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Romanticism and the New Deleuze

About This Volume

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This volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series* includes an editor's introduction by Robert Mitchell and Ron Broglio, essays by Robert Mitchell, Ron Broglio, David Baulch, and David Collings.

This volume summarizes and utilizes the arc of Gilles Deleuze's work while turning it toward Blake, Kant, Shelley, and Wordsworth. It serves both as a primer for those not familiar with the idiosyncratic vocabulary and concepts of Deleuze as well as a thoughtful intervention in Romantic criticism in order to open up new terrain on travel, the sublime, and the revolutionary. Contributors include David Baulch on representation and revolution in Blake's *America*, Ron Broglio on Wordsworth and the picturesque narrative of encounter, and Robert Mitchell on P. B. Shelley's sublime, with a responding essay by David Collings. In an ongoing effort to make use of the multiple platforms of new media, Romantic Circles has provided audio of these essays. It is, we hope, one in a series of efforts at finding the proper utility of audiocasts.

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About the Romantic Circles Praxis Series

The **Romantic Circles Praxis Series** is devoted to using computer technologies for the contemporary critical investigation of the languages, cultures, histories, and theories of Romanticism. Tracking the circulation of Romanticism within these interrelated domains of knowledge, **RCPS** recognizes as its conceptual terrain a world where Romanticism has, on the one hand, dissolved as a period and an idea into a plurality of discourses and, on the other, retained a vigorous, recognizable hold on the intellectual and theoretical discussions of today. **RCPS** is committed to mapping out this terrain with the best and mo st exciting critical writing of contemporary Romanticist scholarship.

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Romanticism and the New Deleuze

Introduction

Robert Mitchell, Duke University, and Ron Broglio, Georgia Tech

1. Whether represented as a reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, a movement "against the tide of modernity," or a flight from History into the ideologically-determined consolations of the Imagination, Romanticism generally has been understood in terms of immanence and transformation: that is, as an attempt to locate, within an overarching system or structure, those points from or axes along which the system or structure can be transformed.[1] Even methodological approaches that emphasize the political and social constraints of Romantic authors—and, by extension, the ideological limitations of depictions of Romanticism as a transcendence of the Enlightenment or of modernity—do not, in the end, so much contest this basic understanding of Romanticism, but rather simply seek to evaluate whether Romantic authors in fact succeeded in escaping their political and social contexts. From a variety of methodological perspectives, in short, "Romanticism" has been understood consistently as a problem of immanent transformation: a question, that is, of the extent to which a movement that began within the Enlightenment could produce fundamental changes in literary, social, and political structures.

2. Given this lengthy tradition of understanding Romanticism as a problem of immanent transformation, and given the historic willingness of scholars of Romanticism to engage "high theory," it is peculiar that scholars of Romanticism have, for the most part, ignored Gilles Deleuze, arguably the twentieth-century philosopher most interested in the relationship between immanence and change. Though scholars of Romanticism in the 1970s, '80s and '90s were quick to engage the work of some of Deleuze's French peers—most notably, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault—Deleuze himself seems to have fallen outside the fold of Romantic literary critical references. Though Deleuze is not entirely unknown to scholars of Romanticism—one occasionally comes across references to concepts that emerged from Deleuze's work with Guattari, such as "deterritorialization," "affect," and "bodies without organs"—Deleuze's own extensive philosophical *oeuvre* appears to have remained largely *terra incognita* for most scholars of Romanticism (at least so far as one can determine the matter from explicit references and bibliographies).

3. As we hope to exemplify by means of this special issue, such neglect is unfortunate, for Deleuze's philosophy contains significant resources for scholars of Romanticism. Most significantly, Deleuze's work can contribute to our attempts to understand the very nature of our field of study: insofar as Deleuze's texts represent a sustained effort to understand the conditions of possibility for immanent transformation, his philosophy can help us to better articulate what is at stake in the very "problematic" of Romanticism itself. In addition, Deleuze's work—as well as his frequent collaborations with Félix Guattari—also bear directly upon a number of more local concerns and emergent methodologies within Romantic literary criticism. For the many scholars of the eighteenth century and Romanticism who have become interested in the history of the emotions, for example, Deleuze's extended discussions of the logic of "sensation" offers an important resource, allowing us to further develop our sense that the Romantics understood sensations, emotions, and passions as embodied and contextual phenomena, rather than as "psychological events" that happen at some central point within an isolated subject.[2] In addition, Deleuze's theory of "affect" helps us to reconsider from a post-phenomenological perspective what it might mean for a poem to represent the "movement" of consciousness, providing us with a vocabulary for better understanding the intensive movements of poetry—that is, those dynamic movements of "momentum, pause, suspense, turn, culmination, climax, and diminuendo" within

poems.[3] On a related front, Deleuze's extensive engagement with Stoic philosophy can help us to better understand what was at stake in the eighteenth-century and Romantic-era interest in Stoicism (an interest evident in the work of authors as diverse as Adam Smith and Percy Bysshe Shelley).[4] For scholars interested in Romantic-era relationships between medicine, biology, and literature, Deleuze's concept of non-organic life and his theorization of embryological development allows us to rethink key Romantic-era terms, such as "organicism" and "development," and to reconsider links between biological knowledge production, medicine, and literature in the Romantic era.[5] And for scholars of Romanticism interested in history—whether the development of modern conceptions of history within the Romantic period, or the specific historical contexts of particular authors—Deleuze's sustained reflections on revolution and historical repetition, and the methodology of history writing developed by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, make possible modes of historical narration that are both "critical" but at the same time enable Romantic-era texts to actualize otherwise hidden potentials in our own moment.[6]

I. The "New" Deleuze?

4. In order to facilitate these productive points of contact between Deleuze's philosophy and the study of Romanticism, this special edition features essays and audio-casts that explore some of these connections. In entitling our collection "Romanticism and the *New* Deleuze," we hope to recall earlier collections, such as *The New Nietzsche* and *The New Bergson*, which aimed at marking—and encouraging—a fundamental shift in interpretations of a philosopher.[7] In the case of Gilles Deleuze, this change in interpretation is particularly evident in the English-speaking world, and it can be characterized in part as a shift in emphasis from the more popularly-oriented books that Deleuze wrote with Félix Guattari in the 1970s, such as *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, and toward Deleuze's much more explicitly philosophical studies. (These latter include his monographs on specific philosophers, such as Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, and Bergson, his extensive reflections on aesthetics, especially cinema and painting, and his difficult but rewarding philosophical treatises, *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*.) To date, this shift in emphasis has been most evident in film studies, new media studies, science studies, and feminist theory.[8] However, it is our hope that scholars of Romanticism will also begin to explore the ways in which the "new Deleuze" helps us both to reframe and rediscover the traditional thematics of Romanticism, while at the same time inventing new methodologies and approaches to our field of study.[9]

5. At the same time, though, our titular emphasis on the "new Deleuze" is also a bit deceptive, for this shift in Anglo-American critical interest from Deleuze's popular to his philosophical works should be understood as neither a rejection, nor a transcendence, of the concerns that motivated his work with Guattari. The problems that motivated *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* are also—or, at any rate, are consonant with—the problems and approaches of *Difference and Repetition*, *The Logic of Sense*, and Deleuze's readings in the history of philosophy. It is primarily the modalities of these two sets of texts that differs: where a book such as *A Thousand Plateaus* encouraged readers to treat the text like a phonograph record, "sampling" from its different chapters, a book such as *Difference and Repetition* is structured by more extended and rigorous philosophical arguments. And in place of the more easily appropriable concepts that populated *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*—concepts such as "schizoanalysis," "desiring machines," "rhizomes," "the nomadic," "de-territorealization" and "lines of flight"—texts such as *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* often emphasize more obscure and difficult concepts, such as "asymmetrical syntheses of the sensible," "differentials," the distinction between "ground" and "foundation," "quasi-causes," and the "Aion." Nevertheless, both the "new" and "old" Deleuze should be understood as part of the same problematic—namely, the attempt to understand and theorize the world from the perspective of immanent transformation.

6. We have sought to highlight this compatibility of the "new" and "old" Deleuze by including audiocasts

and essays that employ both the terminology that Deleuze developed in his own work and the terminology he developed in his projects with Guattari. Ron Broglio's audiocast and essay on Wordsworth, for example, draw heavily on Deleuze's work with Guattari, emphasizing the ways in which their approach to "meandering" and "walking" help us to understand and theorize anew the Romantic premise of a world of "extended agency" (that is, a world in which "agency [is] extended over a whole scene or environment"). David Baulch's work on Blake, and Robert Mitchell's discussion of Kant and Shelley, on the other hand, draw more on Deleuze's solo work, focusing on Deleuze's theory of "revolution" and his practice of "transcendental philosophy," respectively. By emphasizing both the new and old Deleuze, we hope that this collection encourages Romanticists to participate in the new wave of Anglo-American interest in Deleuze's solo work, and to take this as an opportunity as well to read—or re-read—his work with Guattari.

II. Deleuze and Romanticism: Philosophy and Aesthetics

7. If, nevertheless, there is a slightly greater emphasis in this collection on the "new" Deleuze, this is in part due to our desire to emphasize to Romanticists Deleuze's numerous texts on philosophy and aesthetics, many of which have been translated only recently. Deleuze's readings of earlier philosophers, in fact, represent one of the most obvious points of contact between his work and that of Romanticist scholars. The list of authors that Deleuze took up in his monographs on philosophers—a list that includes Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Nietzsche, and Bergson—map out a tradition that is clearly "Romantic" in its points of reference. However, Deleuze's work on these philosophers does not so much replicate what we believe we already know about this tradition, but rather unveils another, more hidden side of Romanticism. In Deleuze's reading, for example, Hume is important less for his role in consolidating a British tradition of epistemological empiricism and serving as the catalyst for Kant's critical philosophy, and more because Hume's texts force us to think through the question of "synthesis" that undergirds the apparently simple concepts of "habits" and "associations"—a question that ought to be of supreme importance to scholars of Romanticism interested in what it might mean to undo what Wordsworth called our "pre-established codes of decision."[10] In similar fashion, the version of Kant that emerges in Deleuze's various readings of the "critical" philosopher differ from traditional readings: rather than positioning Kant solely as the founder of modern aesthetics (or a stepping stone to Hegel's absolute idealism), Deleuze's Kant instead emerges as a philosopher who helps up to think better the very nature of sensation and the importance of "conflicts of the faculties."[11]

8. Yet it is perhaps in his work on aesthetics—and in particular, his writings on literature, painting, and cinema—that Deleuze's romanticism, and his importance for Romantic literary criticism, becomes most evident. Though Deleuze did not write extensively on any Romantic artistic productions, preferring instead to focus on authors (e.g., Proust, Kafka, and Lewis Carroll) and technologies (e.g., cinema) more traditionally associated with modernism, or even postmodernism (e.g., his book on Francis Bacon's painting), his overriding interests in these texts nevertheless seem fundamentally Romantic. The question of time—and more specifically, how artistic productions can make time sensible—dominates his work on Proust and cinema, and as Deleuze makes clear in his monograph and lectures on Kant, this is a question that has its origin in the new "image of time" that Kant made possible.[12] Moreover, Deleuze, like many Romantic authors, remained convinced that sensation is not simply a preface to epistemological representation, but instead has its own structures, structures that can be thought through analyses of both painting and cinema. As a consequence, his analyses of both cinema and painting hold important resources for scholars of literary Romanticism (though of course such resources will require translational work).

9. In addition to providing resources for understanding anew both aesthetic theory and the history of philosophy, Deleuze's work can also help Romanticists to engage again the always-vexed question of

the relationship between philosophy and art. No doubt largely as a consequence of the explicitly philosophical interests of many of the authors—e.g., S. T. Coleridge, P. B. Shelley, Novalis, and the Schlegel brothers—included in the early canons of Romantic literature, scholars of Romanticism traditionally have been quite open to, and interested in, linking the philosophical and artistic productions of this period. Yet scholars of Romanticism often have linked philosophy and art by means of schemata drawn from either Hegel or Marx, suggesting either that Romantic-era philosophy provides a theoretical explication of Romantic-era art, or that both Romantic-era philosophy and art are ideological expressions of class contradictions.

10. Deleuze's late work with Guattari suggests a very different approach to the relationship between art and philosophy. Deleuze and Guattari are critical of claims that art and philosophy "inform" one another, or that philosophy "explains" art. Rather, they stress that the relationship of philosophy and art is one of productive disjunction. According to Deleuze and Guattari, philosophy creates concepts, while art creates sensations—and while concepts and sensations certainly come into many relationships with one another, neither should be understood as the "expression" of the other.[13] Nor should philosophy and art be understood as simple "expressions" of historical contexts; rather, we should understand both philosophical concepts and artistic sensations as inventions that respond to "problematics." This latter term certainly can include Marx's notion of social "contradictions" that are the motor of history, but it also goes beyond the humanism of Marx's concept to include the non-human problematics within which we are embedded.

III. The Form and Contents of this Issue

11. This collection consists of two different media: audio-casts (aka "pod-casts") and written texts. Three of the four audiocasts in this collection—those by Baulch, Broglio, and Mitchell—were originally recorded as part of a special panel on "Romanticism and the New Deleuze" at the 2006 North American Society for the Study of Romanticism (NASSR) conference. Subsequent to the conference itself, the editors of this special edition invited David Collings, one of the panel attendees, to provide a commentary in audio-cast format on one of the essays. Finally, all the contributors were asked to provide essay versions of their talks, which supplement the audio-casts with notes and references, and often present more extensive explication of some of the arguments outlined in the audio-casts.

