

swept up in the force of major historical events. To be sure, Steeves's book suggests a number of fruitful areas for the development of phenomenology. But as a return to the everyday the latter project will require, as it always has, no small amount of "theoretical" work, if we really want to see the revolution through.

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Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation: Out of This World

PETER HALLWARD

New York: Verso, 2006, 199 pages.

It is a rare event to encounter a book on Deleuze that does not privilege either the actual or the virtual sides of what he understands as real, but that rather attempts, despite the seeming paradoxes and contradictions of such a distinctively Deleuzian position, to develop it into a theoretically and practically consistent whole. Unfortunately, Peter Hallward's well-written and well-researched *Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* is not such an eventful book. Unlike those commentators who privilege the actual at the expense of the virtual and read Deleuze as a sort of "fleshy materialist" philosopher, Hallward opts for the opposite extreme. He maintains that "the actual ... is in reality ephemeral and illusory" and "[t]he virtual alone is real" (35), and that therefore Deleuze is more correctly read as a sort of spiritual, if not mystical, philosopher "out of this world." That Deleuzian commentators take such extreme positions might not only suggest that Deleuze failed to get his ontological message across loud and clear, but more important that they are perhaps less concerned with what Deleuze really meant and more with what they can do with him. While such practice is common, if not solicited in the context of Deleuzianism, it does become problematic when a commentator, such as Hallward, proposes a reading in order to reach the conclusion that when it comes to the world we live in, we cannot actually do that much with Deleuze. One is inclined to adopt a more traditional attitude: what *did* Deleuze really mean?

Although he deals with a variety of issues, Hallward's real concern in the book is with the relationship between actualization and counter-actualization. Hallward devotes the first two chapters to actualization, that is, the ontological movement of being from the virtual to the actual, and then spends the following four chapters developing the ways in which such movement can conceivably be reversed. From political practice to art to philosophy, counter-actualization entails progressively

higher degrees of disintegration of the actual. Thus, in political practice the actual is "suspended," in art almost "abandoned," and in philosophy totally "abandoned." While Hallward does not seem opposed to approaching art and philosophy in terms of actualization and counter-actualization, he is skeptical about such an approach when it comes to political practice. If we proceed along these lines, we are left with an empty and useless conception of political practice. Hallward gives two main reasons for this claim. First, given that it is only the virtual and not the actual that is creative, actualization must always proceed from the virtual to the actual, thus making counter-actualization, that is, the movement that originates within the actual, a meaningless notion. "Since it acknowledges only a unilateral relation between virtual and actual, there is no place in Deleuze's philosophy for any notion of change, time or history that is mediated by actuality.... Deleuze's work is essentially indifferent to the politics of this world" (162). Second, given that in actualization actual creatures are but effects of virtual creations, there is no real relation on the level of actual creatures alone, and therefore no real possibility of relational politics. "At bottom" all actual creatures are the same, i. e., different. "Deleuze writes a philosophy of (virtual) difference without (actual) others. He intuits a purely internal or self-differing difference, a difference that excludes any constitutive mediation between the differed. Such a philosophy precludes a distinctively relational conception of politics as a matter of course" (162). It is primarily for these two reasons that Hallward concludes that when it comes to political practice, Deleuze has really nothing to offer.

The main problem with Hallward's interpretation of Deleuze is that it insists on the clear-cut ontological gap between the virtual and the actual. Since "the virtual alone is real" and "the actual is illusory," "the main mistake to avoid here is again the assumption that the virtual and the actual enjoy equal powers of determination, that creating and the creature reinforce one another in some sort of mutual co-implication" (79). Hallward's main mistake is to think this a mistake. Ontologically speaking, it does not make sense to speak of either the virtual or the actual on their own. The virtual and the actual are two sides of one and the same real, and while it makes sense to say that one of these sides is creative whereas the other is not, it does not make sense to speak of the real in either of these terms to the exclusion of the other. Neither the virtual (creativity) nor the actual (creature) on its own is real. The virtual and the actual together are what is real. The virtual does not sustain the actual, and the actual does not sustain the virtual. Instead, the virtual and the actual together sustain the real, and it is within the real that we speak of the reciprocal interplay between the two. Take away one of these sides and the real is no more. It is his mistake to insist on the clear

cut ontological gap between these two sides that leads Hallward to dismiss a Deleuzian conception of politics along the two above-mentioned lines. But if we interpret the virtual and the actual as I suggest here, the two problems Hallward associates with Deleuzian politics disappear.

First, if the real is both the virtual and the actual, counter-actualization just means exercising that side of the real that is creative (the virtual) in order to change it. The (actual) creature places a limit to the degree of (virtual) creativity that is available to its reality. Human beings, for instance, cannot fly, but they can change their social and political circumstances. Hallward complains that counter-actualization is meaningless, since no possibility of change can originate within the actual realm alone. But this complaint would only make sense if we could speak of the actual realm on its own. But we cannot. The actual and the virtual together comprise the real, and it is within the realm of the real that every possibility of change originates, along with everything else. Second, Hallward complains that there is no relational politics since there is no difference on the level of actual terms alone. The same logic applies here. There are no actual terms on their own. Every actual term is already some real term, and it is not only within but also between real terms that we speak of difference. The difference between real terms has to do with the ratio between the virtual and the actual sides of their respective realities. Some realities are more creative (virtual) and some more creatural (actual) in proportion to "what they can do." Deleuze uses Spinoza to understand the difference between these two realities in terms of affectivity, and he uses Nietzsche to call those realities that are maximally creative "good," and those that are maximally creatural "bad." Deleuze's evaluation of any social and political situation always has to do with how much it stifles or how much it encourages the virtual (creative) side of human reality.

Hallward's critique of Deleuze is certainly based on a thorough familiarity with his work. Unfortunately, it does adopt a highly one-sided, dare I say Badiouian, perspective on it.

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