

Habitual Politics and the Politics of Habit:
Bergson, Modern Advance, and the Need to Depart

by

Craig Muncaster
BA, University of Ottawa, 2016

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

This project addresses the problem of monovalent interpretations of habit's role in a creative means of living within the literature. Analyses tend to opt for an either/or logic, in which the majority of research conducted reflects a detrimental, constraining role for habit as regards creativity while responses to this dominant position still operate under a singularly-positive understanding of habit. Introducing a multivalent conception of habit is a component within the broader purpose of challenging dominant conceptions of political improvement or "progress" (acknowledging how historically- and contemporarily-loaded such a term remains), while leaving open the much-needed potential for change. The research demonstrates the dangerous, immobilizing interaction between individual habit formation and the modern, linear teleological focus on political prediction and destination. Concurrently, it points to the benefits to creativity habit can provide when individual habituation is immersed in a different sense of political engagement. This bipartite argument is made through a Bergsonian method, built up from the intuitive primacy of flow and becoming and their decomposition into apparently stable forms and relations. Inspiration is drawn not only from the works of Bergson, but also Deleuze, Heidegger, and successors. By examining the multiple lines internal to habit, the research prescribes the importance of a balanced approach to the direction of political effort between a sense of improvement which advances to livable destinations and a sense which departs from unlivable locations. This is not a balance of the middle way, but of the constant passage between polar extremes (a both/and logic of habit) and individual negotiation amongst free and constrained political actions. By opening up the complexities of habit, subsequent work can interrogate further social and political

elements which enable the persistence of teleological ideology and develop new political mechanisms to promote meaningfully diverse engagement and openness to the radically unpredictable.

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Dedication

To my parents Michelle and Bernie, and to my partner Caitlin. Without your continual love, listening, and proofreading of even the shortest email, this project would not have been possible.

Introduction: The Comings and Goings of Twofold Frenzy

“To be sure, I was much higher than they [the high-wire dancers] were, but I was clinging to my position and they moved lightly and fearlessly, and I saw that I was too high, I was in the wrong place. They were at the right height, not on the ground and yet not so devilishly high and distant as I was, not among people and yet not so completely isolated; moreover, there were many of them. I saw very well that they represented a bliss that I had not yet attained.”¹

“[O]ne does not have to undo every knot on the plane of organization in order to weave new patterns on the plane of immanence.”²

To navigate a path across change and stability is to appreciate the unpredictable without losing connection to a sense of purpose. An orientation towards the achievement of determinate goals or towards fluidity and the unknowability of life cannot be taken up to the excessive detriment of the other. This balance—to be closely examined shortly—is critical to an effective and diverse political environment, as will be repeatedly affirmed across the two chapters of analysis which compose this project. The first chapter details modernity’s excessive focus upon arrival at goals, which is warped through pathological habituation into a condition of stagnancy and political inefficacy. The argument unfolds in three respective sections: the constraining and otherwise negative elements of habituation as a discrete phenomenon are examined, modernity’s focus on prediction (predictableness) and teleological advance is given form and historical context, and the runaway reaction between teleology and habituation is shown to undermine recognition of the world beyond particular habitual expectations along with the realization of political projects. To give a counterbalance to this perilous rigidity, the second chapter examines

¹ Hermann Hesse, “A Dream Sequence,” in *Strange News from Another Star*, trans. Denver Lindley (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 78.

² Moira Gatens, “Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference, Power,” in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1996), 175.

what it means to depart politically, to move away from unlivable conditions rather than to move towards a determined image of the livable. The chapter is broken up into two generally distinct parts. The first two sections respectively provide a metaphorical image of political departure to help orient the reader and an ontological grounding of departure in a quantitative, contingent understanding of political improvement (held in stark contrast to the redemptive narratives emblematic of modernity). Memory and the positive aspects of habituation figure prominently in this account of political life which can get better but cannot reach a conclusion. Once these two sections of groundwork are laid, three more sections provide examples of when individual attention should be focused on departure. In increasing order of “magnitude” of the departure, the consciousness leaving itself (i.e. suspension of conscious perception) over the course of a habitual motion, the consciousness leaving a habit which is no longer useful, and the consciousness leaving a series of habits or identity which is no longer relevant will be closely analyzed. This is not an exhaustive list of important moments of departure for the individual, but they reflect key instances of illusion and immobility found in the first chapter. As will become clearer shortly, departure is not a definitive solution to the ills of progressive advance however. Rather, conceptualizing a political *movement away* serves to antagonistically compliment the current tendency of *movement towards*. It is not a matter of either/or, but of both/and; a political doctrine which embraces both the currents of change and the relative stability of individual identity must constantly oscillate between excessive arrival and departure. Not a middle way either, this politics is the perpetual negotiation of life between polar extremes of direction. More attention will now be given to how the guiding problems of this argument have been formulated. This

situating of the argument in a broader theoretical undertaking will concurrently help explain the form taken by the responses provided. After this discussion of problems and responses takes place, the role of habit in both and the state of understanding habit in the literature will be introduced in detail. While the dualistic nature of the two chapters has already been briefly introduced and will be alluded to over the course of explaining the relevant problems and subjects of analysis, it is after these two preliminary components of the argument are familiarized that the conceptual contents of the two chapters will be generally presented.