12. There is no "preferred" itinerary through the audio-casts and essays that make up this special collection, and readers/listeners should feel free to engage the various components in any order. The audio-cast format, insofar as it replicates the mode of aural delivery of the conference at which this work was originally presented, provides listeners with a relatively quick overview of each of the arguments. The essay versions of the talks, by contrast, allow readers to explore in greater depth the claims made by each contributor, and provide readers with specific references to Deleuze's work.

13. While Deleuze's work readily lends itself to recent efforts to expand the canon of Romantic literature, the essays and audio-casts that make up this collection focus on the ways in which Deleuze helps us to rediscover canonical authors. In "Wandering in the Landscape with Wordsworth and Deleuze," Ron Broglio (Georgia Tech) exemplifies through the example of Wordsworth the ways in which the critical function of literary criticism can be deepened and extended through the work of Deleuze. Contrasting Wordsworthian "walks" with the Deleuzian/Guattarian "meanderings," Broglio argues that Deleuze and Guattari's work helps us to better understand the concrete ways in which Romantic poets were "hooked up to the world." He also illuminates the sense of distributed—and often non-human—agency with which Wordsworth grappled in his poetry, though, as Broglio notes, Wordsworth also often sought to subordinate this expanded notion of agency within his larger project of writerly self-fashioning.

14. In "The Transcendental: Deleuze, P. B. Shelley, and the Freedom of Immobility," Robert Mitchell

(Duke University) seeks to exemplify the productive disjunction between philosophy and poetry that Deleuze and Guattari describe, linking Deleuze's reading of Kant to Shelley's use of rhyme in his poem, "Mont Blanc; Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni." In both his short book on Kant and in several subsequent lectures, Deleuze argued that Kant's Critiques point toward—though they do not make explicit—an understanding of "sensation" as a complex rhythmic synthesis (rather than the raw and simple material of representations, as assumed by, say, John Locke). Mitchell employs Deleuze's reading of Kant to analyze the thematic content and irregular rhyme of Shelley's verse on the "frozen floods" of Mont Blanc, arguing that the poet seeks through this poem to help readers isolate sensations enabled by a suspension of animation. Mitchell thus attempts to use Deleuze and Kant's philosophy to heighten a sensory element of Shelley's art that has been underappreciated, while at the same time employing Shelley's poem to reinvent philosophical concepts initiated by Kant and Deleuze.

15. In his response to Mitchell's audio-cast and essay, David A. Collings (Bowdoin College) emphasizes some of the questions that still remain in the wake of such an encounter between Kant, Shelley, and Deleuze. The editors of this special issue asked Collings to respond in part because of his important contribution to the questions section of the NASSR panel at which these papers were first presented, but also because his own work on symbolic exchange and violence engages many of the same themes as Deleuze's work, but from a different theoretical perspective.[14] By providing a friendly critique of several elements in Mitchell's audio-cast, Collings helps us to further invent ways of talking about the role of sound and rhythm in the experience of the sublime, and the role of both the beautiful and the sublime in our understanding of Shelley's poem. Collings's analysis also asks us to consider further the relationship between philosophy and poetics. He asks to think again, for example, about the relationship between read and heard versions of a poem, noting that Shelley's "poem suggests that rhyme somehow operates inherently within articulation itself, even when, or especially when, the ear is unaware," but wondering where that leaves us in our analysis of more "regular" poems. Equally important, Collings asks us to consider more closely the ethics of Shelley's poem, asking whether "Mont Blanc" implies a quasi-Kantian "teleological operation of the faculties" or the "less legislated operation of the faculties akin to the scenarios of *Difference and Repetition*"?

16. Finally, in "Repetition, Representation and Revolution: Deleuze and Blake's *America*," David Baulch (University of West Florida) exemplifies the ways in which Deleuze allows us to make sense of one of the more hermetic poets of the Romantic era, William Blake. Beginning with Deleuze's analysis of the necessary role of repetition in any "revolution," Baulch advocates a method of reading Blake's *America* that does not tie itself solely to historicist representational and referential frameworks, but rather understands the poem in connection with a Deleuzian "Idea" of revolution: that is, "Idea" understood not as a mental representation, but a productive "problematic" that inheres in the structure of reality. Such a reading allows us to acknowledge the basic problem with mapping Blakean images in *America* to historical referents—namely (to paraphrase Saree Makdisi) that the more specific we are in mapping, the more we seem to make obscure the prophecy of the poem—but at the same time this reading moves us beyond the alternative strategy of reading the poem as simply an example of "the idiosyncratic world of Blake's vision." Instead, Baulch's reading allows us to understand Blake's *America* as a poem that demonstrates that the necessary conditions of historical action are connections between the "virtual" and the "actual" that go beyond historical referentiality. As a result, Baulch's essay also allows us to see Blake's understanding of revolution as central to our understanding of Romanticism as a movement constantly in tension, and continually beyond itself.

Notes

[1] M. H. Abrams's *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* provides a classic description of Romanticism as both a development of, and "reaction" against, eighteenth-

century/Enlightenment-era aesthetics and philosophy. Romanticism is described as a movement "against the tide of modernity" in Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre's *Romanticism against the Tide of Modernity*. For a representative account of Romanticism as a flight from History to Imagination, see Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation*.

[2] Deleuze discusses the logic of sensation most extensively in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. Examples of recent interest in eighteenth-century and Romantic-era histories of emotions, passions, and affect include Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen*; Rei Terada, *Feeling in Theory: Emotion After the "Death of the Subject"*; Kevis Goodman, *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History*; and Andrew M. Stauffer, *Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism*.

[3] See David Perkins, "Romantic Lyric Voice: What Shall we call the 'I'?" *The Southern Review* 29:2 (Spring 1993): 233.

[4] Deleuze discusses Stoic philosophy in *The Logic of Sense*. For discussions of eighteenth-century neo-Stoicism, see Julie K. Ellison, *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion* and Hugh Roberts, *Shelley and the Chaos of History: A New Politics of Poetry*.

[5] Deleuze discusses biological conceptions of development and embryology in *Difference and Repetition*, esp. pp. 244-54, and Deleuze and Guattari make similar arguments in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, pp. 149-66. For recent literary critical discussions of biology, development, and organicism in the Romantic era, see Helmut Müller-Sievers, *Self-Generation: Biology, Philosophy, and Literature around 1800*; Paul Youngquist, *Monstrosities: Bodies and British Romanticism*; and Charles I. Armstrong, *Romantic Organicism: From Idealist Origins to Ambivalent Afterlife*.

[6] Deleuze's work may be of particular interest to scholars of Romanticism interested in emphasizing multiple sites and modes of historical agency through concepts such as "assemblages" and "actor-networks." As formulated by sociologist of science Bruno Latour, both of these concepts owe a significant debt to the work of Deleuze and Guattari (as Latour acknowledges—though often obliquely—in many of his publications—see, for example, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, pp. 59n.64, 95). However, Deleuze's emphasis on difference, differentials, and tension suggests that Latour's consistent emphasis on negotiation and consensus between human and non-human agents—exemplified by Latour's call for a "parliament of things"—may constitute a theoretically-unwarranted limitation of these concepts. For recent employments of the concepts of "assemblages" and "actor-networks" within Romantic literary criticism, see Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: 'From an antique land'*; and Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee and Peter J. Kitson, *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era: Bodies of Knowledge*.

[7] See David B. Allison, ed., *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*; and John Mullarkey, ed., *The New Bergson*.

[8] See, for example, D.N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*; Richard Doyle, *On Beyond Living: Rhetorical Transformations of the Life Sciences*; Mark B.N. Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media*; Elizabeth A. Wilson, *Psychosomatic: Feminism and the Neurological Body*; and Elizabeth Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power*.

[9] The fact that the "old" Deleuze was largely ignored by scholars of Romanticism may have been a function of the fact that Deleuze and Guattari's publications became available in English just as many Romanticist

literary critics were turning to historicist and "critical" methodologies that initially appeared either at odds with, or at least at oblique angles to, Deleuze and Guattari's political and historical methodologies. Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, for example, appeared in English in 1977, only shortly before Marilyn Butler's *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background, 1760-1830* and Jerome J. McGann's *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation*, while *A Thousand Plateaus* was published in English a year after Marjorie Levinson's *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems: Four Essays* and two years before Alan Liu's *Wordsworth: The Sense of History*.

[10] See Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*.

[11] For Deleuze's readings of Kant, see especially *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties* and *Difference and Repetition*.

[12] For Deleuze on Proust, see *Proust and Signs*; on cinema, see *Cinema 1: The Movement-image* and *Cinema 2: The Time-image*; on painting, see *Francis Bacon*.

[13] See especially Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*

[14] See, for example, David A. Collings, *Wordsworthian Errancies: The Poetics of Cultural Dismemberment*; *Queer Romanticisms: Past, Present, and Future*; "The Romance of the Impossible: William Godwin in the Empty Place of Reason"; and "Bentham's Auto-Icon: Utilitarianism and the Evisceration of the Common Body." The latter two essays are part of a completed book-length project (forthcoming) on symbolic violence, the collective body, and Romanticism.

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Romanticism and the New Deleuze

Wandering in the Landscape with Wordsworth and Deleuze

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audio version (in MP3 format)

1. I would like to address where the work of Gilles Deleuze can open up neglected issues in Romanticism. That is to say, I would like to use Delueze to intervene in a particular figure of Classic Romanticism: the figure of an interior self as constructed in poetry. As an example of this interior structured through poetry, simply think of the mansions in the mind created in Tintern Abbey. Notice how power and authority moves from the church or abbey as exterior social structure now in ruins to inside the individual—the mind as "a mansion for all lovely forms, Thy memory be as a dwelling-place" (Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads* 120, ln 141-2).

2. I believe Deleuze is useful in exposing how the privileged interiority of the subject is just another surface without depth. I am interested in using Deleuze to "flatten" Romanticism and deflate the humanist subject at its center. In place of the subject, I see the physicality of bodies and effects of environmental forces as significant agents. In a sense, Deleuze gives us a phenomenology without the privileged interiority of the human subject. He gives us agency extended over a whole scene or environment. I'll explain this in the closing of my analysis. For now, I'd like to begin by looking at the privileged subject in Wordsworth and his typical crafted "encounter narratives."

3. Wordsworth's landscape is that of the poet's mind. One can simply think of the Prelude as constructing images of interiority or the growth of the poet's mind. Time and again Wordsworth, as the poet who embraces nature, also keeps nature at a distance. In the *Lyrical Ballads*, poetry is defined as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling" that is then "recollected in tranquility" (*Lyrical Ballads* 756). It is at such a tranquil distance that Wordsworth contemplates dancing with the daffodils "when on my couch I lie/ In vacant mood" ("I wander lonely as a cloud" ln 19-20). So, Wordsworth has his encounter with nature but moves next to retreat and regroup, using the encounter as a metaphor for constructing the interior subject. The same interest in but remove from nature can be found in his 1812 tour guide. His guide to the Lake District maintains a basic distinction between observer here and objects over there. Each object is considered abstractly by the observer. He takes the object in and discusses its aesthetic merit; following William Gilpin, Wordsworth includes a chapter on lakes, rivers, and lesser bodies of water and another on mountains, hills and valleys, and still another on trees and other vegetation. Then, again like Gilpin, Wordsworth mentally arranges these individual objects together to compose a typical picturesque scene of harmony and unity. During his tour of the Lakes, he arrives at stations that function like military posts; these observation "stations" serve as a strategic points that allow the tourist to make advances upon nature while remaining at a safe distance.

4. Now, there are moments that disturb this harmony and where another agency appears. Occasionally the poet is actually confronted with objects or people that will not remain beyond arm's length—such as the Leech Gatherer of "Resolution and Independence" and the angler in "Poems on the Naming of Places." Wordsworth deflates the physicality of these encounters, a physicality where he is troubled by the body of the vagrant. He turns other humans into mirrors through which the poet reflects upon himself and his state of mind. At this point, it is worth noting several characteristics of the poet's representation of nature. 1) While the land is experienced through a bodily walk, the representation of the space always removes the poet from the scene. 2) Objects are clearly demarcated and any thing or person who threatens to impose upon the narrator gets appropriated as an object for the poet's self-

contemplation. Timothy Morton might say, Wordsworth eats nature. He incorporates it.

5. Turning to Deleuze: how different Deleuze's meanderings are from the Wordsworthian stroll. A meandering walk first appears in the opening pages of *Anti-Oedipus*, an early work by Deleuze and Guattari. There the schizophrenic's motion through space is juxtaposed to the neurotic on the couch—think here of Wordsworth contemplating daffodils "when on my couch I lie." There is a shift from what is happening in the mind (very Wordsworthian) to what is happening to bodies (more Deleuzian). *Anti-Oedipus* works against the Oedipal machinations in Freud. One of the major twentieth-century critiques of Freud has been his inversion of the political. For Freud, power gets played out in the psyche rather than on the streets:

   > Oedipus says to us: either you will internalize the differential functions that rule over the exclusive disjunctions, and thereby "resolve" Oedipus, or you will fall into the neurotic night of imaginary identifications. Either you will follow the lines of the triangle [mother, father, me]—lines that structure and differentiate the three terms—or you will always bring one term into play as if it were one too many in relation of identification in the undifferentiated. But there is Oedipus on either side. And everybody knows what psychoanalysis means by *resolving* Oedipus: internalizing it so as to better rediscover it on the outside, in the children. (*Anti-Oedipus* 79)

   Deleuze and Guattari move from the interior to pure exteriors—what they call a body without organs. Furthermore, *Anti-Oedipus* takes aim at the Symbolic of Lacan by siding with the schizophrenic. For Lacan the schizophrenic disavows the Oedipal and so refuses to enter the Symbolic and thus culture; instead, for the schizophrenic, everything that happens takes place on the surface of the Real: "The true difference in nature is not between the Symbolic and the Imaginary, but between the real machinic (*machinique*) element, which constitutes desiring-production, and the structural whole of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, which merely forms a myth and its variants" (83). Contrasting the neurotic stuck within the Symbolic to the schizophrenic operating on the Real serves as a useful distinction for Romantic criticism since much of Wordsworth's self-fashioning and a good deal of criticism afterwards leaves the poet on the couch where his theater of the mind can be examined. By contrast, for the schizophrenic "Everything is a machine. Celestial machines, the stars or rainbows in the sky, alpine machines—all of them connected to those of his body. The continual whirr of machines" (2). The schizophrenic gets out into the world. Whereas the Wordsworthian walk is designed to reflect the inner workings of the mind and the mind in relation to language, the schizoid stroll as described by Deleuze and Guattari is meant to show relations between bodies. Each body acts as an assemblage that gets defined by how it is hooked up to other assemblages. As Brian Massumi explains in his introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, a brick is used for constructing a building, but when coupled with hand and smashed window, a brick is part of a machine of political protest (Massumi xiii). So, an object is not defined by an interior, a property of identity and self-reflexivity (A = A, a brick is a brick); rather it is defined by its difference, by what it gets connected to and aligned with.

