

“Believing in this World for the Making of Gods: On the Ecology of the Virtual and the Actual”

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Introduction: The Production of Immanence as Spiritual Philosophy

The central claim of Peter Hallward’s recent *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* is that Deleuze is ultimately a spiritual thinker and because of this fact those interested in emancipatory and revolutionary political projects should abandon Deleuze’s thought because it is insufficiently materialist. Hallward states it this way, “Deleuze is most appropriately read as a spiritual, redemptive or subtractive thinker, a thinker preoccupied with the mechanics of *dis*-embodiment and *de*-materialisation. Deleuze’s philosophy is oriented by lines of flight that lead out of the world; though not other-worldly, it is *extra*-worldly.”¹ In my review essay of Hallward’s book I argued that Hallward was correct to bring attention to the neglected spiritual aspects of Deleuze’s philosophy but that his negative valuation of this spiritual aspect was dependent on a misreading that ascribed a certain inherent moralism to the difference between the virtual and the actual (Hallward’s version of materialism simply reverses this moralism so that the virtual is bad and the actual is good). Ultimately this misreading arises out of an ecological and political weakness for it confuses the relationship between the virtual and the actual with a moral relationship whereas what Deleuze presents is more adequately understood as an ecology of the virtual and the actual within the milieu of immanence.² The task of this essay is to develop this idea beyond the merely provocative to a demonstration of this aspect, both spiritual and ecological, of Deleuze’s thought.

The argument unfolds from the axiom that Deleuze’s philosophy is a spiritual philosophy of a certain sort and so we do not seek to defend that position here. To do so would be to repeat some form of an argument that has already been made from Hallward’s

¹ Peter Hallward, *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (London and New York: Verso Press, 2006), p. 3. Emphasis in original.

² For a more sustained engagement with Hallward’s book see my review essay in *Angelaki* 12/1 (2007), pp. 151–156.

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polemic to Philip Goodchild's positive critical engagement to Christian Kerslake's very valuable historical studies and philosophical defense of the esoteric in Deleuze. For this paper we can only provide a truncated axiom of this spiritualism: the spiritual elements in Deleuze's philosophy are located in the givenness and creation of realities that exist at the sub- and supra-individual level and these realities may not be represented adequately through molar identities but can only be experienced as the immanence of these realities themselves. It is from the perspective of this spiritual philosophy, one that questions the rootedness in transcendence of both materialist philosophy and molar spiritualist philosophies, that a nascent philosophy of nature is pursued in *Anti-Oedipus* and deepened in *A Thousand Plateaus*. We trace this philosophy of nature as it explicates what it is that forms the "unground" that produces and is produced by the interplay of the actual and the virtual.³ We then explain this relational character of the actual and the virtual in more detail and show that immanence is the name of this relation. It is then shown how ecology provides a number of images that can become explanatory concepts for understanding the relational reality of this name. Finally we return to the spiritual politics present in *Anti-Oedipus* and connect it to Bergson's revolutionary insight that the mechanical and the mystical are irreducibly connected in order to show how this spiritual philosophy of nature can foster a belief in this refractory world that will power the machinery for the making of gods.

Deleuze and Guattari's Machinic Philosophy of Nature

Deleuze remarked in an interview after the publication of *What is Philosophy* that he and Guattari would like to "produce a sort of philosophy of Nature, now that any distinction between nature and artifice is becoming blurred."⁴ The remark is not surprising as just such a philosophy of nature is already present in a nascent way in the co-authored works. This understanding of nature, arising out of the clarity that comes when the false problem of nature-artifice is tossed aside, is present in the opening pages of *Anti-Oedipus* where Deleuze and Guattari write that "we make no distinction between man and nature: the human essence of nature and the natural essence of man become one within nature in the form of

³ On the production of immanence rather than its "mere givenness" see Daniel Colucciello Barber, *The Production of Immanence: Deleuze, Yoder, and Adorno* (PhD Dissertation, Duke University).

⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 155.

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production or industry, just as they do within the life of man as a species.”⁵ This line is quoted in many of the attempts to show the relevance of Deleuze and Guattari’s thought for ecology and environmentalism, but the philosophical importance of it is often obscured in a variety of residual sentimentalisms that may take either a pastoral form as sentimentalism towards nature (nature as wilderness or other to humanity) or a humanist form (the human steward of nature). In this way Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of nature is added to so many other uncritical discourses on nature and environmental ethics instead of being taken as a discontinuous rupture with the dominant image of nature and man.