Throughout modern political experience, notions of progress and enlightened thought have been inseparable from processes of colonization, erasure, and subjugation of any whose identity or desires deviated from preconceived notions of historical purpose or destination. Fixation upon these ultimate purposes has historically produced a political rigidity with perilous human consequences. There exists in the practical unfolding of modernity an insurmountable gulf between the heroic words of those who claimed to know progress and the consequences of those same individual's policies and actions.³ And what have these horrors been for? The utopian projects have lived up to their names. Perfection continues to elude progress, while costs continue to mount. And yet, politics must go on. Many peoples and persons across the world continue to live in positions of precariousness and exploitation. No matter one's scale of analysis, local, national, global, social and political change remains necessary. An abolishment of the

³ "The colonized...feels neither responsible nor guilty nor skeptical, for he is out of the game. He is in no way a subject of history any more. Of course, he carries its burden, often more cruelly than others, but always as an object." Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. Howard Greenfield (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.), 92. This is but one charge amongst innumerable against modernity's conception of historical progress. The selves who do not fit into the predetermined category of the progress-able face the unbearable violence of historical "obsolescence" under the gaze of ruling powers. This process is by no means unique to Memmi's experience of being colonized; for there to be those on the "inside" of history, others by contrast must be outside of that process.

horrors of “progress” cannot also do away with the idea that things can get better. The overarching problem with which this thesis only begins to contend is how to understand or frame political improvement without recourse to notions of linear progression or advance which have been so disastrous in thought and implementation. No definitive solution is to be levelled over the course of the present argument. However, this problem is stated so as to generally locate the more specific, ancillary problems which are to be taken up in detail and the responses consequently put forward. Another general issue at hand, interpenetrative with the first, is the continued acceptance of modern conceptions of progress in political life today. For instance, the brazenness of Fukuyama is not needed to witness the continued dominance of neo-liberal ideologies and their images of the perfectly free market and individual in many established political spaces. This project argues that much of the ineffectuality and irresistibility of modernist progress emerges together; that danger and deadening to this danger are consequences of the same process. And it is argued that these consequences are the product of a gross imbalance between the political importance of stability (of direction/aspiration) and of change. The epigraphic quotations hint at this balance or lack thereof, but the explanation of their relevance must be momentarily deferred. First, what is the specific nature of this balance, and what is meant by stability and change in the context of the two balancing each other politically?

The sort of balance conceptualized in this text is drawn from a pair of philosophical postulates put forward by Henri Bergson. The two claims speak to tendency and therefore it is useful to begin at his definition of that concept: Bergson understands a tendency as “the forward thrust of an indistinct multiplicity,” going on to

explain that this nature is only observable through a reconstruction of elements which were once an undivided whole.⁴ Of interest for the present argument is the relationship between Bergson's abstract treatment of tendency and political improvement as a sort of lived tendency. He identifies in relation to tendency a "law of dichotomy," whereby two aspects of the same tendency, an integral thrust and counter-thrust, become materially-separate tendencies in the actual; an internal difference of the tendency is drawn out into two distinct and opposed tendencies.⁵ Per the "law of twofold frenzy," each of these separated tendencies then demands a total articulation of itself (as if such an end were possible).⁶ The whole is "mistaken" in its materialization for a lesser whole and then that less encompassing whole is taken as all that is available to knowledge and action. Frenzy in this case is an incompleteness which passes itself off as completed. In a given moment, one half of the divided tendency is the actively pursued one, thus understood as the positive aspect, while the other is identified as simple opposition or negative.⁷ This sense of opposition undermines recognition of the critical, complimentary role that the two aspects played within the pre-divided tendency. Once balanced in itself, a fruitful balance between the two distinct accretions now relies upon external influences. Misrecognizing the reality of complimentary antagonism however, those under the

⁴ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (London: Macmillan and Co., 1935), 254. This undivided whole is the virtual for Bergson and those who succeed him, analysis of which will figure prominently in the second chapter.

⁵ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 256.

⁶ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 256.

⁷ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 255. Reading Irigaray, Frye explains that it is the falsely-dual monad which is oppressive while real dualities are not. The duality A:B has two distinct, recognizable elements, while the "duality" A:not-A has one recognizable category of A and another formless category of infinite indistinguishable not-A members. Marilyn Frye, "The Necessity of Differences: Constructing a Positive Category of Women," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 21, no. 4 (1996): 998-9. It is interesting to consider how the focus on a single frenzied aspect of a more complex tendency contributes to the subsequent formation of such oppressive "dualities."

influence of a twofold frenzy mistake one directional aspect of the movement for the essence of the tendency. From this oversimplification, serious problems emerge.

Thematically and methodologically, this text itself is arranged to follow the structure gestured to by the concept of twofold frenzy.