6. Another way of thinking of pure exteriors and desiring machines is to ask what grounds meaning within a language system. For the schizophrenic, both desire and meaning leap from the personal to the outside (what Lacan calls the Real) while leaping over the social network which serves to normalize desire and linguistic meaning. For everyone other than the schizophrenic, signs and desires have meaning only as they function within a social or cultural system and only as one is able to assimilate one's interior "selfhood" with that system. To use language is to work within a set of social structures. For Deleuze and Guattari, the schizophrenic is a challenge to the political and linguistic systems simultaneously since he utilizes language in unsocial and antisocial ways.

7. The good metaphor and obedient literary image works because of a social agreement based on

selection. Selection signals the culturally proper relationship between vehicle and tenor. The well regulated metaphor manages elements to be included and those to be discarded in the relationship between vehicle and tenor. Considering pure exteriority entails misplacing these proper relations between inside the metaphor and outside, as well as confusing what is proper within the social system and what belongs outside it. The result is the death of "all metaphor, all symbolism, all signification, no less than all designation. Metamorphosis is the contrary of metaphor. There is no longer any proper sense or figurative sense, but only a distribution of states that is part of the range of the word. The thing and other things are no longer anything but intensities overrun by deterritorialized sound or words that are following their line of escape" (22). Sound or words or even, one might add, gestures and bodies, can lead us away from established social configurations, away from metaphors we have forgotten are metaphors, now inscribed as social truths. We are lead instead to meanings and marks of signification whose selection is based on the hybridity of the Real and Symbolic, the desires assembled from the Real and socially inscribed desiring.

8. Because the schizophrenic is not "properly" hooked up to the Oedipal machine of Imaginary desires and Symbolic values, (that is, he is not within Culture) he is free to roam outside of predictable social paths and create new arrangements of objects:

> we are all handymen: each with his little machines. For every organ-machine, an energy-machine: all the time, flows and interruptions. Judge Schreber has sunbeams in his ass. *A solar anus*. And rest assured that it works: Judge Schreber feels something, produces something, and is capable of explaining the process theoretically. Something is produced: the effects of a machine, not mere metaphors. (*Anti-Oedipus* 2-3)

Schreber's case is the first in which Freud analyzes schizophrenia, and his case is taken up by Lacan in his seminar where he lays down the Law of the Symbolic in contrast to the schizophrenic's fascination or hallucination of messages from the Real. But for Deleuze and Guattari, Judge Schreber has created something. Rather than shutting down production or connecting production to the politics of Oedipal family and the Oedipal State, Deleuze and Guattari's Shreber has connected himself to the world in a new fashion. He has created new couplings and assemblages in the Real.

9. Returning to the Romantics and to Wordsworth, we can ask, how is the poet hooked up to the world? What assemblages does his walking create that are *not* subsumed within the Oedipal, within the Imaginary and Symbolic? This means taking his strolls literally at times. The Penrith beacons passage in *The Prelude* connects the wandering boy to the landscape in new ways; he is not the tourist invested in the military beacon but rather he sees this world with visionary dreariness that creates new couplings, new assemblages with gibbet, woman and pool that surround the beacon. New couplings frighten the narrator in "The Discharged Soldier." Wordsworth is shocked by an ill or sickly figure which he describes as only half-human. The other half, the non-human half, derives from the organs of the human body malfunctioning and getting caught up in a relationship with the surroundings, that is, with a nature that has agency. For Wordsworth, it is in illness that one becomes most aware of one's body. Such awareness prevents ethereal flights of fancy and brings a return to the material and even animal nature of being human. A poet bent upon greatness through a soaring imagination has every right to fear the implications of such bodiliness since through the body the poet may be led astray and his poetry may never cohere, never unify, and never satisfy common sense and good taste. He must be disciplined to stay "on the public way" as the Discharged Soldier poem urges (*Lyrical Ballads* 277, ln 2). By finding lodging for the wandering soldier, Wordsworth leads the man into a path like his own, into a public way of being. By the poem's end the narrator proclaims that the man giving lodging is "my friend" and the soldier "my comrade" (282, ln 150, 165). All are brought together under the banner of filial kindness. The same is true of many potentially disturbing Judge Schreber-esque figures. The Leech-gatherer's strange connections to the landscape are absolved by the invocation of God at the end

of the poem. The Cumberland Beggar is likewise tamed by social and religious laws. Each of these characters disturbs by his literalness and physicality. Their nomadism, their wanderings, are contained by a language of religion and moral law as well as by turning the encounters into a reflection on the poet's own interiority, identity, and imagination which coopts and shuts down the radical potential of these vagrants.

10. My hope is that we can *not* stop the madness, that is, we can open up the assemblages in Wordsworth rather than focus on the unifying narrative that shuts down the anti-Oedipal assemblages and the revolutionary potential of the bodies on the road. The work of Deleuze and Guattari opens the way for reassessing and reassembling bodies and desires outside of social machinery and toward what Paul Youngquist refers to as "monstrosity": "Not only do they jam cultural machinery that produces the norm of the proper body, but they challenge its performative authority, inserting the material fact of bodily difference into the circuit of its reenactment" (xv). From a reconfiguration of language to a revaluation of the (im)proper body, the schizo-stroll produces something that cannot be adequately assessed by the social subject and the moral, religious, and even aesthetic norms of which it is a part.

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Romanticism and the New Deleuze

Repetition, Representation and Revolution: Deleuze and Blake's *America*

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audio version (in MP3 format)

I

1. Tracing the implications of the French Revolution is one of the key intellectual tasks that the study of British Romanticism has assigned itself. In general terms, the French Revolution and Britain's ensuing, protracted wars with France stand as something like a master narrative for our contemporary considerations of British literature from this period. The advent of the French Revolution has become all but synonymous with initial hopes for the dawn of a new era that mark the youthful political enthusiasms of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge; and the subsequent disaffection these writers felt with the course of the revolution's failures—their "apostasy," as William Hazlitt would have it—largely constitute the narrative telos of Romanticism's so-called first generation. While Romanticism's canonical second generation, in the figures of Hazlitt, Lord Byron, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, might recover the political idealism of its first generation, the radical hopes for a new political era in Europe promised by the French Revolution seem irrecoverably lost to history. Hence in this master narrative of British Romanticism, revolution is central precisely because of the two deeply conflicted meanings embedded in the term. Even as revolution holds out the possibility of a radically new political order, it delivers only some renewed version of a familiar, repressive state structure.

2. The historical problem of revolution and its representations reflects the term's divided etymological origins. As Raymond Williams has so ably shown us, "revolution" indicates both a repetition, the path a planetary body follows until it returns to its original point, and a difference, a sweeping change of order and social meaning (*Keywords* 270-74). It is worth considering the extent to which the two etymological sides of "revolution" as a term suggest an uncanny truth about the idea of revolution in the Romantic period. If revolution is alternately the promise of a departure from the past in the emergence of something different, *and* a return to, or a repetition of, the oppressive political forms of order it sought to oppose, it raises the inescapable question of what it is about revolution that ultimately prevents it from establishing an effective break from the forms of political subjection it aims itself against. The emphasis of much current scholarship on the Romantic period approaches the problem of revolution in terms of the historical/material contingencies that provide the context for the production of literary texts and their representations of revolution. By contrast, this paper suggests an approach to revolution as a philosophical problem that can be addressed in terms of Gilles Deleuze's interlocking notions of difference and repetition, insofar as they inform the possibility of a Deleuzean "Idea" of revolution. Thus the task of this paper is to explicate the fundamental way in which Gilles Deleuze's *Difference & Repetition* offers a means of interrogating and intensifying the problem of revolution, even as this approach demands that we rethink the very idea of revolution and the way we pursue a scholarly approach to it premised on representation. In the second part of this essay, I will focus specifically on the ways in which revolution as a Deleuzean Idea productively informs a reading of William Blake's *America, A Prophecy.*

3. While the study of British Romantic texts tend to approach revolution in terms of its representations, in *Difference & Repetition* Deleuze offers a radical critique of the seemingly unassailable connection between the idea and its representation; to do so Deleuze makes a distinction between the "idea" and the "Idea." Contrary to traditional western notions of the "idea," Deleuze's "Idea" is not bound to the

representation of an object or a concept, nor is it the property of individual consciousness. In *Difference & Repetition*, Deleuze says that "the Idea is not yet the concept of an object which submits the world to the requirements of representation, but rather a brute presence which can be invoked in the world only in the function of that which is not 'representable' in things" (59). The Idea is not a psychoanalytic phantasm of individual consciousness. Rather the Idea is a complex "system of multiple, non-localisable connections between differential elements which is incarnated on real relations and actual terms" (183). As opposed to an idea, a concept of an object or a system in an individual's consciousness, the "brute presence" of Deleuzean Ideas are where the tendencies, intensities, and contingencies of the "virtual" have an impact on the "actual" world. The Idea is a momentary assemblage of virtual relations that produces a sensation from the point of view of the actual. As such, the Idea of revolution is not an idea, object, or rational intention that can be given a definite, recognizable representation.

4. Perhaps the greatest impediment to understanding the Idea in materialist terms is its position with regard to what Deleuze calls the "actual" and the "virtual." These terms are central to the expression of Deleuze's critique of the western philosophical tradition insofar as the actual has come to be the equivalent of reality in materialist terms. Deleuze characterizes reality as the interaction of the virtual and the actual. Distinctly different from a possibility (in which case the virtual would be subject to a prior representation in the actual), the virtual is never actualized, but, as Constantin Boundas puts it, "the virtual nonetheless has the capacity to bring about actualisation" (297). With specific reference to *Difference & Repetition*, Boundas state, "Deleuze has characterisied the virtual . . . as Ideas/structures and the realm of problem . . . whereby the diverse actualisations of the virtual are understood as solutions" (297). Deleuze associates the Idea with a kind of "solution" without a concept or representation in the actual. As a Deleuzean Idea, revolution would be a solution that does not propose a particular course of political action.[1] Directly addressing revolution's split etymological identity as both change and return, the Idea of revolution is a paradigmatic instance of what Deleuze means by the terms "difference" and "repetition."

5. As interlocking terms, "difference" and "repetition" define the fundamental dynamic of what Deleuze discusses as the "Idea." Difference in itself is not difference *from* something else. Difference, in Deleuze's sense of the term, is not tied to representation, thus it does not involve a comparison to another thing or concept. Deleuze insists that "[d]ifference is not and cannot be thought in itself, so long as it is subject to the requirements of representation" (262). Cliff Stangol identifies Deleuzean difference as the means by which Deleuze's philosophy mounts a challenge to "the primacy accorded identity and representation in western rationality" (72). As a challenge to dominant philosophical constructions of identity, Deleuze, in *Difference & Repetition*, devotes considerable space to a critique of the Kantian Cogito. Taking Kant's "I" of transcendental apperception as dependent upon its own representation to itself as the image of thought, Deleuze claims:

> The 'I think' is the most general principle of representation—in other words, the source of these elements and of the unity of all these faculties: I conceive, I judge, I imagine, I remember and I perceive . . . they form quadripartite fetters under which only that which is identical, similar, analogous or opposed can be considered different: *difference becomes an object of representation always in relation to a conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagined opposition or a perceived similitude*. (138)

Deleuze's objection is that identity is always tied to a representation that is only meaningful by way of a comparison to something else. For Kant, the "I" as an object of thought depends upon the a priori existence of the "I" as thinking subject. Taking the "I" of transcendental apperception as his starting point, Kant derives the four principles of pure understanding that Deleuze enumerates above. For Deleuze, Kant's reasoning falls short of "the conditions of a true critique and a true creation" (139). To

achieve Deleuzean difference, identity must be dissolved in "the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself" (139). Rather than finding identity predicated in a thought-object, Deleuze offers difference as premised on "a fundamental encounter" (139). Deleuze's critique of identity is really only a special case of the general problem that representation presents for pure difference. Tied to representation, difference is always limited to its difference from something else—a prior representation. For Deleuze, pure difference, or difference-in-itself, allows for the possibility of an ontological taking place of the singular and the unique. Experienced as an ontological taking place, such an encounter is not structured by reference to a concept and, as such, is not assimilable to a prior representation.

6. In the same way that Deleuzean difference is not a difference from something else, repetition is not the recurrence of the same for Deleuze, but rather the recurrence of pure difference. Repetition is the site of possibility for the emergence of pure difference without positing an originary point. To free repetition from mimesis is to allow it, as Adrian Parr puts it, "the possibility of reinvention, that is to say repetition dissolves identities as it changes them, giving rise to something unrecognisable and productive" (224). Because Deleuzean Ideas are repetitions of the expression of pure differences in the virtual, the Idea is the transcendental condition for thought as such. The Deleuzean Idea of revolution is not so much the emergence of a political alternative, as it is the effect of the virtual upon the actual as a sensation, rather than a representation. The Idea of revolution is the condition for change in the actual/political world that is not tied to the past and its representations.