The reality of this dominant image of nature and of man is all too apparent. Nature is either that untamed thing, though ultimately tameable, that is separate from humanity now cloistered behind the walls of towns and cities formed by interstates and motorways. Or nature is that beautiful and idyllic place where we escape to find ourselves or that we, good generous people that we are, go to clean up as if mother nature were a decrepit old woman who can no longer wipe herself or, for those of us who are good but far too busy, we pay someone else to clean her up in our name. The problem with these images is not that there is a lack of relation between humanity and nature, as some strains of environmentalism would suggest, because in whatever form these images may coalesce there is already a relation and a particularly political relation at that. Where nature is seen as violent, untamed other it is the decision to treat nature as the enemy of humanity, to treat it as the arbiter of death with whom no peace can be made, and in the vision of nature as idyllic other or even as familial where we are nature’s children the decision is to treat nature as friend. This performs a cession between humanity and nature that separates the two from one another in a relational way. The problem of humanity and nature is thus not one of relation, but of the production of this relation; does this relation produce an artificial (but this is not to say impossible nor, from the viewpoint of natural right, unnatural) cession between the two or does it produce a more productive and ethical coupling?

From the perspective of schizoanalysis there is no difference in kind between humanity and nature, but only a difference of degree. This means that humanity is natural and thus to posit something called nature as other to humanity is to misunderstand the way humanity and nature interact with one another. Deleuze and Guattari say that there are real

⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. 4.

desiring-machines everywhere: “Everywhere *it* is machines – real ones, nor figurative ones”.⁶ Desiring and machines must be taken together as a kind of unilateral duality because machines are those things that allow or cut off flows and desire is what produces and is produced by the coupling of machines with other machines. The breast is coupled with the mouth and this connection creates a new assemblage that can be connected to another machinic assemblage and so on *ad infinitum*. The infinite connections that machines may make with more machines are the product of desire, the desire to produce and to connect, and ultimately it is also what produces the further desire for production. This desiring-production that permeates the machines just as it spills out of them is the production of nature.

From the perspective of schizoanalysis this is what nature is and Deleuze and Guattari tell us that the schizophrenic does not experience “any one specific aspect of nature, but nature as a process of production.”⁷ There is, however, an element that Deleuze and Guattari recognize in reality that is analogous to the idea of Nature as Other – the Body without Organs (BwO). The BwO is the principle of antiproduction in that it resists any organization of itself. It is, Deleuze and Guattari tell us, the form of the death drive.⁸ The BwO resists production as the condition of production, it is the undifferentiated static *thing* that does not work.⁹ The relation between the BwO and desiring-machines is one of co-implication. The BwO is the very condition for the producer-product dyad and it itself is constituted in relation to this dyad even as it works at times against the dyad and at other times with it. The BwO is the kind of nature that lies beneath the production of nature and provides the material for production even as it resists and attempts to bring back every living and productive thing to itself through entropy.

Most philosophies of nature have tended to focus only on this aspect of nature, the undifferentiated and transcendent One that provides all the conditions for the mere appearance of nature found in animal worlds and the human environment. Deleuze and Guattari have inaugurated an ecological philosophy of nature (though, of course, this inauguration only became apparent to them after the fact). For traditional philosophy of nature, perhaps inaugurated by a particularly dominant reading of Plato’s *Timaews* or perhaps

⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 1.

⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 3.

⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 8.

⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 7.

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by Heraclitus' famous fragment that "Nature loves to hide", the question has focused on understanding the unconditioned and undifferentiated as the essence of Nature at the expense of the appearance of nature.¹⁰ This has tended to privilege physics as the outside of the philosophical inquiry into nature whereas a very different philosophy tends to emerge when we take ecology as the outside. Deleuze and Guattari mark a rupture with this metaphysics of nature by translating this notion of Nature-as-Transcendent-One into the very thing that appears most unnatural from the perspective of the appearance of nature. The BwO as force of antiproduction is, from the perspective of the producer-product, unnatural and yet lies at the very heart of nature itself. It does so not as essence, but as integral element of the reality of nature. In short, their machinic philosophy of nature refuses the separation of the unconditioned object as BwO (the transcendent One of traditional philosophy of nature) and the "appearance" or actuality of nature as the process of production and instead presents the problem as that of the co-implication of exchange from producer to product coupled to more producer-product dyads as they proliferate across the BwO.