Working from the premises of Bergson's two laws, the general notion of political improvement was theorized as a pre-divided tendency, with the ensuing deleterious effects of progress hypothesized as being a manifestation of a frenzied reduction of a necessary whole. Political improvement is a sort of movement which by definition—and when well balanced—yields a variety of beneficial results. However, one cannot say that the fruits of modern iterations of political progress outweigh the disastrous costs associated with them. Modern interpretations of progress fail to yield to the importance of directional balance and hence produce conditions of detrimental excess and unlivability. There is a correspondence between the element of twofold frenzy which involves the *total articulation* of a given end and the modern proclivity for teleological ideologies; both involve a passage to the extreme, an (impossible) attempt to reach a conclusion. The first half of the project examines the transfiguration of modern progress into frenzy. As with Hesse's protagonist, one can go too far in their pursuits, be too high.⁸ It is telling that the unnamed protagonist is “clinging to [his] position,” while those below—who are not on the other extreme of the ground—move “lightly and fearlessly.” Life along a single direction takes inordinate resources, saps the individual of their capabilities. But why; particularly, what in linear progress goes so wrong? The

⁸ Baudrillard writes of the “hypertelie,” that which undoes finality by going “further than its own end.” Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 161. The tendency is lost to the excesses of a single direction. Movement past the point of sufficiency is the essence of twofold frenzy.

answer is obvious for those left on the outside (barred from “history”), but what of those on the inside, the dominant group? Bergson rightfully indicates that the effort to completely pursue an erroneously divided direction of tendency is necessarily damaging, but it is important to ascertain the specifics of the particular case of frenzy in order to figure out how to work against it. In the case of modernity’s frenzy, it is produced by the interaction of predetermined political goals and individual processes of cognitive habituation and simplification. Modernity always wants to *advance* to a state of perfection, loftily held in the (potentially distant) future. And this frenzied *movement towards* is latched on to by the habitual inclination of human cognition as predictive certainty (stability) spirals into absurdity. These claims will be introduced in greater conceptual detail when the chapters themselves are specifically introduced.

Currently, the guiding problem gains more specification: what sort of aspect of political life could be used to balance out frenzied advance, to return to a more holistic and inclusive sort of improvement? This balance or countermovement is necessary to realize a more effectual political motion:

The truth is that a tendency on which two different views are possible can only put forth its maximum, in quantity or quality, if it materializes these two possibilities into moving realities, each one which leaps forward and monopolizes the available space, while the other is on the watch unceasingly for its own turn to come. Only thus will the content of the original tendency develop...⁹

Balance here is not a simply matter of reducing the intensity of advance. To get the most out of political improvement, it is a matter of facilitating maximal expression of both the thrusting tendency and the counterthrust. As progress or advance is a sort of direction into the future, towards a particular conception of the good life, then the rather obvious

⁹ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 257.

dichotomous aspect involves a direction of *movement away* from something.¹⁰ In this alternative direction, the second half of the project achieves its specific motivation: what is the political meaning of movement away from something, what is the political sense of the opposite of approach? The premises may appear simplistic, but there is no easy answer to a question whose opposite articulation is so entrenched in everyday life and thought. Before the specifics of the analysis which supports this claim are examined, attention will first be turned to the state of the literature around habit and its role in individual life. The above has alluded that habit contributes to the devolution of political “progress” into deleterious frenzy. While this is the case, the proper political treatment of habit is ultimately more complex than the suppression of a dangerous proclivity.

Founded particularly in the works of Bergson but also in adapted capacity in Deleuze, the understanding of habit developed in this argument fills an absence left by more widely-held interpretations of the pervasive phenomenon.¹¹ It is commonplace in the literature to treat habit as a monovalent element of human experience; to say that it is this or that but to recurrently claim that it has *one* overall effect. There is a general

¹⁰ As Bergson and Deleuze both affirm, the correctly stated problem already prefigures the solution in that statement. Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 15-16. The problem of a divided tendency necessarily insinuates the other half of that division in its rebalancing. Part of the obviousness of political departure is that the identification of *movement towards* as being a problem assumes the virtual potential of *movement away* as counterbalance *in principle*. More generally, this concurrent emergence of problem and response results in the recurrent intertwining of problem identification and methodological explanation in the present introduction.

¹¹ Though not immediately relevant to the overall argument, some discussion of habit’s usage as a concept in the argument is contextually important. To write about habit can be extremely difficult as it is such a fundamental element of everyday experience. Who does not have any habits? The very idea of having none seems preposterous even before the importance of habit is examined. This ubiquity can be analytically dangerous. There is the risk of overloading the concept, of making “habit” relate to too broad a spectrum of actions. A useful heuristic, which will be analytically justified in due course of the argument, is to focus on the autonomous nature of habitual actions. Habits are reflexes which do not require the impetus of any conscious perception or selection. This autonomy can be contrasted to an action which consciously conforms to an expected norm, no matter how pervasive that expectation may be. If one has to think about how their action corresponds to a broader sense of expectation, then that action is not of a habitual register. When considering if an action is habitual or not then, one should begin by determining if there was an element of conscious intervention between received stimulus and reaction.