7. Given their difficulty, why do these remarkably intangible Deleuzean terms matter for the study of British Romanticism and revolution? Regarding revolution as a Deleuzean Idea allows criticism to look at the way a literary text treats thought outside of its representation in a concept. If revolution and its representations are particular solutions that attempt to resolve the problems they address, then revolution, as an idea, demands that we think it as a particular representation of a concept in the actual. By contrast, to think of revolution in terms of a Deleuzean Idea is to think revolution as the transcendental condition for the evolution of actual things. Revolution is thus not the solution to a problem, but the fundamental problematic of thought itself. In order to explore the potential of this admittedly difficult proposition, this paper turns to William Blake's *America, A Prophecy*. Blake's *America, A Prophecy* sets out the American Revolution as the site of the experience of a revolutionary energy that will inspire the subsequent revolution in France. In this sense, the poem may be said to suggest that events in America constitute a kind of "prophecy" for France's future. Read this way, Blake is not much of a prophet. My task in the next section of this paper is to explore the extent to which Blake's notion of the American Revolution as a kind of prophecy can be said to be bound up with the emergence of something very much like Deleuze's sense of difference. In this way, Blake's prophecy is anything but a prediction of the future of the French Revolution based on an historical account of the recent past of the American Revolution.

II

8. It is tempting, and perhaps necessary, to think the impossible for a Deleuzean reading of revolution as an Idea in *America*: to think, that is, of Blake writing *America* in 1793 as a Deleuzean conversation with Karl Marx's 1852 *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Marx's theory of historical repetition is instructive in its observation that "just when [the revolutionaries] seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something entirely new, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service" (595). Indeed, in 1793, when the tensions over the French Revolution in England were perhaps at their height, Blake writes *America,* a text which apparently ends by confirming the conjure trick Marx identified as intrinsic to revolution. Blake's narrator proclaims, "France reciev'd the Demons light," which is to say that the spirit or demon of the French Revolution is that of the American Revolution (16: 15, E 57).

History, according to Marx's model, repeats itself here as the positive transformative process that Marx calls "tragic."

9. If we can read *America* this way, then the French Revolution would become a repetition of the American Revolution. Historically, this is not the case. As Nicholas Williams insists, we must read *America* in the light of its own "historical disconformation" (116). For Williams, we must read knowing that Blake's *America* was "written in the knowledge that America's revolution has not spread . . . to all other nations of the world" (117). Perhaps even trying to read the French Revolution as a repetition of the American Revolution in Blake's poem is rushing past the all too obvious, for it is precisely upon the question of representation that readings of this poem founder. As Saree Makdisi observes, "[e]very step that one takes toward pinning down some specific concrete reference to the historical realities or events of the American War of Independence seems ironically to make the prophecy that much more difficult to interpret" (31-2). Blake's *America* resists critical attempts to stabilize it as a field of representation. To take a Deleuzean path, then, is to read *America* as a rejection of the actual, of material history, and individual consciousness as the only valid description of the reality of revolution, opting instead to explore reality as influenced by the production of sensations occasioned by the Idea of revolution as an indefinite, destabilizing, transformative repetition in the production of pure differences. To make this argument, I want to shift the emphasis in a reading of *America* from determining specific ways in which the poem's presentation of the American Revolution offers a historical precedent or model for the French Revolution, to the focus on the way in which *America*'s presentation of revolution can be understood as a Deleuzean Idea of Revolution that—apart from, or in direct contrast to the historical reality of the American Revolution—explores the condition of thought necessary for the Idea of Revolution. In this way, *America*'s revolution is not a plan of action or an outcome prophetic of France's future, but rather a presentation of the conditions under which difference emerges in repetition.

10. Deleuze argues that Marx's theory of revolution as an instance of cyclic repetition "does not seem to have been sufficiently understood by historians: Historical repetition is neither a matter of analogy nor a concept produced by the reflection of historians, but above all a condition of historical action itself" (91). When Marx sets out his theory of historical repetition, wherein history repeats itself "the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce" (594), his point was that the tragic metamorphosis of the French Revolution of 1789 had actually created the conditions for its own farcical reprisal in 1848 in the person of Louis Bonapart, "a grotesque mediocrity" whom, Marx asserted, "play[ed] the hero's part" (594). For Deleuze, "[c]omic repetition works by means of some defect in the mode of the past . . . . The hero necessarily confronts this repetition so long as 'the act is too big for him'" (92). Deleuze insists "that these two moments are not independent, existing as they do only for a third moment beyond the comic and the tragic: the production of something new entails a dramatic repetition which excludes even the hero" (92). This third repetition is Deleuze's notion of eternal return—it is that which only returns as difference and it is this sense of difference that is the transcendental condition of historical action.[2]. To facilitate an exploration of *America* in terms of these three repetitions, I want to read it, with Detlef Dörrbecker, as a poem composed of three parts: a "Preludium," a conversation between Orc and Albion's Angel, and "a mythical version of the events of the American war for independence" (27). Rather than seeing these parts of the poem as elements in a linear narrative, I am reading them as three instances of repetition that explore what is at stake in revolution with regard to its representations.

11. The "Preludium" of *America* is tragic in the sense that it introduces the infinite transformative Idea of revolution, the sensations of virtual intensities in the actual, only to witness its loss. Initially, as an indefinite, virtual intensity, an Idea of revolution, Orc receives no clearly defined representation in the first twenty-five lines. While complaining that he is imprisoned in "caverns," Orc can be thought of as a kind of virtual capacity for revolutionary intensity that only expresses itself in the mobile

contingency Deleuze calls "an assemblage." Held in "tenfold chains" Orc claims:

> my spirit soars;
> Sometimes an eagle screaming in the sky, sometimes a lion,
> Stalking upon the mountains, & sometimes a whale I lash
> The raging fathomless abyss, anon a serpent folding
> Around the pillars of Urthona
> (1: 12-16, E 51)

Here, Orc is not a thing, not a definite being but an indefinite becoming that emerges in the interchange of virtual intensities and the actual. This sensation repeats itself as instances of difference, a perpetual "sometimes" multiplicity of otherness.

12. The moment which is most troubling to those who wish to read *America* as a celebration of the American Revolution is Orc's sudden existence as an actual, empirical subject, a definite individual who takes particular actions, the consistency of whose being is determined in its relation to a definite field of representations. Orc takes on direct agency in the poem in his rape of the "shadowy daughter of Urthona," whom he sees as his oppressor. Only in this rape is Orc presented as a clearly defined representation rather than a formless intensity. The "shadowy daughter" states, "I know thee," and to "know" is to recognize one thing as an identity that is guaranteed by its determination in a prior representation: "Thou art the image of God" (2:7 & 8, E 52). Here, as Deleuze says, "Representation has only a single centre, a unique and receding perspective" (55). Characterized by her rapist as "fall'n to give me life," Orc is a representation whose content is determined by his victim's reference back to a Christian narrative (2:9, E 52). The shadowy daughter is likewise determined by the terrors to which Orc exposes her and her pathological dependence upon him. As Deleuze observes "Representation fails to capture the affirmed world of difference . . . . It mediates everything, but mobilizes and moves nothing" (55-6). The shadowy daughter expresses this condition in the last line of the preludium as "eternal death," the sterility of representation in its inevitable recourse to historically prior moments. Like Marx's assessment of the first French Revolution, Orc's revolution is immediately ossified by its own content. The assemblages effected by Orc as an intensity are converted into a series of specific geopolitical determinations, "a serpent in Canada . . . / In Mexico an Eagle, and a Lion in Peru; / . . . a Whale in the South-sea" (2:12-14, E 52).

13. If the "Preludium" conveys repetition as a tragedy, plates 3-10, the section of *America* identified by Dörrbecker as the conversation between Orc and Albion's Angel, convey it as "comic." Here, Washington, the hero of the American War of Independence, faces an act that is too big for him. The fears Washington expresses seem justified by the dragon-formed appearance of "Albions wrathful Prince" (3:14, E 52). Indeed, Washington does not meet his antagonist. Rather, Orc emerges from the Atlantic to announce what sounds more like the dawning of the millennial age than provincial concerns about taxation without representation. While Washington sinks into static insignificance, the verbal battle between Orc and Albion's Angel is centered on the question of what exactly it is that Orc represents as a revolutionary force. Here, the idea of revolution is revealed as a product of a representation always tied to the past. Orc claims to represent revolution as the fulfillment of eschatological history, while Albion's Angel sees Orc's revolution as a representation that repeats the moment of his own historical origin. Either way, Orc as a revolutionary has no capacity to break free of the past.

14. While in the "Preludium" Orc becomes a representation that receives its determination in relation to a Christian narrative, in this section of the prophecy proper Orc sees himself as the agent of that history in its final and presumably transformative end. As such, Orc represents revolution as apocalypse and millennium, proclaiming: "The grave is burst" (6: 2, E 53) and "The times are ended" (8:2, E 54). Such

claims in the name of revolution designate it as the idea of an end in humanity's final determination in God's being. For Orc, the American Revolution is, by analogy, the representation of the eschatological end of time. In repeating a historically prior representation, Orc's revolution is incapable of producing difference in itself.

15. In an ironic contrast, Albion's Angel recognizes Orc as a representation that repeats his own historical, revolutionary origin. Upon seeing the firey Orc emerge from the Atlantic, Albion's Angel recognizes him as both "Mars" and "Orc." He reflects on the past and says, "Then Mars thou wast our centre" (5:4, E 53). Troping a Marxist view of history as the history of revolutionary action in celestial form, Orc is recognized as the astrological ruling body that governed the planetary and political revolutions that constitute the very content of Albion's Angel as a representation. In response to Orc's claim that "The times are ended" (8:2, E 54), Albion's Angel responds that "the times are return'd upon thee" (9:19, E 54). Orc is a "rebel form . . . / . . . self-renew'd" (9:14-15, E 54), and a "Devourer of thy parent" (9:20, E 54). Albion's Angel thus sees himself confronted by a repetition of his own historical origin, rather than an end of history. Thus the conflict between Orc and Albion's Angel is primarily over what determines revolution's content. Interestingly, *America* never definitively resolves the question of what the American Revolution represents. Orc represents revolutionary action, whatever its content, in the actual, but *America* suggests that there is a resistant virtual dimension that impinges upon the actual, that an irresolvable problematic of revolution as Deleuzean Idea is a necessary condition for a future beyond the historical repetitions of eternal death.

16. While the question of the second section might be summarized as "What does revolution represent?", the question of the third section of the poem, plates 10-16, might be summarized as, "How can the presentation of revolution avoid being tied to prior representations?" Perhaps the decisive moment in *America* is a passage where almost any sense of the imagery ceases to represent definite concepts, offering instead a presentation of the intensity of a Deleuzean sensation, a "brute presence" that is neither subject nor object in a material sense. On plate ten, Albion's Angel commands his thirteen colonial governors to take action, but they refuse:

> Silent the Colonies remain and refuse the loud alarm.
>
> On those vast shady hills between America & Albions shore;
> Now barr'd out by the Atlantic sea: call'd Atlantean hills:
> Because from their bright summits you may pass to the Golden world
> An ancient palace, archetype of mighty Emperies,
> Rears its immortal pinnacles, built in the forest of God
> By Aristron the king of beauty for his stolen bride,
>
> Here on their magic seats the thirteen Angels sat perturb'd
> For clouds from the Atlantic hover o'er the solemn roof.
> (10:4-12, E 55)

This passage is infamous in *America*'s critical history because it refuses to clarify either its relationship to the poem or its allegory of the American Revolution. For the purposes of this paper, I want to read this passage as suggesting that revolutionary action demands the transcendence of history and its representations in the expression of pure difference. Clearly, Blake's poem continues—through its use of words and images—to present images, but it is difficult to say what these images represent. Nevertheless, the Atlantis passage on plate ten is interesting because it marks the poem's break from any possible historical allegory. Yes, Blake's poem operates through the production of images, but these are images which destabilize the representations necessary for the poem's historical allegory.

17. The passage to "the Golden world" and its "magic seats" allows the thirteen angels to dissolve their identities, and thus it permits a freedom from the determinations of representation. This strange passage allows the poem, as Dörrbecker puts it, to "transcend the level of historical narrative" (37). The thirteen are described as rending "off their robes to the hungry wind" and throwing down the emblems of their power (12:3, E 55). This removal of their "robes" is, of course, their rejection of their roles as surrogates for Albion's Angel in the American colonies, but it is more than that; it is their abandonment of identity altogether in the becoming-fire of revolutionary intensity. They escape logical determination, now both "naked & flaming are their lineaments seen / In the deep gloom, by Washington & Paine & Warren" (12: 6-7, E 55). The named heroes are stationary observers in the face of this revolutionary intensity.

18. In rejecting the marks of their political and human determinations to become common expressions of an intensity, the thirteen foment revolutionary change within the poem. Following their example, the citizens of the colonies all set aside their identities, occupations, and geographical locations to become a "fierce rushing of th' inhabitants together" (14:12, E 56). What is crucial here is that revolutionary change is not so much a political opposition as it is a dissolution of individuality. As Makdisi observes of this passage of *America*, "the individuals are absorbed into the crowd that they constitute, not simply losing but altogether detonating their prior individuality" (39). In "detonating" their individuality in a moment of becoming-revolution, *America* expresses revolution as sensation and movement: "all rush together in the night in wrath and raging fire / The red fires rag'd!" (14: 19-20, E 56). "[W]rath and raging fire" are the sensations produced by this rushing "all," no longer a group of autonomous individuals, but an expression of revolutionary intensity that transcends clear determinations of subject and object. The lines between affect and object blur: mass sensations consume the individual, movement has only velocity and intensity.

