relationality which comprises not the unity of the universe but its 'solidarity'. The universe is not comprised of one unique substance, it is not grounded upon substantiality. Rather, the universe hangs together through the process of the becoming material and passing away of actual entities in an ever-changing, yet individualized, yet extensive, continuum. It is eternal objects which are the linchpin of this system. The task for Whitehead is to detail how there can be a move beyond the particular to account for a notion of sociality, beyond the individuality of each actual entity. Following from his denial of the subject/object, mind/body dualisms, Whitehead does not wish to pursue the universal/particular dichotomy either. However, he does not dismiss the terms universal and particular entirely and this scan lead to problems in analysing the status of eternal objects.

> The antithetical terms 'universals' and 'particulars' are the usual words employed to denote respectively entities which nearly, though not quite, correspond to the entities here termed 'eternal objects,' and 'actual entities.' These terms, 'universals' and 'particulars,' both in the suggestiveness of the two words and in their current philosophical use, are somewhat misleading. The ontological principle, and the wider

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[102] Thus Whitehead is attempting to avoid the subjectivist principle (the subject/mind does not create the world out of nothing) and the sensationalist principle (the reception of data which gives no clues as to how it is to be interpreted).

[103] 'Subjective form' refers to how that data is felt, how it is combined in that actual entity.

[104] Whitehead, 1978, p. 164

> doctrine of universal relativity, on which the present metaphysical discussion is founded, blur the sharp distinction between the two....An actual entity cannot be described, even adequately, by universals; because other actual entities do enter into the description of any one actual entity. Thus every so called 'universal' is particular in the sense of being just what it is, diverse from everything else; and every so called 'particular' is universal in the sense of entering into the constitution of other actual entities.[105]

Yet:

> There is one point as to which you - and everyone - misconstrue me - obviously my usual faults of exposition are to blame. I mean my doctrine of *eternal objects*. It is an endeavour to get beyond the absurd simple-mindedness of the traditional treatment of Universals.[106]

So, when Whitehead does talk of universals and particulars, he does so in the light of the above statements which complicate the relation between eternal objects and universals.

As such, it is through the term 'universals' that Whitehead makes the crucial link between eternal objects and concepts. "The universals are the only elements in the data describable by concepts, because concepts are merely the analytic functioning of universals"[107] So, concepts are **not** universals, however they **are** the expression of that which is 'universal' (in the Whiteheadian sense). And that which is 'universal' is an eternal object. But eternal objects cannot be apprehended as they *are*, they can only be apprehended as elements of the 'universal' *in* the constitution of a particular actual entity. So, eternal objects can be approached through concepts, and, although Whitehead rarely talks of concepts, he does, as ever, have a specific understanding of quite what they are. One of the most important elements of this being that they are neither created by nor limited to humans or to human subjectivity. "According to the philosophy of organism, a pure concept does not involve consciousness."[108] Concepts, like eternal objects, are somehow 'out there', in that they are not the products of consciousness, but they are only 'out there' insofar as they are exhibited on particular occasions. Eternal objects "carry mentality into matter of fact".[109] Or, as Deleuze puts it: "concepts are indeed things,[110] but things in their free and wild state, beyond 'anthropological

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[105] Whitehead, 1978, p. 48
[106] Whitehead, from a letter to Charles Hartsthorne, cited in Kline, 1963, p. 199
[107] Whitehead, 1978, p. 55
[108] Whitehead, 1978, p. 243
[109] Whitehead, cited in Kline, 1963, p. 199

predicates'.[111] Whitehead also states that "all awareness, even awareness of concepts, requires at least the synthesis of physical feelings with conceptual feeling."[112] Concepts, pure concepts are never encountered as such, but conceptual feelings operate as the vector from eternal objects to the constitution of individual entities, via concepts. As such: "the eternal object...is the datum of the conceptual feeling".[113] And, 'conceptual feelings "are the particular feelings of universals, and are not feelings of other particular existents exemplifying universals."[114] But still, this notion of conceptuality is not one which is predicated on the existence of the (human) mind. "The philosophy of organism...conceives the thought as a constituent operation in the creation of the occasional thinker."[115] Concepts do not find their origin in thinking; concepts are that element of the exterior (public) realm which constitutes the definiteness of an individual. "An eternal object considered in reference to the privacy of things...constitutes an element in the private definiteness of that actuality. It refers itself publicly; but it is enjoyed privately."[116]

What must be stressed, at this point, is that such conceptual feeling of eternal objects does not inhabit a realm of a different kind to that of the physical. As seen earlier, in the discussion of the 'dipolar' nature of **all** actual entities, the conceptual (or mental) is integral to the existence of all individual items of matter.[117] To state that conceptual feelings are physical is to miss the subtlety of Whitehead's point. At the same time, simply to reduce the conceptual to the physical is to fall into the trap of the sensationalist principle, where all that exists in the world is data; but where such data gives no key as to how it is to be interpreted. For Whitehead, all

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[110] In this sense, the 'object' aspect of Whitehead's 'eternal objects' should be stressed in that they too are 'things' but not in the same way in which actual entities are things.

[111] Deleuze, 1994, pp. xx-xi. Deleuze, and Deleuze and Guattari also have specific understandings of what constitutes a concept. Once again, the similarities with Whitehead are striking in this chapter. For example: "[A concept]...is a multiplicity". Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 15: "...a concept also has a *becoming*". Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 18. "The concept is an incorporeal, even though it is incarnated or effectuated in bodies." Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 21. These similarities will be taken up in Chapters Seven and Eight.

[112] Whitehead, 1978, p. 243

[113] Whitehead, 1978, p. 240

[114] Whitehead, 1978, p. 160

[115] Whitehead, 1978, p. 151

[116] Whitehead, 1978, p. 290

[117] "Each actuality is essentially bipolar, physical and mental, and the physical inheritance is essentially accompanied by a novel conceptual reaction". Whitehead, 1978, p. 108

data is always interpreted in the process of becoming. As such, 'contemporary physicality', in terms of individual items of matter, in terms of the full existence of actual entities, is the resultant of the operations of both the physical and the conceptual.[118] The material is, therefore, the materiality of an individuality which comprises the integration of the 'physical' and the 'conceptual' both of which have intertwined histories. "In this respect a pure mental feeling...is analogous to a pure physical feeling."[119]

Two important elements proceed from the previous discussion. The first is the 'physicality', and exterior nature of concepts with regard to the human mind. Secondly, there is the need for a re-appraisal of the physicality of the body,[120] an analysis of which will make up the next section. This is an important step in Whitehead's analysis of the materiality of subjectivity.

The 'Withness' of the Body

In the preceding discussion of eternal objects, in order to attempt to describe what they 'are', various references were made to both sense-perception and to colours. In order to evaluate fully Whitehead's position on eternal objects, it is necessary to come to terms with the position of the body within his philosophy of organism. Just as the previous chapter ended with a discussion of the inter-relation of individual actual entities and their place within the extensive continuum, it is now necessary to make the next move which develops Whitehead's notion of eternal objects into a larger scheme. One important way in which Whitehead does this is through reference to the body.

Within the philosophy of organism, the body, like the mind, is not to be given any privileged place. The human body is no more than an element, although a complex one, within the more general solidarity of the world considered as an extensive

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[118] This links with the work of Barad (1998), as discussed in the introduction to this thesis.

[119] Whitehead, 1978, p. 241

[120] As indicated by a range of theorists in the Introduction to this thesis.

region constituted by the becomings of myriad actual entities. As such, just like all other bodies, the human body can only exist in relation to the 'external' world of which it is simply another element. The situatedness of the body is not merely physical however, and necessarily (following from the previous discussion) the body must be situated in relation to eternal objects.

> These [eternal] objects are 'given' for the experience of the subject. Their givenness does not arise from the 'decision' of the contemporary entities which are thus objectified. **It arises from the functioning of the antecedent physical body of the subject**; and this functioning can in its turn be analysed as representing the influence of the more remote past....Thus these sense-data are eternal objects playing a complex relational rôle.[121]

The givenness of the world as it presents itself to the body is not a simple physical fact, it is also a conceptual fact as configured through eternal objects. Such conceptuality does not arise from the mind but from the previous activities of the physical body. Thus the history of the body as a set of settled actualities is that which situates, affects and effects the manner in which the conceptual proceeds. The body does not determine the conceptual but it does provide the immediate environment within which sense-data (the contemporary relationship with eternal objects) are felt. Thus the contemporary body manifests the history of a specific set of becomings and this history influences, but does not determine, the contemporary body. Eternal objects must always ingress in a particular way and the body will play an important role in influencing this. An angry person will smell coffee in a different manner to a calm person; the contemporary body is the temporary site of this anger (it arises from the past) and thereby affects the contemporary ingression of eternal objects (the smell of the coffee). In a sense the body repeats itself but only in so far as it is always different.

> According to this interpretation, the human body is to be conceived of as a complex 'amplifier'....The various actual entities which compose the body, are so coordinated that the experiences of any part of the body are transmitted to one or more central occasions to be inherited with enhancements accruing upon the way....The enduring personality is the historic route of living occasions which are severally dominant in the body at successive instants.[122]

Thus, the body itself is both atomized and yet exhibits some form of 'community'; it holds together not simply in a physical way but through the communality of its

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[121] Whitehead, 1978, p. 62. Emphasis added.
[122] Whitehead, 1978, p. 119

experience of both the physical and the conceptual. "The multiple nexus [such as the body] is how those actual entities are really together in all subsequent unifications of the universe, by reason of the objective immortality of their real mutual prehensions of each other."[123]   Here, Whitehead is approaching a reconfigured notion of the social, in the sense of that magnitude of existence which comprises the 'everyday world' in which human bodies and subjectivities are to be found. That is to say, actual entities, although they describe the general nature of existence, do not and cannot immediately explicate the complexity of the world of humans, cells, rocks and plants. Such a world or worlds, are not distinct from the realm of actual entities but nor are they identical with them. The complexity of the inter-relation of actual entities in nexūs and societies manifests the same ultimate principles of becoming, being and creativity but is not fully explainable in terms of such entities. Complexity brings its own version of effectivity, through sets of complex prehensions and complex eternal objects which thereby constitute complex societies such as animals. One version of this complexity (that of the relation of complex sets of actual entities, complex eternal objects and their relation to human subjectivity or consciousness) shall be taken up in the next chapter. For the moment it is the complexity of the body which will be concentrated upon and which will further develop the way in which larger scale entities gain their own effectivity analogous to, and yet distinct from, the becomings of actual entities considered as abstract and metaphysical.

The subjective experience of the world is not the experience of a thinking subject which is mediated through contact with an 'external' world; it **is** the external world as constituent of the body. The body is part of the 'external' world and arises from it.

> In this account of the ingression, **the animal body is nothing more than the most intimately relevant part of the antecedent settled world.**[124]

And:

> Our bodies are largely contrivances whereby some central actual occasion may inherit these basic experiences of its antecedent parts....In a sense, the difference between a living organism and the inorganic environment is only a question of degree.

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[123] Whitehead, 1978, p. 230
[124] Whitehead, 1978, p. 64. Emphasis added

The relationship of the body to the world is thus described in terms of "'withness'".[125] This term is intended to accentuate how the body is the primary element of experience. It is that 'intimately relevant' part of the world which must be the starting point of any analysis.

> For instance, we see the contemporary chair, but we see it *with* our eyes; and we touch the contemporary chair, but we touch it *with* our hands. Thus colours objectify the chair in one way, and objectify the eyes in another way, as elements in the experience of the subject.[126]

However, within Western philosophy and society, it is sight, as a disembodied faculty, which has been privileged to the exclusion of the other senses and thereby become inextricably linked and reliant upon the prior existence of a mind.[127]

By contrast, Whitehead maintains that the eyes, hands, ears etc. can be seen as structured societies in their own right. But they gain such structure only in reference to the rest of the body and to the external world. The organs of the body are no more and no less than that which both gain their individuality from the 'external' world and amplify the fact that they are composed of the 'external' through their inter-relation with the rest of the body. But once again, this is not simply a physical relation, indeed it cannot be (given the role of eternal objects), but nor is it limited to those eternal objects associated with sense-perception.

> Our dominant inheritance from our immediately past occasion is broken into by innumerable inheritances through other avenues. Sensitive nerves, the functionings of our viscera, disturbances in the composition of our blood, break in upon the dominant line of inheritance. In this way, emotions, hopes, fears, inhibitions, sense-perceptions arise, which physiologists confidently ascribe to bodily functionings....physiologists, who are apt to see more body than soul in human beings.[128]

The body is important, clearly, but this is no resort to socio-biological descriptions. Rather, the body is to be viewed as a site invested with both the physical and the conceptual. Neither is sufficient on its own for an analysis of the body, nor is a rendering of the body in terms of the internal and the external. The two are dual aspects of the same complex. "The body is that portion of nature with which each moment of human experience intimately coöperates. There is an inflow and an

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[125] Whitehead, 1978, p. 62. The 'withness of the body' is a term Whitehead appropriates from Hume. See, Whitehead, 1978, p. 81

[126] Whitehead, 1978, p. 62.

[127] See, Whitehead, 1978, pp. 117-8, 170

[128] Whitehead, 1967, p. 189

outflow of factors between the bodily actuality and the human experience, so that each shares in the existence of the other."[129]

But the body, conceived of as a unity, does have a degree of effectivity. "The human body is the self-sufficient organ of human sense-perception."[130] At the same time, there is a blurring of the boundaries between the external and the internal:

> Where does my body end and the external world begin? For example, my pen is external; my hand is part of my body; and my finger nails are part of my body. Also my breath as it passes in and out of my lungs from my mouth and fluctuates in its bodily relationship. Undoubtedly the body is very vaguely distinguishable from external nature. It is in fact merely one among other natural objects.[131]

Whitehead's version of the body is one which contradicts most scientific, philosophical and common-sense accounts. It is not that Whitehead denies sense-perception, but he does re-evaluate the manner in which sense-perception is encountered via the body. In doing so, he builds upon his previous discussion of the 'withness of the body':

> sense-perception...never enters into human experience. It is always accompanied by so-called 'interpretation'. This 'interpretation' does not seem to be necessarily the product of any elaborate train of intellectual cogitation. We find ourselves 'accepting' a world of substantial objects....Our habits, our states of mind, our modes of behaviour, all presuppose this 'interpretation'.[132]

Thus, in a manner analogous to that of Haraway,[133] and Harding,[134] Whitehead insists that there is no mere innocent acquaintance with the world. One consequence of the utter embroiling of the body with the world is the situatedness of each and every body. Given that such situations are not static but are integral elements of process, then any acquaintance with the world cannot be envisaged as mere receptivity. The body is not simply a passive receptacle; it is the vehicle through which the world is interpreted. Such interpretation is not the interpretation of 'thought', 'the mind' or 'subjectivity'. Rather, it involves the rendering of data in a specific manner. Interpretation is the immediately 'physical' re-description of the

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[129] Whitehead, 1938, p. 157
[130] Whitehead, 1967, p. 214. Deleuze states that: "An organism is nothing if not the solution to a problem, as are each of its differenciated organs, such as the eye which solves a light 'problem'. Deleuze, 1994, p. 211
[131] Whitehead, 1938, p. 156
[132] Whitehead, 1967, p 217
[133] Haraway, 1991, 1997
[134] Harding, 1986, 1991

world.[135]

Whitehead maintains that the seeming gulf between the mind and the body, found in many scientific and philosophical preconceptions, is not always to be found in everyday considerations: "No one ever says. Here am I, and I have brought my body with me."[136] At the same time, the status of the body as an interpretive element within the more general process of the world is not normally recognised. And what is especially neglected is the analysis of the body in terms of its location which, for Whitehead, refers to its occupation of a locus within a wider spatial complex:

> the human body is indubitably a complex of occasions which are part of spatial nature....
> There is thus a general continuity between human experience and physical occasions. The elaboration of such a continuity is one most obvious task for philosophy.[137]

Thus, Whitehead moves towards a geometrical description of the body in an attempt to define how the body inter-relates with the rest of the world:

> the geometrical relationships of physical bodies in the world is ultimately referable to certain definite human bodies as origins of reference. A traveller who has lost his [sic][138] way, should not ask, Where am I? What he really wants to know is, Where are the other places? He has got his own body, but he has lost them.[139]

Whitehead wants to provide a thorough account of the human body and its place within the extensive continuum; so he differentiates between two kinds of division within the extensive continuum. "Genetic division is concerned with an actual occasion in its character of a concrescent immediacy. Coordinate division is concerned with an actual occasion in its character of a concrete object."[140]

Genetic division refers to the fact that that which constitutes an actual entity is not unchangingly singular. Each actual entity is comprised of diverse elements which come together to make up that entity. In this sense it is divisible (in that it is made up of component parts) but it is not divided, because an actual entity is the private

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[135] Which involves the conceptual via the role of eternal objects

[136] Whitehead, 1938, p. 156

[137] Whitehead, 1967, p. 189

[138] Clearly this example could apply to anyone; the remainder of Whitehead's usage of gender-specific pronouns throughout this quotation should also be noted.

[139] Whitehead, 1978, p. 170

[140] Whitehead, 1978, p. 292

process of becoming one. However, once an actual entity has become, it forms part of the settled world of actuality, it is public. It is in this sense that actual entities can be considered as divided. "The actual world is atomic; but in some senses it is indefinitely divisible."[141] And the primary method for analysing the divisibility of the world is, for Whitehead, through geometry. As: "extension is a form of relationship between the actualities of a nexus....Thus geometry is the investigation of the morphology of nexūs."[142] If this were simply a question of the philosophy of geometry then this would bear little relevance for this thesis. But, the mathematical is not always quite so specialized for Whitehead.

> The mathematical relations belong to the systematic order of extensiveness which characterizes the cosmic epoch in which we live. The societies of enduring objects - electrons, protons, molecules, material bodies - at once sustain that order and arise out of it. The mathematical relations involved in presentational immediacy thus belong equally to the world perceived and to the nature of the percipient. They are, at the same time, public fact and private experience.[143]

'Presentational immediacy' is the term Whitehead uses for how an actual entity or complex society 'perceives' its world. Thus mathematical relations (which are a particular version of eternal objects)[144] are 'real'; the coordinate division of the settled world exhibits properties of spatiality, for example. But they are also constitutive of that which 'perceives' such spatiality. If Spinoza can be seen as outlining a 'physics of the body',[145] then Whitehead elaborates a 'geometry of the body'. "The problem is to point out that element in the nature of things constituting such a geometrical relevance of the body to the presented locus."[146]

It must be remembered that: "The vector character of prehension is fundamental."[147] That is, the world is not static, it is in flow, motion, or process; the description of the perception or reception of data will thus involve the geometric in order to capture this sense of movement from 'there' to 'here' and subsequently from 'here' to 'there'. The question is: in what way can the body be described as 'here' rather than 'there';

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[141] Whitehead, 1978, p. 286
[142] Whitehead, 1978, p. 302
[143] Whitehead, 1978, p. 326
[144] "Eternal objects of the objective species are the mathematical Platonic forms." Whitehead, 1978, p. 291
[145] See, Deleuze, 1992, p. 233
[146] Whitehead, 1978, p. 127
[147] Whitehead, 1978, p. 317

why are we not all lost travellers? Whitehead's answer involves describing the body in terms of a "'seat'".[148] "There is the geometrical 'seat' which is composed of a limited set of loci which are a certain set of points. These points belong to the volume defining the standpoint of the experient subject."[149]

Hence, the volume of the body is derived from the geometrical set of points which comprise various loci which in turn comprise the body. Whitehead characterizes the relation of such loci to the external world in terms of "'strains'".[150] It is these strains which exemplify the relation of an experient, 'perceiving' volume to its environment, and to the 'external' world. This is attained through what Whitehead calls a 'strain locus'. "A strain locus is entirely determined by the experient in question. It extends beyond that experient indefinitely, although defined by geometrical elements within the extensive region which is the standpoint of the experient."[151]

The role of geometry therefore becomes clearer. Whitehead uses straight lines, points and loci in order to describe how the body interacts with its world. The relation of the body, of the experient, is not that of a thing which projects the world from its own internality. The body and the world can be considered, in their interaction, as aspects of the same set of geometrical relations. The system of 'internal' relations which describe the actuality of an entity in terms of its becoming, that is, in terms of its privacy as an act of experience, **are the same** as those relations which link it to other actual entities and thereby comprise the whole of extension.[152]

> there is nothing which belongs merely to the privacy of feeling of one individual actuality. All origination is private. But what has been thus originated, publicly pervades the world. Thus the geometrical facts concerning straight and flat loci are public facts characterizing the feelings of actual entities.[153]

The body becomes a moment and an element of the concentration of such geometrical relations and is characterized by what Whitehead calls "'bodily

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[148] Whitehead, 1978, p. 310ff.

[149] Whitehead, 1978, p. 310

[150] Whitehead, 1978, p. 126. See also, pp. 310-321

[151] Whitehead, 1978, p. 323

[152] In a similar vein, Deleuze maintains that: "Every relation is external to its terms." (Deleuze, 1991, p. 99). This similarity will be taken up in an analysis of Deleuze's reading of Hume in Chapter Seven.

[153] Whitehead, 1978, p. 311

efficacy'".[154]   So: "this feeling of bodily efficacy in the final percipient is the re-enaction of an antecedent feeling by an antecedent actual entity in the body."[155] And the re-enaction of feelings is the re-enaction of prehensions. "It is now obvious that blind prehensions, physical and mental, are the ultimate bricks of the physical universe."[156] It is these which constitute, pass through, and extend beyond each and every actual entity. The physicality of the body and of the universe, that is, its extensiveness, is comprised of the physical and conceptual prehensions in their on-going adventures. Internal relations **are** external relations. The difference between them is that they exhibit different moments of extension. Now they are elements of becoming, now they have become and populate the extensive continuum which awaits new becomings. "It is by means of 'extension' that the bonds between prehensions take on the dual aspect of internal relations, which are yet in a sense external relations."[157]

Conceiving of the body in such terms is not a positing of the body as an originator. The body is an exemplum of that system which characterizes how all that 'is' relates to everything else that 'is'. The body does not exist as a separate, inert, object as it can be variously considered as atomic, unitary and composite. It is atomic in terms of its metaphysical status as comprised of multiple actual entities; it is unitary in terms of its 'geometrical seat' and 'bodily efficacy'; and it is composite in terms of those elements or organs through which such unity is inherited, through which prehensions are concentrated, re-enacted and passed on. Thus the body is an 'amplifier' which does not provide a substratum upon which the passing, accidental changes of emotion, blood pressure etc. arise. The body is not a physically sexed entity upon which is constructed specific yet varied gendered meanings. The body is continually constituted and reconstituted through the reception, valuation, and passing on of conceptual prehensions. "Life lurks in the interstices of each living cell, and in the interstices of the brain."[158] Despite the emphasis of the previous analysis, Whitehead does not envisage that his philosophy of organism should be

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[154] Whitehead, 1978, p. 312
[155] Whitehead, 1978, p. 312
[156] Whitehead, 1978, p. 308
[157] Whitehead, 1978, p. 309
[158] Whitehead, 1978, p. 106

restricted to a geometrical analysis. His use of geometry is descriptive of the relations between items in the universe but this does not exhaust their description. Throughout this deployment of geometry, Whitehead's basic tenet of the impossibility of the self-identical, simple location of objects or subjects must be remembered:

> There is no possibility of a detached, self-contained local existence. The environment enters into the nature of each thing. Some elements in the nature of a complete set of agitations may remain stable as those agitations are propelled through a changing environment. But such stability is only the case in a general, average way. This average fact is the reason why we find the same chair, the same rock, and the same planet, enduring for days, or for centuries, or for millions of years. In this average fact then time-factor takes the aspect of endurance, and change is a detail. The fundamental fact...is that the environment with its peculiarities seeps into the group-agitation which we term matter, and the group-agitations extend their character to the environment.[159]

The universe is punctuated by manifold existents each of which is constituted, both physically and conceptually, from previous existents. Thus the world seeps into the individual and the individual seeps into the world. The definiteness of an individual is defined in relation to the manner in which it incorporates the world and this is achieved through the rendering of concepts. This is the role of eternal objects. Duration and 'physicality' are real but only insofar as they manifest a complex arrangement of a specific and novel rendering of the prior elements of the world.

However, it should be noted that within such accounts it is the status of the human body rather than subjectivity that is being focussed upon. The next chapter will move beyond Whitehead's descriptions of the 'physicality' of the body as always incorporating the conceptual, to his description of the relationship between complex eternal objects and human subjectivity. This will involve an analysis of another of Whitehead's specific philosophical terms namely, 'propositions'. And, as shall be seen, this will involve an evaluation of the limited role that language plays within the philosophy of organism. It is the identification of these limitations which will lead on to the analyses of Deleuze's work in Chapters Seven and Eight.

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[159] Whitehead, 1938, pp. 188-9

Chapter Six

Propositions

The two previous chapters outlined Whitehead's philosophy in terms of his general theory of becoming, process and the role of eternal objects. However, they did not address the status of language in Whitehead's philosophy. This chapter will seek to address those sections of *Process and Reality* where Whitehead does deal with the language, the 'linguistic', and its relation to 'reality' in terms of potentiality and actuality. However, it is not simply a question of demarcating those sections which deal with such questions. Within 'Part I' of *Process and Reality,*[1] language is discussed in terms of propositions but only in the more usual philosophical sense of propositions such as: "'There is beef for dinner today,' and 'Socrates is mortal.'"[2] Later on in *Process and Reality*, a whole chapter is dedicated to a discussion of Whitehead's particular understanding of 'propositions'.[3] This analysis does bear some relation to the more usual philosophical rendering of the term 'propositions' but situates them within Whitehead's specific theory. Here, propositions are addressed at the more abstract level associated with his writings on actual entities and eternal objects. At this stage, Whitehead is not addressing language directly but he does characterise his version of propositions in linguistic terms, in that he describes them through the twin terms of "'logical subjects'"[4] and "the complex predicate'".[5] It is only in Part III, Chapters IV and V of *Process and Reality*[6] that Whitehead relates such propositions back to human subjectivity and consciousness; where the role of language, with regard to such propositions, is reintroduced. As such this chapter is divided into three sections; 'Whitehead on Language', 'Propositions', and 'Propositions Revisited'. At the same time, Whitehead, once again, is not as thorough as he might be in differentiating between the more abstract and the 'human' level in these discussions. This leads to some specific problems for Whitehead with regard to language which will lead to the consequent analyses

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[1] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 1-36
[2] Whitehead, 1978, p. 11
[3] Whitehead, 1978, Chapter IX, pp. 184-207
[4] Whitehead, 1978, p. 186
[5] Whitehead, 1978, p. 186
[6] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 256-280

of Deleuze to be found in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Whitehead on Language

"Language is thoroughly indeterminate, by reason of the fact that every occurrence presupposes some systematic type of environment."[7] This statement, made early on in *Process and Reality*, establishes the core of Whitehead's attitude towards language. At this point of the argument he is discussing 'propositions' as usually understood within philosophy, for example, 'Socrates is mortal'. He does not believe that such propositions immediately represent, express or correspond to the facticity of the world. However, the reason why he does not believe this is of some importance; it is because every 'occurrence', i.e. actual entity or event, in itself, can only be understood in relation to the environment from which it proceeds. So: "A proposition can embody partial truth because it only demands a certain type of systematic environment, which is presupposed in its meaning. It does not refer to the universe in all its detail."[8] The details of Whitehead's position on propositions will take up the majority of this chapter. However, in order to fully account for this position it is necessary to first focus on Whitehead's more general position with regard to language.