bifurcation in the research between conceptualizing habit as limitation to free action or as a sort of supplement or necessary antecedent to those same free acts.¹² As Bennet *et al.* identify, much of the contemporary literature which deals with the impacts of habit does so through a negative assessment of the phenomena; the unthinking, automatic character of habit is emphasized in a variety of contexts (colonial, late capitalist, etc.) to demonstrate its antagonistic relationship to human freedom.¹³ Though earlier theorists and philosophers such as Descartes took up such a position, the primary point of origin for this outlook was Kant and whose tradition has been followed through by the likes of Husserl to Bourdieu and John Stuart Mill.¹⁴ Another tradition has been established however which sees a positive role for habit in the repertoire of the creative individual. Elizabeth Grosz links habit to an engaged and creative force—as she develops from the positive interpretations found originally in Bergson, Deleuze, and Ravaissou—necessary for effective interaction with the real.¹⁵ Rather than fetters placed upon human capability, habit grounds ours means to live a productive and varied life. Also reading Bergson however, Melanie White interprets an antagonistic relationship between the habitual sort of movement and a freer kind.¹⁶ Interpreting the language used by Bergson in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, she argues that “the leap is a metaphor for

¹² It is worth noting here that, as Massumi differentiates, the free action is not equivalent to the freedom of a unified agent. The free selection of an action belongs to a plurality of selves and causal constraints which cannot be likened to a “free will” as conventionally understood. Brian Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 81. More will be said on the matter of free action in the third section of the second chapter.

¹³ Tony Bennett et al., “Habit and Habituation: Governance and the Social,” *Body & Society* 19, no. 2&3 (2013): 7.

¹⁴ Tony Bennett et al., “Habit and Habituation: Governance and the Social,” 7.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Grosz, “Habit Today: Ravaissou, Bergson, Deleuze and Us,” *Body & Society* 19, no. 2&3 (2013): 218.

¹⁶ Melanie White, “Habit as a Force of Life in Durkheim and Bergson,” *Body & Society* 19, no. 2&3 (2013): 250.

moving beyond that which is most natural to us — our habits, our instincts, our self-preservation.”¹⁷ It is this “moving beyond” which is telling of her position on the matter of habit. Rather than as grounds for the creative, White sees in Bergson too the characterization of habit as something which must be transcended so that humanity may be able to improve its capabilities and engagement with reality. In another piece, she and Lefebvre assert that habit performs the double role of stabilizer and moral constraint.¹⁸ Habits are a proxy of an organic hierarchy of roles and serve to integrate individual members into the collective.¹⁹ Habits may not be as constraining in this interpretation as they may be in the Kantian school for instance, but they are still an *antecedent* disposition to be displaced by freer motions.²⁰ Similarly, in reading Deleuze and Guattari, Brian Massumi interprets a linear relationship between the development of behavioral patterns and a decrease in the number of “inclusive disjunctions,” of states which superimpose

¹⁷ Melanie White, “Habit as a Force of Life in Durkheim and Bergson,” 255. Emphasis added.

¹⁸ Alexandre Lefebvre and Melanie White, “Bergson on Durkheim: Society sui generis,” *Journal of Classical Sociology* 10, no. 4 (2010): 466.

¹⁹ Alexandre Lefebvre and Melanie White, “Bergson on Durkheim: Society sui generis,” 467.

²⁰ The key to understanding White and Lefebvre’s position on habit is to place its analysis in the specific register of Bergson’s *The Two Sources*. Briefly, that text functions around the duality of “closed” and “open” societies. Closed societies are built upon an exclusive morality of pressure and obligation, while open societies pursue a creative and inclusive morality which operates through aspiration rather than obligation. And as Lefebvre and White summarize, “Everything we have described so far with Bergson (obligation, pressure, *habits*) belongs to what he calls the closed society.” Alexandre Lefebvre and Melanie White, “Bergson on Durkheim: Society sui generis,” 496. Emphasis added. To the two authors, habit figures exclusively in the domain of the closed for Bergson. It is important to note however that the closed is not equivalent to “bad,” nor is open equivalent to “good.” As Glezos clarifies, both social orientations are tendencies in tension which do not manifest in pure states within reality. Simon Glezos, “Bergson contra Bergson: Race and morality in *The Two Sources*,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 0, no. 0 (2019): 1-21. Thus, Lefebvre and White are not insinuating that Bergson believes habits have no role in social or political life. But what they are claiming is that habits serve an exclusively constraining role, and that habitual motions are antecedents which open out onto freer and more inclusive sorts of social organization as societies incompletely transition from closed to open. As will be introduced shortly, habits must not be understood only as these antecedent constraints however, but also as beneficial contemporaries to free acts of creation within a more open society. Habits can offer a power of opening as much as they may be severely closing.

various potential actions to be taken upon each other.²¹ In this interpretation, an increase in the number of habits causes a lessened bodily potential or “degree of freedom” through the increased probability of certain actions being performed by the self in question.²² In both cases, for every habit developed, the subject’s potential is equivalently injured. Even drawing upon the same source material then, there is no unanimously-held opinion regarding the role of habit in creativity and free action. Rather than throwing in with one side of the argument or the other however, the role of habit developed in this project is actually a series of roles which may conflict with one another but which are heterogeneous components of the same phenomenon.