The Immanent Relationality of the Actual and the Virtual

Such a view of nature is already present in the history of ecology. The history of the concept of ecosystem demands that we accept relationality beyond just the living organisms, the biotic community, but extend it to that of the dead and the inorganic or "never-living".¹¹ An ecosystem captures the dynamics of communities of the living and the dead as they interact with the never-living so that when energy animates the system there is an exchange of material between the living and the dead across the body of the never-living. By setting up a philosophy of nature based upon the exchange of the living (producer), the dead (product) and the never-living (BwO) Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of nature shares the same structure as the general account of the ecosystem. This initially unconsciously ecological element of their thought helps us to understand the reality of the actual and the virtual for its

¹⁰ For a very different reading of Plato's *Timaeus* following Schelling and connecting to Deleuze & Guattari see Iain Hamilton Grant, *Philosophies of Nature after Schelling* (New York and London: Continuum, 2006) and for Heraclitus and the historical reception of his fragment see Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2006).

¹¹ This understanding of ecosystem is faithful to the original formulation by A.G. Tansley in 1935. See A.G. Tansley, "The Use and Abuse of Vegetational Concepts and Terms," *Ecology* 16.3 (1935): pp. 299-303. I am deeply indebted to Prof. Liam Heneghan of DePaul University's Institute for Nature and Culture for the notion of the "never-living" and his help in understanding the concept of ecosystem more fully.

relationship shares formally with the one outlined above between the dyad of producer-product and the BwO. The choice of calling this “the reality of the actual and the virtual” is intentional and follows Deleuze’s own description of the actual and the virtual as sharing in reality against making the virtual equivalent with the possible. In the short text “The Actual and the Virtual” we find Deleuze setting out a series of statements that are presented largely as axioms and with minimal argumentation concerning the actual and the virtual. While this text does not provide the most convincing case for accepting Deleuze’s metaphysics, it does provide a crystallization of how Deleuze understands the actual and the virtual and shows clearly that there is an intractable relationship between the two that constitutes the reality of both.

Actualities are dependent upon a plethora of virtual images that prefigure their formation as individuals and Deleuze even says, “Actualization belongs to the virtual”.¹² In this conception of the virtual there is a temptation towards a philosophy of transcendence, as Hallward and Badiou both charge, as the virtual may be conceived as having purity in its complete separation from the actual and this pure virtual determines from outside the actual. In this short text Deleuze unequivocally rejects such a unilateral understanding of the relationship between the actual and the virtual for an immanent understanding going so far as to write, “The plane of immanence includes both the virtual and its actualization simultaneously, without there being any assignable limit between the two.”¹³ Deleuze’s short piece performs this immanence by considering the relationship not from some third term common-but-transcendent to the actual and the virtual, but rather he investigates the relations from their own movement. That is to say, there is a movement where the actual becomes the site of increasingly “extensive, remote and diverse virtualities” but there is also a movement where “the virtual draws closer to the actual, both become less and less distinct.”¹⁴ This is but an abstract description of the two tendencies the relationship may follow, whereas the productive multiplicity that is the relationship of the virtual and the actual “forms an acting individuation or a highly specific and remarkable singularization

¹² Gilles Deleuze, “The Actual and the Virtual” in *Dialogues II*, trans. Eliot Ross Albert (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 149.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Deleuze, p. 150.

which needs to be determined case by case.”¹⁵ That is, there is an infinite task of evaluating the relationship between the actual and the virtual in each individual or singularity.

In short, Deleuze clearly does not think that reality should be collapsed into the virtual. The emphasis on the virtual found in many of his works can be explained not as a desire for the de-materialization of reality, but as a recognition of new actualities that produce a rupture from the current molar state of affairs. This has to be explained without recourse to an obscurifactory appeal to some politicised *creatio ex nihilo*. The immanent relation of the actual and the virtual allows Deleuze to think how an individual or singularity can mark a rupture from the dominant actuality while still being able to locate how this rupture arose from the actual situation. Each actualization allows for the virtual to form new virtual images that may produce new actualities. So while explorations that attempt to understand what the actual is or what the virtual is are important and helpful to understanding Deleuze’s philosophy, the real question of his philosophy is not focused on the essence of the virtual but on the immanent relation between the two and whether that relation is ethical, that is productive of relations that are freely productive or not.