Although Whitehead does not discuss the materiality of the signifier in relation to language and propositions, as Butler does,[9] he nevertheless insists on the physical manner in which vocal language is encountered. In this sense, spoken language is an aspect of the 'withness of the body', although Whitehead does not put it in these terms. Rather he states that:

> A single word is not one definite sound. Every instance of its utterance differs in some respect from every other instance: the pitch of the voice, the intonation, the accent, the quality of the sound, the rhythmic relations of the components sounds, the intensity of the sound all vary. Thus a word is a species of sounds, with specific identity and individual differences.[10]

So, like actual entities themselves, words are different amongst themselves but they

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[7] Whitehead, 1978, p. 12
[8] Whitehead, 1978, p. 11
[9] See, Butler, 1993
[10] Whitehead, 1978, p. 182

also obtain a level of identity. Hence: "the meaning of the word...[is]...an event."[11] However, Whitehead does not develop a specific theory of such linguistic events; they are simply, qua events, another manifestation of the eventfulness of the universe.

It would seem, on this analysis, that Whitehead understands meaning as cohering within individual words. But this is not the case. Meaning comes not from individual words but from their locus within a wider linguistic environment. But this does not explain the means by which language functions as a communicative device, within Whitehead's more general understanding of process. In order to accomplish this, Whitehead describes language in terms of symbolism.[12]

"A word is a symbol."[13] This seems clear enough; but such a statement begs the question; "why do we say that the word 'tree' - spoken or written - is a symbol to us for trees?"[14] Given Whitehead's previous refusal of the subject/object division and his rigorous attempts to avoid any notion of 'primary substance', does this introduction of symbolism not smack of a version of the philosophy of representation? Does the very concept of symbolism require that an entity is fixed, permanent and essential in order that it be symbolised? Further, does the very act of being symbolic not presuppose a new kind of entity, which is separate from, and yet linked, to each object? Does symbolism not suggest a world of objects and subject interlinked through symbols?

Although Whitehead does not address such questions directly, he does distance his version of symbolism from those which predicate a world of distinct objects and subjects in the following way: "Both the word itself and trees themselves enter into our experience on equal terms".[15] Whitehead thereby retains the democratic

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[11] Whitehead, 1978, p. 182. This tantalising reference to the relation between language and events is not developed by Whitehead but is by Deleuze, especially in *The Logic of Sense* (Deleuze, 1990), a detailed of analysis of which is to be found Chapter Eight.

[12] See, Whitehead, 1978, pp. 168-183, and Whitehead, 1928, *Symbolism. Its Meaning and Effect,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

[13] Whitehead, 1928, p. 12

[14] Whitehead, 1928, p. 13

[15] Whitehead, 1928, p. 13

element of his general theory of becoming and hence the principle of univocity. In this sense "it would be sensible...for trees to symbolize the word 'tree' as for the word to symbolize the trees."[16] The difficulty is in explaining quite what the role of symbolism is. If Whitehead is simply reasserting the primacy of the inter-relation of items of matter within his philosophy, then symbolism, as a way of explaining the precise role of language, has lost its purchase. Whitehead is quite clear that: "Language itself is a symbolism."[17] The importance here being upon the word 'a'. Language is an example of the wider mode of symbolism which Whitehead defines as follows: "The human mind is functioning symbolically when some components of its experience elicit consciousness, beliefs, emotions, and usages, respecting other components of its experience."[18]

And herein lies the major problem for Whitehead's version of symbolism. Symbolism is that element of the philosophy of organism which attempts to provide an "adequate account of human mentality".[19] But, as shall be seen shortly, such an account can only really be made, for Whitehead, in terms of his version of 'propositions'. So, it is important to note that Whitehead himself does not seem to set too much store by the need to fully develop a theory of symbolism. Symbolism only receives fifteen pages of dedicated analysis in *Process and Reality*[20] and the majority of the somewhat brief work, *Symbolism. Its Meaning and Effect*,[21] is concerned with outlining the more general principles of his philosophy rather than concentrating on the role of language.[22] Thus, language is not of interest in itself, for Whitehead, but it should be noted that his later account of human subjectivity and consciousness is phrased in terms which resonate with a theory of language. This is because "all forms of consciousness arise from ways of integration of propositional feelings"[23] and, ultimately, such propositional feelings rely on the dual terms of "'logical subjects of the proposition'...and the 'predicates of the

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[16] Whitehead, 1928, p. 13.

[17] Whitehead, 1928, p. 73

[18] Whitehead, 1928, p. 9

[19] Whitehead, 1928, p. 8.

[20] See Whitehead, 1978, pp. 168-183

[21] Whitehead, 1928

[22] Of its one hundred and four pages, only three are explicitly aimed at an analysis of language. See, Whitehead, 1928, pp. 12-15

[23] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256

proposition.'"[24] Quite how such statements coincide with the rest of Whitehead's philosophy of organism will be discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Propositions

As has been seen, actual entities comprise the basic elements of existence insofar as they refer to those units of being whose being is defined through their becoming. However, actual entities are not to be encountered in the universe and nor are they usually thought about except in metaphysical discussions. "In our reference to the actual world, we rarely consider an individual actual entity. The objects of our thoughts are almost always societies"[25]

Simple eternal objects are also 'metaphysical' entities in that they are not to be found, as such, amongst everyday experience. Rather, they refer to potentiality as a fundamental fact of the universe. "The datum of the conceptual feeling is an eternal object which is the referent (*qua* possibility) to any actual entities where the *any* is absolutely general and devoid of selection."[26]

However, such philosophical positions fall a long way short of the requirements of analyses of the human level of the materiality of subjectivity. To merely state that all items of being are subjects (superjects) and that all items of matter are social, although interesting, does not immediately translate into an analysis of the 'social' world. Whitehead recognizes that, at this stage, his philosophical scheme does not reflect what might be termed 'everyday experience' and so he introduces 'propositions' as that element of his theory which is intended to account for the inter-relation of actual entities with more familiar kinds of individuals. The role of propositions is to account for the "flash of novelty among the appetitions of its [a living occasion's] mental pole."[27] So, Whitehead's propositions are intended to

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[24] Whitehead, 1978, p. 186
[25] Whitehead, 1978, p. 198
[26] Whitehead, 1978, p. 257
[27] Whitehead, 1978, p. 184

describe the operations of conceptual feelings amongst the 'everyday' world, as presented to more complex entities than mere actual entities; though it should be noted that, in this initial discussion, Whitehead is not solely addressing human subjectivity. For, as Whitehead has always insisted, **all** actual entities exhibit some level of mental activity (they are all di-polar). However, he is aware that some kinds of societies manifest a significant degree of novelty as compared with others. The universe is not the mere passing on of data with miniscule valuations and variations from moment to moment as would be the case if the universe were only comprised of simple actual entities. The world is not an inert, dead, set of completed actual entities; it entices and invites itself to be felt; and there are a range of ways in which it can be felt. Propositions exhibit the relation of complex societies to the extensive continuum in terms of a "lure for feeling."[28] Whitehead's theory of propositions marks the move beyond his description of the existence of all items of matter in terms of their social-physicality. It is this description and their contribution to a non-essentialist ontology that have comprised the majority of the preceding two chapters. His theory of propositions signal a shift to an analysis of the novelty introduced into the world through the conceptual valuations of such a world which comprise more complex living societies, such as humans. It is thus a more detailed analysis of his placing of human subjectivity within his ontological position.

Following these general remarks about the role of propositions, the remainder of the chapter will involve a detailed analysis of their status in Whitehead's philosophy.

"A proposition is a new kind of entity. It is a hybrid between pure potentialities and actualities."[29] Propositions may be new at this stage of *Process and Reality* but they are not new in terms of Whitehead's intellectual preoccupations. A discussion of propositions is to be found in *The Concept of Nature*[30] (originally published in 1920). A mathematical treatment of the relation of propositions is also to be found in Whitehead and Russell's 1910 work *Principia Mathematica.* Interestingly, the introduction to the second edition, written in 1927 and therefore preceding *Process*

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[28] Whitehead, 1978, p. 185
[29] Whitehead, 1978, p. 185
[30] See Whitehead, 1964, pp. 5-13

and Reality by two years, there appears a term not used in the original edition, namely "atomic propositions".[31] Whitehead and Russell "accept these as datum, because the problems which arise concerning them belong to the philosophical part of logic"[32] but do not treat of them in detail in this work. It is precisely this metaphysical as opposed to logical aspect of propositions that concerns Whitehead in *Process and Reality*. Künne argues that, within *Process and Reality*, "the term *proposition* is used as had been customary in Cambridge at the turn of the century."[33] However, Künne's analysis focuses upon propositions in terms of their relation to judgements, which is only half of the story; Whitehead *does* discuss such a relation[34] but, as shall be seen, this is not the full extent of the analysis. At the same time, it is clear that Whitehead's choice of the term 'proposition' is not a random one. It must bear some relation to its usual philosophical usage even if only to distinguish his own specific rendition of the term. As such, it is perhaps useful to offer a very general definition of the term from which Whitehead both borrows and argues against. Hence:

> Propositions are characterised as true or false and do not consist of words although they are expressed in words. The same proposition can be expressed in different sentences...while the same sentence can be used to express different propositions.[35]

This is not a definition that Whitehead would immediately concur with; however, as shall be seen, there are greater similarities between his approach and such a definition than might have first been thought. And this will lead to problems for his analysis, in terms of this thesis, which shall lead to the need to consider the work of Deleuze. Before such a move can be made, Whitehead's position on propositions in *Process and Reality* must be clarified.

According to Whitehead, propositions must be made up of actual entities and eternal objects. Everything is. However, propositions are distinct from actual entities and pure potentialities. Insofar as actual entities and pure potentialities

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[31] Whitehead and Russell, 1973, p. xv. However, it should be noted that Whitehead states that the introduction to this second edition is wholly written by Russell. See, Whitehead, 1978, p. 8

[32] Whitehead and Russell, 1973, p. xv

[33] Künne, W. 1990. 'What One Thinks: Singular Propositions and the Contents of Judgements, in Rapp and Wiehl, 1990, p. 118

[34] Whitehead 1978, pp. 190-1

[35] Mitchell, D. 1964. *An Introduction To Logic*, Hutchinson and Co, London, p. 13

manifest the metaphysical basis of the universe, they cannot of themselves account for the state of the world at any given point or time, in terms of 'everyday experience'. It is Whitehead's intention that this new notion of propositions will be able to accomplish this, and he defines them as follows:

> The definite set of actual entities involved are called the 'logical subjects of the proposition'; and the definite set of eternal objects involved are called the 'predicates of the proposition.'...The predicates form one complex eternal object: this is 'the complex predicate.'[36]

Given Whitehead's distaste for the subject-predicate mode of thinking (as outlined in Chapter Three) it might seem peculiar that Whitehead seems to reintroduce the terms 'subject' and 'predicate' at this point. But Whitehead's argues against the subject-predicate axis in terms of its being a rendering of the 'knower-known' axis, i.e. the bifurcation of the world into knowing subjects and known objects. To grasp Whitehead's argument, a distinction must be made between propositions, qua entities within his system of process, and judgements about propositions (which form part of the concrescence of an individual entity confronted by a proposition). So his initial description of propositions, perhaps, does owe more to its common usage in Cambridge at that time and his own, earlier, mathematical work, in that propositions seem to express the formal, even neutral, **relation** between actualities and potentialities rather than their status as ontological subject (superject) and predicate.

What is of interest, in terms of this thesis, is the manner in which Whitehead characterizes propositions in terms of a linguistic structure. That is to say, the way in which the world exhibits itself, and expresses itself, to complex entities (such as humans) is in terms of subjects and predicates. This is not the simple placing of language onto the world, instead it is a description of the linguistic form as comprising the complexity of that reality which precedes its actualization by individual subjects. As shall be seen in Chapters Seven and Eight, such descriptions bear remarkable similarities to the work of Deleuze. However, Whitehead's exploration of this aspect of propositions soon becomes subsumed into an account of the relation of propositions both to the judgements of individual

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[36] Whitehead, 1978, p. 186

subjects, and to the truth or falsity of the world-as-it-is, (considered separately from such judgements). It is the details of this subsumption which shall now be addressed.

Whitehead's initial description of propositions strongly rejects the reduction of propositions to either the bases of judgements by subjects, or the mere fodder for logicians in their quest to impose either truth or falsity on all moments of experience and all examples of materiality.

> It is difficult to believe that all logicians as they read Hamlet's speech, 'To be, or not to be:...' commence by judging whether the initial proposition be true or false, and keep up the task of judgement throughout the whole thirty-five lines....The speech, for the theatre audience, is purely theoretical, a mere lure for feeling.[37]

Indeed, in the initial phases of his exposition, Whitehead insists that: "in the realization of propositions, 'judgement' is a very rare component, and so is 'consciousness.'"[38] Such statements sit well with Whitehead's earlier description of the universe as replete with subjects which do not 'judge' the world, as the term is usually understood. Instead they create a standpoint within the world, they incorporate both the physical and the conceptual, but they do not comprise a subtending subject which makes judgements about the world (as Kant and the subjectivist principle would have it). However, Whitehead swiftly moves from such sweeping declarations to a more precise definition of the status of propositions. And, within this definition, the role of judgement soon gains more importance than Whitehead initially granted it. (This relationship between propositions and judgements shall be discussed in more detail below.)

Whitehead introduces an example in order to define his version of propositions. The example he chooses is in keeping with the idea that propositions somehow refer to the world in terms of its immanent facticity. However, it is perhaps unfortunate, though in keeping with his general tone, that Whitehead chooses to explain the role of propositions through an example which is resolutely at the 'human' level, and within a very particular version of such 'humanity': his example is that of the Battle of Waterloo.

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[37] Whitehead, 1978, p. 185
[38] Whitehead, 1978, p. 184

Here, the emphasis is not on the facticity of the battle as a settled or decided historical occurrence. Instead, he is interested in the Battle of Waterloo in terms of the potentiality that surrounds it: "there is a penumbra of eternal objects, constituted by relevance to the Battle of Waterloo."[39] This 'penumbra of eternal objects' refers not to the usual role of eternal objects as the bearers of ultimate metaphysical potentiality but to complex eternal objects which express: "the possibilities of another course of history which would have followed upon his [Napoleon's] victory, [which] are relevant to the facts which actually happened."[40]

Whitehead is treading a thin line here. He asserts that there is a facticity that comprises the Battle of Waterloo, as "our world [is] grounded upon that defeat."[41] But, at the same time, such facticity offers itself not as a ground but as an extensive continuum out of which new entities can arise. Propositions help describe the way in which actuality poses for nascent subjects; they pro-pose both facticity and potentiality.[42] Propositions signal the move from actual entities as the minimum, yet univocal, description of being which exemplify the sheer creativity of process (through their decisions in relation to utter potentiality), to a conception of the universe as that which proposes a more complex level of facticity and potentiality.[43] So, there is a move from utter potentiality to the 'real' potentiality of the world as presented to 'real' subjects.

> Thus we always have to consider two meanings of potentiality: (a) the 'general' potentiality, which is the bundle of possibilities...provided by the multiplicity of eternal objects, and (b) the 'real' potentiality, which is conditioned by the data provided by the actual world.[44]

Given that there is a penumbra of eternal objects surrounding the Battle of Waterloo, then "an element in this penumbral complex is what is termed a 'proposition'"[45] This position can, perhaps, be clarified with reference to Deleuze. Building on the work of Nietzsche, he states that: "nothing important is ever free

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[39] Whitehead, 1978, p. 185
[40] Whitehead, 1978, p. 185
[41] Whitehead, 1978, p. 185
[42] As shall be seen in Chapter Seven, this dual nature of the extensive continuum bears great similarities to Deleuze's notion of the 'virtual'.
[43] See the discussion of the 'withness of the body' in previous chapter
[44] Whitehead, 1978, p. 65
[45] Whitehead, 1978, p. 185

from a 'nonhistorical cloud'....What history grasps in an event is the way it's actualized in particular circumstances; the event's becoming is beyond the scope of history."[46] Deleuze thereby demonstrates how 'important' becomings (i.e. becomings which are not those of mere actual entities but refer to the level of eventfulness in which humans are implicated), do not exhaust the potential of that particular set of circumstances.[47] There is always something over and above the rendering of any particular becoming or event. This constitutes a 'penumbral complex' or a 'nonhistorical cloud' which does not provide a ground upon which becomings or events arise, as to do so would be counter to the demands of a non-essentialist ontology. Rather, Whitehead's propositions enable him to describe the process by which the complexity of states of affairs are actualized, without either reducing such complexity to a unitary entity or positing an ultimate reality in the actualization of specific events or becomings. These issues will be taken up in Chapters Seven and Eight.

For the moment, it should be noted that in both this and the earlier definition of a proposition,[48] Whitehead uses the term 'complex'. On both occasions this is in reference to eternal objects. They now become a 'complex predicate' which operate as a 'penumbral complex'. As such, the predicate of a proposition is not different in kind to eternal objects; all that which was discussed in the relation to their 'existence', ingression etc., in Chapter Five, still applies. Here they are operating in terms of that complexity which characterizes contemporary reality. Actual entities are no longer those peculiar singularities of being which are never encountered as such. Now they comprise complexities of facticity. They are the 'logical subjects', and complex eternal objects are the 'complex predicates'. Together they make up these new 'hybrid' entities that Whitehead calls propositions. "A 'singular' proposition is the potentiality of an actual world including a definite set of actual entities in a nexus of reactions involving the hypothetical ingression of a definite set of eternal objects."[49]

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[46] Deleuze, G. 1995. *Negotiations 1972-1990*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 170

[47] "The world, says Deleuze, is not only actualized but also *expressed*...[but]...actualization does not exhaust their powers of invention". Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p, 87

[48] See note 5 to this chapter

[49] Whitehead, 1978, p. 186

Although Whitehead distinguishes here between 'singular' and 'general' propositions as is usual in philosophical logic, he insists that the analysis of propositions should not be seen as merely the domain of logicians:

> 'propositions,' have been handed over to logicians who have countenanced the doctrine that their one function is to be judged as to their truth or falsehood.[50]

And:

> The interest in logic, dominating overintellectualized philosophers, has obscured the main function or propositions in the nature of things. They are not primarily for belief, but for feeling at the physical level of unconsciousness.[51]

At this stage, it seems clear that Whitehead is firmly against the logical analysis of propositions which takes up so much of *Principia Mathematica*, that is, the mathematical analysis of the relation of propositions solely in terms of the possibility of deriving true (or false) propositions from each other. Such an analysis assumes propositions to be self-defined, bounded entities and takes no notice of their implication in actuality. In this discussion, Whitehead is plain that such analyses neglect the important status of propositions as elements within 'the nature of things' and focus simply on their position within a system of truth and falsehood which thereby limits them to elements for belief by judging subjects.

In a later discussion of propositions, Whitehead makes the almost Nietzschean[52] remark that:

> The fact that propositions were first considered in connection with logic, and **the moralistic preference for true propositions**, have obscured the rôle of propositions in the actual world. Logicians only discuss the judgement of propositions. Indeed some philosophers fail to distinguish propositions from judgements.[53]

Such statements would seem to suggest that Whitehead's propositions must be approached not as elements of judgement but as "an element in the objective lure *proposed for feeling*".[54] That is, propositions describe the formation of actuality which comprises both the physical and the conceptual but this actuality does not present itself inertly to a nascent subject. Instead, the nascent subject faces its

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[50] Whitehead, 1978, p. 184

[51] Whitehead, 1978, p. 186

[52] For example: "It is no more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than appearance". Nietzsche, F. 1990. *Beyond Good and Evil*, Penguin, London, p. 65. And: "the value of truth must for once be experimentally *called into question*." Nietzsche, F. 1989. *On The Genealogy of Morals. Ecce Homo*, Vintage Books, New York, p. 153

[53] Whitehead, 1978, p. 259. Emphasis added.

[54] Whitehead, 1978, p. 187

world, via propositions, in a certain way. The world is 'objective' insofar as it is comprised of settled actual entities but it is not passive. The world is presented in a certain manner which Whitehead characterizes as a 'lure'. What must be noted is that such 'objectivity' does not refer to a 'dead nature' as propositions are "hybrid entities".[55] That is, they comprise both the 'physical' and the 'conceptual' histories of those actual entities involved, and both of these are felt by the nascent subject. As such, with regard to propositions, it is necessary to "substitute the broad notion of 'feeling' for the narrower notions of 'judgement' and 'belief'."[56]

Having said that Whitehead emphasizes the need not to conceptualize propositions in terms of belief, truth and falsehood, this is not to say that Whitehead is not concerned with elaborating a theory of the truth and falsehood of propositions. Rather, as ever, he has a specific understanding of this relation, based upon his critique of certain aspects of this history of philosophy.

> All metaphysical theories which admit a disjunction between the component elements of individual experience on the one hand, and on the other hand the component elements of the external world, must inevitably run into difficulties over the truth and falsehood of propositions, and over the grounds for judgement. The former difficulty is metaphysical, the latter epistemological. But all difficulties as to first principles are only camouflaged metaphysical difficulties. Thus also the epistemological difficulty is only solvable by an appeal to ontology.[57]

Whitehead's philosophy of organism is a sustained attempt to describe a system wherein all units of existence comprise moments of experience, whereby all items of being are subjects in their becoming and then objects for other becomings. This is how he avoids the split between an inert world and active, judging subject. It is in these terms that that which appeared an epistemological difficulty is in fact an ontological one. This is an important point for this thesis. It demonstrates that, within some approaches to social theory, the emphasis on epistemology is misplaced and has often had the consequence of leaving ontological questions about matter as firmly within the province of science. In the main, questions about the status of matter have only been taken up within the sociology of scientific knowledge. For the most part, it is only with certain recent theoretical developments (as outlined in the Introduction) that the relevance of ontology has reemerged.

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[55] Whitehead, 1978, p. 187
[56] Whitehead, 1978, p. 187
[57] Whitehead, 1978, p. 189

Having said this, Whitehead *is* interested in questions of truth and falsehood and correctness or incorrectness within his system. In the first developed discussion of propositions to be found in *Process and Reality*,[58] he maintains that: "There are **two** types of relationship between a proposition and the actual world of a member of its locus. The proposition may be conformal or non-conformal to the actual world, true or false."[59] This distinction between the two ways in which a proposition relates to an actual entity will become problematic for Whitehead and this thesis. This will become evident in the following analysis which addresses this distinction in the form of two questions, namely: 'what does it mean to conform or not to conform?', and: 'what does it mean for a proposition to be true or false?'

The first step, in answering these questions, must be to recall that Whitehead is against the traditional (logical) view that "non-conformal propositions are merely wrong, and therefore worse than useless."[60] Instead, a non-conformal proposition "may be good or bad. But it is new, a new type of individual, and not merely a new intensity of individual feeling."[61] So, the main point of non-conformal propositions is to "pave the way along which the world advances into novelty."[62] "When a non-conformal proposition is admitted into feeling, the reaction to the datum has resulted in the synthesis of fact with the alternative potentiality of the complex predicate."[63] Whereas, with a conformal proposition: "the reaction to the datum has simply resulted in the conformation of feeling to fact."[64]

In order to clarify Whitehead's position, two examples are provided below, which, again, are located at the human level as an explanatory device.

a) 'Someone is looking for a knife in order to spread some butter on their toast. They look around the kitchen and are pleased to see a knife on the table.'

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[58] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 184-207
[59] Whitehead, 1978, p. 186. Emphasis added.
[60] Whitehead, 1978, p. 187
[61] Whitehead, 1978, p. 187
[62] Whitehead, 1978, p. 187
[63] Whitehead, 1978, p. 187
[64] Whitehead, 1978, p. 186

b) 'Someone is looking for a corkscrew in order to open a bottle of wine. They look around the kitchen and are unable to see one, they keep looking and keep looking. The person's friends are waiting in the other room. This person looks around again and sees a knife on the table, momentarily they mistake the knife for a corkscrew and pick it up. They then realize that it is not a corkscrew but realize that they could use it anyway to open the wine. This they manage to do.'

Example a) is one of a conformal proposition being admitted or realized. The person was presented with a set of actualities (the kitchen). There are a range of predicates which surround both the kitchen and the knife. It could have been a murder scene, that could have been the murder weapon. But there has been no murder, there is just a butter knife; this person proceeds happily and uses the knife as a knife, as they want their toast.

Example b) is one of non-conformal proposition being admitted or realized. The misrecognition of the knife for a corkscrew does not conform to the facticity of the world as presented. A knife is not a corkscrew. At this point the logicians would say that an error was made and show no further interest. However, this error enabled the person to proceed and open their wine.