Positive and negative interpretations alike, it is argued here that both exclusive treatments of habit correspond to a “badly stated” problem built upon a “poorly analyzed composite.”²³ What do these criticisms entail? An element of the Bergsonian method—returned to decades later by Deleuze and followed by this project—is the division of composite experiences into pure directions which exist *in principle*, even if these directions never manifest in such a pure state in reality.²⁴ In this method there is a sort of inversion of the twofold frenzy. In both cases there is an original real composite being analyzed; but while frenzy reduces this composite into real, opposed monads, division by principle enables one to analyze virtual directions on their own whilst still

²¹ Brian Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 70.

²² Brian Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 70. There is something notable in Massumi deriving a negative interpretation of habit from Deleuze without Deleuze paying much (if any) attention to Bergson’s *The Two Sources* as well. That text contains Bergson’s most negative treatment of habit and therefore would be the most accessible source for the transfer of a negative conception of the phenomenon to Deleuze’s own thought. That this was not the case is interesting, but will not be pursued specifically in this project.

²³ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 17.

²⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 22-3.

maintaining the reality of the composite. Differences of kind internal to the composite can be thought without distorting these internal differences into external oppositions. However, if one fails to treat the real composite as such and rather postulates it as a monad, then that composite is “poorly analyzed.” All sorts of conceptual problems emerge when one treats an internally heterogeneous whole as homogenous, such as a reductive understanding of habit. The proceeding argument demonstrates that with their own specific contexts and caveats, the contrasting outcomes of habituation—limitation and creation—are both correct interpretations coming from Bergson’s and his successors’ works. Habits can and must exist contemporarily with free acts of creation (the former aiding in the realization of the latter), rather than being understood as antecedents to be definitively replaced by superior motions; but habits can also severely limit the potential of the subject if left unchecked. The dual tendencies of habit are indirectly identified in the opening passage from Gatens, repeated here: “[O]ne does not have to undo every knot on the plane of organization in order to weave new patterns on the plane of immanence.”²⁵ Fixity, the stable organization of life in part furnished by habituation, does not need to be completely undone for radical creation to take place. There is an opposition between habit and creation, but it is not linear nor is it exclusive. Furthermore, the duality is also a mutually-nourishing one when it is between *useful* habits and free acts of creation. Not every habit acquired is a limitation, nor is every habit dispensed-with a freedom. In this way, the analysis contributes an important position between the existing polarities within the literature and seeks to provide a more precise interpretation of the multivalent though interpenetrative roles of habit in political

²⁵ Moira Gatens, “Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference, Power,” in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1996), 175.

life. As it stands, the erroneous division of political advance and withdrawal is reflected in the singular focus on the freeing or constraining tendencies of habit being the whole of the phenomenon of habituation. Rather than this either/or logic, what is needed in the understanding of habit's role in individual life is a both/and logic which presupposes the divergent and simultaneous effects of habituation. This logic is developed by going back over the primary philosophical materials; there is enough pertinent theory in Bergson, Deleuze, and others to examine both directions integral to the development of habits.²⁶ Furthermore, secondary sources which originally corresponded to one of the false monads of habit are treated as relevant to specific elements of a more complex whole. Having ascertained the problems of progress and frenzy to be responded to (some more tentatively than others) and habituation as the central subject of the analytical response, it is now time to turn to the actual structure and argumentative content of the project.

The set of problematic conditions being addressed has passed from a general treatment of Bergson's twofold frenzy (in which internal aspects of a single tendency are externalized as opposing forces), through an introduction of excessive political advance as a particular manifestation of twofold frenzy in modernity, to the role which habit plays in the development of this frenzy but to also leaving open the potential role which habit may play more positively under alternative conditions. The structure of the text is divided by chapter along the dichotomy of political advance and departure, and it is concurrently divided along the principles of habitual constraint and habitual potential. In

²⁶ For this reason, it was not felt necessary in the limited space of this text to turn to other theorists such as Kant or Bourdieu to develop the apparently "negative" or constraining aspect of habit. Further research could certainly draw parallels between these authors and the argument presently developed. It is important as well to consider the very fact that one "tradition" of habit can be used to develop a multivalent conception of the impact of habit. Support is provided to the thesis that habit cannot be understood as singularly-positive or -negative by virtue of not needing to develop the multivalent conception from ostensibly opposed traditions. The dualistic tendency pre-exists in the (primary) literature its devolution into opposed monads.

