# A stirring alphabet of thought: review essay

Marcelo Svirsky
*University of Wollongong*, msvirsky@uow.edu.au

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# Review Essay
# A Stirring Alphabet of Thought

*Marcelo Svirsky*   Cardiff University

José Gil (2008) *O Imperceptível Devir da Imanência – Sobre a Filosofia de Deleuze*, Lisbon: Relógio D'Água.

One might interpret and explain the great philosophers as one pleases, but an honest interpretation must not smother the soul of their oeuvres, however much one may admire or criticise them. Many would agree that Deleuze's writing is often obscure and difficult, and therefore the attempt to introduce some clarity through interpretation must be welcomed. However, too much order can compromise the delicate mechanism of his work and literally freeze its internal dynamics when, for example, concepts and planes of thought are arranged without regard for their links and junctures. In the case of Deleuze, it seems that if anything must be respected, it is the sense of constant movement through the connections that he was able to forge for the benefit of philosophy. This movement is related first and foremost to his critical dwelling on the dogmatic image of thought, which Nietzsche was undoubtedly instrumental in fostering, as Deleuze himself describes in the preface to the English translation of *Nietzsche and Philosophy*:

> And without doubt this is the most important point of Nietzsche's philosophy: the radical transformation of the image of thought that we create for ourselves. Nietzsche snatches thought from the element of truth and falsity. He turns it into an interpretation and an evaluation, interpretation of forces, evaluation of power. It is a thought-movement, not merely in the sense that Nietzsche wants to reconcile thought and concrete movements, *but in the sense that thought itself must produce movements, bursts of extraordinary speed and slowness*. (Deleuze 1986: xii; emphasis mine)

Deleuze's *diagram* is perhaps an apposite concept in this respect: as Williams explains, 'a Deleuzian diagram is an apparatus expressing a series of dynamic transformations... these movements are not displacements of things as the effect of forces, but changes in things

as they move and encounter others' (Williams 2008: 79). This constant movement evades the very possibility of capture for the sake of recognition, representation, or static identity. And it is here that José Gil's book scores a major achievement: his writing ties in neatly with Deleuze's agility, because he chooses to interpret Deleuze as a thinker of movement, one who manipulates philosophical concepts, problems and ideas by alternately pushing them away, turning and twisting them this way and that, beyond their intended boundaries, and beyond their previous identities. With Deleuze, there is always a 'Deleuzian movement' of thought. Thus, for Gil, we always find in Deleuze 'a movement of torsion that immediately allows us to contemplate a sphere of difference' (Gil 2008: 30).[1] Viewing thinking as a motion means it is a potentiality – and therefore an action and a critique without transcendent referents (Gil 2008: 166–7). But this torsion of concepts[2] is done not merely for the sake of creating new concepts, but also for the purpose of defining a new field of experience and thought, one marked by excess – that is, beyond the bare empirical exercise of the faculties (Gil 2008: 64–5). And to this end, a proper 'pedagogy of the senses' is required: to educate the senses to discern that which is transcendentally insensible.

But it is more – it is also a matter of language. There is something particularly agile in Gil's Portuguese Deleuze. Perhaps it is the Latin kinship with the French that explains this airy and lyrical version, the sense of the French rhythms. The rhythm and sense of anticipation that Gil's Portuguese instils in Deleuze's philosophy lift the written word above the idiomatic technicalities and rigidities that occasionally stem the flow of Deleuze's prose in other languages. In this respect, Gil keeps the reading in flux, in a state of constant becoming. And yet, in spite of Gil's aspirations, this book cannot be considered an introduction to Deleuze's thought. Although he carefully explores Deleuze's complicated concepts and ideas and offers a rich interpretative language, Gil also does not refrain from embarking upon the complicated task of offering a micro-dynamic of Deleuze's body of thought, thus rendering his book less suitable for novice readers of Deleuze. This is increasingly apparent as one progresses through the book and witnesses Gil's evident mastery of the broad material written by Deleuze (and Guattari), and his ability to crisscross at will the length and breadth of Deleuze's work, and make connections between what he judges to be the different stages and transformations of Deleuze's concepts (Gil 2008: 178). However, in one respect, the book *is* introductory, in that it is not a work in which Deleuze's thought is applied to specific problems in philosophy, politics

or any other field. It is an interpretative work of Deleuze's thought and, seen in perspective, Gil serves as Deleuze's conceptual biographer.