> That member of the locus has introduced a new form into the actual world [a knife/corkscrew]; or, at least an old form in a new function [a knife as a corkscrew]....Error is the price we pay for progress.[65]

At the same time, this explanation refers to the judgement of a proposition in terms of its being admitted into the constitution of a novel, entity or occasion. But Whitehead does not want to reduce propositions solely to elements which serve as the basis for judgement. Instead he states that: "In the 'organic' doctrine, a clear distinction between a judgement and a proposition has been made."[66] This distinction rests upon the restriction of the terms 'true' and 'false' to propositions considered in themselves whilst judgements about propositions are to be considered in terms of whether they are 'correct'. "We shall say that a proposition can be *true* or *false*, and that a judgement can be *correct* or *incorrect*".[67] This is because propositions designate facticity and potentiality, whilst a judgement "is a

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[65] Whitehead, 1978, p. 187
[66] Whitehead, 1978, p. 191
[67] Whitehead, 1978, p. 191

feeling in the 'process' of the judging subject, and it is correct or incorrect respecting *that* subject; and it can only be criticized by the judgements of actual entities in the future".[68] In this sense, the concrescence of all actual entities, or at least those faced with propositions, involves judgement. However, these are not the judgements of a sub-tending subject. Instead, such judgements are the conceptual feelings which go to make up the concrescence of that subject on that occasion.

Such an approach would seem to run the danger of dividing judgements off from actuality to such an extent that they become almost entirely separate from it. There is the risk of reducing propositions to the true ground upon which correct or incorrect judgements are founded but whose truthfulness or falsehood remains external to such judgements. This would reduce matter (actuality) to its traditional role as passive, objective and distinct from judging subjects. This is precisely the position which Whitehead is at pains to refute throughout the rest of his philosophy.

One way in which Whitehead attempts to resolve this apparent difficulty is through a discussion of more traditional philosophical notions of judgements. He refers to both correspondence and coherence theories of truth, not to dismiss them out of hand but to claim both as descriptions of aspects of his theory of judgements. "The theory of judgement in the philosophy of organism can equally well be described as a 'correspondence' theory or as a 'coherence' theory."[69]

Whitehead explains his position as follows: "The judgement is concerned with a conformity of two components within one experience. It is thus a coherence theory."[70] If each act of judging involves the bringing together in a novel way of elements of the universe that were previously separate, then each act of becoming is also an act of judgement, in that a selection is made as to which elements are combined. In the case of propositions, what is combined is a particular set of logical subjects with one predicate out of a range of predicates. In the example given previously, the logical subjects which comprise the knife were initially combined with

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[68] Whitehead, 1978, p. 191
[69] Whitehead, 1978, p. 190
[70] Whitehead, 1978, p. 191

the predicate 'corkscrew' out of a limited range of predicates. It is in this sense that each becoming, with regard to propositions, is a granting of coherence to that which was previously disparate. It is an example of the many becoming one. This is Whitehead's version of a coherence theory of judgement.

However, a judgement:

> is also concerned with the conformity of a proposition, not restricted to that individual experience, with a nexus whose relatedness is derived from the various experiences of its own members and not from that of the judging experient. In this sense there is a 'correspondence' theory.[71]

In this analysis, Whitehead removes the perspective of a judging subject, in order to describe the status of that set of actual entities which comprise the logical set of a proposition and which is distinct from a judging subject. He does this in order to rescue his philosophy of organism from an over-reliance upon the experience of one such judging subject. If he wants to retain his emphasis on 'stubborn fact' and to avoid the reduction of such stubborn fact to inert matter, he must reassert the experience of inter-relation between those entities which comprise stubborn fact without reference to an entity which makes Whiteheadian judgements about such stubborn fact. There is, thus, a facticity to actuality which eludes and is distinct from judgements made about it. In this sense propositions either conform or do not conform. But there are clear tensions in such a position. As stated above, there is the danger of positing propositions as the unknowable ground upon which individual judgements are made; associated with this is the idea that each entity transcends its universe: "Every actual entity, in virtue of its novelty, transcends its universe".[72] This would seem to suggest that each actual entity *is* the most important subject in the universe at that moment of space and time that it expresses.

To state that the relation between other actualities is distinct from such an experience of becoming would seem to contradict such a system. No doubt, Whitehead's response to such a criticism would be that, for him, both sides of this argument hold, in that each actual entity is an exemplum of the more general process of the inter-relatedness of all actual entities in the universe. That is: "the

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[71] Whitehead, 1978, p. 191
[72] Whitehead, 1978, p. 94

continuum is present in each actual entity, and each actual entity pervades the continuum."[73] He might also state that, insofar as he is talking about actual entities rather than propositions and their relation to structured societies (living things), then there is a distinction to be made between the metaphysical basis of being, that is, the more abstract aspect of his general ontology, and the complexity which comprises the relation of propositions and judging subjects. However, such a distinction would seem, once again, to promote a disjunction between the facticity of being and the judgements made in relation to it. Whitehead would seem to have established an ontology in which 'substantial thing **can** call unto substantial thing'[74] through his theory of prehensions. However, there seems to remain a realm of truth outside that of the judgements of prehending subjects, and this realm of truth is the conformity of propositions to an actuality which is not involved in the synthesis of prehensions and so does not comprise the becoming of a judging subject. Whitehead makes this distinction apparent in a further discussion of the relative positions of correspondence and coherence theories within his philosophy: "With this distinction we see that there is a 'correspondence' theory of the truth and falsehood of propositions, and a 'coherence' theory of the correctness, incorrectness and suspension of judgements."[75]

However, as discussed above, this 'distinction' seems to be more of a disjunction; a disjunction akin to that identified the Chapter One regarding Butler's ultimate position with regard to the gap between language and the material. So, perhaps, in one way, Whitehead's problem can be traced to the minimal position that Whitehead grants language within his philosophy. For, toward the end of his first detailed discussion of propositions within *Process and Reality*, Whitehead returns to using examples of 'verbal' propositions to illustrate his point concerning how "the actual world...enters into each proposition."[76] This instance of using an example from the human level is more confusing than most, as it immediately strays into the realms of the relationship between matter, human subjectivity and language. For,

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[73] Whitehead, 1978, p. 67
[74] See Whitehead, 1967, p. 133
[75] Whitehead, 1978, p. 191
[76] Whitehead, 1978, p. 194

of the ('linguistic') proposition "'Caesar has crossed the Rubicon'",[77] Whitehead states: "this form of words symbolizes an indefinite number of diverse propositions." That is, if uttered roughly two thousand and fifty one years ago, 'Caesar' would have referred to a contemporary structured society and 'Rubicon' to a contemporary society which were in the actual world of both the person who made the statement and the person for whom the proposition was an element to be judged. Or:

> one of Caesar's old soldiers may in later years have sat on the bank of the river and meditated on the assassination of Caesar, and on Caesar's passage over the little river tranquilly flowing before his gaze. This would have been a different proposition.[78]

His conclusion is that "Nothing could better illustrate the hopeless ambiguity of language since both propositions could fit the same verbal phraseology."[79] Whitehead then goes on to list other possible propositions to which such a verbal statement could refer. And his general conclusion is that he has demonstrated "the futility of taking any verbal statement...and arguing about *the* meaning."[80] Whilst this may signal a shift away from the logical and mathematical concerns over propositions of *Principia Mathematica*, it would seem to reduce language to a human problem which obscures the facticity of the world. There are two consequences of this. First, it reduces the analysis of language to a side-line; as language is simply ambiguous in relation to the 'truth' of matter. Secondly, inherent in the disjunction between the truth of propositions, and the 'correctness' or 'incorrectness' of judgements made about them, lurks the danger of granting the judging subject an almost free rein to select or reject the predicates that it assigns to the logical subjects of a proposition. That is to say, if language is no more than hopelessly ambiguous and each subject can make its own selection, then what is to tie such subjects together? Has Whitehead granted such autonomy to each individual that the effect of his philosophy is to reinstate the freely judging superject in place of the transcendental subject of the Enlightenment? In order to answer such questions it will be necessary to look at Whitehead's direct discussion of human consciousness.

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[77] Whitehead, 1978, p. 195
[78] Whitehead, 1978, p. 196
[79] Whitehead, 1978, p. 196
[80] Whitehead, 1978, p. 196

Propositions Revisited

It is over two-thirds of the way through *Process and Reality* when Whitehead states that: "The nature of consciousness has not yet been adequately analysed."[81] The previous discussions of actual entities, prehensions, eternal objects, the extensive continuum and so on, has been based on an abstract approach to the nature of being. As has been seen, references and examples relating to the body and the status of human subjects within such a scheme have been made. But there has been no distinct analysis of the nature of human subjectivity in terms of consciousness. It is of note that when Whitehead does finally turn to such matters it is in relation to his notion of propositions.

In fact, at this point Whitehead repeats himself when he states that: "now a new kind of entity presents itself",[82] although he has already stated that: "A proposition is a new kind of entity"[83] some sixty-one pages earlier. This may be another example of Nobo's claim that "Whitehead was a far from careful writer",[84] or it may stem from the fact that the material presented in *Process and Reality* was originally delivered as a series of lectures.[85] What is important, for this thesis, is that this new discussion of propositions has a different slant to that which has already been analysed. This is because of its direct relation to the 'nature of consciousness'. It shall be argued that Whitehead's discussion of this relation points up significant problems with his notion of propositions which can only be 'rescued' through the analysis of Deleuze which will make up the following chapters.

In this renewed exposition, Whitehead lays emphasis on propositions as "tales that perhaps might be told about particular actualities."[86] This is as opposed to eternal objects which "tell no tales as to their ingressions",[87] which, Whitehead claims, "is

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[81] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256
[82] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256. These new kinds of entities are, once again, 'propositions'.
[83] Whitehead, 1978, p. 185
[84] Nobo, 1986, p. 1
[85] The frontispiece of *Process and Reality* refers to its being the 'Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of Edinburgh During the Session 1927-8'.
[86] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256
[87] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256

the ultimate ground of empiricism".[88] That is to say, eternal objects, as metaphysical entities which express the potentiality of the universe, give no evidence, on their own, as to the reasons why the world presents itself as it does to complex structured societies (amongst which humans are to be found). This is the status of eternal objects as "the purely general *any* among undetermined actual entities."[89] The reason that this can be seen as the 'ultimate ground of empiricism' is that: "You cannot know what red is by merely thinking of redness. You can only find red things by adventuring amid physical experiences in *this* actual world."[90]

So, once again, Whitehead is, perhaps a little confusingly, using 'red' as an example of an eternal object. But his point is, once again, anti-Platonic. 'Red', as eternal object, does not exist in a separate realm from reality. It is only to be found amongst genuine experiences of red things. This is the basis of Whitehead's empiricism. There are only those things which are presented, encountered and experienced and no-thing else. It is in these terms that eternal objects 'tell no tales as to their ingressions.' At the same time, the world is not limited to these items as presented in these situations. The world is in process, the being of the universe *is* process. Each actual entity is an exemplum of this process but it neither explains process on its own, nor does it exhaust the potentiality of the universe. In this sense, Whitehead's empiricism might be called 'transcendental',[91] in that each entity is an expression of the universe but does not capture that which both comes before and goes after it. This is the role of eternal objects; they explain the pure potentiality of the universe but only insofar as such potentiality is materialized in those entities which make up the on-going process of the universe.

At the same time, complex structured societies, such as humans, do not encounter the world as pure potentiality ingressing into actual entities with no clue as to the tales which surround such ingression. This is the role of propositions insofar as

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[88] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256

[89] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256

[90] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256. Compare: "This rose is not red without having the red color [sic] of this rose. This red is not a color [sic] without having the color [sic] of this red." Deleuze, 1990, p. 112. Such similarities will be taken up in Chapter Eight.

[91] The extent to which Whitehead's version of empiricism is similar to Deleuze's 'transcendental empiricism' will be discussed in Chapter Seven

they are 'the tales that might be told about particular actualities'.

The relation between consciousness and propositions is that: "all forms of consciousness arise from ways of integration of propositional feelings with other feelings, either physical feelings or conceptual feelings."[92] A propositional feeling is the way: "a proposition enters into experience as the entity forming the datum of a complex feeling derived from the integration of a physical feeling with a conceptual feeling."[93]

Propositional feelings refer to the way that complex structured societies encounter the world. In this sense they are distinct from conceptual feelings which do "not refer to *the* actual world"[94] but to the potentiality of the universe. So "no eternal object is ever true or false."[95] This is not to deny the role of conceptual feeling within propositions, for propositional feelings are "a hybrid between pure potentialities and actualities."[96] But, in **this** discussion of propositions Whitehead seems to take a different tack to that analysed in the previous section. Now, "A proposition **must** be true or false."[97] This does not sit so well with Whitehead's earlier assertions that the problem with propositions is that they 'have been handed over to logicians' who have envisaged their sole importance as being whether they are true of false.

Whitehead maintains the same status for propositions as he did in his earlier discussion, in that he still sees them as comprised of logical subjects and a complex predicate. "The proposition is the possibility of *that* predicate applying in that assigned way to *those* logical subjects."[98] "Thus in a proposition the logical subjects are reduced to the status of food for a possibility."[99] However, in this particular analysis it is truth and falsehood which are emphasized:

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[92] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256
[93] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256
[94] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256
[95] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256
[96] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 185-6
[97] Whitehead, 1978, p. 256. Emphasis added.
[98] Whitehead, 1978, p. 258
[99] Whitehead, 1978, p. 258

> The logical subjects are, nevertheless, in fact actual entities which are definite in their realized mutual relatedness. Thus the proposition is in fact true, or false. But its own truth, or its own falsity, is no business of a proposition. That question concerns only a subject entertaining a propositional feeling with that proposition for its datum[100]

Whatever is said about them, whatever judgements are made regarding them, propositions exhibit the state of the world as it is; therefore statements and judgements concerning them must be either true or false. But, with regard to such truth or falsity, the state of the world as it is, that particular actuality, is indifferent as "the proposition in itself...tells no tales about itself; and in this respect it is indeterminate like the eternal objects."[101] This indifference of being is something to which Deleuze is directly opposed. It is, he maintains one of Spinoza's great achievements that: "Instead of understanding univocal being as neutral or indifferent, he makes it an object of pure affirmation."[102] Thus, Whitehead's insistence on the existence of propositions as actualities which are indifferent to judgements which must be made about them, dislocates them from their immanent implication in the world and leads him to a situation which "is probably the nearest Whitehead ever got to his own anathema of bifurcation".[103] That is, Whitehead seems to be juggling two positions here. With respect to propositions his ultimate attitude is as follows: "A proposition, as such, is impartial between its prehending subjects, and in its own nature it does not fully determine the subjective forms of such prehensions."[104] This approach is evidence of Whitehead's approximation to the correspondence theory of truth. But with respect to the status of actual entities who are confronted by such propositions, he states that: "in respect...to all entities in the universe, the satisfied actual entity embodies a determinate attitude of 'yes' or 'no.'"[105] However, this 'yes' or 'no' must be true or untrue in relation to the indifferent proposition to which it refers. There is thus a disjunction to be found in Whitehead's world between propositions in themselves and judgements which refer to them.

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[100] Whitehead, 1978, p. 258

[101] Whitehead, 1978, p. 257

[102] Deleuze, 1994, p. 40

[103] Jordan, M. 1968. *New Shapes of Reality. Aspects of A. N. Whitehead's Philosophy*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London, p. 91

[104] Whitehead, 1978, p. 261

[105] Whitehead, 1978, p. 212. However, such statements do seem to accord with Deleuze and Spinoza's notions of affirmation and the refusal of being as neutral.

Once again, the reason for this might be his refusal to include language in the inter-relation of propositions and the judgements of actual entities in relation to propositions. For, the void between the two could be seen as arising from the difficulty that Whitehead has in accounting for the 'reference' of judgements to propositions. At the end of this second discussion of propositions Whitehead returns to a common theme of *Process and Reality* namely, the ambiguity of language and its inherent inability to render or capture being as defined through process. "Language, as usual, is always ambiguous as to the exact proposition which it indicates."[106] This ambiguity leaves both propositions, and the subjects whose judgements about propositions constitute an integral part of their becoming, in an equivocal (rather than an univocal) position. For, as has been seen (Chapters Four and Five), actual entities involve a cutting off from the extensive continuum; it is in respect that they make de-cisions. But what informs, limits, or determines such decisions? It cannot be said that it is simply the extensive continuum or propositions that determine such becomings, as each actual entity is novel and is informed by the principle of creativity which underpins process. Also, each becoming comprises both the 'physical' and the conceptual as all entities are di-polar. Does this mean that insofar as each "actual entity...transcends its universe",[107] it is completely free? Although this is not a position Whitehead would agree with (as he would stress the absolute implication of each actual entity within the extensive continuum),[108] it is certainly a question which it is possible to ask of him. Indeed, this is one of the questions that has most concerned Whitehead commentators.[109] But these notions of freedom are usually tied to the problem of human agency. "The important question remaining, however, is how this elaborate

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[106] Whitehead, 1978, p. 264

[107] Whitehead, 1978, p. 94

[108] See, "the continuum is present in each actual entity, and each actual entity pervades the continuum." Whitehead, 1978, p. 67

[109] "The concept of freedom has always been understood as central to Whitehead's metaphysical system." Lucas, 1989, p. 151. The first line of the first chapter of Pols' (1967) text is: "Our exposition and internal criticism of the metaphysical doctrine of *Process and Reality* will be organized around the topic of freedom", Pols, 1967, p. 3. His final position is that Whitehead grants ontological priority to his eternal objects so that "the actual entities alleged to possess freedom lack a genuine entitative character: the sense in which they exist is derivative", Pols, 1967, p. 190. However, it should be noted that Millett (Millett, N. 1997. 'The Trick of Singularity' in *Theory, Culture and Society*, Volume 14, Number 2, May 1997) states that: "with Whitehead, 'freedom'...is utterly bereft of any anthropomorphic attribution," Millett, 1997, p. 56. However, this does not rid Whitehead of the problem of freedom in his philosophy as it begs the question of how much freedom **any** actual entity has within the philosophy of organism.

'microscopic' doctrine of freedom vis-à-vis actual occasions translates into a meaningful doctrine of human agency."[110] Such approaches ask Whitehead to provide a moral theory consonant with the notions of freedom, autonomy, responsibility as already understood within philosophy. This thesis takes Whitehead's ideas around matter, ontology and subjectivity in a different light. It does not see his work as a contribution to already established problems within philosophy but as a way of re-situating specific concerns, namely the relations between materiality, subjectivity and ontology. In this sense, Whitehead's work is even more problematic.

It is not really a question of how much or how little freedom an entity has but of how such freedom can be described. This is not to say that Whitehead does not provide a theoretical account within which freedom is neither absolute nor absent:

> there is no such fact as absolute freedom; every actual entity possesses only such freedom as is inherent in the primary phase 'given' by its standpoint of relativity to its actual universe. Freedom, givenness, potentiality, are notions which presuppose each other and limit each other.[111]

Whitehead's version of propositions is supposed to help explicate the inter-relations of 'freedom, givenness and potentiality'. Yet, at the same time, as has been seen, Whitehead is clear that there is an elemental problem with language. And it is this refusal to engage with language within his theory of becoming that produces the major, though not insurmountable problem with Whitehead's theory. For, despite his reluctance to theorize language, his general philosophical position does occasionally lead him to a description of the materiality of language: "To speak of anything, is to speak of something which, by reason of that very speech, is in some way a component in that act of experience."[112]

But such a position is not fully elaborated within *Process and Reality* where, instead, Whitehead is much more worried about the indeterminacy of language and its dislocation from the project of metaphysics. "A precise language must await a completed metaphysical knowledge."[113] And insofar as *Process and Reality* is an

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[110] Lucas, 1989, p. 154. See also, Sherburne, 1963, 'Responsibility, Punishment, and Whitehead's theory of the Self' in Kline, 1963, pp. 179-88

[111] Whitehead, 1978, p. 133

[112] Whitehead, 1967, p. 223

[113] Whitehead, 1978, p. 12

attempt to develop such a metaphysical knowledge then this might explain the need for Whitehead's deployment of so many new terms (actual entities, eternal objects, prehensions, nexus etc.). It is in this sense that his philosophy is 'speculative': Part I[114] of *Process and Reality* is entitled 'The Speculative Scheme' and the first chapter is called 'Speculative Philosophy'.[115] Much of the speculation arises from the inability of language to express metaphysical truths; hence the need to invent a new language, the very specialized language of *Process and Reality*: "philosophy redesigns language in the same way that, in a physical science, pre-existing appliances are redesigned."[116] The problem is that within a system which insists upon the indeterminacy of language, and its inability to express propositions, yet insists upon the 'freedom' of each item of being to transcend its universe, it remains impossible to describe the limits of such freedom. That is to say, if "in a proposition the logical subjects are reduced to the status of food for a possibility",[117] then what is to limit such possibility? Is each subject able to create itself in any way that it wishes? Is there unlimited freedom within Whitehead's process? Clearly not, for the extent of possibility is limited by the range of predicates that surround these logical subjects and which make up "the predicative pattern."[118] But, ultimately, that which constitutes such a predicative pattern are eternal objects. For propositions are the melding of complex sets of actual entities (logical subjects) with complex sets of eternal objects (predicates). Within the proposition, the eternal objects no longer express the abstract notion of metaphysical potentiality as they usually do within the philosophy of organism. Instead they express the limited potentiality of a proposition, regarded as an element of the 'real'[119] world. Complex structured societies (such as humans) constitute themselves as subjects through the admission or refusal of some of these predicates in relation to these logical subjects. "The proposition is the possibility of *that* predicate applying in that assigned way to *those* logical subjects."[120] But, insofar as such predicates are the

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[114] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 3-36
[115] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 3-17
[116] Whitehead, 1978, p. 11
[117] Whitehead, 1978, p. 258
[118] Whitehead, 1978, p. 258
[119] 'Real' in the sense of expressing the world as usually encountered by human subjects, i.e. as containing enduring objects such as stones and factories rather than the eminently 'real' yet un-encountered metaphysical 'actual entities'.
[120] Whitehead, 1978, p. 258

same in kind as eternal objects and given that language is ambiguous in relation to propositions, it seems difficult, if not impossible, for Whitehead to successfully describe this realm of predicates, their actual relation to such logical subjects, and how this might limit or effect the development of new subjectivities.

Just as Spinoza faced difficulty in accounting for the passage from the infinite to the finite, Whitehead faces the difficulty of describing the inter-relation of complex sets of propositions and nascent subjectivities. This is not a metaphysical problem: it is not one that threatens the basis of his philosophy as one premised on becoming and process. Rather, it expresses the deficiency of his philosophy in being able to describe such inter-relation given that language is, for him, always elliptical, ambiguous and dislocated from the actuality of propositions considered on their own terms. Whitehead's retention of elements of the correspondence theory of truth within his description of propositions means that language is, for him, unable to render such propositions. There is thus a gap between the material and language. It is one of the aims of this thesis to point a way in which such a gap may be avoided. That is to say, this thesis set out to:

1) establish a non-essentialist ontology - which has been developed through an analysis of Whitehead's philosophy of organism.

2) describe the position of subjectivity and matter with such an ontology. And, as identified in the Introduction by Cheah,[121] Kerin,[122] and Kirby,[123] this should include some notion of communication or language.

Given that Whitehead is unable to meet this second demand, as has been made plain throughout this chapter, it is now the work of Deleuze which shall be turned to as a possible way of linking language, being, matter and subjectivity. However, before turning to how Deleuze's work on language can contribute to the general aims of this thesis, the next chapter will evaluate the similarities between key areas of Deleuze's work and Whitehead's philosophy of organism.

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[121] Cheah, 1996
[122] Kerin, 1999
[123] Kirby, 1997, 1999

Chapter Seven
Deleuze (and Whitehead) on Empiricism, Subjectivity, and Becoming

In order to demonstrate the relevance of Deleuze to the aims of this thesis, the present chapter will establish the similarities between his philosophical approach and that of Whitehead. It will also make the first moves in clarifying how Deleuze's work can be utilised in over-coming the problems identified in the work of Whitehead and Spinoza in previous chapters. In order to achieve this, the first step must be to re-orient the work of Deleuze itself. That is to say, as set out in Chapter One, it is not enough to expect the texts of Deleuze simply to offer solutions in themselves. Certain elements of certain set of texts must be rendered in a specific way to ally them to the concerns of this dissertation. As Deleuze himself states: "a philosophical theory is an elaborately developed question, and nothing else; by itself and in itself it is not the resolution to a problem".[1]

This will entail avoiding many areas of Deleuze's thought, as the chapter is intended to focus the earlier concerns of this thesis. The main texts of Deleuze that will be involved in this analysis are *Empiricism and Subjectivity*[2] and *Difference and Repetition*.[3] Given that this chapter is mainly concerned with addressing the similarities between the work of Deleuze and Whitehead it will remain mostly at the 'philosophical' level. That is, it will attempt to establish the conjunctions in their approaches to empiricism, subjectivity, becoming and ontology. The following chapters will build on these comparisons in order to draw out the relevance of their work for more direct analyses of the relation between materiality and subjectivity.

In the course of the present analyses, it may well seem that Whitehead is more of a 'continental' philosopher than a traditionally Anglo-American writer. At the same

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[1] Deleuze, 1991, p. 106
[2] Deleuze, 1991
[3] Deleuze, 1994

time, as the next three chapters will demonstrate, it could also be argued that Deleuze is a much more interested in philosophical issues which are usually considered to be the concern of Anglo-American philosophy. For example, from his earliest work, and throughout his career, he is interested in the status of 'logical' propositions. This question has not been addressed directly within this thesis but it should be noted that there is much less distance between these schools of thought that is often believed. A recognition of this lack of distance might well benefit philosophers and social theorists alike.

Empiricism - (The Mind and the Subject)

It is noticeable that elements of Deleuze's early work[4] replicate some of the main concerns of *Process and Reality*, in that both return to detailed analyses of Hume. Not only that, *Empiricism and Subjectivity* also displays many of the themes that run through Deleuze's philosophical life. With regard to Whitehead and Deleuze's analyses of Hume, both writers are looking for a way of thinking which pre-dates the Kantian attempt to meld empiricism and rationalism; thereby introducing the transcendental as an integral aspect of the experience of the (human) subject. The following section will use Deleuze and Whitehead's analyses of Hume as a pivot, around which a comparison of their work can developed.