this parallelism is the crux of the overall argument regarding the importance of balance. In each habit, there is a line of automation and immediacy whereby the subject's potentiality is constrained by an unconscious, reflexive response to a received stimulus. Too many habits and the subject may be objectified in their constrained patterns of behavior. There is also a line of freedom and creation, as habits indirectly but no less meaningfully contribute a reserve of energy to conscious, more strenuous deviations from the norm. Too many deviations and hence too few habits can leave a subject stranded however, without enough reserve potential to meet a new pressing need. Only with this proper analysis of the composite of habit is it possible to understand the political importance of both advance and withdrawal and hence undo a frenzied understanding of political improvement. Habit cannot be thought apart from prevailing cultural and political forces as these external conditions affect the development of the diverging lines of habit. While everyone experiences habit, they do not do so in the same way nor do they do so identically within themselves across time. In this way, the experience of habit may be considered general, but it is not universal. The inverse is also the case: political life cannot be considered apart from the influence of habit. Bergson's theories of habit formation have hence been interwoven throughout the text to align certain aspects of habit with the most relevant political factors, while still implicitly demonstrating the holistic complexity of the concept of habit. When there is only advance, as is the case in modernity broadly understood, there is a simultaneous predominance of habitual constraint. Under particular political conditions, habit becomes a source of extremely spatialized action. It is spatialized in the sense that the habitual subject experiencing

frenzied advance is limited to reaction to the external world as that extension acts upon them. The first chapter deals exclusively with these conditions and outcomes.

Why, again, is modernity so excessively focused on forward advance? The first chapter responds to this question by way of a chemistry analogy. It is the *reaction* of teleology and habituation which produces frenzy. The chapter begins by detailing the stabilizing and constraining aspects of habit for the active individual. These are the effects of habit which are so vocally derided by conventional interpretations of the phenomenon. There is much to be found in the metaphysics of Bergson which conform to these negative expectations. His theories of habit formation leave open the possibility of a crippling pathologization. Habits have the potential to overdetermine the actions of a subject, and it is this excess of constraint which eventually cements frenzied advance in modernity. However, modern conceptions of progress also contribute to this eventuality. The image of political conclusion or a perfected future—integral to the idea of teleological advance—delimits the politically possible while also urging individuals to reach that future condition as quickly as possible. Life continually accelerates while the selection of actions to be taken remains constrained. Teleological prediction and velocity then merges with habitual expectation to perpetually recreate a present which was once an intermediary step on the way to the “perfected” future. Once this perpetuation takes hold, the subject’s constrained field of perception becomes totally dominated by automatic habitual reflexes. As the actor’s world shrinks, their political efficacy is equivalently abbreviated. The subject is increasingly objectified as their pathological habits prohibit conscious intervention and alteration of course. Hence, while political *movement towards* may be consciously thought and enacted initially, the conscious

element is undone by advance being the only direction available to political improvement. In this unconsciousness is the reason for modern “progress” being able to outlive its obvious failures. Advance *necessarily* loses touch with a changing world if it is the sole conception of change. Intermediary stages play out unceasingly as habitual expectation diverges more and more from the needs of reality. The second chapter offers a solution to this dual problem of inefficacy and irresistibility by carefully describing a shift (several distinct shifts) in attention from advance to *movement away*.

Political departure pushes back against the pathological consequences of frenzied advance by concentrating on things left behind: the unconscious self during periods of habitual motion, the memories which lay beneath habitual contractions, and the fluid, multitudinous “self” which resides alongside a given manifestation of identity. A positive conception of habit is implicated in each of these moments of departure as well. The key development of the second chapter is describing the accumulation of potential energy made possible by a *useful* habit.²⁷ Habits relate to acts of creation indirectly, through the diverting of effort from a memorized action to be expended elsewhere. Without this diversion of resources, the subject would not be able to work against the pathologization of their very same habits. Creativity is required to break habits (to depart from them) which are no longer useful to a changed subject, and this creativity depends upon the other habits of that subject for its basic resources. Habits are locked in a struggle with themselves and between each other, as the arriving aspect of political improvement is to the antagonistic but complimentary departing aspect. One cannot

²⁷ Usefulness in this sense is directly connected to the creative potential afforded by a habit. This is of course only one sense which may be attributed to the quality of “useful.” The ideal of maximizing creation is the motivating factor for the second chapter, but this is not to say that creativity is the only political good. Further discussion on this topic takes place in the conclusion.

depart without habit, but one may very well *not* need to depart if their cognition was structured in such a way that they did not form habits. As each departure turns into an arrival, the process begins again. There is an interminability here which is vital to the philosophy of Bergson and a correlate to the perpetual emergence of new forms in the world. Explored more closely in the two chapters, time for Bergson marks the constant addition of the new to the old. The future is always unpredictable—different from the present—and therefore the usefulness of habits will always come to an end. As the world changes, habits which once were relational begin to work only for themselves and thus must be abandoned. There is no perfectibility to be found here (just slippage and overcompensation). The addition of primarily ateleological departure to arrival serves to aid in opposing the disastrous “progress” of modern teleology.²⁸ Recognition of change serves to strike a balance with the continued importance of striving for determinate goals.