19. Blake's *America* thus suggests Deleuze's notion of a third repetition beyond Marx's two, wherein the Idea of revolution destabilizes representation. In this third repetition, this third way of thinking revolution in the poem, pure differences in the virtual have an effect on the actual, as the sensations generated by intensities. Thus the Deleuzean achievement of *America*'s treatment of revolution suggests that the connections between the actual and the virtual are the condition of historical action. But what does a Deleuzean Idea of revolution allow us to envision as a future? It is impossible to say. Revolution without representation is a commitment to a future without a guarantee of comprehensible meaning or morality, and it is for this reason that Deleuze characterizes the third repetition as "a throw of the dice" or a kind of "creative destruction."

20. Still, the question remains as to what it accomplishes to say that *America* can be read as a negotiation of the Deleuzean distinction between the idea of revolution and the Idea of revolution. Reading Blake's poem in Deleuzean terms suggests what I think is a legitimately Blakean alternative to seeing the poem as either referring exclusively to the material word, or wholly to the idiosyncratic mental world of Blake's vision. The former cannot limit itself to elaborate allegorizations of the actual material-political world as reality, and the latter cannot simply advocate the transcendence of reality to constitute a different world through imaginative vision. The Deleuzean lesson for a reading of Blake's *America* is its constant reminder of the instability of the subject as fiction of representation, a fiction whose meaning is only guaranteed by its external determinations—its difference from something. The Deleuzean point of revolution in *America* is that it must be thought outside of its representations to produce the conditions for real historical difference. In this way, I am proposing a third way to think the term "revolution," in keeping with the way Deleuze defines difference and repetition, as the cornerstone of his critique of representation. In reading Blake's *America* in Deleuzean terms, I will not suggest that Blake's text goes beyond representation in an absolute sense, but rather that it is possible to understand Blake's text as presenting us with revolution as a dissolution of identity that depends upon a reference to something else. The sense of "revolution" I'm invoking here is thus not the outcome of a

political conflict, wherein one form of government gives way to another. What my reading of the poem intends to produce is a sense of the way in which the notorious difficulty of Blake's references is more than a cryptic problem to decode and render as something that we recognize, but, instead, a step into what Deleuze calls "an unrecognized and unrecognisable *terra incognita*" (136). Thus rather than trying to save Blake's text from charges of obscurity by making his text represent something we all understand, the challenge I offer here is to think the kind of destabilization of reference that Blake's text produces as a fundamental philosophical premise upon which meaningful change becomes possible.

Notes

[1] Instead of a concrete plan of action seeing a particular result, the Idea is a momentary contingency of virtual relations that produces a sensation from the point of view of the actual. As such Deleuze associates Ideas with a kind of "solution" without a concept or representation in the actual. Deleuze explains that Ideas

> precipitate all the circumstances, points of fusion, congelation or condensation in a sublime occasion, *Kairos*, which makes the solution explode like something abrupt, brutal and revolutionary. . . . It is as though every Idea has two faces, which are like love and anger: love in search of the fragments, the progressive determination and linking of the ideal adjoint fields; anger in the condensation of singularities which, by dint of ideal events, defines the concentration of a "revolutionary situation" and causes the Idea to explode into the actual. (190)

Ideas are thus a solution without a concept and a happening without precedent, but it is for this very reason that Ideas are the necessary engine, as it were, for the emergence of a radical revolutionary difference in the world. This is not to say that such a revolutionary happening would realize any sort of utopian hopes; all Ideas affirm is difference. While the critical utility of Deleuzean Ideas for a piece of literary analysis is admittedly tough to grasp, my hope for this paper is neither to offer an exhaustive definition of Deleuzean Ideas, nor to say that what Blake does in *America* is necessarily an expression of authorial intention that prefigures Deleuze's thought, but rather this paper simply suggests that the Deleuzean Idea offers one way that revolution, as it is presented in *America*, may be conceived outside of historical allegory.

[2] For my reading of revolution in Blake's *America*, Deleuze's eternal return offers a way to see the dissolution of the subject in what I identify as *America*'s third repetition as the event which marks the effect of the virtual upon the actual. My paper is not directly concerned with Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, but rather the way in which Deleuze also sees in Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonapart* two senses of revolution that imply a third revolution, that is the eternal return. In this sense, Blake's *America* does not go beyond representation, but rather it shows us what the virtual/real Idea of revolution produces as an event in the actual/real of historical action.

In *Difference & Repetition* in particular, Deleuze's sense of the term repetition is a product of his reading of Friedrich Nietzsche's eternal return in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Deleuze employs eternal return as the term to encompass what difference and repetition can produce as an effect in the actual/real. Rather than seeing Nietzsche's eternal return as an infinite repetition of the past, Deleuze finds "Nietzsche's proposition as the fundamental axiom of a philosophy of forces in which active force separates itself from and supplants reactive force and ultimately locates itself as the motor principle of becoming" (Spinks 83). Through his reading of Nietzsche, Deleuze casts the first repetition as a critique of representation, the second as a critique of identity. The third, implied, repetition of the eternal return in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* coincides with Deleuze's sense of difference and repetition. By seeing the eternal return only in its third repetition,

Difference & Repetition asserts a third that is beyond its two actual appearances in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In the first version of eternal return (III "Of the Vision and the Riddle"), the Dwarf characterizes Zarathustra as "'Condemned by yourself and to your own stone-throwing; o Zarathustra, far indeed have you thrown your stone, but it will fall back on *you*" (251). This first version of return is the return of the past as a repetition of the same. Here, all eternity is simply a circular repetition of what has been—repetition is inextricably tied to its prior representation. Zarathustra resists this. In the second version of eternal return (III "The Convalescent"), Zarathustra's animals claim to know what Zarathustra is "and must become: behold, you are the teacher of the eternal recurrence, that is now your destiny!" (252). In this instance, the eternal return is attached to the repetition of Zarathustra's identity as the recurrence of the same. Zarathustra's becoming "*the teacher of the eternal recurrence* . . . [is simultaneously his] destiny!" (252). Here, the eternal return is a straight line that leads to the realization of an identity that was always guaranteed as "destiny." As Deleuze observes "Zarathustra, feigning sleep, no longer listens to them, for he knows that eternal return is something different again, and that it does not cause the same and the similar to return" (298). If the eternal return, as a third repetition, eschews the recurrence of both identity and representation, what is its content? Deleuze answers:

> We have tried to show that it is a question of simulacra, and simulacra alone. The power of simulacra is such that they essentially implicate at once the object = *x* in the unconscious, the word = *x* in language, and the action = *x* in history. Simulacra are those systems in which different relates to different *by means of* difference itself. What is essential is that we find in these systems no *prior identity*, no *internal resemblance*. It is all a matter of difference in the series, and of differences of differences in the communication between series. (299)

This is not to say that the eternal return in its third repetition is simply the production of the simulacra, but that "simulacra" best captures the way the active force of difference that decenters identity in favor of a perpetual becoming—an ontology without origin—in the philosophical construction of the actual/real that *Difference and Repetition* strives to articulate.

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Romanticism and the New Deleuze

The Transcendental: Deleuze, P. B. Shelley, and the Freedom of Immobility

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audio version (in MP3 format)

Introduction

1. One of the primary goals of this special collection is to highlight the utility and importance of Gilles Deleuze's philosophy for scholars of Romanticism. This essay seeks to establish the relevance of Deleuze for Romanticists and Romanticism by linking Deleuze's philosophy both to one of the central Romantic-era philosophers—Immanuel Kant—and to one of the more philosophical of the British Romantic poets, Percy Shelley. What I argue, in short, is that part of Deleuze's philosophical method—what I'll call, following James Williams, Deleuze's method of "transcendental deduction"—both connects Deleuze to the Kantianism with which scholars of Romanticism are so familiar, but at the same time, digs deeper into tensions that vex Kant's system, and that this reading of Kant then helps us to better understand the roles of passivity and temporality in Percy Shelley's writings. Taking as my case study Shelley's poem "Mont Blanc; Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni," I argue that Deleuze's discussion of the role of rhythm and sensation in Kant's philosophy helps us to understand how Shelley connects the thematic content of "Mont Blanc"—namely, the experience of being in the presence of the mountain—with the rhythmic structure of the poem itself. Moving away from the premise of his earlier poem *Queen Mab*, in which he suggested that poetry could produce moral improvement by inculcating in readers a sense of being part of an animated whole, "Mont Blanc" instead aims to moralize its auditors by suspending animation, which in turn allows readers and listeners to isolate their capacities for sensation.

2. Before moving into my argument proper, though, I want to note my motivations in writing this essay. This paper had its origin, in large part, in a graduate seminar on "Romantic Conceptions of Life" that I taught in spring 2006. For that class, I had students read part of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, and in one of the sections we considered, Deleuze suggests that our experience of time is the result of three syntheses. There is, first, what Deleuze calls a "sensible synthesis," by which he means the synthesis of past and future into the present that occurs "*in* the mind which contemplates, prior to all memory and reflection" (this is something like the phenomenological account of the unconscious modes of "retention" and "protention" necessary for any experience of time) (82).[1] There is, second, the active synthesis of conscious memory. However, Deleuze argues that both of these syntheses are dependent upon

> organic syntheses which are like the sensibility of the senses; they refer back to a primary sensibility that we *are*. 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 . . . is a sum of contractions, retentions and expectations (*DR* 73).

A particularly bright undergraduate who was taking the course objected to Deleuze's attempt to ground sensible and perceptible syntheses in an "organic" synthesis, and the nature of his objection was quite astute. The student argued that whereas Deleuze's contentions about the first two syntheses seemed like philosophical claims, in the sense that philosophy could adjudicate their validity, the question of an organic synthesis seemed to be operating in a completely different level of analysis (e.g., biology or physics rather than philosophy). Or, as he put it, and in a more Kantian tone, Deleuze was guilty of

making an unwarranted movement from transcendental to ontological claims: that is, from conditions that had logical necessity to conditions that (purportedly) had ontological necessity. I think this is an astute observation, but the purpose of this paper, in part, is to map out the itinerary that would justify Deleuze's movement through Kant to something like ontology.

I. The Kantian Transcendental Deduction

3. I'll begin with a quick reminder of how Kant understands the term "transcendental." Kant introduces the concept of the "transcendental" in the Introduction to *The Critique of Pure Reason*, defining there as "*transcendental* all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*" (*CPR*, A 12; p. 59). In this quote, the pronoun "our" is quite important, for it highlights the fact that Kant is interested in the a priori modes of knowledge of the particular kinds of beings that *we* are. And we are, according to Kant, a kind of being characterized by three active "faculties" and one passive faculty. We can certainly imagine—and there may in fact exist—beings with different arrangements of faculties, or perhaps even beings that lack faculties entirely, but in order to understand our own conditions of knowledge, we must understand the possible relationships between our active and passive faculties.[2]

4. So what does it mean to say that we are a being composed of active and passive faculties?

5. As Deleuze notes, Kant in fact uses the term "faculty" in two senses. Sometimes, Kant uses the term faculty to refer to *relationships between representations and objects*, and in these cases he refers to the faculties of "knowing," "desiring," and "feeling." So, for example, Kant speaks of the "faculty of knowing" when he refers to our efforts to make our representations conform to external objects; he speaks of the "faculty of desire" when he refers to our efforts to produce the objects of our representation (as when, for example, we seek to be the cause of a moral action); and he speaks of the "faculty of feeling" when he refers to the effect of a representation on the "vital force" of the subject: that is, the capacity of a representation to intensify or diminish the sensed vital force of a subject. According to Kant, our everyday experience involves different—and often confused—kinds of relationships between the three faculties of knowing, desiring, and feeling. For example, we may claim to have knowledge of an object, when in fact we simply desire it, or we may believe we desire an action, when in fact the representation of this action simply produces pleasure. Thus, as Deleuze notes, a transcendental analysis of these faculties—that is, the faculties of knowing, desiring, and feeling—means for Kant the task of locating the "higher" form of each of these faculties. A higher form of a faculty means a form in which the faculty gives itself its own law, rather than being directed by other faculties (*KCP* 4). The higher form of the faculty of knowing, for example, would be that form in which knowing gives itself its own law, rather than being directed by the faculties of desiring or feeling.

6. However, Kant also uses the term faculty in second way, to refer to a *source* of representation, and in those instances, he speaks of the faculties of "reason," "understanding," and "imagination." The faculty of imagination, for example, links what Kant calls "intuitions" of objects—that is, sensory perceptions of objects—with concepts; the faculty of understanding produces concepts; and the faculty of reason produces "ideas" (which, in Kant's system, are concepts that go beyond the possibility of experience). He actually speaks of four faculties here, for there is also the faculty of sensibility, by means of which we generate intuitions. However, this faculty is not of especial interest to Kant, because it is not, for him, *active*: that is, it does not synthesize, but is simply a faculty of reception. As Deleuze notes, for Kant, "[o]ur constitution is such that we have one receptive faculty and three active faculties" (*KCP* 9). [3]

7. It is the method of "transcendental deduction" that allows us to link these two senses of the term

faculty. We locate the higher form of the faculties of knowing, desiring, and feeling when we employ a transcendental deduction to determine relationships of legislation between the faculties understood as sources of representation (that is, the three faculties of reason, understanding, and imagination). For Kant, the faculties of reason, understanding, and imagination are all always involved in each of our pursuits and activities, but the question is: which of these faculties directs—that is, which legislates for—the others? In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, transcendental deduction reveals that a higher form of knowledge is possible when the faculty of understanding legislates over—that is, directs the activities of—the faculties of reason and imagination, while in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, transcendental deduction reveals that a higher form of desire is possible when reason legislates over the faculties of the understanding and imagination.