Both writers maintain that, by focussing upon experience and a specific version of empiricism, it is possible to account for subjectivity without recourse to a primary transcendental field. Rather, any such transcendence will be viewed as a consequence of the activity of multiple singular entities. For Whitehead this involves describing how an actual entity constitutes itself through its 'de-cision' out of that which is given as potential, namely the extensive continuum. According to Deleuze,[5] for Hume the question is "how is the subject constituted in the given?"[6]

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[4] *Empiricism and Subjectivity* was first published in 1953.

[5] The following discussion of Hume is all based on Deleuze's reading of Hume. For simplicity's sake the fact that this is Deleuze's specific reading has not been referenced throughout. Instead, when Hume is referred to this should be taken as an exposition of the similarities of Deleuze's analysis with the work of Whitehead.

[6] Deleuze, 1991, p. 87

And the first element of the answer is to render the 'given' not as a substrate, or as a ground upon which the subject arises; nor is the 'given' that which proceeds from the transcendental subject.[7] Rather, the answer is in formulating the given as 'constructed'.

> The construction of the given makes room for the constitution of the subject. The given is no longer given to a subject; rather, the subject constitutes itself in the given. Hume's merit lies in the singling out of this empirical problem in its pure state and its separation from the transcendental and the psychological.[8]

There is a crucial and helpful distinction that must be made here. Whitehead's initial discussion of subjects was metaphysical, it described the conditions pertaining to all subjects, all items of matter. Hume's theory is precisely one of 'Human Nature'. Immediately, the analysis is in the realms of the social rather than the abstract ontology of Whitehead. "In this sense, Hume is a moralist and a sociologist, before being a psychologist".[9] Hume does not start with the mind but asks the question "*how does the mind become human nature?*"[10] His analysis does not presuppose that the mind is an object within nature, immediately open to study. Rather, the existence of the mind itself must be explained. "The mind is not nature, nor does it have a nature. It is identical with the ideas in the mind. Ideas are given, as given; they are experience."[11]

So, like Whitehead, Hume commences with an investigation into the nature of experience with regard to the creation of a subject, and the relation of such a creation to the 'given'. Moreover, this analysis emphasises that that which constitutes the mind is no more and no less than the ideas of the mind. These ideas are not created by a pre-existing mind, they are given, and that which 'gives' them is experience.

"But what is the given?"[12] For Whitehead it is the extensive continuum out of which are generated actual entities which then return, after their adventure of experience,

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[7] See Chapter Three for Whitehead's critiques of substance as a substrate, and the subject-predicate axis which accompanies approaches which accept such a position.

[8] Deleuze, 1991, p. 87

[9] Deleuze, 1991, p. 21

[10] Deleuze, 1991, p. 22

[11] Deleuze, 1991, p. 22

[12] Deleuze, 1991, p. 87

to this extensive continuum. The given is that which creates and permeates all existence through the wider notion of process. For Hume, the given is: "the flux of the sensible...a set of perceptions. It is the totality of that which appears, being which equals appearance; it is also movement and change without identity or law."[13] Hume's 'given' is Whitehead's extensive continuum. And this is not an undivided flux, it is not a seething mass of matter with no distinguishing features. Whitehead stresses the importance of the atomisation of the extensive continuum in the form of actual entities which combine diverse elements into a unit of experience. For Hume, this is the very definition of empiricism. "Empiricism begins from the experience of a collection, or from an animated succession of distinct perceptions. It begins with them, insofar as they are distinct and independent."[14]

And, in a more familiarly Deleuzean vein, this distinctness of perceptions (which here function as Whitehead's prehensions), "is the principle of difference."[15] Difference is at the heart of empiricism. It is that which facilitates the analysis of the subject in terms of its experience, without reducing such a subject to either a determinant of experience or that which secretly persists beneath all experiences, thereby constituting a transcendental version of subjectivity.

> Therefore, experience is succession, or the movement of separable ideas, insofar as they are different, and different, insofar as they are separable. We must begin with *this* experience because it is *the* experience....It is not the affection of an implicated subject, nor the modification of a mode of substance.[16]

Experience is a part of a more general process. That which constitutes this process is the combining of that which is separate into a temporary unity. Like Whitehead's prehensions, which comprise actual entities, these elements are separable; they are at one point separate, but in the unity which comprises an act of experience they are not separate. This is what incorporates the existence of a subject. A subject is not explainable as the particular manifestation of a more general principle. It is just *that* experience. There is no room for either a transcendental subject or a superior level of reality; there is no substance which subtends all experience and

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[13] Deleuze, 1991, p. 87
[14] Deleuze, 1991, p. 87
[15] Deleuze, 1991, p. 87
[16] Deleuze, 1991, pp. 87-8

of which each experience is just another exemplum.[17] "If we wish to retain the term 'substance,'...we must apply it correctly not to a substrate of which we have no idea but to each individual perception."[18] "'Actual entities...are the final real things of which the world is made up. There is no going behind actual entities to find anything more real."[19]

Such approaches are a counter against any philosophy of representation. They attempt to render matter and subjectivity as combinatory elements which, through their inter-relation, manifest items or moments of existence. Neither has primacy, nor is one a reflection of the other. Such arguments against representation are a constant theme in Deleuze's work and are an important aspect of this early analysis of Hume. "The philosophy of experience is not only the critique of a philosophy of substance but also a critique of a philosophy of nature. Therefore, ideas are not the representations of objects".[20]

Therefore a philosophy of experience must account for space and time, not as external guarantors of existence but as elements of it. This led Whitehead to his 'epochal' theory of space and time where units of being create quanta of space and time.

On Deleuze's reading, Hume's approach is similar but distinct from one which identifies space and time as quanta. The similarity is in the denial of space as an over-arching Newtonian receptacle: "The given is not in space; the space is in the given."[21] Thus space does not pre-exist the manifestation of individual items of matter. However, the very notions of time and space are closely tied to the notion of a perceiving mind: "undoubtedly there are a many things smaller than the smallest bodies that appear to our senses; the fact is, though, that there is nothing smaller than the impression that we have of these bodies".[22] This is not a position

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[17] (This is another example of a moment when Deleuze distances himself from Spinoza).
[18] Deleuze, 1991, p. 88
[19] Whitehead, 1978, p. 18
[20] Deleuze, 1991, p. 88
[21] Deleuze, 1991, p. 91
[22] Deleuze, 1991, p. 91

to which Whitehead would accede. Rather, it is one of Whitehead's main contentions that philosophy must be able to describe the existence of these 'smallest bodies', this is the point of his actual entities. However, as has been seen, there is a need for Whitehead to describe the manner in which human subjectivity inter-relates with the given. This is the point of his 'propositions'. Hume does not concern himself with ultimate metaphysical particles and commences with the relation of human subjects to the given. It is in this sense that he invokes the notion of the 'sensible'.

> The smallest impression is neither a mathematical nor a physical point, but rather a sensible one. A physical point is already extended and divisible; a mathematical point is nothing. Between the two there is a midpoint which is the only real one. Between real extension and nonexistence there is real existence whose extension will be precisely formed. A sensible point or atom is visible and tangible, coloured and solid.[23]

This can be translated into Whiteheadian terms. That which constitutes extension are actual entities. Insofar as they are units which become, they punctuate the universe with quanta of space and time.[24] Mathematical points are high abstractions which do not reflect reality in terms of genuine existence. At the more complex (human) level, that which constitutes genuine existence is the becoming of a structured society in a unison of becoming. An integral part of such becomings is the ingression of complex eternal objects which grant definiteness such as colour and 'tangibility'. A distinction must be made between the formal existence of a subject (its existence with regard to its becoming) and its objective existence (its existence as a settled, complete, entity which atomizes the extensive continuum and is an element of stubborn fact - an 'object'). "The peculiarity of an actual entity is that it can be considered both 'objectively' and 'formally.'[25] Formal existence refers to "the 'real internal constitution' of the actual entity."[26] Objective existence "is the actual entity as a definite, determinate, settled fact, stubborn and with unavoidable consequences."[27]

In the passage cited above, Hume is focussing on formal existence or, as Deleuze

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[23] Deleuze, 1991, p. 91
[24] See Whitehead, 1978, pp.283-4
[25] Whitehead, 1978, p. 220
[26] Whitehead, 1978, p. 219
[27] Whitehead, 1978, p. 219-220

calls it, 'real existence'. Such existence is described as being implicated with the 'sensible'. This is an important point to which Deleuze, and this thesis, will return in the later analysis of *The Logic of Sense*, which develops more fully the link between sense, existence and language. For the moment, that which characterises such sensible points is their real existence but lack of extension. "A sensible point...is visible and tangible[28]....By itself, it has no extension, and yet it exists."[29] Furthermore: "no extension is itself an atom, a corpuscle, a minimum idea, or a simple impression."[30] So whilst Hume is denying the notion of space and time as a receptacle within which existence occurs, he is also insisting that extension is always tied up with the human mind. "Space and time are in the mind."[31] "Extension, therefore, is only the quality of certain perceptions."[32]

This is where Whitehead and Deleuze's interpretations of Hume diverge considerably.

Hume and Subjectivity

> The perceptions, for Hume, are what the mind knows about itself; and tacitly the knowable facts are always treated as qualities of a subject - the subject being the mind. His final criticism of the notion of the 'mind' does not alter the plain fact that the whole of the previous discussion has included this presupposition.[33]

So, Whitehead accuses Hume of assigning the status of a primary substance to a subject which thereby haunts his version of the mind. This follows from the insistence on the 'real existence' of sensible objects which implicitly relies upon their perception by another subject, namely, the human mind. This is why Whitehead assigned the status of subject to all actual entities, to rid himself of this problem.

On Deleuze's reading the subject is produced by the mind and not the other way

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[28] This could be seen as a pre-cursor of Deleuze's later distinction between "the visible and the articulable". Deleuze, 1988, p. 32ff.

[29] Deleuze, 1991, p. 91

[30] Deleuze, 1991, p. 91

[31] Deleuze, 1991, p. 91

[32] Deleuze, 1991, p. 91

[33] Whitehead, 1978, p. 138

around:

> We must now raise the question: what do we mean when we speak of the subject? We mean that the imagination, having been a collection, becomes now a faculty; the distributed collection becomes now a system. The given is once again taken up by a movement, and in a movement that transcends it. The mind becomes human nature. The subject invents and believes; *it is a synthesis of the mind*.[34]

The subject arises out of the combination of elements; these elements are sensible impressions. Such impressions are not given to a subject as it is the combination of distinct and diverse elements by the subject that creates the mind and thereby the subject. This creation entails that the given is changed, it has gone beyond what it is. This movement creates both the subject and enables the given to re-articulate itself. Thus far, such an analysis would fit in with Whitehead's philosophy. However, it is also clear that Whitehead's claim, that behind Hume's notion of the mind there always exists a subject, could still be seen to bite. After the initial question, posed in the above citation,[35] there follow three sentences which are written either in the passive tense or in a combination of passive and active: 'having been...becomes'; 'taken up'; 'becomes human nature'. But, in the final sentence, the phrase which introduces the role of the subject as distinct from the mind is in the active tense: 'The subject invents and believes'. This differs from Whitehead's approach where subjectivity is created through the process of combination. The subject is limited to its genetic growth which coincides with its own concrescence.[36] The assigning of activity to a subject which 'invents and believes' entails that it creates that synthesis which is the mind. This account would seem to run counter to Whitehead's analysis of Hume and, more tellingly, appears to fall foul of his critique of the subjectivist principle which tacitly posits an enduring subject as some kind of primary substance.

This is not to say that Deleuze, himself, is advocating the admission of a pre-existing subject which subtends the mind. He is offering a specific and generous reading of Hume. His denial of such a subject is sustained throughout *Empiricism and Subjectivity,* and indeed throughout his philosophical works more generally. In order to rescue Hume from such criticisms he invokes another principle within

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[34] Deleuze, 1991, p. 92

[35] The citation is referenced in note 34.

[36] See Whitehead, 1978, pp. 87-8

Hume's philosophy namely, "associationism".[37]

Associationism: Relations, Empiricism and Subjectivity

This principle is offered to deny the existence of a subtending subject and to explain *why* sensible impressions are combined, imagined and believed to matter, in *this* way rather than *that.* According to Deleuze. "Atomism is the theory of ideas, insofar as relations are external to them. Associationism is the theory of relation, insofar as relations are external to ideas, in other words, **insofar as they depend on other causes**."[38] The notion that 'relations are external to their terms' will be returned to presently. For the moment what is important is the distinction between 'atomism' and 'associationism'. Atomism refers to the distinctness and separateness of sensible impressions. This is 'the principle of difference' which is the defining factor of empiricism. But any philosophy which stops at this point will face the problem of accounting for *why* such data is interpreted in specific ways (the danger of sensationalism). It will also have difficulties in accounting for the status of subjectivity, in relation to such impressions, without having recourse to a primary substance in terms of a continuing subject which collates such impressions and gives them 'meaning'. 'Associationism' is the means by which Hume attempts to avoid such pitfalls. Associationism refers to the need to introduce elements and explanations which are external to the subject in order to be able to account for the diverse ways in which ideas are combined, meaning granted, and subjects created. This distinction is crucial, on Deleuze's account, if Hume is to avoid positing the human mind as the guarantor of enduring experience which, thereby defines the essence of subjectivity.

Deleuze defines associationism thus: "Association affects the imagination. Rather than finding its origin, association finds in the imagination its terms and its object. It is a quality which unifies ideas, not a quality of ideas themselves."[39] Association

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[37] Deleuze, 1991, p. 27 and passim.
[38] Deleuze, 1991, p. 105. Emphasis added.
[39] Deleuze, 1991, p. 24

is not internal to the mind and is not created by the mind. Rather the mind is created through associations.

> Association, far from being a product, is a rule of the imagination....ideas are connected in the mind - not by the mind. The imagination is indeed human nature but only to the extent that other principles have made it constant and settled.[40]

What is important for this discussion is the distinction between ideas and the way in which they are related. The association of ideas does not stem from anything intrinsic to those ideas. The association of ideas is made possible by the relations between ideas. These relations are not integral to those ideas or to any ideas. They are distinct from them; they are external to them. The same applies to objects. Whether these objects are items of matter or sensible impressions, the relations between them (contiguity, distance etc.), are not integral to these objects, nor are they derived from them. Relations are distinct from their objects; they are external to them. "Whether as relations of ideas or as relations of objects, relations are always external to their terms."[41] This is one of the first statements that led commentators to describe Deleuze's empiricism as 'transcendental'.[42] For, the 'objects' of empiricism, be they subjects or sensible impressions, do not fully explain or exhaust existence. There is always something else that goes beyond the immediate inter-relation of things, or collection of ideas, into a mind or subject. There are always relations which are neither limited to, nor determined by, objects and ideas. There is always that which goes beyond or transcends the immediate. However, such going-beyonds do not constitute a transcendent realm or field which guarantees immediate facticity. This transcendence cannot be grasped in itself, it does not exist in itself, nor is it bounded by the present. In this manner such a philosophy is irreducibly empiricist but insofar as it always goes beyond the confines of contemporary manifestations of existence, it is transcendent.

There are clear links here between Deleuze and Whitehead. Indeed the preceding paragraph could be read as a summary of the latter's philosophical approach. Whitehead admits the influence of William James[43] upon his thought, as does

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[40] Deleuze, 1991, p. 24
[41] Deleuze, 1991, p. 66
[42] See, for example, Hayden, 1998, pp. 5-35, Marks, 1998, pp. 78-90
[43] Whitehead, 1978, p. xii, 68

Deleuze in his most concentrated discussion of the externality of relations.[44] Whitehead's discussion of the externality of relations is always linked to their correlate internality through his insistence upon the public/private nature of prehensions within a more general scheme of extension.

> It is by means of 'extension' that bonds between prehensions take on the dual aspect of internal relations, which are yet in a sense external relations. It is evident that if the solidarity of the physical world is to be relevant to the description of its individual actualities, it can only be by reason of the fundamental internality of the relationships in question. On the other hand, if the individual discreteness of the actualities is to have its weight, there must be an aspect in these relationships from which they can be conceived as external, that is, as bonds between divided things. The extensive scheme serves this double purpose.[45]

Prehensions are that which express how contemporary existents are constituted through relations which are not limited to such existence.[46] They go beyond their implication in any particular existent to become an element within another and another and so on. They are constantly re-iterated and repeated within actuality but are not limited to it. In this sense they are always empirical but they always transcend the particular without either invoking the universal,[47] or constituting a transcendental field.

> The operations of all organisms are directed *from* antecedent organisms and *to* the immediate organism. They are 'vectors' in that they convey the many things into the constitution of the single superject. The creative process is rhythmic: it swings from the publicity of many things to the individual privacy; and it swings back from the private individual to the publicity of the objectified individual.[48]

To return to Deleuze, the joint notions of the externality of relations and 'transcendental empiricism' are crucial concepts, echoes of which are to be found throughout his philosophy. It is at the basis of his denial of the 'true' existence of objects and subjects and their re-placement as elements within a wider figuration of being in terms of becoming, difference, repetition, events, relations and so on. At the same time, despite Deleuze's strong and intriguing reading of Hume, there still remains the question of precisely what comprises the externality of the relations of association which, Deleuze claims, save Hume from the charge that he

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[44] Deleuze, 1991, p. 99

[45] Whitehead, 1978, p. 309

[46] See, also, Deleuze, 1993, p. 78

[47] Except insofar as Whitehead describes the principle of 'creativity' which underpins the movement from one entity to another as the 'universal of universals'. See Chapter Four

[48] Whitehead, 1978, p. 151

presupposes the continual existence of a subject which subtends the mind. Perhaps one major reason why this concern is able to keep raising its head, stems from Hume's concentration upon 'human nature'. After all, he is mostly concerned with describing how it is that human subjects are constituted within the given, and this tends to reduce the given to that which is presentable to or perceptible by humans alone. That is to say, he does not provide a metaphysics or an ontology which applies to all objects or subjects, irrespective of their status as humans or not. This could be one reason why Deleuze's next extended discussion of Hume incorporates a discussion of Bergson and is situated within *Difference and Repetition*,[49] which attempts to provide a sustained account of an ontology which is not founded upon human subjectivity or consciousness. A fuller discussion of this text will follow a final indication from *Empiricism and Subjectivity* of the continuity of interest that Deleuze maintained in certain areas of thought. That is to say, the following, brief discussion will indicate how Deleuze's work is never simply philosophical; it is always engaged in practical, social problems.

Nature/Social

The earlier analysis of Whitehead outlined his complex understanding of the concepts of nature and of societies, and how he saw these as inter-related. Deleuze finds such an inter-relation in the work of Hume. Given his emphasis on associationism, it is clear that human nature is not simply part of nature, it is in some sense manufactured. In this sense it is social. At the same time, nature is not simply that which is the object of human inquiry, it is not to be defined as that which is distinct from human society. The two are intertwined. "The fact that nature and society form an indissoluble complex should not make us forget that we cannot reduce society to nature. The fact that humanity is an inventive species does not prevent our inventions from being inventions."[50]

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[49] Deleuze, 1994, pp. 70ff.

[50] Deleuze, 1991, p. 46. See also Whitehead's comment "The greatest invention of the nineteenth century was the invention of the method of invention." Whitehead, 1933, p. 120

Thus any analysis of the natural[51] must take account of the social and any account of the social must take account of the natural. There is a complexity within and between the two, not just in terms of inter-connectedness but also in terms of existence. To ignore such complexity, to view the social as a separately explainable realm, is to misrecognize its true 'nature', in that the social is always implicated in the natural and the natural in the social:

> It is a fact that a drive is satisfied inside an institution. We speak here of specifically social institutions....In marriage,[52] sexuality is satisfied; in property, greed. The institution, being the model of actions, is a designed system of possible satisfaction. The problem is that this does not license us to conclude that the institution is *explained* by the drive. The institution is a system of means, according to Hume, but these means are oblique and indirect; they do not satisfy the drive without also constraining it at the same time. Take for example, *one* form of marriage, or *one* system of property. Why *this* system and *this* form? A thousand others, which we find in other times and places are possible.[53]

This analysis may lack some of the sophistication of Deleuze's later analyses but it does indicate various elements which persist throughout his work. Most notably, the attempt to render subjectivity as an element within a wider network, or 'designed system'. But such systems or institutions do not reflect the general, social manifestations of human instincts or drives. Also, the enabling of the satisfaction of a drive through an institution or 'designed system' does not mean that such drives are genuinely satisfied. Such satisfaction is only obtained at the expense of constraints being put upon the drive itself. Finally, such 'designed systems' are historically and culturally specific. But even these reasons for existence are not to be found within the drives of human subjects; nor can they be explained as specific instances of a more general historical development. The workings of each system in terms of its location and its design must be addressed as specifics. 'Why *this* system and *this* form?'

Deleuze's discussion of the historical and cultural specificity of such 'designed systems' will be taken up in more detail in the next two chapters. For the moment,

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[51] The terms 'nature' and 'social' have not always been put in single inverted commas in this discussion. There are two reasons for this. The first is that in the passages upon which this paragraph is a commentary, Deleuze does not use them. The second is that to do so would be to delimit them as immediately problematic whereas the aim of this discussion is to suggest that some of the problems associated with these concepts come from seeing them as either antithetical or as distinct.

[52] This could be taken as a problematic example

[53] Deleuze, 1991, p. 47

the remainder of the chapter will involve a further comparison of Deleuze with Whitehead and an outline of Deleuze's writings on ontology.

Difference and Repetition

Difference and Repetition is often taken to be Deleuze's concerted attempt to overturn or deflect the Platonic influence on the history of philosophy, most especially with regard to its emphasis on the philosophy of representation. For example, Hayden envisages Deleuze's project thus: "only with the end of representation can the primacy of difference and repetition be fully acknowledged."[54] Marks, following Foucault,[55] states that: "As far as Deleuze is concerned, philosophy has traditionally been concerned with a 'dominant image' of thought which has depended upon recognition and representation."[56] Boundas sees *Difference and Repetition* as, primarily, Deleuze's re-appropriation of Bergson and an argument against the 'transcendental illusion' which arises from "our exclusive preoccupation with the real and the possible at the expense of the virtual and the actual."[57] It therefore, emphasises the anti-Platonic aspects of the work and focusses on a Bergsonian rendering of Deleuze's ontology. But, the over-emphasis upon Deleuze's philosophy as simply a critique of idealism will tend to locate Deleuze's concerns within a limited set of purely philosophical problems. It is to suggest that Deleuze is merely arguing against Plato and his concept of identity. To limit Deleuze's work to such concerns is not only to do him a disservice but opens his texts to claims such as those of Badiou, that he ultimately fails in his attempt to over-turn Platonism:

> The price one must pay for inflexibly maintaining the thesis of univocity is clear: given that the multiple...is arrayed in the universe by way of a numerical difference that is purely formal as regards the form of being to which it refers...and purely modal as regards its individuation,[58] it follows that, ultimately, this multiple can only be thought

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[54] Hayden, 1998, p. 8

[55] Foucault, M. (edited, with an Introduction by Bouchard, D. F.) 1977. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, pp. 165-196

[56] Marks, 1998, p. 79

[57] Boundas, 1996, pp. 85-106

[58] This is precisely Whitehead's critique of Spinoza, that the modes do not gain the full status of existence. It is also clear that Deleuze rejects this aspect of Spinoza's work within *Difference and Repetition*, as shall be seen below, although at other points, in other texts he does more fully subscribe to a Spinozist

of the order of simulacra. And if one classes...every difference without a real status, every multiplicity whose ontological status is that of the One, as a simulacrum, then the world of beings is the theater [sic] of the simulacra of Being.

Strangely, this consequence has a Platonic, or even Neoplatonic, air to it.[59]

Such readings may seem counter to Deleuze's explicit rejection of Plato and Platonism:

The one and the many are concepts of the understanding which make up the overly loose mesh of a distorted dialectic which proceeds by opposition. The biggest fish pass through. Can we believe that the concrete is attained when the inadequacy of an abstraction is compensated for by the inadequacy of its opposite? We can say 'the one is multiple, the multiple one' for ever: we can speak like Plato's young men....Contraries may be combined, contradictions established, but at no point has the essential been raised: 'how many', 'how', 'in which cases'.[60]

And, indeed, Badiou does notice Deleuze's attempts to distance himself from a simple reiteration of the Many/One duplet. "Deleuze is indeed he who announces that the distribution of Being according to the One and the Multiple must be renounced".[61] But he then goes on to argue that, given Deleuze's insistence upon retaining the univocity of being, then: "Deleuze's fundamental problem is most certainly not to liberate the multiple but to submit thinking to a renewed concept of the One."[62] And here is, perhaps, a key to the argument. By remaining within the ambit of philosophy *qua* the study of the possibility of thought within a universe comprised of becoming, events and so on, Badiou limits both Deleuze's philosophy and his own critique within the realm of re-thinking the concepts of the Many and the One. "What is thinking? We know that this has always been the central question of philosophy."[63] This ultimately leads Badiou to state that although he does regard Deleuze as a physicist (rather than simply as a philosopher), it is only in terms of those pre-Socratics, namely as "*'thinkers of the All.'*"[64]

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scheme: see, for example, Deleuze, 1992, pp. 198-9.

[59] Badiou, 2000, p. 26
[60] Deleuze, 1994, p. 182
[61] Badiou, 2000, p. 10
[62] Badiou, 2000, p. 11
[63] Badiou, 2000, p. 79
[64] Badiou, p. 102

Deleuze, Spinoza (and Whitehead)

Ansell-Pearson also notes this reference by Badiou to Deleuze as a 'thinker of the all',[65] but he does not agree that this reduces Deleuze's philosophy to an attempt to think the 'All' in terms of the 'One'. Instead, he argues that Badiou insists upon viewing Deleuze's philosophy solely in Spinozist terms, so that Badiou describes the "virtual in terms of an ontological substance (the power of the One)".[66] This reading, Ansell-Pearson argues, ignores Bergson's determination to render the virtual in terms which avoid the difficulties to be found in Spinoza's monism. Indeed, it is also to ignore Deleuze's explicit statements that Spinoza's unitary, ontological substance is problematic, as shall be discussed below. In a further commentary on Bergson's understanding of the relation of the Many and the One, Ansell-Pearson states:

> The 'whole'...cannot be approached in terms of ready-made criteria of an organic totality. The pluralist and the empiricist will thus invoke and appeal to a whole that is only ever the whole of an acentred mobile continuity, a continuity of moving parts and wholes in which the 'whole' that they are implicated in does not denote an organic unity.[67]

Not only does such an analysis serve to counter Badiou's critique, it is an analysis that could be equally used as an explication of the work of Whitehead. And, although Bergson has not been focussed on in this thesis, it is clear that his work can provide both insights into, and defences of, the work of Deleuze. At the same time, it is arguable that whilst Bergson's work does examine the relation of ontology and matter, it does so within the realm of such a relation to thought or thinking. As such, it clarifies important questions for contemporary philosophy but is not so instructive for social theory. Whitehead, on the other hand, does not seem so interested in theorizing thought[68] and therefore might provide a clearer route to a non-essentialist ontology.