Covering Deleuze's works from before and after his volumes on *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Gil greatly expands upon the notion of the plane of immanence as the ontological axis of Deleuze's thought, in a way more suited to experienced readers of the genre. Nonetheless, his writing is clear and makes for pleasant and fluent reading. Thus, for example, as he puts it, the process of learning – as explained in *Difference and Repetition* – is 'the discordant exercise of the faculties divorced (disconnected) from every form of identity' (Gil 2008: 34). In other words, for Gil the activity of learning is something that can never be achieved, but rather only be the focus of constant experimentation.

## I. Introduction

Before considering the main arguments of Gil's book, a few preliminary comments are in order. As noted, central to its theme is a Deleuzian exploration of the transcendental conditions of the plane of immanence.[3] To this end, Gil explores the realm in which the conditions for thinking and of real experimentation must be found (thereby underlining Deleuze's distance from transcendental Kantianism, in which these are regarded as mere replications of the empirical). But what exactly do these conditions point to? They allude to the 'invisible which is stronger than the visible forms', Gil argues – to the sub-representative realm of singularities, that is, to the virtual (Gil 2008: 63–4).

According to Gil, Deleuze developed his problematisations through two lines of inquiry. The first was induced by his desire to follow in the footsteps of other great philosophers, from Aristotle to Husserl, to 'rescue the sensible' – but in defiance of tradition, rather than with it. This in turn led to the second, more positive, line of inquiry, in which Deleuze set out to present 'the sensible, or the concrete' as something that is beyond what our physical senses might grasp as concrete. This 'beyond' is defined by Gil as 'the insensible that only may be felt, the unimaginable that only can be imagined' (Gil 2008: 14). It is a terminology that he adopts to designate singularity in concrete experience, that which embodies difference itself. The insensible, however, can only be generated in a field that is distinct from the comparative field of the empirical: it is there that we find the Deleuzian transcendental conditions of experience. For Gil, Deleuze's lines of philosophical inquiry compelled him to build – primarily from *Difference and Repetition* to *The Logic of Sense* – a supportive

topological ontology of difference that connects the concept of repetition with an original reading of the eternal return, culminating in the plane of immanence in his later works with Guattari.

But how exactly does repetition 'open up' the future as a dimension of creation? To put it another way, where lies the habitat of difference? According to Gil, it is the depth of the spatial texture of the eternal return (as opposed to Plato's false depth) or the texture of immanence, which guarantees the logic of excess, the '*produçao do novo*' (Gil 2008: 60). Without this ontology, Deleuze would be unable to offer a dynamic of thought based on nomadic distributions (and away from sedentary distributions of analogy) with which life may be re-thought. As Deleuze writes in the last pages of *Difference and Repetition*:

> Repetition in the eternal return appears under all these aspects as the peculiar power of difference, and the displacement and disguise of that which repeats only reproduce the divergence and the decentring of the different in a single movement of *diaphora* or transport. The eternal return affirms difference; it affirms dissemblance and disparateness, chance, multiplicity and becoming. (Deleuze 1994: 300)

## II. Structure and Main Arguments

Over ten chapters and an appendix, Gil's book revolves around the ways in which Deleuze presented a new style of thought, one never anchored in a model or an image. For Gil, Deleuze created a revolutionary alphabet of thought, one always in flux, averting nodes of sedimentation and creating lines of flight. The Deleuzian alphabet of thought is the medium through which we learn to think – it is his 'conceptual machine', with movement as the only vehicle within this medium. This alphabet is also of the field of virtual singularities from which a calculus is forged, and a grammar or a language comes into being in different domains (Gil 2008: 40–2). How does it move and change? While the alphabet's letters are the conditions of intelligibility of the Idea[4] – the elements articulated by the dice in every throw – these conditions change in the face of new problems that emerge with every throw (in every domain). Here the letters must be understood not literally, but as the changing elements of the alphabet, which in turn animates thought. It is an infinite alphabet in terms of its potential combinations: there are always new integrations of letters – 'a genuine machine for the creation of concepts' (Gil 2008: 42). It follows that the Deleuzian alphabet is not a fixed model of construction, but a constantly moving machine of differenciation: 'dislocation of terms, corrections of concepts,

abandonment and adjunctions of other notions – indicating how the alphabet experiences transformations from one text to another, from one work to another' (Gil 2008: 42) (here Gil expands upon Deleuze's concepts, as for example, with the 'Idea' in *Difference and Repetition* and its evolution to the 'Event' in *The Logic of Sense*).