²⁸ However, while Bergson’s philosophy does generally conform to an ateleological account of time and hence human history, Deleuze—also drawn upon regularly in this argument—adds to his adaptations of Bergson’s works potential room for the teleological to slip back in. Particular attention has been given to Deleuze’s *Difference & Repetition* in this project. A positive understanding of difference is a concept central to the argument. However, as Nick Nesbitt identifies, Deleuze’s metaphysics of “pure positivity” is achieved through the negative form of the complete expulsion of the negative. Nick Nesbitt, “The Expulsion of the Negative: Deleuze, Adorno, and the Ethics of Internal Difference,” *SubStance* 34, no. 2 (2005): 79. What does this paradoxical negation mean for the current argument? Grosz identifies Deleuze as a source of resistance to the outmoded notion of revolution as “predictable transformation” or pursuit of a “directed goal.” Elizabeth Grosz, “Deleuze’s Bergson: Duration, the Virtual and a Politics of the Future” in *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, ed. Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 215. Massumi also identifies Deleuze, as well as Félix Guattari, as the “ultraopposition within the opposition” of the Left. Brian Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 3. Deleuze’s apparent desire to fully do away with the negative is thought to somewhat trouble this narrative of opposition to predictable revolution however. This desire is characteristic of the ideologies and processes detailed in the first chapter which attempt to impose perfectibility and stability upon a world of constant change. The definitive expulsion of the negative for the sake of the purely positive or a Nietzschean aestheticism does not correspond to the ebb and flow of all forms as the most basic characterization of flux. More specifically, when Deleuze adopts the positive understanding of habit from Bergson, he simultaneously adopts the continued possibility of pathologization and hence of detrimental habits or “lack” broadly understood. The situation is more complex than constant affirmation. In terms of the task at hand, this general criticism of Deleuze’s theory points to the need to bring parts of his body of ideas back towards their basis in Bergson’s own thought. The critique is directly addressed in the second chapter regarding Deleuze’s conception of the virtual, but it is also performed in the background throughout the chapter.

While habits can constrain one to a single direction of life and foment frenzy, they can also enable one to more freely explore a variety of disjunctive paths and novel approaches to living. If habit is viewed entirely negatively, then the vital processes of accumulation which it offers would be unidentifiable. But focusing too much on the benefits of this accumulation entails ignoring the perceptive limitations which come with the diversion of effort away from unconscious motions. The active and creative subject finds themselves caught between achieving internal goals and adapting to a changing external world, and between the automatic movements which hasten the completion of those goals but also which mask the very same goals behind layers of outdated automation and imperceptible haste. These conflicts are difficult to localize and essentially interminable. To return to Hesse's protagonist for a moment: "Alas, perhaps my whole life had had only this meaning, to see those lovely hovering maidens, *to approach them, to become like them!*"²⁹ The high-wire dancers are to be emulated, but their bliss cannot be the protagonist's own. The ideal is sought, but always overcompensated or slipped beneath; in the present contexts, one can only approach the proper balances between political directions and habitual outcomes, not fully achieve them. These irresolvable tensions are the stuff of a politics which appreciates difference for what it really is and the world for its constant (paradoxically permanent) change. But to begin to understand the nuances and precise details of these conflicts is to find a better means of navigating them. By way of habit, this project uncovers further specificity in the political struggle between purposeful intention and the unpredictableness of an open, perpetually incomplete world.

²⁹ Hermann Hesse, "A Dream Sequence," 81. Emphasis added.

Chapter 1: Constraint, Advance, Dream

“...I was deafened and blinded by a storming rush that steadily buffeted all my senses. But this only for a moment, since, as if my patient’s farmyard had opened out just before my courtyard gate, I was already there;...”³⁰

“...progress has pushed over hyper-anticipatory and predictive society toward a simple *culture of chance*, a contract on the aleatory.”³¹

There is present in Kafka’s overall body of work a fascinating tension or dichotomy between the journey which is impossible to complete, at times even to begin, and the journey which is completed as soon as it is begun, or that is below the threshold of conscious perceptibility.³² The apparently paradoxical unity of these two qualities of passage characterizes the currently hegemonic aspect of political displacement: *movement towards* some sort of goal or predicted destination. Together these two sorts of journey represent in the following argument the condition of the active subject in modernity, who is acting quickly while accomplishing almost nothing. In that political context, movements are made ever more rapid while the actor is also increasingly dissociated from both their past and the reality within which they act. Like Kafka’s doctor the actor’s senses are deadened by their velocity, but the distances that they seemingly cover are also illusory. It is argued in this chapter that, through the interaction of a cognitive disposition to continual activity and the modern political context with its emphasis on teleological perfectibility, habit presents itself as a more potent force for

³⁰ Franz Kafka, “A Country Doctor,” in *The Penal Colony*, trans. Willa Muir and Edwin Muir (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), 138.

³¹ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, 30. Original emphasis.