However, to assign Deleuze simply to either Bergson or Whitehead is mistaken. He

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[65] Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p. 131; Ansell-Pearson, 2000, p. 53

[66] Ansell-Pearson, 2000, p. 53

[67] Ansell-Pearson and Mullarkey, 2002, pp. 11-12.

[68] When Whitehead does address 'human' thought, he does so in terms of 'propositions'; the problems with this account were identified in the previous chapter.

is clearly interested in the status of thought, this is evident throughout *Difference and Repetition*;[69] but he is also interested in the organisation of matter, and the 'nature' of materiality when not immediately correlated to thought. This is also evident in *Difference and Repetition* but is more fully discussed in *The Logic of Sense*. Throughout the analysis of these texts within this thesis, it is the status of materiality considered separately from human thought which will be the main focus.

In Whitehead's philosophy of organism, as is the case with Deleuze, 'the many is one, the one is many' is not a mantra which Whitehead repeats endlessly. ("The term 'one' does not stand for 'the integral number *one*,' which is a complex special notion.").[70] Instead, he is always much more interested in stubborn fact, in the concrete, in 'this'. "The true philosophic question is, How can concrete fact exhibit entities abstract from itself and yet participated in by its own nature?"[71] The over-reliance on abstraction leads to the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness' which he defines as the "error of mistaking the abstract for the concrete."[72] In these circumstances this might include the distinction between the many and the one and, by association, the belief that there is such a concrete thing as the Platonic version of the universe. That is to say, to accuse someone of Platonism, or to insist that they are in the irreducible division between the one and the many, is to ascribe a concreteness to both which they do not merit. If there is no simple division between the many and the one, then the many and the one do not exist as concrete entities but only insofar as they are inter-related. "Wherever a vicious dualism appears, it is by reason of mistaking an abstraction for a final concrete fact."[73] Also, can it be genuinely argued that Plato or Platonism is a single concrete entity? This is not to say that there is not a complex of which Platonism is a part and which has genuine effects.[74] But it is to deny the existence of a unified entity which constitutes Platonism, an entity which Badiou, amongst others, seem to see as all-enveloping.

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[69] See especially, Deleuze, 1994, pp. 129-221
[70] Whitehead, 1978, p. 21
[71] Whitehead, 1978, p. 20
[72] Whitehead, 1933, p. 64
[73] Whitehead, 1967, p. 190
[74] For a detailed account of the effects of such a 'Platonic complex' on concepts of sexual difference, see Irigaray, 1985a; 1985b

Closely tied to such arguments about the one and the many is Deleuze's definition of a multiplicity, which he envisages as a way of avoiding the need to come down on one side or the other of such a debate. In this respect: "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 of unity in order to form a system."[75]

Just as Whitehead insisted that a multiplicity cannot be defined as having a unity derived from its members alone but does have unity with regard to "some qualification which participates in each of its components severally",[76] Deleuze maintains that multiplicities are systematic. They derive their effectivity from themselves, from the dispersion which they instantiate. As a result, they do not possess unity, as such, although they do 'exist' and have consequences.

There is now a need to return to the question asked by Deleuze in relation to Hume, namely, 'how is the subject constituted within the given?' and a crucial element of this is to ask, once again, 'what constitutes the given?' The status of the 'given' is a vital one in attempting to meet the demands of an ontology is not based on some form of ground or essence.

If considered as attempting to further the question as to what constitutes the given then *Difference and Repetition* **is** involved in overturning Platonism, in that it refuses to accept abstract ideas as constituting the given. But it only does so in order to ask the question differently, in terms of the virtual and the actual. These twin pillars will be addressed shortly, but it is important to note that within this text the development of such twin concepts is not a simple response to Plato. Instead, one important element of Deleuze's analysis is a reappraisal of the work of Spinoza, in a fashion similar to that of Whitehead.

In the final chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, indeed on the final page (of the English edition), Deleuze states that: "All that Spinozism needed to do for the

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[75] Deleuze, 1994, p. 182
[76] Whitehead 1978, p. 46. See also Chapter Five

univocal to become an object of pure affirmation was to make substance turn around the modes."[77] It is clear that Deleuze has a problem with Spinoza's ontology similar to that of Whitehead when he argues that "the gap in the [Spinoza's] system is the arbitrary introduction of the 'modes'"[78] for "Spinoza bases his philosophy upon the monistic substance, of which the actual occasions are inferior modes."[79] That is to say, Spinoza's infinite substance always takes priority and renders any modifications or items of materiality as derivative, as only explainable with reference to the infinite. Yet, as seen in Chapter Two, he cannot account for the passage from the infinite to the finite.

Deleuze sums up the argument as follows: "Spinoza's substance appears independent of the modes, while the modes are dependent upon substance, but as though on something other than themselves."[80] This is not to say, that Spinoza's work is without worth. It is clear that Deleuze views Spinoza as one of the great architects of the univocity of being.[81] The following is a summary of how Deleuze reads Spinoza as the great advocate of univocity.

The univocity of being can be seen as the attempt to describe a non-essentialist ontology which does not rely upon either the mind or a substrate of physical substance as the true originators of existence. "Any hierarchy or pre-eminence is denied insofar as substance is equally designated...and equally expressed by all the modes".[82] In this way it denies the subject-predicate and primary substance accounts of being. There are no ranks within being. "Being is the same for all these modalities, but these modalities are not the same. It is 'equal' for all, but they themselves are not equal."[83]

That which distinguishes one such modality from another is not to be construed in terms of self-identical, Newtonian objects: "real distinctions are never numerical but

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[77] Deleuze, 1994, p. 304
[78] Whitehead, 1978, p. 7
[79] Whitehead, 1978, p. 81
[80] Deleuze, 1994, p. 40
[81] See Deleuze, 1992, pp. 48-9, 63-7
[82] Deleuze, 1994, p. 40
[83] Deleuze, 1994, p. 36

only formal - that is, qualitative".[84] Materiality is the consequence of the variations in intensity of the attributes of substance. "These variations, like degrees of whiteness, are individuating modalities of which the finite and the infinite constitute precisely singular intensities."[85] There are no necessary, sharp divisions between items of matter. The attempt to divide up the universe into component parts is a high abstraction which does not reflect the real distinctions which comprise the universe: "numerical distinctions are never real, but only modal".[86] Such modal distinctions are their own reasons and there is no need to go elsewhere, or to invoke a transcendental field, to explain that which exists. There is nothing else apart from the modal *expression* of substance. In this sense, being is one, in that it has one voice: each item of matter equally expresses being; being is univocal.

However, as stated earlier, Deleuze does maintain that there is a problem with Spinoza's account in that his 'substance appears independent of the modes'. In order to correct this, Deleuze argues that:

> Substance must itself be said *of* the modes and only *of* the modes. Such a condition can be satisfied only at the price of a more general categorical reversal according to which being is said of becoming, identity of that which is different, the one of the multiple, etc.[87]

Like Whitehead, Deleuze realizes that in order to account for facticity without recourse to a primary substance, then not only must all items of being be assigned to their individual instances (modes or actual entities) but a new category must be invoked. And, within that category, priority must be given to becoming rather than being. Certain consequences immediately follow from such a categoreal reversal, namely, that identity or subjectivity can no longer be that which governs or creates individuality. Rather, identity comes about through becoming. "That identity not be first, that it exist as a principle but as a second principle, as a principle *become*".[88] Or, to put it another way, all subjects are *in fact* superjects; this is not to deny identity or subjectivity but to remove it from its position as a formative principle and to re-place it as a formed principle. However, in order not to allow such

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[84] Deleuze, 1994, p. 40

[85] Deleuze, 1994, p. 39

[86] Deleuze, 1994, p. 40. See, also, Deleuze, 1992, pp. 27-39

[87] Deleuze, 1994, p. 40

[88] Deleuze, 1994, p. 40

superjectivity to fall back into an undifferentiated mass, or substance, or theological device, such superjectivity must be premised upon difference. The philosophical accomplishment of enabling identity to be conceived of as something secondary, as something that becomes **and** as something premised on difference would, according to Deleuze: "be the nature of a Copernican revolution which opens up the possibility of difference having its own concept, rather than being maintained under the domination of a concept in general already understood as identical."[89]

Having seen that Whitehead not only prioritises becoming, views identity as something secondary to such becoming, and also asserts that actual entities "differ among themselves",[90] it could well be argued that the philosophy of organism could be seen to have already attempted such a 'Copernican revolution'. However, at this stage, Deleuze turns to Nietzsche, as the writer who has done most to further this idea through his notion of eternal return. "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."[91] Returning has the same role for Deleuze as 'Creativity' does for Whitehead:

> 'Creativity' is the principle of *novelty*. An actual occasion is a novel entity diverse from any entity in the 'many' that it unifies. It is that ultimate principle by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively. The 'creative advance' is the application of this ultimate principle of creativity to each novel situation which it originates.[92]

However, Whitehead also stresses the importance of repetition amongst this more general scheme. That is to say, this novelty is not entirely 'new', as, within each becoming novel there is a dual repetition. The first repetition is that what is repeated is becoming itself. The second is that what becomes, in itself, repeats the universe in a novel way. "These various aspects can be summed up in the statement that *experience* involves a *becoming*, that *becoming* means that *something becomes*, and that *what becomes* involves *repetition* transformed into *novel immediacy*."[93] Hence: "In the organic philosophy the notion of repetition is

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89 Deleuze, 1994, pp. 40-1
90 Whitehead, 1978, p, 18
91 Deleuze, 1994, p. 41
92 Whitehead, 1978, p. 21
93 Whitehead, 1978, pp. 136-7

fundamental."[94] Novelty expresses difference, the category of creativity encapsulates difference; it gives it its own concept. Or, as Deleuze puts it: "The wheel in the eternal return is at once both production of repetition on the basis of difference and selection of difference on the basis of repetition."[95] However, this is not some simple, serial becoming which dissipates the universe into a Heraclitean flux. For that which is mediated by becoming is the virtual and the actual. This distinction plays a vital role within the work of Deleuze, and will be addressed throughout the remainder of this chapter.

The Virtual and The Actual

In terms of this thesis, two of the most important points with regard to the virtual/actual distinction are as follows:

1) As identified by Ansell-Pearson,[96] the virtual/actual distinction is one which Badiou finds especially problematic within the work of Deleuze.[97] Badiou claims that: "the virtual and actual, cannot in fact be thought of as separate."[98] And, he claims, that in trying to establish the reality of the virtual, Deleuze splits univocal being into two (which is clearly contrary to his purposes) which means "the more irreal...and finally nonobjective the actual (or beings) becomes".[99] Badiou's argument is that it is impossible for Deleuze to advocate the 'reality' of both the virtual and the actual whilst maintaining the notion of the univocity of being.

2) It is a crucial element of a non-essentialist ontology that it is not founded upon some notion of a ground. Deleuze attempts to develop such 'groundlessness' through his distinction between that virtual and the actual, neither of which have ultimate priority and within which becoming has primacy over being. It is therefore important not only to outline Deleuze's understanding of the virtual/actual but also

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[94] Whitehead, 1978, p. 137

[95] Deleuze, 1994, p. 42

[96] Ansell-Pearson, 2002, pp. 1-2 and 103-4; Ansell-Pearson, 2000, pp. 51-3. The latter text is a review of Badiou's text on Deleuze (Badiou, 2000).

[97] Badiou, 2000, pp. 48-53

[98] Badiou, 2000, p. 53

[99] Badiou, 2000, p. 53

to attempt to refute Badiou.

> The virtual is opposed not to the real but to the actual. *The virtual is fully real in so far as it is virtual.* Exactly what Proust said of states of resonance must be said of the virtual: 'Real without being actual, ideal without being abstract'; and symbolic without being fictional. Indeed, the virtual must be defined as strictly a part of the real object – as though the object had one part of itself in the virtual into which plunged as though into an objective dimension.[100]

This position is opposed to the distinction between the real and the possible in which there is no ultimate separation between that which exists and that which does not exist, as both are always already defined and delimited by a prior, abstract concept.[101] Instead, there is no ultimate ground as the virtual is not given to a subject, it acts as a field of potential.

It would seem that the work of Whitehead could also be helpful in refuting the claim of Badiou that either the actual or the virtual must be granted precedence in terms of their claims to reality. It is Whitehead's notion of the extensive continuum which most closely corresponds to that of the virtual. Most especially, it is his discussion of the **process** of the creation of actual entities out of such a continuum and the return of these entities into the continuum as constituting the being of becoming, that will help elucidate how the virtual and the actual can both be equally 'real' and yet separate. For Whitehead clearly states that the extensive continuum, in itself, is real but not actual, **and** that the extensive continuum does not correspond to, nor is it exhausted by, its actualization by actual entities. "Thus though everything is real, it is not necessarily realized in some particular set of actual occasions."[102] So, although Whitehead does not use the term 'virtual', this extensive continuum could be said to be virtual in the sense that "virtualities exist in such a way that they actualize themselves in splitting up and being divided".[103]

> When the virtual content of an Idea is actualised, the varieties of relation are incarnated in distinct species while the singular points which correspond to the values of one variety are incarnated in the distinct parts characteristic of this or that species. The Idea of colour, for example, is like white light which perplicates itself in the genetic elements and the relations of all the colours, but is actualised in the diverse colours

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[100] Deleuze, 1994, pp. 208-9

[101] See, Deleuze, 1994, p. 211

[102] Whitehead, 1967, p. 197. Deleuze would not use the term 'real' here but would substitute that of 'virtual'.

[103] Boundas, 1996, p. 91. In order to do this, Boundas stresses Deleuze's notion of "Different/ciation" (Boundas 1996, p. 91 and passim). Although important to a general understanding of Deleuze's work, this notion has not been dealt with here as it is does not directly relate to Whitehead.

with their respective spaces....There is even a white society and a white language, the latter being that which contains in its virtuality all the phonemes and relations destined to be actualised in diverse languages and in the distinctive parts of a given language.[104]

Or, to put it in Whiteheadian terms: Colours, as eternal objects, express the potentiality which confronts nascent items of matter (actual entities). Eternal objects are complex and relational, and are always associated with the conceptual aspect of becoming (they are hence closely related to the Deleuzean concept of 'Idea'). They are real but do not 'exist' until they ingress in particular becomings (until they are actualised, hence moving from virtual to actual through the process of 'incarnating' matter). Such actualisation is not random, it is affected by the environment and the past of the actual entities into which they ingress. Colours are always prehended in a certain way. The way in which this happens depends upon the social structuring of the organism in question. Thus, although whiteness itself exhibits a continuity (there is a 'white society') the manner in which it is felt will differ from organism to organism. All subjects are alive, in that they purposively receive and reformulate the extensive continuum and all communicate with each other within the extensive continuum, yet they are also all different. So any description of how they feel and assimilate eternal objects cannot be limited to human language. It is at this point that Whitehead usually cites his distrust of language (see Chapter Six). But Deleuze goes one step further; he argues that whiteness comprises, in its virtuality, all the potential of 'being white', which will always be actualised differently according to the individual which 'incarnates' whiteness. Language is not to be distrusted, but is itself to be seen as diverse. There will be different languages for different entities or assemblages of entities. Also, within any language there will be distinctions and divisions which enable singularities to pass into individuals. It is at this point that the work of Whitehead and Deleuze become especially pertinent for analyses of the relations between materiality and subjectivity. Now individuation becomes a matter of division. And this division is not merely physical (biological division into categories such as species, genus, anatomical difference) but conceptual, in the Whiteheadian and Deleuzean sense. That is, it is not simple social constructionism (the way different societies or cultures

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[104] Deleuze, 1994, p. 206

grant different meanings to certain given factors). Nor is it complex social constructionism (where matter is denigrated or made inaccessible through the priority of a signifying system or cultural intelligibility). Matter, meaning, subjectivity and sense all happen at once. They are neither social nor material; nor are they ultimately reducible to either one or the other. The two sides are needed together. Hence social divisions are material divisions and vice versa. The two cannot be separated. But this is too simplistic, for within such a scheme, neither the 'material' or the 'social' retain their usual sense within the work of Whitehead and Deleuze.

For the moment, it is necessary to return to the question of 'how the subject is constituted inside the given', and to explain fully 'what constitutes the given'. Hayden, in his discussion of *Difference and Repetition,* characterizes Deleuze's position as follows: "In real experience the transcendental and the empirical are united in the direct, sensible apprehension of difference as such";[105] which could almost be a description of *Process and Reality.* However, such difference can "be thought only if one questions identity as the ground of representation."[106] To critique identity is one thing, to explain the relation between subjectivity and matter is another. This will entail a description of the 'given', and in *Difference and Repetition* this takes the form of an account of the ontological status of singulars or singularities, in terms of their population of the virtual as opposed to their actualization.

Introducing Singularities

Within *Difference and Repetition,* Deleuze's account of singularities is not as fully developed as it might be. In an early reference, Deleuze states that "Beneath the general operation of laws, however, there always remains the play of singularities."[107] This asserts their status as that which is not captured or explainable by the customary descriptions of the world as a generally ordered place.

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[105] Hayden, 1998, p. 17
[106] Hayden, 1998, p. 17
[107] Deleuze, 1994, p. 21

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It also hints at their metaphysical priority. This is developed when Deleuze obliquely argues that they cannot be contained or described by concepts and that they differ among themselves, indeed they are harbingers of difference. "Specific difference...in no way represents a universal concept (that is to say, an Idea) encompassing all the singularities and turnings of difference".[108]

This is a negative definition, in that it says how singularities are **not** immediately linked to concepts but does not positively describe the relation between concepts (language) and singularities.[109] This negative form of definition in relation to language continues when Deleuze states that: "Singularity is beyond particular propositions no less than universality is beyond particular propositions."[110] Rather, singularities are important for the role they play within Deleuze's work. And this role is to account for differential distribution within the given, or the virtual, which is not actualized as different, is not yet individuated. Thus: "the distribution of singularities belongs entirely to the conditions of the problem, while their specification already refers to solutions constructed under these conditions....The problem is at once transcendent and immanent in relation to these solutions."[111] In Whiteheadian terms, there is no indifferent relation between the extensive continuum and the actual entities which arise out of it. All individuation is purposive. Thus, in a short passage which echoes the work of Whitehead:

> This is how, in the case of the organic, the process of actualisation appears simultaneously as the local differenciation of parts, the global formation of an internal milieu, and the solution of a problem posed within the field of constitution of an organism.[112]

Once again, there is no strict definition of singularities, it is not possible to work out what they 'are'. Just as actual entities play a precise role in Whitehead's theory, so singularities play a specific role in Deleuze's.[113] For, as with Whitehead's actual

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[108] Deleuze, 1994, pp. 31-2

[109] 'Positive' definitions of the linking of language, concepts and singularities are, rather, to be found in *The Logic of Sense*, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

[110] Deleuze, 1994, p. 163

[111] Deleuze, 1994, p. 163

[112] Deleuze, 1994, p. 211

[113] I am grateful to Eric Alliez for confirming, to me, the similarity between Whitehead's actual entities and Deleuze's singularities and their importance for establishing a non-essentialist ontology.

entities, they are never encountered as such.[114] Singularities are that which become problematised and which consequently constitute individuality; in themselves they are not individuals in the usual sense, as such individuals are resultants. In this sense, Deleuze seems more immediately aware of the problem of naming singularities than Whitehead. For Deleuze, they represent the 'pre-social' aspect of becoming, the becoming which is inherent in the virtual. That which is actualised is that which is truly social, and in this he differs from Whitehead who, as seen in Chapter Five, tends, ultimately, to over-socialize his actual entities.

Singularities express not the solidity of objects, they do not exhibit the reality of Newtonian self-identical things. Rather, singularities express reality as qualitative difference. "Singularity and intensity are terms used to articulate a thought robbed of the organizing principle of the individual."[115] In the same vein as Whitehead, and drawing on Spinoza, the reality of such singularities does not rely upon quantitative distinctions (which in themselves are never real); instead, singularities are different and distinguishable in terms of their intensity - they are quanta. The role of singularities is to provide "a prior metastable state...the existence of a 'disparateness'...between which potentials are distributed."[116] This is not yet a description of singularities, rather it is a description of an intensive field, a plane of immanence, an extensive continuum, within which, and from which, singular actual entities are individuated. In this sense, although not individuated yet: "Such a pre-individual state nevertheless does not lack singularities: the distinctive or singular points are defined by the existence and distribution of potentials. An 'objective' problematic field thus appears".[117]

This 'objective problematic field' describes the relations between elements which are not yet actual (although for Whitehead they would once have been actual). However, they are still real but not in the sense of being 'thing-like'. This does not mean that such a field is an inert substrate upon which actuality bases itself, for this

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[114] Although, in one of his final texts, Deleuze does give the following, intriguing example: "very small children all resemble one another and have hardly any individuality, but they have singularities: a smile, a gesture, a funny face". Deleuze, G. 2001. *Pure Immanence. Essays on A Life*, Zone Books, New York, p. 30
[115] Millett, 1997, p. 54
[116] Deleuze, 1994, p. 246
[117] Deleuze, 1994, p. 246

field is constituted through the inter-relation of potentials. Just as Whitehead attempts to dispel the notion of indifferent matter which awaits perception or constitution, Deleuze posits a field of differentiated but inter-related, intensive singulars which express potentiality. This is how both Whitehead and Deleuze manage to establish a non-essentialist ontology; by insisting upon the reality of both the extensive continuum or the virtual, and the actuality of contemporary existence. However, neither provide an absolute ground for the other. That which is given is real, but it is not a ground; it expresses a limited, infinite potentiality which is neither fully exhausted nor realized by individuals which arise out of it. For Whitehead, it is the role of eternal objects, to express potentiality. Deleuze does not make such a strict separation, preferring to envisage the inter-relation of singularities as comprising potentiality. This does not contradict Whitehead's stance as it is similar to the latter's account of propositions as hybrid entities comprising both actual entities and eternal objects. Once again for Deleuze, this inter-relation is expressed in terms of the forming of a 'problem'.

> Individuation emerges like the act of solving a problem, or - what amounts to the same thing - like the actualisation of a potential and the establishing of communication between disparates....The individual thus finds itself attached to a pre-singular half which is not the impersonal within it so much as the reservoir of its singularities. In all these respects, we believe that individuation is essentially intensive, and that the pre-individual field is a virtual-ideal field, made up of differential relations.[118]

In other words, Deleuze is in agreement with Whitehead as to the constitution of individuals which are not grounded upon an inert substance but which arise out of a field of potential which acts as either a 'lure for feeling' (Whitehead) or the posing of a problem (Deleuze). Neither the lure, nor the problem, exist separately from that which is individuated through this process. The prehending subject constitutes itself through its response to this lure for feeling (prehensions constitute subjectivity): or, an individual is constituted through both its pre-singular half and its individuated half, neither of which exist without the other; the two are joined by the problem or question which is posed, and to which individuality is a response.

At the same time, and unlike in *Process and Reality*, there is the tendency within *Difference and Repetition* for such individuation to be described not in terms which

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[118] Deleuze, 1994, p. 246

apply to the formation of all subjects or individuals but mainly in opposition to the notion of a complete, centred human subject or consciousness.

> Beyond the self and the I we find not the impersonal but the individual and its factors, individuation and its fields, individuality and its pre-individual singularities. For the pre-individual is still singular, just as the ante-self and the ante-I are still individual....That is why the individual in intensity finds its psychic image neither in the organisation of the self nor in the organisation of the self nor in the determination of species and the I, but rather in the fractured I and the dissolved self.[119]

This tendency to refer to problematics surrounding 'human' identity, and its consequences (namely the charge that Deleuze remains within the realm of the Platonic), have been discussed above. It is not clear that such charges are sustainable upon a close reading of *Difference and Repetition* but it *is* clear that such charges are more easily avoided through the fuller discussions of singularities to be found in *The Logic of Sense*. Yes, *Difference and Repetition* is an attempt to over-turn Platonism; but it is not only that, such an attempt does not exhaust the scope of the text. Furthermore, to then reduce Deleuze's disparate and extensive texts to an attempt to overturn Platonism is to misrecognize both the content and procedure of this work. *Difference and Repetition* is a response to a set of specific problems, many of which are concerned with Platonic conceptions of the Idea and their relation to human subjectivity and thought. But, other texts of Deleuze respond to different problems in different ways. His philosophy is strategic and any reading of them must also be. As Deleuze states himself, early on in his philosophical life, the only worthwhile objection is:

> the objection which shows that the question raised by a philosopher is not a good question, that it does not force the nature of things enough, that it should be raised in a different way, that we should raise it in a better way, or that we should raise a different question.[120]

Consequently, in one sense, Deleuze *has* to remain within the ambit of Plato in *Difference and Repetition*, and Badiou misunderstands Deleuze's methodology when he makes his critique. This thesis is asking a specific question of Whitehead and Deleuze: 'how can their work be construed as a development of a non-essentialist ontology?' And, in order to follow this question through it is necessary to consider Deleuze's understanding of the relation of language to becoming, as

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[119] Deleuze, 1994, pp. 258-9
[120] Deleuze, 1991, p. 107 [originally published in 1953].

outlined in *The Logic of Sense*.