How does this alphabet of thought move one to create and perceive difference? Broadly speaking, Gil answers by structuring and connecting Deleuze's fundamental concepts in the following elliptical and centrifugal fashion: to begin with, a thought of this kind is one of excess, since it always takes itself to its limits; second, multiple logics of excess (life and death, freeing blockades and auto-destruction) are found in what is engendered by the connection and disjunction of divergent series; third, a 'beyond' the organic and the empirical, in which excess or difference circulates and therefore must be localised and described; fourth, this 'beyond' is given by the *n* dimensions of the plane of immanence; fifth, immanence follows the logic of potentiality, the strategy of reciprocal determination between the virtual and the actual (or between sense and the expressed), works from within desire and gives it a plane in which to operate; sixth, and therefore, what emerges is *delirious reality* ('history is delirium'), so immanence is the ontological texture of the real; seventh, the texture of the plane depends on the matter of expression (thought, writing, dancing, etc.), and its transformation (or becoming) is conditioned by rhythmic connections and by consistency between heterogeneous forces; eighth, agency is about microscopic processes of becoming, and not a model to follow (here we find a pillar in Deleuze's significant revolution of thought); and finally, since Deleuzian thought is rhizomatic, it is a thought of excess.

What is a thought of excess? For Gil (Chapter 3),[5] in terms of syntheses of time, excess means to regard the future as the ontological dimension of the new, as an empty form that allows for forgetting and connecting (the task of the eternal return). In terms of energy, excess liberates that which is buried by blockades – unfolded by an inequality or difference in intensities (like erupting volcanoes).

Gil argues that Deleuze's treatment of excess evolves through two different stages. How can we break with the false entropic system with which the world is represented and liberate the intensities? According to Gil, in *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* Deleuze introduces excess as an augmentation of forces that rupture the systems of common sense and the doxa – a norm attacked by a movement of dissolution. Therefore, thought is reterritorialised with a flux of excess breaking with that which it imprisons. Up to this point, it might be said

that the logic of excess operates in a sort of action–reaction fashion, since the line of flight appears as a result of the violence exerted by the excess of external forces. But according to Gil, this logic of thought abruptly changes, to the point where he is able to distinguish between a 'First thought and a Second thought of Deleuze' (Gil 2008: 202). From *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari put forward a different image of the world: here excess is a part of all systems, creating lines of flight and war machines. The world is machinic at every level or plateau. There is no excess relative to a norm, since every norm is already distorted by a war machine, meaning that there is no state apparatus without lines of flight. Therefore, there is excess everywhere. In other words, the change in *A Thousand Plateaus* in relation to *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* is given by a movement of thought, which introduces immanence within the actual texture of the concepts. This is to the benefit of connectivity, since the tempo of incessant movements within concepts allows not only for internal modifications of components, but mainly for an in between (or opening) to connect across concepts (Gil 2008: 80). But with the advantages, Gil warns, there are also dangers: an excess of excess might appear when immanence is introduced within the texture of the concepts, thus 'an escalation in the flux of variation outlives a boundary, making the flux homogeneous' (Gil 2008: 83). This mechanism, says Gil, explains micro-fascisms and why desire turns against itself, and why the line of flight loses its power of becoming.

The argument goes like this: from the plane of immanence in which everything is in circulation, at certain rhythms and conjugations the plane can be filled with energy of just one type (hate, love, etc.). The excess of this type of energy is equivalent to a drastic reduction in the potential of the bodies (homogenisation takes place) and of heterogeneity. In summary, the excess of energy in the plane of immanence, as excess without limits, transforms the lines of flight (the trajectories of the singularities) into lines of impasse and destruction, and as a result, the power of becoming is lost.