We can see the similarity between the immanent relationship of the actual and the virtual and the philosophy of nature outlined above. The virtual, like the BwO, resists the actual and always threatens to dissolve it and in this exchange of energy where energy is expended and produced the virtual is renewed and changed. The virtual also shares many aspects with that part of reality that traditional philosophy of nature focuses on as if it were nature, but Deleuze’s explicit description of the actual and the virtual points to immanence, that is the productive relation of the two, as the more adequate name of a machinic nature.

Immanence and Ecological Ethics

We have here, in a dense and brief way, crystallized Deleuze’s ontology of the virtual and the actual by reading it through the nascent philosophy of nature developed through the two *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* volumes. Is this not ethics, but merely a statement about what is? And even as an ontological statement is it original or valuable to talk about relationality in this way? After all a whole host of diverse thinkers from Aquinas to Hegel to Heidegger argue for the relational reality of being. What makes Deleuze different is the way he understands the reality of relation as always an immanent relation, and thus an ethical

¹⁵ Deleuze, p. 152.

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one, and not a dialectical or analogical relation, which appear to be productive of transcendent moral judgments on being. Throughout his oeuvre Deleuze has worked with this insight and shown how individuals arrive out of this infinite flux of immanence, how novelty can occur in an immanent system with no transcendent outside, and how immanence names not a flight from this world but calls forth powers from this world so that we may believe in this world and act in it not under the illusion that we are its masters but as custodians tending to the machines of the universe.

Some may continue to ask, but how does one get from this ontology of immanence to an ethics of immanence? How does one get from the Deleuzian is of infinite chaotic process to the Deleuzian ought of political and social emancipation? Taking ecology as we have throughout this paper as an immanent outside to Deleuze's ontology and philosophy of nature we can begin to answer this question by giving it specific content. For ecological thinkers share this problem of getting from an ontology of flux to a positive social and political position. How does one get from an ontology of an ecosystem, where we see the dynamic reality of nature played out, to the claims of political ecology that call for the conservation and restoration of ecosystems? This is *the* philosophical problem for the practice of ecological restoration. Ecological restoration is the practice of taking a degraded ecosystem and restoring it to a prior state that is more ecologically healthy and biologically diverse. The criticism that has been raised by some philosophers, most notably Eric Katz and Robert Elliot, is that human beings participating in nature do nothing but perpetuate artificiality at the cost of authenticity suggesting that nature is at its most authentic when humanity and its artifices are absent.¹⁶ While this criticism is premised on a rather simplistic dualism of artificial/authentic, there is an aspect lying beneath that dualism that presents a true problem for philosophy. For even when we show that the authentic is the artificial we are left with the problem of deciding why to restore when that will require the destruction of another ecosystem, which appears to be problematic even if that ecosystem is less healthy and less diverse. How do we get from the reality that all ecosystems change to the radical demands of political ecology to act as custodians of that change?

¹⁶ See Eric Katz, "The Big Lie: Human Restoration of Nature," *Research in Philosophy and Technology* 12 (1992). and Robert Elliot, *Faking Nature: The Ethics of Environmental Restoration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