II: The Deleuzean Transcendental Deduction

8. All of this will strike most readers, I assume, as uncontentious—that is, as simply an explication of Kant's claims, as Kant himself presented them. However, what interests Deleuze are Kant's brief allusions to what Deleuze calls the "genetic" aspects of Kant's system: that is, those moments in which Kant realizes that he can't simply assume valorized particular legislative relationships between faculties, but instead has to show the conditions of possibility that would allow such relationships to be produced. With respect to these genetic moments in Kant, Deleuze argues two points. First, he argues that the condition of possibility for any determinate, legislative relationships between faculties is that these faculties are capable of a free and indeterminate—that is, a *non*-legislative—mode of accord. And, second, he argues that such non-legislative modes of accord can only be understood if we understand the terms "sensation" and "Ideas" differently than Kant. Rather than understanding sensation as simple receptivity, as does Kant, we have to understand it as a mode of synthesis, and rather than understanding Ideas as non-determinate concepts produced by reason, and we have to understand them as tensions—what Deleuze calls "problems"—that traverse all the faculties and tie these faculties into the world itself.

9. I'll begin with Deleuze's claim about the relationship between legislative and non-legislative modes of relationship between faculties. Deleuze argues that Kant cannot, within the terms of his own system, simply "invoke a harmonious accord of the faculties" (*KCP* 22) that characterizes the different legislative relationships of knowledge and morality. Rather, "the Critique in general demands a principle of [this possibility for an] accord [of the faculties]" (*KCP* 22-3). Deleuze argues that Kant himself locates the condition of possibility for these different forms of harmony between faculties in a more fundamental capacity for a "free and indeterminate accord" between faculties. That is, Deleuze argues that, within the terms of Kant's system,

> every determinate accord [between the faculties] presupposes that the faculties are, at a deeper level, capable of a free and indeterminate accord (*CJ* para. 21). It is only at the level of this free and indeterminate accord (sensus communis aestheticus) that *we will be able to pose* the problem of a ground of the accord . . . (*KCP* 23-4).

   Not surprisingly, Deleuze turns to Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, and to its analysis of the so-called "reflective judgment"—that is, the kind of judgment that Kant describes as characterized by free and indeterminate accord of faculties—in order to locate the ground of the determinate accord that characterizes legislative relationships between faculties. In the third *Critique*, Kant's two primary examples of "free and indeterminate accords [of faculties]" are judgments of beauty and sublimity, and Deleuze argues that in both cases, Kant suggests that these accords of faculties are *produced* as responses to experiences of difference or intensity.

10. In the interests of space, I'll focus here on Deleuze's discussion of Kant's account of sublimity.

According to Kant, judgments of sublimity are dependent upon an accord between reason and imagination, insofar as in judgments of sublimity, "the soul" must discover that both of these faculties have a "supersensible destination." However, Kant contends that the pleasure produced by this accord of the faculties of reason and imagination emerges from an initial dissonance between reason and imagination, a dissonance produced by the fact that the faculty of reason demands something of the faculty of imagination—namely, that external objects be gathered together into a whole—which the imagination cannot accomplish in the case of very large or powerful objects.

11. Kant himself is primarily interested in the *result* of this accord between reason and imagination. That is, for Kant, "[t]he sense of the sublime is engendered within us in such a way that it prepares a higher finality and prepares us ourselves for the advent of the moral law" (*KCP* 52). What interests Deleuze, however, is not the result of the accord, but the fact that such an accord is *produced*: that is, in judgments of sublimity, "the imagination-reason accord is not simply assumed: it is genuinely *engendered*" (*KCP* 51-2).[4] From Deleuze's perspective, what Kant neglected to do—but should have done, within the terms of the Critical system—was to account for the condition of possibility of such a *production* of an accord that is free and indeterminate; that is, the production of what Deleuze calls a "*discordant harmony*." Deleuze is interested in this "discordant harmony," since, he claims, in such moments, "each [faculty] communicates to the other only the violence which confronts it with its own difference and divergence from the othe[r faculties]" (*DR* 146). For Deleuze, in other words, judgments of sublimity are interesting philosophically less on account of what they may or may not point the subject toward—for Kant, they point subjects toward the higher finality of the moral law—but rather for what they reveal about the limits of each faculty and the conditions of possibility that allow faculties to relate to one another in the first place.[5]

12. Deleuze's analysis of the conditions of possibility for the discordant accord that is produced in judgments of the sublime produces two important modifications to the Kantian system. First, Deleuze suggests that accounting for the genesis of judgments of sublimity requires that the Kantian understanding of sensation—of "sensibility"—must be modified. Where Kant understands sensation as a simple receptivity, Deleuze argues that Kant's own discussion of the sublime suggests that, in fact, the faculty of imagination can carry out its tasks—apprehension, reproduction, and recognition—only if there is a prior, non-conceptual, but also non-imaginative mode of synthesis proper to sensation itself.[6] Deleuze suggests that we call this mode of synthesis proper to sensation "rhythm," and he proposes that Kant needs to assume precisely such an understanding of rhythm to account for the capacity of sensation to connect us to the world. Sensation connects us to the world not through concepts of the understanding or through the specific synthetic activities of the faculty of imagination; rather, "[t]he being of sensation is . . . the compound of nonhuman forces of the cosmos" (*WIP* 181). Deleuze suggests that it is only by establishing the mode of synthesis proper to sensation that we take the true measure of the understanding of transcendental philosophy: that is, "[e]mpiricism truly becomes transcendental, and aesthetics an apodictic discipline, only when we apprehend directly in the sensible that which can only be sensed, the very being *of* the sensible: difference, potential difference and difference in intensity as the reason behind qualitative diversity" (*DR* 56-57).

13. Yet, Deleuze suggests, we still have to go further, and ask "[w]hat forces sensibility to sense?" (*DR* 143) Here is the second departure from Kantian terminology, for Deleuze suggests that we use the term "Idea" to refer not—as did Kant—to the non-determinable concepts of the faculty of reason, but rather to the "problems" that tie living beings into their environment, "problems" that also serve to link the different faculties of the human subject to one another. Thus, writes Deleuze, "it will be necessary to reserve the name of Ideas not for pure cogitanda but rather for those instances which go from sensibility to thought and from thought to sensibility, capable of engendering in each case, according to their own order, the limit- or transcendent-object of each faculty" (*DR* 146). It is through the concepts of "rhythm" and "Idea," then, that Deleuze moves the methodology of transcendental deduction from a

purely epistemological to an epistemological-ontological foundation, for it is by means of the rhythmic capacities of sensation that we are bound into those fields of tension and differentials—that is, Deleuzean "Ideas"—of which we are part.

III: Shelley's "Mont Blanc": Rhythm and Suspended Animation

14. In addition to helping us better understand Kant's own philosophy, Deleuze's reading of Kant also helps us to understand better the role of rhythm in Romantic era poetry, and in what follows, I'll try to support this claim though a case study of one poem, Shelley's "Mont Blanc." I want to stress at the outset, though, that this is not an influence argument: that is, I'm not arguing that Shelley read Kant in the same way that Deleuze read Kant, especially since Shelley's knowledge of Kant was relatively minimal. My point is rather that Deleuze's engagement with Kant provides us with a set of conceptual tools that allows us to make sense of some of otherwise confusing aspects of Shelley's poetry and philosophy.

15. I've picked "Mont Blanc" as my case study because the poem has often been read as an exemplification of an essentially Kantian understanding of the sublime. This is the explicit claim of, for example, Christopher Bode, but there are also many canonical readings of the poem that—though they do not mention Kant—nevertheless develop interpretations that rely on the structure of Kant's sublime, in the sense that they read the poem within the paradigm of what we might call "threat to consciousness and its resolution."[7] That is, most critics seem to agree that the poem is, or represents, an attempt to confront and resolve a threat to consciousness. The threat itself is indexed by the "frozen floods" and "beaming ice" of Mont Blanc (ll. 64, 106)—phenomena that are, like Kant's examples of the sublime, either too powerful, extensive, or alien for the imagination to encompass. And for many critics the poem attempts—successfully or not—to resolve this threat to the imagination by, first, discovering in consciousness a capacity of becoming equal to this threat, and, second, by coordinating a moral, or at least political, interest with this capacity (those notoriously obscure "large codes of fraud and woe" that, the poem's narrator claims, will be repealed should the mountain's voice be heard).

16. A Deleuzean reading of the poem does not so much contest this interpretation as point to a different aspect of the poem, focusing our attention not on the possible resolutions of the threat that the poem announces, but rather on the ways in which such threats allow us to understand—and, more to the point, more fully engage—our faculty of sensation. Shelley's poem focuses our attention on sensation by using the mountain to reduce its narrator to a state of passivity, what Shelley calls a "trance sublime and strange." It is within this state of suspended animation—that is, a state in which the narrator's faculties of knowing and desiring are placed in abeyance—that the specificity and complexity of the faculty of feeling can be best revealed. More specifically, it is from this perspective of trance that the narrator is able to sense the differentials that connect living beings with an embodied external world. Because this is a differential proper to the faculty of sensation, it can only be sensed, not conceptualized. However, the poem, as an instance of articulated language, necessarily deals with concepts, and the narrator thus must index this sensory differential through concepts that describe states of "static intensity"—for example, that "torpor of the year when feeble dreams / Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep / Holds every future leaf and flower" (ll. 88-90). Less proximate indications of sensation are developed through nouns and adjectives that highlight tension and potential energy, as when Shelley employs representations of ice (e.g., glaciers and ice gulphs) to link adjectives of suspension, such as "stillness" and "serenity," with verbs of intensity, such as "revolving," "subsiding," and "swelling" (l. 95). It is these verbs of intensity—what Shelley calls in line 33 "ceaseless motion"—that ensure that the "torpor" of the year is not so much an accurate conceptual description as a translation into concepts of what can, in fact, only be sensed.

17. Yet what makes this a poem—rather than simply a poetic restatement of Deleuze's philosophy—is that

in its very presentation, as verse, it is designed to isolate and expand in listeners their own capacities for sensation, and it accomplishes this through its peculiar rhyme scheme. While "Mont Blanc" is sometimes understood as an example of blank verse, William Keach's classic study *Shelley's Style* revealed the complicated rhythmic structure of "Mont Blanc." As Keach notes, "[o]f the 144 lines in *Mont Blanc*, only three end in words which have no rhyme elsewhere in the poem." Yet because Shelley's poem employs irregular forms of rhyming—imperfect rhyme, such as the rhyme of "down" with "throne" in lines 16 and 17; internal rhyme, such as the rhyme of "glare" and "there" in lines 131 and 132; and homonymic rhyme, such as the extended rhyme of "throne" with "overthrown" between lines 17 and 113—the poem nevertheless "feels" like it is somehow between rhyming and blank verse. Keach contends that the irregular rhythmic structure of the poem is related to its thematic content, through he also interprets this relationship by means of the familiar paradigm of "threat and resolution." He suggests that rhyme in "Mont Blanc" is sufficiently *irregular* to help evoke "the 'untameable wildness' Shelley spoke of . . . . Yet rhyme is [also] there as one of the resources with which the poet verbally counters as well as encounters an experience of threatening power and sublimity" (196). Keach, in other words, interprets the irregularity of the rhyme as mimicking for the reader the threat of untamable wildness, while the fact that there nevertheless *is* rhyme "counters" that threat.

18. In keeping with my interpretation of the poem's content above, I would slightly shift Keach's point, and argue that instead of producing and resolving a threat, the irregular rhythm of the poem instead functions for the reader as an intensive series—that is, an oscillating movement between the torpor of repetitive rhyme and the leap beyond rhyme. As a consequence, where the representational content of the poem *re-presents* the importance of sensation, the poem's rhyme presents the reader with sensory material that must in fact be bound together by the faculty of sensation. Thus, rather than understanding the irregularity of the meter in "Mont Blanc" within the paradigm of a sublime "threat-to-consciousness-and-its-resolution"—a paradigm that Keach refines, rather than contests—we should instead understand rhyme in "Mont Blanc" as a non-signifying means for isolating sensation. By employing rhyme irregularly, "Mont Blanc" keeps its listeners in a state of suspension, neither able to locate a consistent and stable rhythmic measure that would allow a "prediction" of the occurrence of the next rhyme, nor able to move rhyme to the background of the reading or listening experience (as would be more the case for actual blank verse).

19. If the poem is able to produce an experience akin to the sublime in its listeners and readers, it does so not through the conflict of faculties that Kant described in the *Critique of Judgment*—that is, the tension between apprehension and comprehension that occurs when the faculty of imagination attempts to accomplish what the faculty of reason demands (*CJ* 110-11)—for the poem does not in fact *present* an object that challenges sensory comprehension. As David Collings astutely notes in his response to my original presentation of this argument, "Mont Blanc" *represents*, rather than presents, an object that challenges sensory comprehension. No doubt many of Shelley's readers have imagined to themselves that if they were in the actual presence of the mountain, they too would be able to apprehend the individual parts of the mountain, but unable to comprehend the whole—but this is an exercise in the imagination of failure, not an actual failure of imagination, for the concepts that the poem presents are well-formed, suited to both apprehension and comprehension. If, nevertheless, the poem enables a sublime feeling of distortion and straining, such a feeling is produced by the link the poem establishes between the well-formed representational content of the verse and the intensive series established by its rhyme. What the poem *presents* is sonic material: that is, the sounds of the words themselves. These sounds do not challenge imaginative comprehension or apprehension, but they do produce a strain through the irregularity of their rhyme, as sensation continually seeks for the measure of the poem.