As an example of the transformation of lines of flight into lines of destruction, Gil cites Fernando Pessoa's schizophrenic writing. Pessoa, on whom Gil has written two books and several articles, is one of the most celebrated Portuguese poets. Writing as Alvaro de Campos (one of Pessoa's many heteronyms), Pessoa gives us an image of destruction: 'the self-multitude, producer of multiplicities . . . who multiplies through infinite forms of sense and infinite selves – freezes into an immutable and self-destructive unity' (Gil 2008: 84). The destructive movement is from a centrifugal movement to a centripetal and unifying one,

converging onto the self-individual, emerging after the struggle with the self-multitude. Thus, we have multiple logics of excess: a line of flight might stop blocking concepts, but it might also lead to self-destruction.

To some extent, Deleuze's criticism of Platonism in *Difference and Repetition* undermines Gil's argument regarding the change in Deleuze's thought. On the one hand, Deleuze attacked the dogmatic image of thought in Plato with an external movement of dissolution, to unblock concepts. But on the other hand, for Deleuze the touchstone of Platonism is also its undoing, with Plato himself providing the ammunition. In other words, Deleuze found in Plato an internal war machine that allows for transformation. Although 'Platonism as a whole is erected on the basis of the desire to hunt down the phantasms or simulacra that are identified with the Sophist' (Deleuze 1994: 127), it is the distinction between the two kinds of images (and not between the original and the image) – the copy and the simulacra – that seems to Deleuze to be the decisive junction of a philosophical decision which could have ended otherwise: namely, the decision as to which model Plato chose. The simulacra are the false pretenders, 'demonic images' according to Plato, not eligible for inclusion in the system that measures the copy against the identity of the original Idea. 'Does this not mean, however, that if simulacra themselves refer to a model, it is one which is not endowed with the ideal identity of the Same but, on the contrary, is a model of the Other, an other model, the model of difference in itself from which flows that interiorized dissimilitude?' (Deleuze 1994: 128) Yes, is Deleuze's answer: Plato had sown both models, of the identity of the Same and the resemblance of the Similar on the one hand, and of the terrifying dissimilar on the other. He opted for the former, but also provided the means for criticising this choice, which Deleuze saw and seized upon.

Divergent series (composed of intensities) are in relative displacement, explains Gil, implying a differential correspondence between the elements of the series, a disequilibrium, which is the excess of one series over other (Chapter 4). The emphasis here is on the communication between the series, given that it is through this connection that the excess of forces circulate. This connective element is the 'dark precursor' of *Difference and Repetition* or 'the empty square' of *The Logic of Sense*. It is an intensive element and an active difference. Fernando Pessoa himself, for example, is the dark precursor in his oeuvres: he communicates across the series and assembles the heteronyms through their edges, their margins. This is the significant function of the empty square – its circulation across the series in the structure and the attendant displacement of frontiers – or, in other words, it

is also the significant function of the structure which 'is in fact a machine for the production of incorporeal sense' (Deleuze 1990: 71). The dark precursor as embodiment of difference is decentred, outside itself, dislocated, in constant movement (Gil 2008: 102–6). Pessoa cannot be identified by means of the traditional tools of recognition and representation: *he is not*; he moves. How does the moment of communication take place across the series? Here Gil points out that the *disjunctive syntheses* are the true machine of innovation in Deleuze's thinking of the event (Gil 2008: 18). According to Gil, citing Deleuze's critique of Leibniz's theory of the incompossibles (series 24 in *The Logic of Sense*), he is able to offer an innovative concept of disjunction as the synthetic movement of divergent terms, where the distance between two inherently different terms is breached not by macroscopic wholes but by pre-individual singularities (Gil 2008: 20). The connection or '*ligaçao*' creates difference and introduces variation: this is the Deleuzian definition of the Event.