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First, we must begin by noting that a philosophy of immanence rejects from the outset the separation of ontology and ethics (here meaning politics just as much as individual acts of persons). Deleuze writes that, “politics precedes being” because immanence is not merely “what is”, as if this constituted a transcendent reality, but immanence is the production of immanence.¹⁷ There is no difference in kind between nature and artifice, for how could artifice exist without materials prior to its creation and what aspects of nature can we point to that doesn’t bear the marks of being worked with? What criteria honestly allow one to say that the ant-hill or the beaver dam is natural, but the skyscraper is artificial? Political ecology that takes seriously the axioms and findings of scientific ecology can no longer claim that what is natural is better, because everything is natural. The industrial revolution is just as natural as the exchange of energy between the gazelle lying dead before the lion. At the cosmic scale, the inevitable day when our sun dies and swallows the earth is just as natural as the delicate bones of a finch that allows it to daintily fly through the air. A political ecology based on the neo-spiritualism of Deleuze’s machinic philosophy of nature shows us that we can no longer depend on the fantasy of some stable natural law, but instead must always evaluate the relationship asking if this is productive of immanence or if it tends towards breaking the whole of the relationship and being swallowed and destroyed by the very form of death itself (BwO). It doesn’t matter at all that, according to some, it is inevitable that all of life, even the possibility for life, will be destroyed as the universe tends towards the coldness of entropy. This doesn’t matter because we are faced, not with the end of our relationships, but with the process of our relationships. We must decide if we are going to foster ecosystems that promote the further divergence and creation of life, what ecologists call biodiversity and Bergson called creative evolution, or if we are going to life as if we were never-living in the first place and swallow the rest of nature up into our pure form of anthropomorphic death.

Conclusion: The Powers of the False and Believing in this World

What is written above mirrors in many ways the final words of Henri Bergson’s *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*:

¹⁷Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia II*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 203.

“Humanity lies groaning, half crushed under the weight of its own progress. They do not sufficiently realize that their future is in their own hands. Theirs is the task of determining first of all whether they want to go on living or not. Theirs the responsibility, then, for deciding if they want merely to live, or intend to make just the extra effort required for fulfilling, even on our refractory planet, the essential function of the universe, which is a machine for the making of gods.”¹⁸

We can read the opening pages of *Anti-Oedipus* as if it were continuing from Bergson’s final lines for Bergson himself sees machines, the most destructive artifices of humanity, at the heart of the universe. The universe is a machine, a real machine, and it can make gods. We too are machines. and not the Other-Master to the machines. Deleuze and Guattari posit such a Bergsonian definition of humanity when they write,

“Not man as king of creation, but rather as the being who is in intimate contact with the profound life of all forms or all types of beings, who is responsible for even the stars and animal life, and who ceaselessly plug an organ-machine into an energy-machine, a tree into his body, a breast into his mouth, the sun into his asshole: the eternal custodian of the machines of the universe.”¹⁹

Bergson has a fundamental insight into the relationship of religion and nature. He famously splits up religion into two different modes, static religion as seen in the institutional forms of religion and dynamic religion that is possible in every human person but is seen most clearly in mystics. Both modes have some connection with the whole of nature, dynamic religion opens itself up to the flow of nature and flows with it (not unlike Deleuze and Guattari’s schizophrenic) and static religion creates certain defensive forms of intelligence against the depressing aspect seen most clearly in the what Bergson calls fabulation. In both cases the mechanical aspect of nature brings forth the mystical either as an opening to the infinite flux of natural creativity or in the creation of defensive myths. Deleuze and Guattari have a similar valuation of the mystical, seen most clearly in their discussion of the schizophrenic out for a walk, but both Bergson and Deleuze and Guattari know we are not all mystics or schizophrenics. Instead, they tell us in the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, one must follow and forge mystical-schizo lines of flight without

¹⁸ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton with the assistance of W. Horsfall Carter (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), p. 317 [Translation modified].

¹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 4.

disintegrating completely. One way of doing this is releasing the active powers in static religion's fabulation or myth-making so that in the act of fabulation we believe in this world.

As if they were writing about the current set of ecological crises facing us Deleuze and Guattari write:

“[...] it is possible that the problem now concerns the one who believes in the world, and not even in the existence of the world but in its possibilities of movements and intensities, so as once again to give birth to new modes of existence, closer to animals and rocks. It may be that believing in this world, in this life, becomes our most difficult task, or the task of a mode of existence still to be discovered on our plane of immanence today. This is the empiricist conversion (we have so many reasons not to believe in the human world; we have lost the word, worse than a fiancée or a god). The problem has indeed changed.”²⁰

It is rather stark to say, but the anti-restoration philosophies of Katz and Elliot lose our world. They turn it into something that was once authentic and no longer is. We can repeat and translate Nietzsche's critique of truth: the true ecosystem does not exist, and if it did would be inaccessible, impossible to describe. The truthful man who wants to describe the true ecosystem and true world wants nothing other than to judge life, seeing in the ecosystem an evil that he wants, not to heal, but only to stand above it through a higher moral and normative judgment.²¹ Authenticity is here being tied to a past that never was, since it is an error of the intellect to assume an ecosystem is anything like a painting and not, rather, like a film. Even assuming that the ecosystem has some value because it is connected to a non-human past, this does not lead to authenticity. In a film the piece is authentic even when the sequences are out of chronological order, when it has a 'false continuity'.²² You cannot forge a movie and if a movie is remade it is not said to be faked, but neither is it true – it simply is another film that can be affirmed or not.²³

²⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 74-75.