Conclusion: Shelley on Animation, Sensation, and Freedom

20. By way of conclusion, I would like to dwell briefly on what I see as the implications of this Deleuzean reading of "Mont Blanc" for our more general understanding of Shelley's poetics. I focus here especially on the ways in which this helps us to understand what Shelley saw as the purpose—or, more precisely, the practical effect—of his poetry on his readers, for it strikes me that the emphasis in "Mont Blanc" on sensation marks a significant shift between Shelley's early and later understandings of what we might think of as the social effects of poetry.

21. I agree with most interpreters of "Mont Blanc," who have felt confident that Shelley intended his poem to produce its effects in an explicitly moral and political register. This intention on the part of Shelley seems supported by the narrator's suggestion that the mountain has a voice that, when heard properly, has the power "to repeal / Large [political] codes of fraud and woe" (ll. 80-1). However, the mechanism by means of which Shelley thought that a poem could effect, or at least encourage, political and legal change is not so clear. On the one hand, the suggestion that perceptions and conceptions of natural objects produced moral and political improvement was not a particularly contentious position in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and authors could defend such a position with a variety of schemas, ranging from "physico-theology," which emphasized the moral improvement that resulted from a conscious awareness of the complexity of nature, to the Wordsworthian claim that love of nature led to love of men, to the Kantian suggestion that beauty "symbolized" morality while experiences of sublimity allowed us to "feel a purposiveness within ourselves entirely independent of nature" (*CJ* 100). On the other hand, though, the emphasis in "Mont Blanc" on the inhospitability of nature seems to preclude these sorts of solutions: "Mont Blanc" stresses not the complexity, but rather the chaos, of the natural world; it aims to reveal not a "love" of nature but rather a vacancy that is inhospitable to humanity; and the sublimity that the poem invokes leads us into a facultative free play focused on sensation rather than the more hierarchical "free play" between the faculties of imagination and reason that Kant invokes in his explanation of the sublime. We are thus left with a question: what, in the case of "Mont Blanc," justifies a connection between its emphasis on sensation, on the one hand, and politics and morality, on the other? Why, in other words, should the attention to sensation that "Mont Blanc" enables have moral and political implications?

22. To begin with, the link between sensation and moral and political improvement suggested in "Mont Blanc" seems to represent a significant refinement of the philosophy of progressive materialism that Shelley outlined in his early poetic epic, *Queen Mab* (1813). *Queen Mab* is also a "trance poem," beginning with a description of girl sleeping so deeply that the narrator is uncertain whether she is dead or alive. The rest of the poem describes the girl's imaginative "abduction" by Queen Mab, who reveals to her the past, present, and future of the world, focusing especially on the history and destiny of social and political institutions such as Christianity, the family, and the state. Drawing on authors such as David Hume, William Godwin, and d'Holbach, Shelley argued for a form of philosophical materialism in the text and notes of *Queen Mab*, contending that mind and thought were causally linked to the physical interactions of the material world, and would—as a result, and necessarily—change as the material world changed. Shelley believed that these material changes were progressive, and thus the world was—albeit slowly—"re-forming" along utopian lines. Since this reformation included both the material and mental worlds, *Queen Mab* outlined a prospect of the future in which the earth was become a temperate paradise, human disease and suffering were alleviated (if not entirely abolished), and divisive and inequitable political systems had been replaced by pacific social relations. In Canto V of the poem, Shelley connected this progressive materialist philosophy to the concepts of life and activity, suggesting that his progressive materialism could be intuited through the image of one "wide-diffused" "spirit of activity and life, / That knows no term, cessation, or decay" (80).[8] At this early point in his poetic career, Shelley seems to have understood "animation" and "activity" as linked concepts that allowed his readers to think *systemically*: that is, by imagining the universe as "activity and life, / That knows no term, cessation, or decay," readers would be able to sense and orient themselves toward global and systemic changes already underway, and of which they themselves were

parts.

23. In "Mont Blanc," Shelley remained interested in orienting his readers toward systemic perceptions, but he seems no longer to have believed that representations of motion and activity were the keys to enabling such understandings. Rather than representing his readers' activities as part of a more general spirit of animation, "Mont Blanc" represented the suspension of animation. Shelley remained committed to the goal of encouraging a sense of system, but "Mont Blanc" shifted the register of such awareness from understanding to sensation, presenting its auditors with a rhythmic and linguistic technology able to isolate a listener's capacity for sensation. The poem also suggests that such a capacity is necessary if readers are in fact to become able to orient to themselves toward systemic change.

24. "Mont Blanc" thus points toward a complex understanding of the way in which sensation serves as the link between matter and mind. While Shelley was still clearly indebted to the sensationalist empiricism of Locke, Hume, and Condillac, "Mont Blanc" reveals the poet's awareness that sensation cannot be understood as simply an "impression" of external matter on a malleable surface. Rather, "Mont Blanc" emphasizes the extent to which for Shelley, as for Deleuze and Guattari, the being of sensation must be understood as a "compound of nonhuman forces of the cosmos." Sensation, that is, should be understood neither as a passive opening to the outside nor an active imposition of the human phenomenal matrix on the noumenal non-human; it is rather a mode of synthesis that binds a living being into the non-organic forces of the cosmos. Deleuze and Guattari's point—and I take this to be Shelley's point in "Mont Blanc" as well—is that sensation involves a *synthesis* of these non-human forces; that is, it brings together and binds different nonhuman forces.

25. In the register of its rhythmic elements, "Mont Blanc" is designed to enable listeners/readers to attune themselves to the differentials of the world, rather than focusing solely on the ways in which those differentials could be turned into means for ends determined by consciousness. However, Shelley's poem also aimed to reproduce this freedom of sensation at the level of consciousness, thereby momentarily freeing the listener from the habits of the past.[9] What distinguished an auditing of Shelley's poem from an experience of pure sensation per se is that in the former case, sensation is linked to concepts, enabling a work of interpretation that allows one to align the affective opening to non-human forces enabled by sensation with the moral and political message established by the poem's conceptual content.

26. The understanding of sensation that underwrites "Mont Blanc" complicated Shelley's progressive materialism, for the poem suggested that humans facilitate the progressive movement of matter by sensing—and then responding to—the differentials that traverse both the natural world and human bodies. Precisely because "the everlasting universe of things/ Flows through the mind" (ll. 1-2), the differentials produced by these "waves" can then be linked to the more small-scale differentials that the subject itself establishes. By listening to "Mont Blanc," the auditor becomes aware of potentials within the "system" of the world, and so can be inspired by the "voice" of Mont Blanc to change existing legal and political codes. If a poem can "moralize" its readers, Shelley suggests, it does so not through its content, but rather because the state of suspension that its reading requires frees sensation, enabling new forms of linkage between elements of the system of the world.[10]

27. While I have focused here on ways in which Deleuze's work allows us to understand anew Shelley's poetics specifically, it also strikes me that Shelley's "Deleuzeanism" has wider implications for the study of Romanticism, as well as the study of literary poetics more generally. As David Collings has noted in his response to my podcast and essay, the irregularity of rhyme in Shelley's "Mont Blanc" means that my claims about this particular poem cannot be applied in simple fashion to other Romantic works that employ more regular rhyme, or to later modes of poetry for which rhyme is not a primary

consideration. At the same time, though, I see the irregularity of rhyme in "Mont Blanc" as an analytic isolation of the rhythmic irregularity that traverses most, if not all, works that we deem "poetic." A Deleuzean approach to irregular rhyme and rhythm thus represents a way of engaging with what M. H. Abrams has called the "material dimension" of poetry and poetics, but in a way that focuses on the conditions of possibility for experiences of materiality, rather then looking toward a humanist physiology of the body as the ground of explanation of these experiences.[11] This Deleuzean-Shelleyan approach can also extend our sense of the rhythms of literature beyond prosody and into questions of reception, focusing on ways in which the periodicities of reading experiences—for example, the points in daily rhythms in which poems and books are read; how often they are read; and in what kinds of social settings they are read—can both enable and interrupt other social rhythms.[12] Finally, a Deleuzean Shelleyianism allows us to understand anew the afterlives of Romanticism. It enables us to discern, for example, a tradition of thought about "active passivity" that begins in the Romantic era, but which also finds expression at the end of the nineteenth century (in the work of, for example, Henri Bergson), and again in the latter part of the twentieth century (in the work of, for example, Gilles Deleuze, as well as in the work of literary authors such as Philip K. Dick).[13] Approaching this tradition from the perspective of the Deleuzean Shelley allows to understand its movement beyond the schema of historical continuity, pointing us instead toward a historical modality of suspended animation, by means of which potentials established in the Romantic era can again be revived and renewed in later periods.

Notes

[1] Hereafter, all references are indicated parenthetically, with the following abbreviations employed: "*DR*" for *Difference and Repetition*; "*KCP*" for Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*; "*WIP*" for Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*; "*CPR*" for Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*; "*CJ*" for Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*.

[2] As David L. Clark notes, our ability to imagine beings such as aliens, angels, and animals that are constituted in other ways plays an important role in Kant's general system; see, for example, "Kant's Aliens: The Anthropology and Its Others," pp. 201-289.

[3] As Deleuze notes in *Difference and Repetition*, "Kant defines the passive self in terms of simple receptivity, thereby assuming sensations already formed, then merely relating these to the *a priori* forms of their representation which are determined as time and space" (*DR* 98).

[4] What intrigues Deleuze especially about the account of the beautiful in the *Critique of Judgment* is Kant's account of the role of "free materials of nature" (*KCP* 54), such as colors and sounds, in our experience of the beautiful. As is well known, Kant's account of the beautiful stresses the role of form over colors and sounds: for Kant, "form" names that aspect of an object which the imagination alone can "reflect," whereas (as Deleuze notes) "color and sound are too material, too entrenched in the senses to be reflected in our imagination in this way" (*KCP* 47). But at the same time, Kant's subsequent account of symbolism acknowledges, even if circumspectly, the importance of colors and sounds for the emergence of an aesthetic accord of the faculties. For Kant suggests that in experiences of the beautiful, the free materials of nature such as colors and sounds "do not relate simply to the determinate concepts of the understanding," but also end up relating to an Idea of reason: the white lily, for example, is a kind of plant from the standpoint of the understanding, but a symbol of innocence from the standpoint of reason. And, Deleuze stresses,

> Two consequences flow from this: the understanding itself sees its concepts enlarged in an unlimited way; [and] the imagination is freed from the constraint of the understanding to which it remained subject in the schematism and becomes capable of reflecting form freely. [And this

> means that] The accord between imagination as free and understanding as indeterminate is therefore not merely assumed: it is in a sense animated, enlivened, engendered by the interest of the beautiful (*KCP* 55).

It is true, of course, that Kant seeks to position these genetic movements—that is, the emergence within the subject of new forms of common-sense—within teleological, developmental frames. So, for example, Kant suggests that emergence of "the indeterminate unity and the free accord of the faculties" that takes place in experiences of "the beautiful" "do not merely constitute that which is *deepest* in the soul, but prepare the advent of that which is *most elevated*, that is to say the supremacy of the faculty of desire, and make possible the transition from the faculty of knowledge to the faculty of desire" (*KCP* 55-6).

[5] Or, as Deleuze puts it in *Difference and Repetition*, judgments of sublimity are useful insofar as they allow us to investigate the "triple violence" to which faculties can be submitted: namely, "the violence of that which forces [the faculty] to be exercised, [second,] of that which [the faculty] is forced to grasp and which it alone is able to grasp, yet also that of the ungraspable (from the point of view of [the faculty's] empirical exercise" (*DR* 143).

[6] Of course, Kant doesn't make this point directly; rather, Deleuze argues, it is in the changes that Kant makes to his account of the faculty of imagination—and the role of the human body and rhythm—between the first and third critiques that we can see that imagination's activities (apprehension, comprehension, recognition) must depend upon a prior synthesis of sensation.

[7] The precise nature of the threat differs considerably from reading to reading: critics inclined toward philosophical interpretations have tended to stress epistemological threats, while historicist critics have emphasized threats that are more political, social, or environmental in nature. Examples of philosophical interpretations include I. J. Kapstein's classic argument in "The Meaning of Shelley's 'Mont Blanc'" that the poem manifests the threat of logical inconsistency resulting from Shelley's apparent allegiance to *both* philosophical materialism and idealism; Charles H. Vivian's counter-proposal in "The One 'Mont Blanc'" that the poem *is* in fact "self-consistent," since it is "not a poem in which the problems [about the "ultimate nature of mind"] are solved," but is rather about "the very experience of coming to grapple with the problems, and about the nature of the evidence available for dealing with them" (55, 61); Earl Wasserman's suggestion in *Shelley: A Critical Reading* that the inhospitable ice is an index of the possibility that nature is fundamentally "vacant"; Frances Ferguson's contention in "Shelley's 'Mont-Blanc': What the Mountain Said" that while the poem "exhibits its own repeated failure to let Mont Blanc be merely a blank, merely a mass of stone" (173), it also attempts to remove this as a problem by turning "epistemological language into love language" (173, 178); and Christoph Bode's claim in "Shelley's 'Mont Blanc': The Aesthetic 'Aufhebung' of a Philosophical Antinomy": that the apparent conflict between the epistemology and ontology of the poem itself makes for a consistent argument for an idealist philosophy. Historicist interpretations include Nigel Leask's assertion in "Mont Blanc's Mysterious Voice: Shelley and Huttonian Earth," that "Mont Blanc" constitutes a secular attempt to counter religious interpretations of the sublimity of the glacier and mountain and Alan Bewell's suggestion in *Romanticism and Colonial Disease* that the glaciers of the mountain—glaciers that "creep/ Like snakes that watch their prey"—register Shelley's fear of the threat of unstoppable global cooling (ll. 100-101).