From this point onwards (starting from Chapter 5) Gil devotes the book to a critique of how Deleuze defines the transcendental as the realm that determines the changing conditions of the possible, and to the 'passage', or the genetic process between the virtual and the actual. Without this realm, it would be impossible for thought to create movement beyond common sense and good sense. The whole question becomes one about how to localise and describe a space for that which is beyond the organic and the empirical – where the intensities from *Difference and Repetition* attest to an ontological-virtual depth. From the perspective of this task, Gil maintains that prior to *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze had failed to assure univocity of sense through the notion of 'surface'. With Guattari, and following May '68, a second philosophy emerges. A conceptual evolution in Deleuze's thought takes place, and previous concepts are rethought and expanded upon (Gil 2008: 163). It is worth noting that scholars differ in their identification of the various turning points in Deleuze's work. The argument over Deleuze's change following his collaborative work with Guattari and the events of May '68 is well known. But for James Williams, a significant singularity appears with *Logic of Sense*, in which Deleuze experiments 'with a style of writing and a more free approach to the tradition [that] break out and allow novel ideas and a different ethos to guide philosophical thought' (Williams 2008: 77). However, this sort of 'identification' of Deleuze's changes of attitude is instructive in itself, and opens up doors for further analysis and implementation. (It is possible that Deleuze himself would resist even this attempt to 'represent' a passage and the stages used in

this type of interpretation.) This is in contrast to the genealogies through which Deleuze's 'philosophical perfect origins' are usually sought.

According to Gil, in *Anti-Oedipus* and in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the surface is replaced by the plane – as the place where sense is engendered. This plane is what is necessary to provide a basis for the thought of immanence, and the concept of the body without organs (BwO) starts to play a major role in its construction. In *Anti-Oedipus*, the BwO acquires a precision and consistency that it hadn't in *The Logic of Sense*; it is now the plane of immanence. 'A whole battery of new concepts describing the movement of the BwO arises, and it is further developed in *A Thousand Plateaus*' (Gil 2008: 164). The significant change is Deleuze's incursion into the social field and history, and the relationship of the latter to a theory of desire; particularly important is the crossed parallelism between the production of desire, its inscription and reception, and the capitalist production and its recording and consumption (Chapters 7 and 8). According to Gil, most important is the convergence between these two series and the emplacement of the BwO not as a metaphor, but as the socius itself and the place of becomings: desire is the real, and the real comprises desire. The convergence between the desiring-production and the capitalist production is the real. The plane of immanence is the real and it is of the order of production of desire, of capitalist production, and of power, or in other words, history is delirium. This is a new regime of concepts and thought. It is at this point, according to Gil, that Deleuze and Guattari start to perceive thought itself as immanence and as life.

Immanence works from within desire. Desire is a force of composition, an infinite, incessant machine of connection, creation and agency. When we desire, we are on the BwO. Desire needs a space or a plane on which it can circulate: this is the BwO. Here Gil explains Deleuze's choice for Artaud's concept, against the organism, the organised structure. An organism presupposes an organisation of organs, and it is an obstacle to the intensification of free energy. For this reason, the un-doing of the organism is a precondition for the construction of the BwO. It is important to stress that the BwO is not inhabited by the basic units of empirical life, says Gil. He elaborates on this further. For example, the BwO of a writer is not words, but the result of their work on words. Gil maintains that the point of departure to reach a BwO is our empirical body-organism. What we have is just an interpretation of the body, ready to be undone. That is our point of departure in constructing the BwO: our materials are transformable. It has all the necessary materials to be

transformed into another body. The BwO is a body of sensations, and the result of transformation of the empirical body; it lies beyond the empirical body. It is virtual-real. The transformation has an initial phase that is negative: here it is necessary to undo the organism, to combat strata (or opinions); in the second phase we encounter chaos; and finally, a strategy to form the plane of immanence is adopted in order to leave chaos.[6] The construction of a BwO passes through these phases, not necessarily in the linear sequence as explained (Gil 2008: 187). What are the three great strata opposing the construction of the BwO? They are the organism, significance and subjectivity. Against the organism, Deleuze and Guattari propose disarticulation and multiplication of articulations; against signification, experimentation; and against subjectivity – nomadism. There is an important operation in the stage of dissolution of strata, present through the three strata. It is the disorganisation of the order of stratification of the internal organs of a body. In the course of the making of the BwO, we fight against consistency and return to new forms of it. Consistency is simultaneously coexistence and conjunction: in order to have consistency, the elements must be capable of assembly.