²¹ See Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 137

²² Deleuze, p. 128.

²³ “In short, the forger cannot be reduced to a simple copier, nor to a liar, because what is false is not simply a copy, but already the model. Should we not say, then, that the artist, even Vermeer, even Picasso, is a forger, since he makes a model with appearances, even if the next artist gives the model back to appearances in order to make a new model?” Deleuze, p. 146.

But, of course, even Nietzsche asks what is left after we have abolished the true world. “There remain bodies, which are forces, nothing but forces.”²⁴ But this quasi-monism of force is not an ontology of violence, but an ontology of affect. The question of the false is a question of affect and the power of false continuity is to affect the human person, even to the point of drawing them into a creative emotion. Following Bergson’s first chapter of *Matter and Memory* we can say that the image is a certain body. Now take an image of an eco-utopia; a place where humanity has not mastered non-human nature, but come to dwell in it and to do so well, even joyfully. Such an image is affective, it can either cause depression at this not being the case or it can cause a more active emotion, some form of hope leading to bodily action. The opposite image has become all too familiar in contemporary culture, the eco-apocalypse. Hollywood films follow upon television series where we are given an image where humanity has failed to dwell in non-human nature. Each image is, strictly speaking, not true and yet each is real because each is affective.

The powers of the false are located in the affectivity of false images and false continuity. If truth has brought humanity to a point where they can no longer live because they have only judgment and not love or even hate, then truth must be resisted by the false. But this false cannot be just any false; this is not to say that everything is equivalent to everything else. A false image or a false time can either be noble or base, good or bad. A falsity can foster destruction, entropy, and death (the lies of so many governments, with their new priestly caste of economists) and such a falsity is base, slavish to Mammon and Mars. But a falsity can also be noble, it can create: “According to physicists, noble energy is the kind which is capable of transforming itself”.²⁵ So, though Deleuze aims to be done with judgment, the powers of the false call for immanent evaluation. Though this philosophy is opposed to truth, it is the name of the good and the joyous – in short, it is for life.

All creation is a simulacrum, because it is the actualization in matter what is virtually real in spirit or non-matter, perhaps even naming this the future is appropriate. If Bergson has a theology it is that God is an infinite creativity, not a creator, but the very process that is living, immanent and indefinite within life.²⁶ Deleuze and Guattari’s theology is much the

²⁴ Deleuze, p. 139.

²⁵ Deleuze, p. 141.

²⁶ “In our eyes, the ultimate end of mysticism is the establishment of a contact, consequently of a partial coincidence, with the creative effort which life itself manifests. This effort is of God, if it is not God himself.” Bergson, p. 220.

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same, as they believe in the God of the disjunctive syllogism.²⁷ Our creativity is thus like a divinity within us, even if it is a bit of a diabolical God whose image we are crated in the image of. The image of a restored ecosystem, when it restores the relationship between the living, dead, and the never-living, is more than just putting a few plants back in a discrete space. It creates and thus expresses this divinity. This is what Bergson means when he says our planet is a machine for the making of gods. Not that human beings will become like God, knowing good and evil with full control over a true world of our absolute creation, but that human beings have been given, for better or worse, the capability to drive and direct the creative energies of the universe which eternally express this underlying divinity.

If we want to save ourselves, the world, the earth and its future time, we must make the decision to believe in it again. This is not an invitation to repeat the errors and violence of mythology, though that must be risked, but a war cry to discover what the body of the earth can do. Ecological restoration expresses the human not as king of creation but as an eternal custodian of the machine for the making of gods. Deleuze's philosophy of immanence provides some tools that can help us in this custodial responsibility and understand not only that reality is relational but also that we can evaluate and foster those relationships that create the world anew.

²⁷ "God defined as the *Omnitudo realitatis*, from which all secondary realities are derived by a process of division". Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 13.