But, before proceeding to this discussion, it is worth pointing up certain other resonances between the work of Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* and that of Whitehead which there is not space to dwell upon here. For example, Whitehead refers to his philosophy as a 'philosophy of organism.' Deleuze characterizes 'humans' as organisms thus:

> We are made of contracted water, earth, light and air - not merely prior to the recognition or representation of these, but prior to their being sensed. Every organism, in its receptive and perceptual elements, but also in its viscera, is a sum of contractions, of retentions and expectations.[121]

There is, therefore, an indication that what applies to human subjectivity applies to all subjectivity (insofar as it is organic - Deleuze is not clear, here, as to whether all items of matter are organisms). In this analysis, he is agreeing with Whitehead's description of sense-reception as constitutive of subjectivity, as opposed to sense-perception which is normally taken to be the indicator of organic status (see subsection on 'Eternal Objects' in Chapter Five). Sense-perception and its close relative, consciousness, are not primary in explaining existence, rather they are to be explained: "perceptual syntheses refer back to organic syntheses which are like the sensibility of the senses; they refer back to a primary sensibility that we *are*."[122]

Deleuze's analysis continues in a manner which not only echoes Whitehead's description of the body as a 'complex amplifier' through which information is transmitted but also Whitehead's denial of a unified subject which organises or describes such experiences. "We speak of our 'self' only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says 'me'."[123] Or, as Whitehead puts it (when arguing against Descartes): "each time he pronounces 'I am, I exist,' the actual occasion, which is the ego, is different; and the 'he' which is common to the two egos is...the nexus of successive occasions."[124]

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[121] Deleuze, 1994, p. 73. Thus, Whitehead would not be able to say of Deleuze, as he does of other philosophers, that he has "disdained the information about the universe obtained through their visceral feelings". Whitehead, 1978, p. 121

[122] Deleuze, 1994, p. 73

[123] Deleuze, 1994, p. 75

[124] Whitehead, 1978, p. 75

Although such statements are clearly expressed within *Difference and Repetition*, there is not enough space to treat them fully at this point. Instead, the following chapter *will* involve a consideration of the further inter-relations of Whitehead and Deleuze but these will be focussed on the extent to which Deleuze is able to develop Whitehead's ontology by providing an account of language within such a philosophical position. The main elements of Deleuze's work which will be of relevance to this task are located in *The Logic of Sense*.

Chapter Eight

Deleuze (and Whitehead) on Events, Sense, and Language

The previous chapter discussed how Deleuze is keen to avoid reducing the given, or the virtual, to a unity out of which proceed simple individuals (as is the case, ultimately, with Spinoza). This introduced the role of singularities as comprising the differentiation of the virtual in a manner which does not entail that they are necessarily actualized as individual. That is, singularities constitute distinct elements within the virtual but do not correspond to things (such as molecules, chairs, tables etc.). The many does not become one, it remains many, even though ones (individuals) arise out of this many. The extent to which such an analysis coincides with that of Whitehead was also discussed. This chapter will investigate how Deleuze develops this discussion of such inter-relations within *The Logic of Sense*. The aim is to demonstrate how Deleuze's concern with singularities, events, and the operations of language, is able to overcome the difficulties identified with Whitehead's discussion of propositions, as identified in Chapter Six.

One of the clearest links that Deleuze makes between the disjunction of the many, the conjunction of the one, and their relation to language and events, is as follows:

> It is not that the disjunction has become a simple conjunction....But the whole question, and rightly so, is to know under what conditions the disjunction is a veritable synthesis, instead of being a procedure of analysis which is satisfied with the exclusion of predicates from one thing in virtue of the identity of its concept (the negative, limitative, or exclusive use of disjunction)....Instead of a certain number of predicates being excluded from a thing in virtue of the identity of its concept, each 'thing' opens itself up to the infinity of predicates through which it passes, as it loses its center [sic], that is, its identity as concept or as self. **The communication of events replaces the exclusion of predicates.**[1]

Deleuze is aware that it is not enough just to say that the many are not one, they remain the many. To do this would be to so utterly atomize the given that communication and inter-relation between both items within the given, and those individuals which arise out of the given, would be impossible. Like Whitehead, he wants to avoid the Newtonian position where "substantial thing cannot call unto substantial thing."[2] This is why Deleuze is insistent that Hume does not 'atomize the

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[1] Deleuze, 1990, p. 174. Emphasis added.
[2] Whitehead, 1967, p. 133

given'.[3] Thus, the need is to explain how the given is both disjunctive, in that it is made up of many items, yet somehow holds together; it is a 'veritable synthesis'. In this respect, Deleuze's argument is similar to Whitehead's notion of the extensive continuum, where there is both singularity and inter-relation. Indeed this is the very definition of the extensive continuum: "The continuum is present in each actual entity, and each actual entity pervades the continuum."[4]

Where Deleuze differs from Whitehead, is in his treatment of language as an integral part of such explanations. For Deleuze, it is not language itself which is unreliable, rather, the error is in seeing the disjunction of the many as reflecting the division of the world into objects, through their being isolated under a concept. For example, the specificity of a cat is not to be defined in terms of whether it falls under the concept 'cat' (i.e. has four legs, is furry, miaows, etc.). Such positions define individuality negatively insofar as they ask questions such as: 'does this predicate (going miaow) apply? and, 'does this predicate (being furry) apply?' The negativity coming from both the response: 'If not then this is not a cat', and the conceptualization of being as an outcome of the denial or limitation of other predicates or properties, rather than the affirmation of that which does actually constitute this singular combination (*this* 'cat'). "We see that the *continuum* of singularities is entirely distinct from the individuals which envelop it...singularities are pre-individual....the expressed world exists only in individuals, and...it exists there only as a predicate".[5]

Deleuze's contention here is more like Whitehead's treatment of propositions. The composition of a singularity involves the assimilation of those elements in relation to which it arises. It is not a question of an already formed subject making a decision as to how it will develop. Rather, the self and its identity, is an outcome of the process of assimilation of logical subjects and a range of predicates. It may seem that Deleuze contradicts Whitehead in that he maintains that such formations involve each 'thing' opening 'itself up to the infinity of predicates', whilst Whitehead

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[3] "Hume is reproached for the 'atomization' of the given." Deleuze, 1991, p. 105. Deleuze maintains that such reproaches are unjustified.

[4] Whitehead, 1978, p. 67

[5] Deleuze, 1990, p. 111

insists that propositions form concrete and limited sets of potential to a nascent subject. However, it must be remembered that insofar as propositions are hybrids of actual entities and eternal objects, then the latter express the utter, infinite potentiality of the universe. They are the channel through which the infinite creativity, which characterises process, inhabits particular situations. Likewise, Deleuze makes a clear, yet interlinked, distinction between the infinity of the field of singularities and the particularity of the constitution of each individual out of such a field: "A world already envelops an infinite system of singularities selected through convergence. Within this world, however, individuals are constituted which select and envelop a finite number of singularities of the system."[6]

Or, in Whiteheadian terms, the extensive continuum is made up of an unlimited potentiality of actual entities out of which arise superjects which are constituted through the decision, or definite selection, of a finite section of this continuum. Deleuze also recognizes such particularity when he appropriates Nietzsche's version of perspectivism to further his point:

> With Nietzsche...the point of view is opened onto a divergence which it affirms: another town corresponds to each point of view, each point of view is another town, the towns are linked only through the divergence of their series, their houses and their streets....divergence is no longer a principle of exclusion, and disjunction no longer a means of separation.[7]

This neatly coincides with Whitehead's definition of the actuality of every entity as both arising from and producing inter-related standpoints.[8] "Every actual entity in its relationship to other actual entities is in this sense somewhere in the continuum, and arises out of the data provided by this standpoint."[9]

Once again, however, the two approaches are not synonymous as Deleuze is much more interested in the operations of language. As has been seen, he is especially critical of theories which define singularity in relation to whether they fall under a concept. This is not to say that Deleuze does not think that concepts play any role

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[6] Deleuze, 1990, p. 109

[7] Deleuze, 1990, p. 174

[8] It should be noted that just as Deleuze's discussion of perspectivism is to be found within his discussion of the 'veritable synthesis' of disjunction, so Whitehead's analysis is also located within a discussion of the extensive continuum.

[9] Whitehead, 1978, p. 67

within the formation of individuals. Indeed this is one of the reasons that he makes a distinction between singularities and individuals. Singularities refer to the specific rendering of the given, of the virtual, which comprise stubborn items which are not reducible to a vague mass of potential. However, they are not individual things as such (chairs, tables etc.). Individual things are resultants of the process by which singularities become instantiated in problems, they become implicated within solutions; through concepts they are forced into individuality. Individuals are the outcomes of the operations of force, of power:

> Forms of the negative do indeed appear in actual terms and real relations, but only in so far as these are cut off from virtuality which they actualise, and from the movement of their actualisation. Then, and only then, do the finite affirmations appear limited in themselves, opposed to one another, and suffering from lack or privation.[10]

> It is in the BwO[11] that the organs enter into the relations of composition called the organism. The BwO howls: 'They've made me an organism! They've wrongfully folded me! They've stolen my body! The judgement of God uproots its immanence and makes it an organism, a signification, a subject....A perpetual and violent combat between the plane of consistency, which frees the BwO...and the surfaces of stratification that block it or make it recoil.[12]

Such statements demonstrate how a reading of Deleuze through Whitehead can offer a way of conceptualising the operations of power which take account of materiality and subjectivity. However, it order to make this case fully, the manner in which language operates within such an approach must also be made clear. This will be taken up in the remainder of this chapter.

Events

"Everything happens at the boundary between things and propositions."[13] This statement, made early on in *The Logic of Sense*, indicates the importance of language to this work. The question which should be asked of Deleuze here is '*what* happens?' And although his reply would not be 'an event' it is clear that the notion of an event would play a critical part in his answer.[14] "The event is

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[10] Deleuze, 1994, p. 207
[11] 'Body without Organs'
[12] Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p. 159
[13] Deleuze, 1990, p. 8
[14] "An event is not what occurs...it is rather inside what occurs". Deleuze, 1990, p. 149

coextensive with becoming, and becoming itself coextensive with language."[15] In this sense, it is possible to view Deleuze as working with the same concepts as Whitehead but using different terminology. Although it is dangerous to simply see Whitehead as a philosopher of the event,[16] it is possible to align him with such a notion. Events occur, be they the life course of a molecule,[17] or the continuing existence of Castle Rock in Edinburgh.[18] But such examples are limiting in their scope; such events refer to the continued existence of certain entities or societies. As such, anything with such existence could be an event. Hence the term, in Whitehead, loses its conceptual purchase as it refers to an almost unlimited number of occasions. The term thus loses its specificity and its usefulness. Ansell-Pearson outlines a similar danger in Deleuze's rendering of the event: "Does this imply that everything is an 'event' in Deleuze's sense? But if everything is an event, is this not to deprive the event of its genuine event-like status and character?"[19]

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[15] Deleuze, 1990, p. 8

[16] Whitehead's fullest discussion of events is to be found in *The Concept of Nature* (Whitehead, 1964, pp. 14-15, 18-9, 34, 74ff., 144ff.). These are some of the most intriguing elements of Whitehead's thought. Here, he describes an event (and events) as: a "unit factor, retaining in itself the passage of nature" (Whitehead, 1964, p. 75); "a completely defined limitation of extent" (Whitehead, 1964, p. 75); "the things related by the relation of extension. If an event *A* extends over an event *B*, then *B* is 'part of' *A* and *A* is a 'whole' of which *B* is a part." (Whitehead, 1964, p. 75). Hence, "The continuity of nature is the continuity of events" (Whitehead, 1964, p. 76). And, "every event contains other events as parts of itself...every event is a part of other events" (Whitehead, 1964, p. 76). But ultimately, "The demarcation of events, the splitting up of nature into parts is effected by objects which we recognise as their ingredients." (Whitehead, 1964, p. 144). In this early work, published nine years before *Process and Reality*, Whitehead is attempting to critique philosophical and scientific approaches which divide the universe into inanimate objects and enlivened subjects; the task being to describe how the two inter-relate. So, his aim was, already, to describe the universe as process, and in order to do this he describes existence in terms of events. The universe is eventful. However, certain problems arose from this position, namely the need to explain the relation between events and the enduring objects which seem to inhabit them (see Whitehead, 1964, pp. 144 ff.) and to discriminate between events, if every event is part of another event. Hence his final position that it is "impossible to recognise an event" (Whitehead, 1964, p. 143) as all humans recognise (in the sense of being aware of) are enduring objects. This second problem arises because *The Concept of Nature* is as much an attempt to describe human 'perception' or 'reception' of nature as it is a description of 'nature-in-itself' (a distinction which Whitehead recognises; see Whitehead, 1964, pp. 3-5). In themselves these are not problems for Whitehead's later work, which does not shift from the basic philosophical arguments about the eventfulness of the universe. But in his later texts, Whitehead does not see events as primary in explaining the constitution of the reality of process. That is to say, he moves away from an account which deals so immediately with human awareness of the world, as he is much more interested in explaining that which constitutes any moment of existence. As has been seen, the term he chooses to adopt is that of 'actual entity'. It is these which are granted metaphysical priority so there is no need to explain their relation to events; events follow from actual entities. As such, events are still occasionally referred to in Whitehead's later work but they have lost their pivotal status in his philosophy. See, for example, Whitehead, 1978 [1929], p. 73, 80, 230; Whitehead, 1967 [1933], p. 198.

[17] "A molecule is a historic route of actual occasions; and such a route is an 'event.'" Whitehead, 1978, p. 80

[18] "The Castle Rock at Edinburgh exists from moment to moment, and from century to century, by reason of the decision effected by its own historic route of antecedent occasions." Whitehead, 1978, p. 43

[19] Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p. 130

Ansell-Pearson then goes on to make the important distinction between the role of philosophy and the need to account for the everyday instantiations of individuals within events. "As a theory of 'pure' becoming, one might argue that the thinking of the event does not acknowledge the peculiar violence it inflicts upon individuals".[20]

These statements indicate two vital points. Firstly, that it is crucial to recognize those arguments, in the work of Whitehead and Deleuze, that are 'purely' philosophical, and not to attempt to immediately apply them to the social. Secondly, Ansell-Pearson, indicates how it might be possible to develop the philosophical elements of Deleuze and, by association, Whitehead's work, and to apply them to analyses of that which is normally termed 'social'. For, it would seem necessary to move beyond descriptions of the universe as pure becoming, or abstract descriptions of the virtual, to a delineation of the power and exclusion involved in the actualizations whereby human individuals are made to appear. This will be taken up again later on and in the next chapter. For the moment, this chapter will use Deleuze's discussions of language and becoming to indicate how the former is deeply implicated in the limiting and forcing of such becomings. Before moving to such discussions it is analyse more closely Deleuze's understanding of 'event's'.

> The Stoics...distinguish between two kinds of things. First, there are bodies with their tensions, physical qualities, actions and passions, and the corresponding 'states of affairs.' These states of affairs, actions and passions, are determined by the mixtures of bodies....The only time of bodies and states of affairs is the present. For the living present is the temporal extension which accompanies the act, expresses and measures the **action of the agent and the passion of the patient**. But to the degree that there is a unity of bodies amongst themselves...a cosmic present embraces the entire universe: only bodies exist in space, and only the present exists in time. There are no causes and effects among bodies. Rather, all bodies are causes - causes in relation to each other and for each other....
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> Second, all bodies are causes in relation to each other, and causes for each other, and causes for each other - but causes of what? They are causes of certain things of an entirely different nature. These *effects* are not bodies, but, properly speaking, 'incorporeal' entities. They are not physical qualities and properties....They are not things or facts, but events. We can not say that they exist, but they subsist or inhere (having this minimum of being which is appropriate to that which is not a thing, a non-existing entity). They are not substantives or adjectives but verbs.[21]

Bodies, like actual entities, are, in some sense, genuine items of existence. However, they are not simple, inert items of matter, they are not things (chairs,

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[20] Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p. 133
[21] Deleuze, 1990, pp. 4-5. Emphasis added.

tables etc.). Bodies or things are not merely that which is perceived (if they were then Deleuze could be accused of replicating the sensationalist principle); within themselves bodies incorporate qualities, tensions, passions, emotions. Like actual entities they include, within themselves, the manner of their existence; not simply their own passive existence. As Whitehead puts it, in strikingly similar terms to Deleuze: "The subject never loses its triple character of recipient, **patient and agent**."[22] Considered amongst themselves, simple bodies establish a more general field of inter-relation; the virtual or the extensive continuum. Within, and out of this field, they create the extension which comprise both space and time.

So far, Deleuze is describing the priority of existence which pertains to bodies or actual entities considered amongst themselves, just as Whitehead asserts the primacy of actual entities. However, such entities do not comprise all that there is in the universe. The universe is not made up simply of effective and affective bodies continually inter-relating with each other. The particular organization or inter-relation of bodies, their particular mixtures which constitute a given time and space, also comprise a specific 'state of affairs'. Chapter Six discussed how 'propositions' are needed, by Whitehead, in order to account for how the world 'makes sense' to humans. The trouble with Whitehead's propositions is that they leave too much room for possibility, for freedom. Also, their lack of correlation with language entails that the way in which humans 'make sense' of the world is separate from language.

At the same time, Whitehead's notion of propositions might not be redundant within this analysis. Künne describes Whitehead's propositions in the following way:

> If one defines a *state of affairs* as something that *might* be the case, but perhaps is not, as distinguished from a *fact* as something that actually *is* the case, then it is possible to interpret Whitehead's 'propositions' as 'states of affairs'.[23]

It might just be that viewing propositions as 'states of affairs' will help both to identify the further similarities between Whitehead and Deleuze's positions and to

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[22] Whitehead, 1978, p. 316. Emphasis added.
[23] Künne, 1990, p. 118

demonstrate how the latter is able to offer solutions associated with Whitehead's notion of propositions; as long as this is not rendered in terms of the possible, i.e. that which '*might* be the case', but instead, in terms of potentiality.[24] That is to say, if Whitehead's usage of the term propositions is seen as indicating the manner in which the world offers itself for actual entities (for actualization) as a "lure for feeling", then, as will be seen, this will correspond to Deleuze's usage of the term 'states of affairs'. Importantly, Deleuze draws a sharp distinction between such states of affairs and events. He also distinguishes the role of propositions in relation to such events. Limiting Whitehead's 'propositions' to Deleuze's 'states of affairs' will enable this analysis to demonstrate how Deleuze's rendering of language, in terms of propositions, is an advance on Whitehead's philosophy. So: "states of affairs, quantities and qualities are no less beings (or bodies) than substance is".[25] And, "A proposition is a new kind of entity. It is a hybrid between pure potentialities and actualities."[26]

However, bodies and actual entities have effects which are not limited to themselves. The particular rendering, mixing and inter-relation of bodies, each state of affairs, have consequences not limited to the existence of such bodies. This is where Whitehead's notion of propositions fell down, in that they seemed to offer too much in the way of possibility for a nascent subject in its 'reaction' to such states of affairs. Deleuze allows no such unrestricted freedom. One important way in which he curbs the freedom evident in Whitehead's propositions is through his use of the 'event'. Events are the effects of states of affairs. They are not creative in themselves, they are consequences. Events are closely linked with sense and

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[24] See previous chapter for a fuller discussion of this distinction

[25] Deleuze, 1990, p. 7. Deleuze, following Stoic thought, includes as items of existence not just that which is usually conceived of as existing, namely bodies or objects but also their qualities, their modes of inter-relation, i.e. states of affairs (Deleuze, 1990, p. 7) In doing so he agrees with Whitehead's insistence that the extensive continuum and all existence is not just a matter of brute, dead facticity but incorporates qualities and the conceptual; all actual entities are 'di-polar'. Thus for Deleuze (and Whitehead) existence is characterized in terms of "*Something (aliquid)*" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 7) which includes that which is normally thought of as comprising 'non-being', i.e. the qualitative aspect of existence. This is opposed to the usual (Platonic) scheme of distinguishing Being from non-Being; instead 'something' which includes qualities etc. is to be contrasted with "extra-being" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 7) such that "the characteristics of the Idea are relegated to...impassive extra-Being" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 7). It is in this sense that "the stoics are the first to reverse Platonism". (Deleuze, 1990, p. 7).

[26] Whitehead, 1978, p. 186

language. It is within these that the (human) subject takes its rightful place as an effect within a wider system of relations as shall be discussed below.

Events and Sense

What is an event? What is sense? What is the relation of language to these two? Perhaps the clearest answer to such questions are provided by Foucault in his 'review' of *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*.[27] Here he distinguishes between three levels of the event:

> at the limit of dense bodies, an event is incorporeal (a metaphysical surface); on the surface of words and things, an incorporeal event is the *meaning* of a proposition (its logical dimension); in the thread of discourse, an incorporeal meaning-event is fastened to the verb (the infinitive point of the present).[28]

Just as it is necessary, within the texts of Whitehead, to distinguish between the metaphysical discussions of the conditions of existence, in terms of actual entities and eternal objects (which do not correlate to individual items of contemporary matter), and the more complex renderings of existence within which 'humans' operate (i.e the realm of propositions), so it is necessary to isolate the different levels at which Deleuze approaches events. In his discussion of the Stoics, Deleuze is firmly at the metaphysical level. As has been seen (and shall be discussed again below), this delineation of the event is a philosophical one which reappropriates the status of the substantiality of existence and the status of the ideal. In this sense, and at this level, Deleuze **is**, once again, arguing against Plato. But this does not reduce his whole argument to one against Plato. This is only the first step within *The Logic of Sense*. So, once again, to reduce Deleuze's work simply to an onslaught against Platonism is to misrecognize the scope of his work.[29] Instead, Deleuze is also interested in the relation of the eventfulness of the universe to language. This is his great advance on Whitehead. His understanding of the

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[27] See, Foucault, 1977, pp. 165-96

[28] Foucault, 1977, p. 175

[29] Not only is this Badiou's position, there are also elements of such an approach within Foucault's account. For example: "To reverse Platonism with Deleuze is to displace oneself insidiously within it". Foucault, 1977, p. 168

immediate relation between events and propositions will be taken up shortly. It is this relation which will make the link between his and Whitehead's non-essentialist ontology and the 'social', 'human' realm which constitutes contemporary manifestations of subjectivity and matter.

To return to Deleuze's, as opposed to Foucault's, replies to the questions set at the beginning of this section,[30] his response to the first question would be: "We will not ask...what is the sense of the event: the event is sense itself."[31] His answer to the third question would be:

> Between these events-effects and language, or even the possibility of language, there is an essential relation. It is the characteristic of events to be expressed or expressible, uttered or utterable, in propositions which are at least possible.[32]

Events are effects, they are on the surface of being in that they result from the prior mixture of bodies, qualities and quantities etc.: "*Everything now returns to the surface.*"[33] Insofar as events are effects, they do not constitute the being of something. So to ask 'what is the sense of an event?', perhaps even to ask 'what is an event?' is misplaced, as such questions presuppose the genuine existence of events separate from that language which is used to refer to them.[34] Instead, Deleuze argues, language itself is intimately tied up with becoming and materiality. Thus it is 'sense' which becomes the most important element in the discussion of the relation of bodies, states of affairs, events and language. So it is the second question given above, namely 'What is sense?', that needs to be focussed upon.

Deleuze would make no simple reply, but his position could be summed up as follows:

> *Sense is both the expressible or the expressed of the proposition, and the attribute of the state of affairs.* It turns one side towards things and one side towards

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[30] 'What is an event? What is sense? What is the relation of language to these two?'
[31] Deleuze, 1990, p. 22
[32] Deleuze, 1990, p. 12
[33] Deleuze, 1990, p. 7
[34] However, it should be noted that Deleuze directly asks this question in a chapter entitled 'What Is an Event' (Deleuze, 1993, pp. 76-82) which, interestingly, is his fullest discussion of Whitehead's work. As stated earlier, this passage has not been focussed on within this thesis as this would limit the scope of a comparison of their work. However, the importance of the eventfulness of the universe to both Whitehead and Deleuze is evident in such passages.

propositions. But it does not merge with the propositions which it expresses any more than with the state of affairs or the quality which the proposition denotes.[35]

Deleuze is using the term 'sense' in a very specific way here. Sense is that which forms the boundary between things and words but is reducible to neither. The best way to approach Deleuze's version of sense is through a review of his usage of the term 'propositions'. This review will indicate the similarities and dissimilarities between Deleuze's usage of the term 'proposition' and its usual philosophical usage.

"Many authors agree in recognizing three distinct relations within the proposition."[36] And these three relations are 'denotation', 'manifestation' and 'signification'.[37] 'Denotation' "is the relation of the proposition to an external state of affairs".[38] 'Manifestation' "concerns the relation of the proposition to the person who speaks and expresses himself [sic]".[39] And 'Signification' "consider[s] the elements of the proposition as 'signifying' conceptual implications capable of referring to other propositions".[40] It is not that Deleuze believes these relations to be fictitious or fallacious, rather: "From denotation to manifestation, then to signification, but also from signification to manifestation and to denotation, we are carried along a circle, which is the circle of the proposition."[41]

Denotation is solely concerned with the truth or falsehood of propositions, but it does not account for the sense of a proposition itself. Denotation is concerned with the external relation of a proposition to that which it denotes, not to the internal aspect of that proposition by which it 'makes sense'. Hence, "all denotation presupposes sense, and...we position ourselves *straight away* within sense whenever we denote."[42] (This is similar to Whitehead's rendering of propositions

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[35] Deleuze, 1990, p. 22
[36] Deleuze, 1990, p. 12
[37] See, Deleuze, 1990, pp. 12-16
[38] Deleuze, 1990, p. 12
[39] Deleuze, 1990, p. 13
[40] Deleuze, 1990, p. 14
[41] Deleuze, 1990, pp. 16-7
[42] Deleuze, 1990, p. 17

in terms of a correspondence theory of truth).

Manifestation relies upon the solidity and intentionality of a unified subject, an I, which 'means what it says', thereby guaranteeing the truth or meaningfulness of the propositions which it utters: "sense resides in the beliefs (or desires) of the person who expresses herself."[43] But given Deleuze's (amongst others) critique of this notion of a unified self, then manifestation cannot harbour the sense of a proposition.