> Regardless of the nature of the plane, its construction must provide consistency, necessary for the coexistence of the most diverse elements . . . because the encounter, the interlacement and the composition of the heterogeneous as heterogeneous is a first condition of creation and of intensification of fluxes. (Gil 2008: 184)

In response to the question where are we supposed to find the weapons (war machines) for the struggle to make a BwO, Gil says that Deleuze is obscure: he addresses voluntarism and the spontaneity of desire at the same time (Gil 2008: 199). It is necessary to *violentar* (to force) the strata that condition the interior of desire, but it is also necessary to *violentar* our thought (Chapter 9). This is why 'to think is dangerous':

> Because in order to think, it is necessary to destroy the strata of good sense and common sense – namely, to destroy normalised thought and generalised opinion; because the philosopher, as the artist, must engage with chaos in order to cut from it a plane of immanence. To enter into the chaos – into doubt, into the 'epoché' and the vertigo of thought – to leave the doxa of the 'natural attitude', implies imposing violence upon the total of common existence. (Gil 2008: 221)

The solution resides in the ideas of chance and encounter. We desire, and leave the strata by virtue of a chance encounter. In a life dominated by strata, adventure always produces encounters that sprout desire.

'All these strategies imply a continuous oscillation between man and his environment; between external forces and the fluxes of the body; between the strata and desire... It assumes a body that is able to combine different kinds of energy with its own... a body capable of taking a line of light, of knowing what is best for itself' (Gil 2008: 200). A body like this forever finds itself partly beyond the strata and partly stratified. At this point, in the manner of other Deleuzians wrestling with the problematic nature of agency, Gil quotes the famous 'non-recipe' recipe: 'This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers...' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 161).

Prudence, however, must be adopted to avoid fatally risking ourselves whilst breaking with the strata of the organism, of significances, and of subjectivity. This is why Deleuze insists on prudence, Gil reminds us. According to Gil, 'prudence is not an attitude or a moral prescription, but a technique' (Gil 2008: 188). He considers it a technique of mastering the struggle against the strata. As Deleuze and Guattari warn, to be prudent means to conserve 'small amounts' of organism, of signification and subjectivity. But it is a twofold technique, because those small pieces of strata must be 'reactivated' by breaking them every day. It is a technique that saves us from destruction, while at the same time bringing about the erosion of the dominant strata. In this way we must respond to the dominant reality:

> To maintain small resources of signification and subjectivity, to reproduce the codified game of the social networks every morning, and simultaneously to practice new strategies of struggle, by reproducing the enemy and experimenting with its efficacy. The deliberate repetition of interpretations and subjectivities imposed by the dominant order creates a distance in relation to them and supplies stages on the road to destratification. (Gil 2008: 188)

To what extent is this distance planned and acted upon? How does knowledge (regarding selection of strata to be repeated or forgotten) stand here in relation to chance and spontaneity? If it is a distance between the actual and the virtual, how is unconscious desire accounted for here? If this distance accounts for the critical turn in reactivating the strata, then under which conditions does repetition become an experiment in the beyond? These are perhaps the most troubling questions regarding agency and activism, and in fact, the scholarly literature on Deleuze's thought is mostly mute about them. At the phase where the debate deals with agency, and like many Deleuzian scholars before him, Gil is disappointing. His writing lacks the social and

political landscapes that might enhance the notions of '*agenciamento*' and prudence, and the roles of the BwO. Expectations are hampered by abstract language and by literary examples (from Gil's and Deleuze's works) with a narrow spectrum of political implications.

I will conclude with two themes present at the end of Gil's book: the function of time in the formation of the plane of immanence (Chapter 10), and the notion of becoming (Appendix). The time of immanence is given by the *Ritornello* (*A Thousand Plateaus*), explains Gil. The repetition creates an aperture to a continuation, something that facilitates orientation and calm – 'a beginning of order within chaos'. For example, fieldworks are accompanied with Ritornellos; they work by tunnelling forces of the body to combine with forces of the land. The Ritornello creates a space, a territory, in which forces are selected, combined, joined. It delimits the borders of an internal space, just as a bird might stake out its territory with its songs. In the end, 'a melody becomes a landscape' (Gil 2008: 232). The micro-dynamics of the Ritornello goes in this way: the internal forces of the body must be freed from their biological impulses to allow for expressive combinations. The Ritornello then disconnects itself from the territory which enabled it to become expressive, and it is deterritorialised, acquiring an independent dynamic which allows for new connections with other forces. How do the heterogeneous elements (heterogeneous matters of expression, e.g., body and land, artist and colours and canvas) consolidate? 'To consolidate (consistency) is not about coexisting in proximity, but to engage in articulation, to connect' (Gil 2008: 234). According to Gil, it is the rhythm of the Ritornello that enables matter to capture heterogeneous forces. Capture means transformation of the time of a matter to permit connection with another matter's time. And transformation means becoming.