[8] This image in *Queen Mab* was a poetic reworking of a line of thought that Shelley first developed in correspondence with Elizabeth Hitchener. In his 2 January 1812 letter to Hitchener, for example, he argued that an understanding of life as "infinite" was equivalent to the position that "every thing is animation" (*The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, I:156).

[9] For an account of Shelley's more general interest in creating ruptures in his auditors' "time consciousness," see my *Sympathy and the State in the Romantic Era: Systems, State Finance, and the Shadows of Futurity,*

pp. 163-204.

[10] It was this understanding of sensation, I suggest, that motivated Shelley's belief that "passive resistance" was an effective political strategy. Shelley's doctrine of passive resistance—exemplified in a poem such as "The Mask of Anarchy" (1819), and inspirational for later figures such as Mahatma Gandhi—has often been interpreted from a purely psychological view. From this perspective, passive resistance is effective because it "shames" aggressors. It is more productive, however, to approach Shelley's understanding of passive resistance from the perspective of suspended animation: by suspending one's own action, one enables greater capacities of sensation—that is, lines of linkage with systemic potentials—for others. Such a perspective avoids the dubious causal claims of the psychological approach—it is not at all clear why passive resistance ought "automatically" to produce shame in aggressors—while retaining the emphasis on system to which Shelley was committed.

[11] See M. H. Abrams, "Keats's Poems: The Material Dimensions."

[12] See Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, "Rhythm and Meaning." While Gumbrecht draws on systems theory, rather than Deleuze, in his essay, his claims can be productively linked to a Deleuzean approach to rhythm and meaning.

[13] For an example of Dick's interest in the activity of passivity, see his brilliant novel *Ubik*, which depicts a cast of characters who travel all around the globe, as well as between the earth and moon. These characters slowly come to the realization that they are, in fact, in states of suspended animation, yet they nevertheless retain a capacity to affect events outside these states, in the "real" world.

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Romanticism and the New Deleuze

Rhyming Sensation in "Mont Blanc": In Response to Rob Mitchell

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1. In his paper, "The Transcendental: Deleuze, P. B. Shelley, and the Freedom of Immobility," Rob Mitchell outlines Deleuze's immanent critique of Kant's theory of the faculties in order to demonstrate that it provides a broader philosophical template on which readers of English Romantic poems can draw. Mitchell rightly argues that insofar as the Kantian framework remains useful to such readers, Deleuze's critique is a significant development, for it allows us to attend with greater rigor to unsuspected dimensions of a poetics of the sublime. Deleuze points to how Kant's theory of the faculties relies on aspects of the mind he does not discuss, such as the faculty of sensation. As a consequence, Mitchell argues, one can expand the frame of a Kantian reading of "Mont Blanc" by finding terms such as "torpor" or procedures such as irregular rhyme which variously present the intensities of sensation.

2. In this response to Mitchell's paper, I'd like to set aside the validity of Kantian readings of "Mont Blanc," as well as the question of the accuracy of Deleuze's argument or Mitchell's summary, in order to pursue further certain implications of Mitchell's intuition regarding this poem's irregular rhyme, particularly the key innovation with which he concludes. In aligning Deleuzean intensities of sensation with the poem's unusual sound structure, Mitchell draws new attention to an important question in the study of Romantic poems: what role do sound or rhythm play in the articulation of the sublime?

3. At first, it seems clear that "Mont Blanc" is neither attempting to imitate the sublime experience itself nor to enable the reader to undergo that experience while reading it. The poem does not directly assault the senses, shatter the representational medium, or attempt to push beyond the limits of language. Rather, it muses upon sublimity in what most readers for many decades regarded as a consistently maintained and elevated version of blank verse. Moreover, it sustains a rather oblique relationship to sublime experience per se; its use of philosophical concepts and images and its openly speculative interest in the import of the mountain and ravine suggest that it shares much with a philosophical analysis of the mind's faculties. Although the poem does not provide philosophical argument per se, instead representing its characteristic concerns in part through the dramatized situation of an embodied speaker, it evacuates this speaker of particular biographical features and goes so far as to read features in the landscape itself allegorically, as instances of the faculties of mind. This blend of embodied response and universal import closely resembles Kant's own procedure, for he too insists both on the uniqueness and the communicability of aesthetic judgment. The dramatic scenario of this poem nicely captures the particular status of aesthetic judgment itself, as if to make explicit a representational scenario already operating in Kant's text.

4. But at this point one must move beyond Kant, for "Mont Blanc" attempts to share its aesthetic judgment in an aesthetically appealing mode of its own. In effect, the poem engages the problem of the aesthetic on two distinct levels at once, rendering aesthetic theory in a beautiful form. It does aesthetic philosophy poetically, conducting its analysis of the mind's faculties in a text that also draws upon the resources of imagistic patterns, rhetorical tropes, allusions, meter and sound. In examining the poem, one's attention to aesthetic concerns is inevitably divided between its philosophical import and these features of poetic statement. Yet one cannot be too strict in policing the boundaries between these two levels, for in drawing attention to the poetics of articulation, "Mont Blanc" suggests that philosophical

argument inevitably relies on representations of an embodied "I," narrative exempla, privileged metaphors, and repeated terms. Its own inventiveness, not least in imagining what might transpire on the peak of a mountain no one has yet ascended, parallels what Deleuze considers to be Kant's own resourcefulness; both Kant and Shelley, perhaps, are "inventors of concepts," crafting new philosophical categories and scenarios. In short, the poem suggests that patterned verbal statement is a precondition of philosophical argument and hints that there may be an aesthetic appeal to the form of argument itself.

5. This shift from propositional content to verbal texture might remind one of the characteristic procedures of Derridean reading, which typically treats the philosophical text as a specifically written thing. But in this case, at least, Deleuzean reading must differ from Derridean, for it focuses not on the vicissitudes of certain core terms but on the non-signifying features of verbal statement, such as rhythm and sound. One might say that it attends not to the non-conceptual dimension of concepts but to the non-representational dimension of representation. But because of Deleuze's immanent critique of Kant, one need not regard the non-representational dimension of the poem as extraneous to its philosophical import; within the space of the poem, that dimension stands in for the non-representational aspect of the mind, the faculty of sensation, which for Deleuze is a precondition for the operation of other faculties. As Mitchell argues, then, the Deleuzean critique of Kant enables the reader to discern a philosophical significance in what might otherwise appear to be purely poetic features of the text.

6. Rhyme in "Mont Blanc" has philosophical import thanks to another, often unremarked, feature of the poem. One does not so much hear these poem's rhymes consciously as read them, patiently, over the shoulder of Keach. While one might discern such rhymes on an unconscious level in listening to a recitation of the poem, they are notable primarily in retrospect as one inspects the written text. In this case, what normally appeals to the ear reappears after a careful reconstruction of the poem's sounds: rhyme remains, but only when we are drawn to recognize it where we might otherwise miss it. This retrospective procedure has an uncanny import; by challenging us to discover its encrypted relationship to rhyme, the poem suggests that rhyme somehow operates inherently within articulation itself, even when, or especially when, the ear is unaware. In this shift from ear to page, "Mont Blanc" does not efface the poem's solicitation of the senses but hints that such a solicitation is more ubiquitous, and unconscious, than readers have thought—at least those readers who, before Keach, had never noticed this feature of the poem. Even where a poem may seem to set aside rhyme, for example by relying on the conventions of blank verse, it can never entirely efface rhyme, for rhyme seems to be inherent in the aural dimensions of language; articulation necessarily brings in its train poetic effects. By problematizing rhyme in this way, the poem treats it philosophically, drawing attention in a proto-Deleuzean fashion to that element of sense inherent in what one might here call the faculties of articulation.

7. Precisely because Mitchell's argument illuminates this poem so well, I am tempted to exert pressure upon it in two respects, in the hope that doing so will help Romantic critics pursue further the consequences of Deleuzean reading. The first question bears upon the exemplary status of "Mont Blanc" in this argument. Mitchell emphasizes the particular efficacy of the poem's irregular rhyme, which avoids both repetitive rhyme and the absence of rhyme and thus makes all the more palpable a specific singularity of sensation. But where does this argument leave most other poems, which typically choose one or the other of those options? Ironically, this reading may work too well; in using "Mont Blanc" to exemplify a Deleuzean reading, it may remove from view a vast field of other poetic forms or strategies. What we need is an argument that explores a series of possible instances of Deleuzean poetic articulation. In fact, it is not yet clear exactly why one must set aside "repetitive rhyme" in Deleuzean poetic analysis, given Deleuze's own rigorous treatment precisely of repetition. Perhaps "Mont Blanc" marks out one of many strategies by which poems may capture the specific intensities of sense.

8. The second question is this: which Deleuzean critique of Kant should one use in reading Shelley? For the most part, Mitchell relies on *Kant's Critical Philosophy* (1963), where Deleuze primarily exposes the preconditions of Kant's analysis of the faculties. This is an immensely useful text for Shelley studies, not only because it enables one to carry out the reading of "Mont Blanc" that Mitchell provides but also because it might help one grasp Shelley's alignment of aesthetics and ethics. The correlation here between a Deleuzean Kant and Shelley is quite precise. In his analysis of the *Critique of Judgment*, Deleuze argues that for Kant, the "free accord of the faculties" is discordantly harmonious because it is already determined by reason's legislative role in the moral sphere. For Kant, "the suprasensible destination of all our faculties is the pre-destination of a moral being." Accordingly, Kant argues that "the interest of the beautiful implies a disposition to be moral" (55). In a similar vein, in the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound* Shelley argues for the ethical and political efficacy of "beautiful idealisms of moral excellence." Like Kant, Shelley may be invested in a concept of the ultimate unity of the faculties, a unity that, as that poem suggests, he too may conceive teleologically.

9. However, Deleuze responds to Kant in a rather different mode in *Difference and Repetition* (1968). Here he pushes well beyond an immanent critique of Kant, radicalizing the insights of the earlier volume and providing an alternative account of the relation between the faculties. Mitchell draws upon this Deleuze in his opening reference to an organic synthesis and in his later remarks on discordant harmony and on the rhythm proper to sensation itself. Here again, the correlation between Deleuze and Shelley is potentially quite precise. One can illustrate the conjunction here by extending Mitchell's argument about "Mont Blanc." Mitchell suggests that one need not read irregular rhyme within the Kantian framework of threat and recovery, as does Keach; that unusual form may point instead to the singularities of sensation. But in the system proposed in *Difference and Repetition*, those singularities may exemplify a conflict of the faculties also evident in the Kantian sublime. What may be at stake here is not a displacement from sublimity to sensation but an account that treats both sublimity and sensation as instances of a broad "*discordant harmony*" of all the faculties, which, in a passage that Mitchell cites, arises when "each [faculty] communicates to the other only the violence which confronts it with its own difference and its divergence from the others." This discordant harmony, Deleuze goes on to argue, many not arrange itself under the Kantian Ideas as *cogitanda*, but under Ideas conceived as this problematic site of violence between faculties (146). Here Deleuze generalizes the violence proper to Kant's account of the sublime, although in doing so he deprivileges the legislative role of reason. Yet his argument makes it possible to read Keach with Mitchell, as it were, and bring sublimity and sensation into a broader discordant field no longer determined by any supreme faculty. In this version of a Deleuzean Shelley, there is no ultimate destination of our aesthetic and moral faculties, for they belong to a domain of coherent divergence in which none is privileged.

10. The key question in this regard is whether Shelley's practice in "Mont Blanc" more closely resembles the earlier or the later Deleuze. Does the poem foreground the dimension of sensation requisite for Kant's own account of the sublime and ultimately endorse a teleological operation of the faculties, or does it explore a less legislated operation of the faculties akin to the scenarios of *Difference and Repetition*? Or does it outline yet another possibility? At first one might argue that the poem more closely resembles the earlier Deleuze, for it calls attention to the singularity of sensation in the way Mitchell argues without directly or specifically emphasizing a non-legislative divergence between the faculties. Dwelling at length on the mountain's hyperbolic destructiveness, the poem broadly identifies with the perspective of the mountain itself when it views "the race of man" from afar, celebrates the mountain as a moral and political exemplar, and even affiliates it with a "secret strength" that operates "as a law." Arguably, it insists on a teleological justification of sublime violence more aggressively than does Kant himself. Yet precisely this aggression should give one pause. The poem's apparent ease in celebrating destruction ironically accentuates the impulse to repudiate violence, to resist the claims made on behalf of the mountain. But the poem relies on a countervailing identification with what it assumes we will resist. Although it may not espouse an explicit philosophy of divergence, its very tone

suggests that it enacts a non-teleological conflict of the faculties, at once endorsing the sublime while recognizing its inhuman costs, subscribing to an ethical idealism while emphasizing that its exemplar carries out a devastating assault on ordinary human concerns.

11. This reading extends Mitchell's argument but remains broadly congruent with his, suggesting that the poem draws attention to aesthetic conflict in several ways at once—through the use of irregular rhyme as well as the complex ironies of its embrace of the sublime. In these two ways and possibly more, the poem superbly exemplifies an unresolved conflict of the faculties, in its beautiful harshness capturing what a Deleuzean Kant would describe as a discordant harmony.

12. The fact that it is possible to enlarge upon Mitchell's argument in these ways points to the strength of his approach, for it suggests that the affinities between Shelley and Deleuze are strong enough to illuminate as yet unsuspected features of Shelley's philosophical poetics. By drawing Deleuze into our critical conversation, Mitchell has made possible a new, more searching reading of this difficult poet and of the whole question of the intersections between Kant and English romanticism.

Works Cited

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