Signification is envisaged as explaining the conditions under which meaning or truth become possible. Signifying systems cohere within themselves to delimit the possibilities of that which is true and that which is false, without referring to objects themselves (as with denotation) or relying upon the intentionality of a unified subject (manifestation): "we define signification as the condition of truth".[44] But such a procedure, by focussing upon the conditions of truth, tries to explain what makes a proposition true but also has to account for the sense that a proposition which is not true (i.e. which is false) makes. That is to say, signification tries to explain the external conditions which make a proposition true and still allow for the sense made by false propositions. "In discussing the conditions of truth, we raise ourselves above the true and false, since a false proposition also has a sense or signification. But at the same time, we define this superior condition as the possibility for the proposition to be true."[45]

Thus the possibility of a proposition being true is used to explain the sense which all propositions, be they true or false, make. There is a difference between a proposition 'making sense' and its 'being true'. But under signification, the former is relegated to a condition of the latter. Furthermore, the conditions of truth are established in terms of the possibility of a proposition being true. So it is the possibility of the truth of a proposition which grounds the conditions which make that

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[43] Deleuze, 1990, pp. 17-18
[44] Deleuze, 1990, p. 18
[45] Deleuze, 1990, p. 18

proposition true. And this: "is an odd procedure since it involves rising from the conditioned to the condition, in order to think the condition as the simple possibility of the condition."[46]

Deleuze's main point here is that there is nothing about theories of truth which make them able to explain the sense which inheres propositions, be they true or false. Any theory of the conditions of truth must contain "contain *something unconditioned*"[47] which enables the three relations of the proposition to subsist. There must be a fourth relation of the proposition. And this unconditioned something, this fourth relation is 'sense'. In keeping with his wider philosophical outlook, that which comprises such an 'unconditioned something' cannot exist in itself as substantial, for then it would either exist as an individual and, therefore, would be limited in its ability to operate, as individuality is a temporary effect of the mixing of bodies. But nor can sense be purely conceptual, it cannot be an abstract idea which forms and informs the world as, according Deleuze, such ideas are effects rather than causes. Instead:

> Sense is the fourth dimension of the proposition. The Stoics discovered it along with the event: sense: *the expressed of the proposition*, is an incorporeal, complex and irreducible entity, at the surface of things, a pure event which inheres or subsists in the proposition.[48]

Sense is 'the expressed of the proposition'. It is not what the proposition expresses; it is not limited to the proposition. If it were then sense would remain within the circle of the proposition and would have to be explained in terms of denotation, manifestation or signification. At the same time, sense is not a simple property of things as they are. Finally, sense is not reducible to the perceptions or judgements of subjects confronted either by propositions or things. Sense as "that which is expressed by the proposition...[is] irreducible to individual states of affairs, particular images, personal beliefs, and universal or general concepts."[49]

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[46] Deleuze, 1990, p. 18. Deleuze is arguing directly with Russell here whom he cites in footnote 7 to this passage: See, Deleuze, 1990, p. 337

[47] Deleuze, 1990, p. 19

[48] Deleuze, 1990, p. 19

[49] Deleuze, 1990, p. 19

Deleuze then comments on the difficulty of this notion. "It is difficult to respond to those who wish to be satisfied with words, things, images and ideas."[50] Sense does not 'exist', with regard to Deleuze's understanding of the conditions of existence. "For we may not even say that sense exists either in things or in the mind; it has neither physical nor mental existence."[51] Furthermore, sense is something that cannot be grasped nor can it be named as such: "*in fact* we can only infer it indirectly".[52] And it is this final statement which provides the best clue as to how an understanding of 'sense' can be furthered with reference to Whitehead. As discussed in Chapter Five, according to Whitehead, that which cannot be named, that which only exists insofar as it partakes of other things, that which is never encountered but must be inferred from the stubborn facts of experience, is an eternal object. It is not eternal objects as expressions of potentiality that are being alluded to here but eternal objects in their role as that which provides definiteness to the experience of becoming a subject. Chapter Six discussed the difficulties which Whitehead encountered in explaining the mode in which human subjects confront propositions and the role that language plays in this. Deleuze's usage of the term 'sense' could be seen as a way of explaining what goes on in such occurrences. Indeed, it could be argued that Deleuze's notion of sense is a development of the notion of the term 'event' which Whitehead used in his early work but which he moved away from in *Process and Reality*.[53] For sense is that which accompanies an event, in that it describes not how the subject makes sense of the world but how the world *makes* sense. It is this process of 'making sense' that enables the creation and completion of subjects and individuals. That is to say, the world creates sense as an effect of the inter-relation of singularities within the virtual. Given that all subjects are part of this world they are also created within such creativity. And this is precisely Whitehead's point in his critique of Kant:

> Thus for Kant the process whereby there is experience is a process from subjectivity to apparent objectivity. The philosophy of organism inverts this analysis, and explains the process as proceeding from objectivity to subjectivity, namely, from the objectivity, whereby the external world is a datum, to the subjectivity, whereby there is one

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[50] Deleuze, 1990, p. 20
[51] Deleuze, 1990, p. 20
[52] Deleuze, 1990, p. 20
[53] See footnote 16 of this chapter for a fuller discussion of Whitehead's early usage of the term 'event'.

individual experience.[54]

Deleuze does not compare his account with that of Kant, instead he utilises elements of the work of Husserl. However, this is a particular reading of Husserl firmly ensconced within Deleuze's empiricism:

> The logic of sense is inspired in its entirety by empiricism. Only empiricism knows how to transcend the experiential dimensions of the visible without falling into Ideas, and how to track down, invoke, and perhaps produce a phantom at the limit of a lengthened or unfolded experience.[55]

This notion of going beyond 'the experiential dimensions of the visible' will be discussed in the following chapter. For the moment, it is the tracking down and unfolding of experience which is of interest (as it is throughout *Process and Reality*). And Deleuze's hunt starts with the Husserlian notion of the 'noema':

> when Husserl reflects on the 'perceptual noema,' or the 'sense of perception,' he at once distinguishes it from the physical object, from the psychological or 'lived,' from mental representations and from logical concepts. He presents it as an impassive and incorporeal entity, without physical or mental existence, neither acting nor being acted upon - a pure result or pure 'appearance.'[56]

In Whitehead's terms, settled actual entities have objective existence, as opposed to the formal existence of the entity which prehends that object as part of its becoming constituted as an entity.[57] So, 'perceptual noema' or 'the sense of perception' could be seen as referring to the immediate process of the combining of prehensions within an actual entity or subject, in its genetic phase;[58] that is, in its becoming (i.e. before it has become). This is a description of the very moment or moments (which are not yet in time) of the sub-representative[59] creation of individuality which neither relies on nor proceeds from an individual.

> When, therefore Husserl says that the noema is the perceived such as it appears in a presentation, 'the perceived as such' or the appearance, we ought not to understand that the noema involves a sensible given or quality; it rather involves an ideational objective unity as the intentional correlate of the act of perception. The noema is not given in a perception (nor in a recollection or in an image).[60]

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[54] Whitehead, 1978, p. 156

[55] Deleuze, 1990, p. 20

[56] Deleuze, 1990, p. 20

[57] See, Whitehead 1978, pp. 219-220

[58] See, Whitehead, 1978, p. 283

[59] "Anyhow 'representative perception' can never, within its own metaphysical doctrines, produce the title deeds to guarantee the validity of the representation of fact by idea." Whitehead, 1978, p. 54

[60] Deleuze, 1990, pp. 20-1

So, noema are not the passive reception or perception of static objects; they are not 'given' in the traditional sense. Rather, the noema constitute 'an ideational objective unity'. These are, perhaps, not the terms that Whitehead would choose but they do relate to his notion of the act of experience of an entity, comprised through the combining of elements into a unity; where such elements do not immediately correspond to perception. Noema are that which are somehow related to the objective existence of objects but are also distinct from them. "We distinguish between green as a sensible color [sic] or quality and 'to green' as a noematic color [sic] or attribute. '*The tree greens*'.[61] Whitehead puts it in the following way: "the prehension of a sensum, as an apparent object qualifying a region, involve[s]...for that prehension a subjective form also involving that sensum as a factor. **We enjoy the green foliage of the spring greenly**".[62]

Both Whitehead and Deleuze are attempting to describe **how** subjects or individuals occur amidst their non-essential ontological multiplicities, in a way that allows for the world to be received, and for sense to be made, without relying primarily on perception. This is the role of 'sense' in Deleuze; it is not something that the subject confers on the world rather it is something that is created; the world *makes* sense: "'*The tree greens*' - is this not finally the sense of the color [sic] of the tree...? Is the noema anything more than a pure event [?]"[63] However, it is not simply that the world *is* sense, or that the world is *sensible* and all that is required is the proper rendition of its given elements to produce subjectivity. It is the complex relation of sense to language and events which Deleuze uses to preclude such determinacy.[64]

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[61] Deleuze, 1990, p. 21

[62] Whitehead, 1967, pp. 250-1. Emphasis added

[63] Deleuze, 1990, p. 21. Deleuze recognizes that he is not strictly following the work of Husserl here who would not make such a statement "(Husserl does not speak of it in this manner for terminological reasons", Deleuze, 1990, p. 21). The upshot of Deleuze's account of Husserl is that phenomenology, instead of treating of the depths of subjectivity and its relation to the world becomes a "rigorous science of surface effect", Deleuze, 1990, p. 21

[64] See, Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p. 132

Sense, Expression and Language

It has been seen that Deleuze defines sense as 'the expressed of the proposition'; but it is not quite as simple as that:

> Let us consider the complex status of sense or of that which is expressed. On one hand, it does not exist outside of the proposition which expresses it; what is expressed does not exist outside its expression. This is why we cannot say that sense exists, but rather that it inheres or subsists. On the other hand it does not merge at all with the proposition, for it has an objective...which is quite distinct. What is expressed has not resemblance whatsoever to the expression. Sense is indeed attributed, but it is not at all the attribute of the proposition - it is rather the attribute of the thing or state of affairs. The attribute of the proposition is the predicate - a qualitative predicate like green for example. It is attributed to the subject of the proposition. But the attribute of the thing is the verb: to green, or rather the event expressed by this verb....'Green' designates a quality, a mixture of things, a mixture of tree and air where chlorophyll coexists with all parts of the leaf. 'To green,' on the other contrary, is not a quality in the thing, but an attribute which is said of the thing. This attribute does not exist outside of the proposition which expresses it in denoting the thing.[65]

Sense is the expressed of the proposition. Deleuze is partly using the term 'proposition' in the traditional philosophical manner where it is distinguished from the verbal or written rendering of a proposition: "a proposition is that which is (or could be) asserted to be the case, while sentences are the sets of words which express propositions."[66] However, Deleuze would not agree that it is sentences that express propositions as this is one of the roles of 'sense'. Whitehead would agree with Deleuze on this, as such an approach limits the interest in propositions to the truth or falsehood of the sentences which 'express' propositions.

For Deleuze, sense does not exist, as such, as it only occurs through its expression ('what is expressed does not exist outside its expression'). This is not to say that sense is an attribute of a proposition ('what is expressed has no resemblance whatsoever to the expression'. Usually, trees are said to be green. They are seen to be static objects which have certain essential properties which define what they are; one of these properties is that they are green. In such accounts, trees are passive, enduring entities which are perceived or talked about by subjects which are independent of them. As has been seen, both Whitehead and Deleuze are sharply opposed to such approaches. Instead they both emphasise the processual aspect

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[65] Deleuze, 1990, p. 21
[66] Mitchell, 1964, p. 13

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of reality, the primacy of bodily relations, and the individual moments whereby actuality arises out of this more general field. Thus 'greenness' is not a static property, rather, it is an active element which expresses the constitution of each specific tree ('the attribute of the thing [or state of affairs] is the verb': 'to green, or rather the event expressed by this verb'). Deleuze thus 'agrees' with Whitehead that there are subjects of propositions (logical sets of actual entities) and that these are surrounded by a range of predicates (complex eternal objects). Where he is clearer than Whitehead is in associating such predicates with verbs. It is not that Deleuze envisages language as the harbinger of existence, rather, that the notion of the verb best evokes the activity which comprises the real existence of the world.

It should be noted that early on in his philosophical career, Whitehead too, attempted to use parts of speech as elements within the facticity of the universe, for example: "It is an adjective of events which to some extent conditions the possibilities of apparent sense-objects."[67] And, Whitehead's theory of propositions does coincide, at points, with Deleuze's view of the world in terms of activity, and events as quasi-effects of the prior mixture of bodies and qualities (logical sets of actual entities and predicates - in terms of complex eternal objects). However, for Deleuze, it is verbs that express the activity of the universe; this activity is reducible neither to subjects nor objects, for both are involved within and yet escape the formation of sense. 'Green' or the greenness of a tree is one thing; it *is* the mixing of bodies, it is a state of affairs. 'To green', the activity or expression of greenness is not inherent in such a state of affairs, it is not an essential property of a thing. Instead, 'To green...is said of the thing.'

So, the thing does not say 'I am green so perceive me as green or assert that I am green.' The greening of a tree is 'said of the thing'. But it is not said by a subject. In fact it is not said by anyone. It should be noted that Deleuze uses the passive tense here. However, insofar, as such an attribute 'does not exist outside of the proposition which expresses it', then it must be expressed. This is closely tied to Deleuze's usage of the 'univocity of being' where "Being is said in a single and

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[67] Deleuze, 1922, p. 34

same sense...*of* all its individuating differences".[68] Thus being is 'spoken' in that it enacts sense. But this is not a unified sense; for within the very instantiation of being is that which creates difference. Given that there are no universal concepts or propositions, Deleuze is arguing that each moment of being is accompanied by a proposition. These are not verbal propositions but, at the same time, each becoming does entail that some position is taken with regard to the world or state of affairs; and such positioning is implicated in what has been called a 'statement'.[69] As Ansell-Pearson puts it: "statements refer only to a 'language-being' that enjoys its own independent existence, and which produces subjects and objects for themselves as so many immanent variables."[70] It is the making of this statement, which is the making of sense, which itself produces the subject and enables the designation of an 'exterior' world after the event. In reality (i.e. in terms of becoming), sense, propositions, attributes, events and their relation to verbs are not strictly separate. But, as with Whitehead's analysis of the combination of prehensions into a substantial entity, it is possible, after the event to analyse or divide that which is not in itself divided; "the region is, after all, divisible, although in the genetic growth it is undivided."[71]

However, it should be noted that it is not specific verbs, or the 'meaning' of verbs, which is of interest to Deleuze. Instead, Deleuze isolates two distinct aspects of the verb. There is "the present, which indicates its relation to a denotable state of affairs".[72] Under this aspect falls the triad of denotation, manifestation and signification which form "the aggregate of times, persons, and modes."[73] The other aspect is "the infinitive, which indicates its relation to sense or the event in view of the internal time which it envelops."[74] Under this aspect falls the range of potentiality which each specific occurrence of that verb relies on for its sense. But, the sense of the verb is not exhausted by these occurrences, it retains it own

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[68] Deleuze, 1994, p. 36
[69] The status of such 'statements' shall be taken up later on in this chapter.
[70] Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p. 132
[71] Whitehead, 1978, p. 284
[72] Deleuze, 1990, p. 184
[73] Deleuze, 1990, p. 184
[74] Deleuze, 1990, p. 184

indeterminate form. "The Verb is the univocity of language, in the form of an undetermined infinitive, without person, without present, without any diversity of voice."[75] Thus, the verb replicates the role of eternal objects in Whitehead's work. It will be remembered that eternal objects express the infinite potentiality which permeates the universe through its ongoing creative process. In this way they are eternal, out of time, in that they are not determined by, or limited to, the present . As such, they link the past and the future. "The pure infinitive...permits no distinction of moments, but goes on being divided formally in the double and simultaneous direction of the past and future."[76]

Yet, one of the main roles of eternal objects is to ingress in the becoming of actual entities. In Deleuze's reading of Whitehead: "eternal objects are...pure Virtualities that are actualized in prehensions."[77] It is only because of such ingressions that definiteness is granted to actual entities, to individuals. Thus, under the first aspect of Deleuze's version of the verb, ('its relation to a denotable state of affairs') are created 'times, persons, and modes'; that is, the present with all its punctuations of time, space and individuals. Unlike Whitehead, Deleuze thus views language, in the form of the verb, as integral to the formations of individuals. This is not language as an epiphenomenon, or supplementary explanatory device, or creation of the human subject. Language is coextensive with becoming, with the event, with the creation of sense itself. Further, language is not solely a human affair, it is not reducible to a 'cultural intelligible'. On Deleuze's account, the verb "inherits...the communication of events among themselves."[78] The universe is not "shivered into a multitude of disconnected substantial things....[where] substantial thing cannot call unto substantial thing."[79] Instead, language, sense, and events are all interconnected effects of the mixing of bodies which do thereby communicate with each other. Language does not represent, reflect or create, states of affairs, it is made possible by them and expresses particular actualities and delimits them. "It

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[75] Deleuze, 1990, p. 185
[76] Deleuze, 1990, p. 185
[77] Deleuze, 1993, p. 79
[78] Deleuze, 1990, p. 185
[79] Whitehead, 1967, p. 133

is language which fixes the limits."[80] Yet language also keeps singularities and actualities in touch with the infinite, with the unbridled process of becoming: "it is language as well which transcends the limits and restores them to the infinite equivalence of an unlimited becoming".[81] Language does not make (create) sense; it is only one element in the process in which individuals become actualised, their sense created, and whereby events occur. "As it expresses in language all events in one, the infinite verb expresses the event of language - language being a unique event which merges now with that which renders it possible."[82] So, describing the verb as infinite is a philosophical device. It is an abstract characterization of the universe in terms of process and becoming. But the verb is also implicated in the 'present', in the actualization of individuals; it is important to recognize this distinction, that is, to accept the force of the philosophical approach, but then to delineate the operations of such infinitive verbs in their present and personalizing actualizations. It is also important to note a distinction between Deleuze and Whitehead at this point, even though this might turn out to be no more that a terminological one.

For Whitehead, subjectivity is superjectivity, that is, it is the combination of diverse elements into one unity. It is the process of this concrescence that constitute its 'formal' existence. Once it has become, it perishes, it becomes a datum for other becomings. This is its 'objective' existence whereby it gains its immortality.[83] Whitehead emphasizes the processual aspect of becoming and hence the formal aspect of existence. Deleuze, on the other hand distinguishes between that form of subjectivity which is 'real', which exists, but within the realm of singularities, as distinct from the actualization of individuals which is equally 'real'. As Ansell-Pearson puts it: "subjectivity is never ours but always virtual."[84] Thus the present, or the 'world-as-it-is'[85] is populated not by subjectivities but by individuals which are actualized out of the virtual. Such actualized individuals are also 'real', they are as

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[80] Deleuze, 1990, p. 2
[81] Deleuze, 1990, p. 3
[82] Deleuze, 1990, p. 185
[83] Whitehead, 1978, pp. 219-220
[84] Ansell-Pearson, 2002, p. 168
[85] See Chapter 2, footnote 4, for a fuller discussion of this term

real as the virtual. However, they are in some way delimited or controlled; they are implicated in the operations of force. Clearly Whitehead does not view the shift from formal to objective existence in precisely these terms. However, it would seem possible to equate his distinction between these modes of existence to Deleuze's notions of virtual subjectivity and actual individuals.

However, the advantage of Deleuze's stance, for analyses of the 'social', is that he addresses the role of language in the delimitation of individuals which are related to, and yet distinct from, their initial virtuality or rendering of the extensive continuum. As such, through the remainder of this thesis, the term 'individual' will be used to refer to actualized subjectivity. And, a discussion of such actualization in the 'present' will make up the remainder of this chapter which concludes the theoretical development of this thesis.

Actualization in the 'present'

It has been seen how Deleuze introduces language into his ontology through an analysis of the status of the verb as infinite. It was also pointed out that this is only half the story, in that the verb is also implicated in the actualizations of the present. Deleuze elaborates this second point by building on the work of Foucault.[86] In doing so, he makes use of the term 'statements'. These 'statements' are different from propositions both in the usual philosophical sense and in the Whiteheadian sense. For: "No sense of possibility or potentiality exists in the realm of statements. Everything in them is real and all reality is manifestly present."[87] As stated earlier, Ansell-Pearson argues that such 'statements' refer not to the verbal utterances of humans but to "a 'language-being' that enjoys its own independent existence, and which produces subjects and objects for themselves as so many immanent variables."[88] "To be precise, subject, object and concept are merely functions

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[86] Deleuze, 1998
[87] Deleuze, 1988, p. 3
[88] Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p. 132

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derived from the primitive function or from the statement."[89] Or, as Whitehead puts it: "subject and object are relative terms."[90]

Statements are not produced by individual speakers or subjects; they do not harbour the intentionality or creativity of individual humans; "no originality is needed in order to produce them."[91] As opposed to Whitehead's treatment of propositions as that realm within which it would seem that there was almost an infinite potential for superjects to orient themselves and express their creativity,[92] on Deleuze's reading, statements inhabit the realm of the already decided, of the real (in the sense of the actual). Statements will delimit the utter facticity of the moment within which subjects find their place; they are, in this sense, 'social' insofar as they substantiate the actual conditions and consequences of the contemporary world. Hence, they are also resolutely implicated in the material.

However, this is not a fixed or essential version of materiality; it is one which relies upon a notion of multiplicity. "So this is our definition of a group of statements, or even a single statement: they are multiplicities."[93] As has been seen, multiplicities are vital elements of the work of both Whitehead and Deleuze. Once again, and in opposition to Badiou,[94] Deleuze states that such multiplicities are not reducible to either the 'One' or the 'Multiple' (or 'Many').[95]

> Multiplicity remains completely indifferent to the traditional problems of the multiple and the one....There is neither one nor multiple....There are only rare multiplicities composed of particular elements, empty places for those who temporarily function as subjects, and cumulable, repeatable and self-preserving regularities.[96]

It is important to note that multiplicities are rare, that Deleuze is not a great celebrant of the supposed multiplicitous flux and flow of a constantly deconstructed and deconstructing postmodern condition etc. etc. Hence, there are limited

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[89] Deleuze, 1988, p. 9
[90] Whitehead, 1967, p. 176
[91] Deleuze, 1988, p. 3
[92] See Chapter Six
[93] Deleuze, 1988, p. 13
[94] Badiou, 2000. Also, see Chapter Seven and Eight of this thesis
[95] Whitehead also holds this position. See Whitehead, 1978, p.21
[96] Deleuze, 1988, p. 14

positions and spaces within which individualized subjectivities gain their materiality.[97] As such, it is precisely this hardness, this physicality and its relation to subjectivity, which is of interest to this thesis. The more abstract elements have been discussed in relation to Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze. It is now Deleuze's reading of the 'non-discursive'[98] that will be turned to, in order to demonstrate the resonances between this notion and Whitehead's understanding of subjectivity in terms of its social-physical actualization.

Deleuze characterizes the discursive and the non-discursive in terms of "saying and seeing"[99] or "the articulable and the "visible".[100] These two realms are not mutually exclusive nor are they totally inter-dependent. At one level (a Spinozist one, perhaps), they could be described as two different attributes of the same 'thing'; if it were not the case that this 'thing' does not strictly exist prior to its articulation or its visibility. Statements are not purely linguistic. They imply and require, for their operation, "the *complementary space* of non-discursive formations".[101] Deleuze identifies such formations in relation to institutions.[102] For:

> Any institution implies the existence of statements such as a constitution, a charter, contracts, registrations and enrolments. Conversely, statements refer back to an institutional milieu which is necessary for the formation both of the objects which arise in such examples of the statements and of the subject who speaks from this position (for example the position of the writer in society, the position of the doctor in the hospital or at his [sic] surgery, in any given period together with the new emergence of objects.)[103]

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[97] It is in this sense that the detailed and 'limited' descriptions which Foucault undertook of the medical the penal, and 'sexuality' could be seen as concrete attempts to render the effects of multiplicities in a hard, concrete, social-physical actuality. See, Foucault, M. 1976. *The Birth of the Clinic*, Routledge, London Foucault, M. 1991; *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, Penguin Books, London; Foucault, M. 1984. *The History of Sexuality. Volume One*, Penguin, London.

[98] Given that Deleuze uses the term 'non-discursive' throughout his text on Foucault (Deleuze, 1988), it is important to note that it is not one that Foucault often employs himself and he seems to have had some difficulty with the notion. The closest he came to a definition was in a round table discussion when he states: "If you take Gabriel's architectural plan for the Military school together with the actual construction of the School, how is one to say what is discursive and what is institutional?" (Foucault, M. 1980. *Power/Knowledge*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, p. 198). Thus Deleuze's work is being treated as a development of Foucault's ideas in the current analysis.

[99] Deleuze, 1988, p. 48

[100] Deleuze, 1988, p. 49

[101] Deleuze, 1988, p. 9

[102] This demonstrates Deleuze's continuing interest in the relation of philosophy to immediate, social concerns from *Empiricism and Subjectivity* to his later texts; (for example, Deleuze, 1991 [1953], p. 47).

[103] Deleuze, 1988, p. 9

If medical discourse is derived from a relation of statements which enables it to talk intelligibly about specific objects, and employ specific practices, then one example of the non-discursive, the visible, might be the hospital considered as an architectural entity. However, this is not to consider the hospital as a Newtonian, physical object, for: "they [hospitals] are not just figures of stone, assemblages of things...but first and foremost forms of light that distribute light and dark, opaque and transparent, seen and non-seen, etc."[104]

The articulable and the visible are, in some respects, analogous but they are not isomorphic. It is, perhaps, Whitehead's work which can best elucidate these terms and their inter-relation. As has been seen, at the metaphysical level, every actual entity is "dipolar, with its physical and mental poles".[105] But as discussed earlier[106] this 'mental' aspect does not refer to the psychological or to consciousness as originary. Rather, it refers to the conceptual as that potential which is instantiated within all items of being or matter; this is what grants all materiality its subjectivity. This account therefore avoids envisaging the universe as replete with simple, inert objects, only occasionally punctuated with the searing light of human subjectivity.

So, consistent with Whitehead's insistence on the priority of becoming over being and his epochal theory of time (and space),[107] it is the pulse of becoming which creates time and space; so to speak of relations within such becomings is to pre-empt actuality. The visible and the articulable do not exist within time and space, they create it. And this goes for the hospitals, prisons and so on, which literally[108] fabricate their own spatio-temporal systems.