Becoming is a pre-philosophical condition of a thought of immanence. Becoming is a process of transformation of intensities, and takes place in a zone of the indiscernible. It is where reciprocal transfer of forces and intensities occurs across traditional categories. The molecular dynamic: forces move particles of becoming, creating a relation of movement and repose, through which micro-parts of the body enter into a zone of vicinity of the other's micro-parts. Everything is in a state of becoming, and we are in a perpetual state of becoming of several types. Even the most blockaded entity in a stratum emits virtual particles which places it partially in a plane of immanence. Or, to put it in other way, says Gil, even the most petrified stratum is transversed by lines of flight through which molecular becoming escapes.

> A becoming is not a transformation of form, an 'identification' of an 'I', an imitation of a macroscopic figure (molar). It is a microscopic process (molecular) through which strata are dissolved (with 'I' as a stratum of subjectivity). Between all the kinds, the imperceptible becoming is that which saves us from paralysing molar capture. (Gil 2008: 258).

This brings us to the title of Gil's book. The Deleuzian primacy of the molecular over the molar is there for the purpose of combating recognition and representation, because the imperceptible, the indiscernible and the impersonal cannot be recognised or formally represented (Gil 2008: 260). This is the majestic voice of becoming. The thought of the molecular brought Deleuze to a molecularisation of the thought. The molecular is neither a standpoint nor a scale. It is an objective dimension of the real. To think the real is to think on a molecular level.[7]

## Notes

1. Translations mine.
2. The torsion of concepts needs to be understood, according to Gil, as Deleuze's method of critical thinking based on a special form of negation. Rather than negating a concept by its mere categorical opposite, Deleuze applies a movement of critique through which the identity (or the principle) of the foundation (of the concept under critique) is no more sustained (Gil 2008: 27). By this movement of torsion a field of difference is finally opened and affirmed, and this affirmation is in itself the movement of thought. Gil returns to a similar description also for dualisms.
3. Despite Gil's commitment to the theme of transcendental empiricism – articulated by Deleuze from his early writings – it is surprising not to find any reference to Deleuze's book on Hume.
4. Following Deleuze, Gil explains that the Idea cannot be represented or identified. The Idea is a sub-representative virtual multiplicity. Its object is a problematisation and its state of being is 'in movement'. There is a complex field of connection between Ideas. Here the notion of Perplication appears: the differential interrelation of Ideas (clarity and obscurity). The notion of Perplication assumes the internal mobility of the Idea.
5. In Chapters 1 and 2 Gil introduces Deleuze's ontological concepts mainly from *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*.
6. According to Gil, the same philosophical 'logic' is at work in those philosophers Deleuze wrote against: Plato, Descartes and Husserl (Gil 2008: 201). What distinguish Deleuze from the metaphysical philosophers is that he is after how to acquire consistency without lose the infinite where thought is immersed. If the infinite movement of thought is not stopped – where infinite is the condition of immanence – explains Gil, then the transcendental cannot be introduced (Gil 2008: 203). 'Therefore, the first big difference consists in the way we handle chaos: either it is negated, excluded (as with Descartes), or the movement and the infinite velocities that animate concepts are extracted from it' (Gil 2008: 203). The second difference resides in the fact that the circulation of concepts on the plane of immanence are aleatory; they don't obey any law, rule or a

despotic signifier, but only the chance of the encounter – 'the ideal game of the eternal return'. There are nomadic movements and not fixed trajectories on a map in which the territorial distributions are determined by categories; this is a philosophy of difference in which everything changes (Gil 2008: 203). Then, if the concept is a movement of thought, how was it possible to handle it as a static representation?

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