However, Deleuze (and Whitehead) would not want to over-emphasize the heavy, stratified, domains of discourse and institution (the articulable and the visible), or the rigidity of such institutions and the final completion of each bounded creation (or

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[104] Deleuze, 1988, p. 57
[105] Whitehead, 1978, p. 239
[106] See Chapter Five
[107] See Chapter Seven
[108] This word is over-used but seems pertinent here

subject). The co-workings of power and knowledge do not completely render their material as subject, or object, so that there is nothing beyond or left over. Just as Whitehead's philosophy is imbued with the idea of process (of the going beyond each actual occasion), for Deleuze, actualization is never a complete rendering of the virtual:

> events of the surface are actualized in the present of bodies...by imprisoning first their singularities within the limits of worlds, individuals and persons. There is also another movement wherein the event implies something excessive in relation to its actualization, something that overthrows worlds, individuals and persons, and leaves them to the depth of the ground which works and dissolves them.[109]

Process, or the move from the virtual to the actual, never exhausts the creativity, force, or power which characterizes the implication of matter and subjectivity in the contemporary world. Over and beyond immediate actualizations of events in contemporary bodies, there remains the force of the eventfulness of the universe which creates the future and the past in distinction to the present. This is akin to Whitehead's notion of 'Creativity' as characterizing the ultimate category of the universe.

However, and to reiterate, Deleuze and Whitehead insist that to view linguistic propositions as the designators of an external reality is to mis-recognize the complexity of the inter-relation of events, things and propositions. The analysis of events always comes after, and is in danger of belying, that which generates such events; namely the relations of entities or singularities in the extensive continuum or the virtual. Hence: "the predication of properties veils radically different relations between entities"[110] (Whitehead). "This new dualism of bodies or states of affairs and effects or incorporeal events entails an upheaval in philosophy"[111] (Deleuze). However, it is crucial not to see this as a simple reversal of Platonism. States of affairs are not deterministic of events. The relation is more complex. It is clear that Deleuze wants to rid the philosophy of representation of its supposed power to describe matter and facticity in terms of the contemporary, yet enduring, self-identical objects such as tables and chairs. But this does not mean that such

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[109] Deleuze, 1990, pp. 167-8
[110] Whitehead, 1964, p.19
[111] Deleuze, 1990, p. 6

objects are mere ephemera of the prior mixings of bodies. The aim is to deny their self-identity as constituting the material; insofar as they exist, they exist within events which themselves do not cause them. In one sense, objects do not exist, as the relations between singularities is eventful and produces temporary stabilizations into that which is normally considered to be an object. So, events *do* have effects but not at a substantial or material level: "they [events] are only 'quasi-causes'...which perhaps express...the relative unity or mixture of bodies on which they depend".[112] So it is important that *"the event is not confused with its spatio-temporal realization in a state of affairs."*[113] And, that such 'realization' is only a moment within an ongoing process which creates the present by taking its past and hurling towards its future.

With regard to the status of subjectivity within such a process, both Whitehead and Deleuze, would deny any absolute interiority to such subjectivity; however, they would make a distinction between the inside and the outside. "The outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside *of* the outside."[114] In this sense, the 'outside' works in a similar way to Whitehead's extensive continuum. It is out of this that subjects are created. This does not mean that such subjects have an inside which is of a different kind to the rest of being. These are not subjects as opposed to objects. The foldings which comprise subjectivity are temporary renderings of an outside. They are the public made private only insofar as this privacy will become public again.[115] Subjectivity is a moment and a place within the ongoing movement of a wider field, namely the virtual or the extensive continuum. For Deleuze, such subjectivity is characterized in terms of the fold.[116] Thus, each subject is a social, physical and historical rendering: each fold is social in that it incorporates elements of the public into an singular entity; each fold is physical in that it is an actual

[112] Deleuze, 1990, p. 6
[113] Deleuze, 1990, p. 22
[114] Deleuze, 1988, pp. 96-7
[115] See, Whitehead, 1978, pp. 289-90
[116] See, Deleuze, 1988, pp. 93-123 and, Deleuze, 1993, which is entitled *The Fold*

rendering of elements of the universe; each fold is historical in that its formation arises from the particular arrangement of forces, previous folds, and problems within which it is situated.

Conclusion: Language, Individuality and Materiality

For Deleuze, human language is not creative in any originary sense and nor is it unique. "Events make language possible."[117] Human language is only one of the elements within the constitution of humans as individuals. It is the realm of sense which informs and surrounds such temporary individuality, and proscribes the events within which they occur. There are other diverse languages: "There is even a white society and a white language, the latter being that which contains in its virtuality all the phonemes and relations destined to be actualised in diverse languages".[118] Such languages are not limited to humans as they can arise from the communication of non-human singularities. This notion builds upon Whitehead's assessment of eternal objects as those potentials which inform the creation and definiteness of all subjects. A white stone is not only white because human language calls it white. It is white because whiteness is one of the defining elements of its becoming. It feel itself to be white. Whitehead's choice of colours as his preferred method of explaining the role of eternal objects takes on renewed importance with Deleuze's analysis. Deleuze is clearer in linking colour, matter and subjectivity:

> Included in the notion as subject is forever an event marked by a verb, or a relation marked by a preposition...(and if things had the gift of speech, they would say, as might, for example, gold: 'I will resist melting and nitric acid').[119]

Or, as Whitehead puts it, quoting Locke: "Thus we say, fire has a power to melt gold;...and gold has a power to be melted".[120] Thus subjectivity or individuality is not solely a human affair. And the actualization of individuals is not entirely

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[117] Deleuze, 1990, p. 181

[118] Deleuze, 1994, p. 206

[119] Deleuze, 1993, p. 52

[120] Whitehead, 1978, p. 57. The citation is from Book II, Chapter XXI, Section 1 of Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Locke, 1988, p. 105). In the original the word 'power' is in italics on both occasions.

separate from the singularities which enable actualization: "singularities are actualized both in a world and in the individuals which are parts of the world."[121] In this way, and following Whitehead, the process of the actualization of singularities is not simply a question of the many becoming one, or the external creating the internal, or vice versa. Instead, "actualization is always both collective and individual, internal and external."[122] Deleuze maintains a different emphasis to Whitehead in that for him actualization is always tied up with 'expression'. "To be actualized is also to be *expressed*."[123] This notion of expression is not so dissimilar from the work of Whitehead, if it is considered in the following terms. What each actualized individual expresses is the univocity of being, the ultimate principle of the complete inter-linking of each individual with every other entity in the entire universe. "Each atom is a system of all things."[124] But such analysis remains at the metaphysical level. In 'fact', in *actuality*, each individual entity is presented with its own world, its own history, its own grouping of singularities or objectified entities as it is "somewhere in the continuum, and arises out of the data provided by this standpoint."[125] And with regard to the body, this entails, as Deleuze puts it, that:

> In each world, the individuals express all the singularities of this world - an infinity - ...but each monad envelops or expresses 'clearly' a certain number of singularities only, that is, *those in the vicinity of which it is constituted and which link up with its own body*.[126]

With which Whitehead concurs:

> the animal body is nothing more than the most intimately relevant part of the antecedent settled world.[127]

Thus, it is possible to view Deleuze as a continuation of the work of Whitehead: Deleuze's term 'individuals' can be taken as synonymous with Whitehead's usage of the term 'superject' considered under its 'objective' aspect, as opposed to its formal, aspect[128] and the term 'pre-individual singularity' is taken as epitomizing the

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[121] Deleuze, 1990, p. 110
[122] Deleuze, 1990, p. 110
[123] Deleuze, 1990, p. 110
[124] Whitehead, 1978, p. 36
[125] Whitehead, 1978, p. 67
[126] Deleuze, 1990, p. 111
[127] Whitehead, 1978, p. 64
[128] See Whitehead 1978, pp. 219-20

inter-relation of actual entities within the extensive continuum. The great advantage of Deleuze's analysis is that he is able to incorporate language within his scheme. As he and Guattari comment on the work of Whitehead: "Interaction becomes *communication.*"[129] Hence, it is possible to outline a theoretical approach which includes 'nature' (in the sense of the physical world of the natural sciences and philosophy) as a cohesive and yet infinite milieu within which individuality and subjectivity are not simple constructions, representations or epi-phenomena. Instead, they comprise the limited, physical and social actuality of the 'world-as-it-is' but do not fully exemplify, incarnate or exhaust its potentiality.[130] An integral aspect of such an outlook is the rendering of language as implicit and co-extensive with such actuality. Deleuze thereby builds upon the utterly social character of Whitehead's philosophy[131] by introducing the relation between such sociality and language. Subjectivity, matter and language are not to be viewed in terms of one determining the others. None is given absolute priority.

This chapter concludes the theoretical developments of this thesis. The following and final chapter will review the aims, arguments and conclusions of this piece and will point to some of their relevance to contemporary analyses.

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[129] Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 154
[130] See, Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p. 87
[131] "Every actual entity is in its nature essentially social". Whitehead, 1978, p. 203.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

This thesis set out to re-think the relationship between materiality and subjectivity. The Introduction reviewed a range of recent calls for such a re-thinking. These demonstrated how the division between the 'biological' body and the 'cultural' body has made it difficult to account for the very physicality of the body within contemporary analyses of subjectivity. The political consequences of this division were made evident through an appraisal of the work of Butler,[1] but more especially in an exposition of certain critiques of her texts. These established the need for a non-essentialist ontology[2] which this thesis took up through an evaluation of the work of Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze. In the Introduction, a certain set of demands were set which it would be necessary for this thesis to address.[3] The following statements are offered as summaries of how this thesis has responded to these demands.

Firstly, 'human' subjects are not to be viewed as distinct from non-human subjects (or objects).

Secondly, the constitution of all subjects occurs within a realm of 'social physical activity'. So, subjectivity is no simple cultural construction but neither is it reducible to natural (physical) explanations.

Thirdly, language is an integral element in the constitution of individuality and

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[1] Butler, 1993

[2] For example: Barad, 1998; Cheah, 1996; Fraser, 2002; Kerin, 1999; Kirby, 1997, 1999; Sandford ,1999

[3] 'The need to give an account of items of matter inherently inter-related and yet part of a wider scheme, without privileging the position of the human mind or body...
The need to account for the utter materiality and facticity of items of matter within a more general ontological position which can also describe the correlate concepts of space and time...
The need to give an account of the communicability of items of matter in terms of the 'linguistic', and of power relations. In order to avoid the philosophical assumptions described above, such an account must explain such notions not in terms of any philosophical foundationality but in terms of difference'. This passage is from the Introduction to this thesis.

subjectivity. However, language is not merely a human or cultural affair. Humans are implicated within language in that the operations of language are implicit in the instantiation of all subjectivity.

Finally, language both delimits and yet opens up potentialities for subjectivity. That is, it is one element of the potentiality of the universe (the verb as infinite or infinitive); whilst it is also an operand within the incarnation and actualization of limited individuals out of such potentiality (the verb in the present).

These conclusions were drawn out in the course of the argument of this thesis which is set out below.

Chapter Two set out the parameters of a non-essentialist ontology through an evaluation of Spinoza's *The Ethics*. However, it was argued that, ultimately, Spinoza is unable to guarantee the full materiality of his conception of individuality; i.e. they do not gain a level of existence which is sufficiently distinct from his infinite substance. This chapter, thereby, set out certain questions to which Whitehead and Deleuze would have to respond. Chapter Three examined Whitehead's critical position with regard to the history of philosophy and science. This introduced his critique of 'primary substance' which it would be necessary for the later elaboration of his 'philosophy of organism' to avoid. The two following chapters reviewed the positive aspects of Whitehead's theory of becoming. The most important elements of Whitehead's argument, for this thesis, are as follows: that being is becoming; that all items of matter attain the status of subjectivity; the utter inter-relation of the conceptual and the physical; the role of potentiality; the locus of the body within his philosophy. However, Chapter Six claimed that Whitehead's account of language is deficient. Chapter Seven compared the work of Deleuze to that of Whitehead and set out the similarity of their philosophical concerns. This enabled Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense* to be utilised as a development of Whitehead's analyses, through its ability to account for the place of language within a non-essentialist ontology.

Hence, Chapter Eight discussed Deleuze's approach to language in terms of the

infinite verb and its actualization in the present through 'statements'. The similarities with Whitehead's ontological approach were also discussed. Most especially, Deleuze's notion of the 'visible and the articulable' was aligned with Whitehead's conception of all entities being comprised of the 'physical and the conceptual'. It was further argued that, within these schemes, subjectivity is rendered as a fully material yet changing moment within a wider spatio-temporal locale. Within such locales there are also to be found certain 'social' institutions which both delimit and enable individuality. In this manner, the work of Whitehead and Deleuze were presented as developing an ontology which is able to account for the materiality of subjectivity without recourse to either scientific or essentialist accounts of such physicality.

The remainder of this chapter will revisit, in more detail, the conclusions of this thesis and some of its consequences for contemporary analyses.

Materiality and Statements

As opposed to those positions, as outlined in the Introduction,[4] where matter is viewed as either inaccessible to, or no concern of, analyses of the social, Whitehead and Deleuze maintain that the 'world-as-it-is', is fully social, fully material and fully processual. And, language, via statements, is always implicated in the ever-changing renderings of subjectivity. So, it is possible to move from Deleuze's more abstract discussions of verbs and infinite potentiality to the more immediate, social or actualized realm of statements. Unlike some (deterministic) structuralist models, there is no greater reality hiding behind such statements. This theory of statements avoids Whitehead's critique of primary substance and Spinoza's problem of the passage from the infinite to the finite. As Whitehead strongly argues, there is no going behind reality to find out what is 'really' there; either motivations or covering laws, be they biological, technical or historical.[5]

As seen in Chapter Eight, any analysis of such statements must include an account

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[4] E.g. those of Durkheim (1964), Schutz (1967), Giddens (1984), Althusser (1984, 1986)
[5] "There is no going behind actual entities to find anything more real." Whitehead, 1978, p. 18

of their relation to the non-discursive, to materiality. Hence, Deleuze's concerns with this notion of the non-discursive coincide with Whitehead's emphasis upon the need to explain 'stubborn fact' within a philosophy of process and becoming. And, as discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, contemporary theorists such as Barad, Fraser, Kember, Kirby, and Sandford[6] are also interested in notions of non-discursiveness and what Whitehead calls the 'stubbornness of fact', in that they are engaged in a reassessment of the relation between the status of the physicality of matter (or its stubbornness) to contemporary formations of subjectivity. It is one of the central arguments of this thesis that an emphasis upon the materiality of matter, and the importance of developing an ontological stance which is able to account for this **and** its relation to subjectivity is clearly evident in the work of Whitehead and Deleuze.

At the same time, and as has been seen throughout this thesis, it is also necessary for such versions of materiality to take account of the conceptual. As discussed in Chapter Five, this is the role of eternal objects in Whitehead's philosophy: for "even the physical world cannot be properly understood without recourse to its other side".[7] Hospitals, for example, are comprised of the physical and the conceptual but never exist without being imbued and surrounded by an environment which both supports and defines the possibility of becomings, activities and actualizations within and around it: "all of these societies presuppose the circumambient space of social physical activity."[8] Thus, the analysis or division of complex entities, such as hospitals, into the strict physicality of the buildings and the social elements of its language, codes and practices is mistaken. This is not how things really *are:* "the region is, after all, divisible, although in its genetic growth it is undivided."[9] This is the great lesson of Whitehead. And so it is with the distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive: it is possible to divide the physical entity of the hospital building from the codes and practices which occur there. Indeed, this is often the procedure of engineers, architects, doctors and patients on the one hand and social theorists on the other. But, once again, this is not how they really *are.*

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[6] See: Barad, 1999; Fraser, 2002; Kember, 2002, 2003; Kirby, 1997, 1999; Sandford, 1999
[7] Whitehead, 1978, p. 239
[8] Whitehead, 1967, p. 206
[9] Whitehead, 1978, p. 284

To fully address questions about the *reality* of such institutions then, rather than ignoring the physical aspect and concentrating on the language, symbols and codes evident therein, or vice versa, it is necessary to adopt a version of ontology which enables such an analysis to frame its analyses more pertinently.

Power and Subjectivity

Institutions, or renderings of the visible and the articulable, do not inhabit an already existent space or time, and nor do they possess power of themselves. Rather, they are manifestations of the wider process, creativity or power of the universe which fabricate such spatio-temporal systems.

Hence, the effectivity of such fabrications relies on the instantiation of some notion of force or power, through which becomings acquire the status of the material. As has been noted throughout this thesis, Spinoza, Whitehead and Deleuze are all interested in the operations of power. "The human body can be affected in many ways, whereby its power of activity is increased or diminished".[10] "The philosophy of organism holds that, in order to understand 'power,' we must have a correct notion of how each individual actual entity contributes to the datum *from which* its successors arise and *to which* they must conform."[11] And: "the differential relation presents a third element, that of pure potentiality. Power is the form of reciprocal determination according to which variable magnitudes are taken to be functions of one another."[12] So, for example, the prison consists of the discursive and the non-discursive. It is constituted within discourse **and** at the level of the institutional (the architectural), in its physical distribution of individuals, its organization of light, its visibility. It is force, creativity or power that make this possible insofar as they differentiate statements within the articulable, and differentiate the articulable from the visible. The visible itself: "is also an expression of forces giving a form to them which is not that of discourse but instead of visible materiality. And this is how power traverses both the visible and the articulable and brings them into

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[10] Spinoza, 1955, Part III. Postulate I. (p. 130)

[11] Whitehead, 1978, p. 56

[12] Deleuze, 1994, p. 174

communication."[13]

With regard to the status of subjectivity, the work of Whitehead could be used to identify the operations of power inherent in attempts to render living superjects into self-identical, self-sufficient objects. On such an account the modern prison can be seen as an act of violence following Newtonian misconceptions. On Whitehead's (or Deleuze's) account, the reason that the prison is such an act of violence is its epistemic faith in its own ability to utterly individualize; yet such faith is premised upon a complete misrecognition of the status of existence. Hence:

> The universe [the prison] is shivered into a multitude of disconnected substantial things, each in its own way exemplifying its private bundle of abstract characters which have found a common home in its own substantial individuality. But substantial thing cannot call unto substantial thing.[14]

Or as Deleuze puts it, the attempt is made: "*to impose a particular conduct on a particular human multiplicity.*"[15]

Such statements re-introduce the importance of the ontological positions of Whitehead and Deleuze to contemporary analyses. One crucial aspect of their approaches is to assert the primacy of becoming over being. Both writers take a stand against reducing the world to discrete sets of objects and subjects which, thereby, provide the 'material' of most human inquiry. At the same time, neither Whitehead nor Deleuze advocate a great celebration of flux and flow at the expense of the actual. Instead, they invite new conceptual approaches which can take account of becoming **and** the considerable facticity of the actual. For Deleuze, it is 'events' which will be able to accomplish such a task. And although, as seen in the previous chapter,[16] it is not always wise to describe Whitehead as a 'philosopher of the event', it is possible to align his work to such a notion.

It is also clear that within Deleuze and Whitehead's work, there is an important re-

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[13] May, T. 1993. *Between Genealogy and Epistemology: psychology, politics, and knowledge in the thought of Michel Foucault*, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania, p. 87

[14] Whitehead, 1967, p. 133

[15] Deleuze, 1988, p. 34

[16] See, Chapter Eight, footnote 16

description of the time, place and status of all subjectivity; a subjectivity which is not limited to the 'human'. This is a critical point for this thesis, as both writers provide compelling reasons as to why, and how, contemporary analyses should avoid positing the human person as either an object or a subject. Rather, 'human' individuality is to be envisaged as an aspect within the wider, processual effectivity whereby the virtual becomes actual, or the solidarity of the extensive continuum. becomes actualized into individuality. Hence, a review of the status of becoming within the work of Whitehead and Deleuze, and its relation to events and subjectivity will make up the final section of this thesis.

Conclusion: Becoming, Events and Subjectivity

The operations of becoming are not directed, prior to such becoming; neither language nor subjectivity are creative *in* the act of becoming, or in the process of actualization. Rather, they are produced in response to the prior organization of the virtual, of the extensive continuum. So, power, in its relation to knowledge, "produces truth in so far as it makes us see and speak. It produces truth as a problem";[17] just as in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze envisages actualization as the response to a problem.[18] The advantage of Deleuze's position here is that it enables a more concrete understanding of that which comprises such problems. So, to develop contemporary analyses, it is important not to dwell solely on power and control and their actualized effects (bodies, subjects and objects). Instead it is necessary to extend such analyses to trace that which enables such actualization and how such material individualities come to be. That is, it is important to be aware of both the distinction between the virtual and the actual as well as their inter-relation. Or, to put it another way, it is important to be aware of the distinction between the extensive continuum and the becomings of actual entities, as well as their inter-relation.

The invitation is to analyse those processes by which all three (subjectivity, matter

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[17] Deleuze, 1988, p. 83

[18] For example, "The virtual possesses the reality of a task to be performed or a problem to be solved", Deleuze, 1994, p. 212

and language) conspire to instantiate actuality. Subjectivity (or individuality) is neither a simple effect of former processes nor is it a creative force in itself. Subjectivity is not limited to human subjects. For both Whitehead and Deleuze, enduring 'objects', insofar as they are substantial items of existence, are 'persons'. For Whitehead: "Societies of the general type, that their realized nexūs are purely temporal and continuous, will be termed 'personal'."[19] Further: "a dog is a 'person'".[20] As long as it is remembered that such persons (or objects) are not self-identical, self-sufficient, Newtonian entities as "all of these societies presuppose the circumambient space of **social physical activity**."[21] Deleuze puts it thus:

> All objects = x are 'persons' and are defined by predicates. But these are no longer the analytic predicates of individuals determined within a world which carries out the *description* of these individuals. On the contrary, they are predicates which *define* persons synthetically, and open different worlds and individualities to them as so many variables or possibilities.[22]

So, as stated above, both Whitehead and Deleuze have very specific conceptions of that which constitutes individuality. Further, they insist that to render humans as the only mode of personhood is to falsely render the processual character of the universe and to betray the univocity of being. For Deleuze, language is co-extensive with becoming but is also involved in the actualization of becoming into 'objects' or 'individuals'. So, language in the present mode (as opposed to the infinite mode) is that which provides the momentary definiteness or individuality which some have mistaken for the full and only reality of the 'objective' world. However, to deny that such objectivity is the only manifestation of reality is not to reduce the world to a seething flux with no discernible difference. Some commentators have believed that a Deleuzean analysis will only trace flows, flights and deterritorialization, and revel in fluidity. There is a danger that some might take the same approach with Whitehead's emphasis on process. But it is clear that, contrary to any such readings, both writers simply view the universe as eventful. Subjects and objects do appear within this eventfulness but they are neither primary nor originary. This thesis will now conclude with a brief example of how the work of Whitehead and Deleuze's emphasis on becoming and process could be used to

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[19] Whitehead, 1967, p. 205
[20] Whitehead, 1967, p. 206
[21] Whitehead, 1967, p. 206. Emphasis added
[22] Deleuze, 1990, p. 115

investigate not simply the mobility of contemporary society but also contemporary forms of actualization.

For example, within contemporary sociology and anthropology, the 'social' is often considered to be some form of a flow.[23] Appadurai,[24] in particular, considers migration as one of a series of disjunctive spaces of flow, which together constitute the global cultural economy. But this is only half the story; it remains at the level of the virtual. So, it is possible to utilise the work of Whitehead and Deleuze to broaden the scope of such analyses. Hence, if migration is considered as an event, then it is the quasi-effect of the mixture of bodies and their tensions. It is a resultant of the inter-relation of a variety of singularities. But such migration is always actualized in states of affairs and bodies. Such analyses should examine the actualizations of such becomings in terms of the fixing of the virtual into the present, and the actualization of the event into concrete states of affairs and bodies.[25] Such actualizations will take the form of classifying and discriminating such singularities into individual bodies; so that they are physically rendered as either a tourist, a refugee or an asylum seeker. These are not just labels or categories. They are the hard, physical, manifestation in individualized bodies. The event is thereby actualized in such a manner that singularities are individuated and ordered into groups in which they are deemed to be the same; thereby disavowing the difference within and between them, the difference that constitutes them in their becomings. That is to say, a major aspect of the present in the UK is the necessity to be physically actualized as a citizen, visitor, genuine applicant for residency, or illegal entrant. These are not the only actualizations; there are others which cut across the space and time of the same individuated body and yet are actualized within a different body. However, it will be possible to trace the history that links such different actualizations to the previously individuated body.

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[23] See Urry, 2000

[24] Appadurai, A. 1990. 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy' in *Theory, Culture and Society*, Volume 7, 2-3, pp. 295-310

[25] This will entail the need for a fuller understanding of the distinction between the virtual and the actual; or, between the extensive continuum, becoming, and the emplacement of that which becomes. However, to focus on actualizations alone would only tell the other half of the story. It would isolate actualizations to the exclusion of the virtual. Such analyses would miss the fact that all actualizations are elements within a wider scheme of on-going process.

On this view, individual subjectivity is a twisting of a social, physical environment. This physicality does not limit the body to its own immediacy, its own genes, molecules, cells and so on but opens it up, through the re-conceptualization of the physical; that is to say, the conceptual is to be seen as an integral element of the physical. "It is even this twisting which defines 'Flesh', beyond the body proper and its objects":[26] "we cannot tell with what molecules the body ends and the external world begins."[27] But this is not a dispersal of the body, to the extent that individual renderings of it become lost in a wider universe of flux. This is not the passing of the infinite to the finite or the finite into the infinite.[28] Instead, it is a question of eliciting the dispersion and yet also the sedimentation of the body, and of subjectivity, with regard to its wider social and physical environment. And such elicitings are not simply cultural descriptions of an already existent physical field. Rather, they would constitute the description and re-description of the folds that constitute contemporary subjectivity.

Clearly such descriptions would require an understanding of the inter-relation of materiality and subjectivity, if they are to engage fully with the 'physicality' of the body. However, in order not to fall back into some form of essentialism, it is necessary that these accounts would utilise a non-essentialist ontology. As such, it is hoped that this thesis has provided a way of furthering such analyses by providing an account which helps to meet both of these requirements.

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[26] Deleuze, 1988, p. 110

[27] Whitehead, 1967, p. 225

[28] "It would no longer involve raising to infinity or finitude but an unlimited finity." Deleuze, 1988, p. 131

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