³² In terms of the former blockage, *The Castle* and *The Trial* immediately come to mind, while *An Imperial Message* is also relevant. The latter hyper-facility is most obvious in the previously quoted *A Country Doctor*, but can also be found in *A Dream*.

informing political interaction than does teleological intention and that the over-habituating of movements within modernity undermines the potential realization of political goals. Hence, habitual movements, which are adopted for their efficiency and imperceptible in their immediacy, in a Kafkaesque fashion simultaneously contribute to the radical stoppage of political life for the affected subject. This argument is made along two interrelated sets of conditions. The cognitive foundations of habituation will be examined in the first section as they appear in the works of Henri Bergson. Then the contextual reasons for modernity's focus on teleology will be described in the second section, primarily through Eric Voegelin's account of the development of modernity. Once these two foundational lines are established, their interaction will be analyzed by way of Paul Virilio's description of late modernity in the first part of the third section. The outcome of this interaction is the dominance of established habits over other modes of action and the closing off of effective individual political engagement, as shown in the second part of the third section. The three-part progression of the argument will now be presented in greater detail in order to introduce the primary concepts to be explained in their respective sections.

The theoretical aspect of this chapter shares a formal resemblance to a chemical reaction. There are two distinct reagents (sections one and two), an intermediary catalyst that intensifies the reaction (the first part of section three), and a resultant precipitate or outcome (the second part of section three).³³ Along one reactant line is the ongoing

³³ While similar enough in meaning to be used interchangeably, *reagent* and *reactant* refer to two distinct elements of a chemical reaction. While anything which is part of the initial reaction is a *reagent*, only that which is consumed by the reaction is a *reactant*. Given the thesis of this chapter and continuing on with the formal resemblance, cognitive habituation can be seen as a reagent while teleological intention as a reactant as the latter is fully overtaken or "consumed" by the transformation of the former into simulated reality and political impotence.

assessment of the mental disposition of the human subject towards activity. Though this disposition is taken on its own as a relatively ambivalent force in this first section, it is not without its own problems. The “mental filter” proposed by Bergson as well as his related discussion of the process of habit formation are the basis of concerns directed herein at the subject’s powerful attraction to action within the world around them. This filter serves to emphasize within the subject’s perception those things which are thought to be easily manipulated by the subject and those things which have been successfully manipulated in the past, for the sake of efficient interaction with the world; this emphasis then concurrently deadens the percipient subject to that which has been *a priori* deemed unalterable as well as to possible means of interaction which run counter to established habits of that self. The argument made here hinges in part on the inherent risk—not on its own an inevitable outcome—in this account of a disposition to a limitation of the breadth of subjective responses to received stimuli and the loss of a creative approach to the world for the sake of habitually-established patterns of intervention and reaction. The mental filter itself and ancillary habits contribute forces which prohibit novel perception or reaction, a less severe example of stoppage but a component to the eventual undoing of political intention, and perpetuate previously selected actions without prior recourse to conscious perception or intervention (immediate travel). The other track of the present argument follows modernity’s very poor (in terms of emphasizing creativity) response to this base disposition. Traced throughout the modern period is an aspiration, under a variety of guises, for capabilities of prediction and the alleviation of anxieties regarding the uncertain future. Two accounts, one of a long modernity by Voegelin and the other of the late modern by Virilio, are mobilized in this analysis. Voegelin’s theories are

examined in the second section in order to follow the historical emergence of teleological prediction, taken by this argument as emblematic of modernity. He describes modernity as a sort of “gnostic” project (to be explained in detail in the section), first religious and then secularized, which attempts to ward off uncertainty by proclaiming humanity as its own divine redeemer and offering a vision of a perfected world and human spirit. Desire for predictability and the protection of this perfected image is then argued to introduce a political need for the establishment of the inevitable, a recreation of calculable objective interaction transposed upon the modern subject. The role of Virilio’s theories in the present argument is to demonstrate how the ongoing practical implementation of modernist doctrine functions to catalyze the reaction between teleological intention and habituation; there is an ever-intensifying feedback loop between assumed perfectibility and habituation. The more diligently a given telos is adhered-to by an actor, the more the habitual sort of action predominates in that actor’s day-to-day movements. This first part of the third section of the argument details how the political project of inevitability simultaneously enables and is enabled by a high-velocity society through the limitation of potential actions to be taken and the technological enhancement of those constrained actions. Immediate travel as the functional expulsion of distance, in the sense that the instantly traversed is not consciously perceptible, is a virtue under such circumstances as it hastens reaction to received action and works to expel the time necessary for calculative error or unintended intervention. The modern project of predictability eschews creative uses of action and memory, the two of which are inseparably linked as will be shown in the following chapter, for the establishment of a malignantly-comfortable political present and future.³⁴ Rather than opposing the negative outcomes

³⁴ Wolin argues that one of the most complicated elements of political interaction is that there is no single,

of perceptive filtration with an external countermovement of the broadening of potentialities, the modern doctrine has been a rather complete embrace of the constraining and sense-deadening side of human cognition. The worst aspects of the active human temperament are thus able to run roughshod over the modern political landscape. This dominance is evidenced in lived descent into dreaming nonreality and the quoted aleatory life, examined by Voegelin, Virilio, and others, which serves to insulate the modern subject against the reality of a fluid and shifting world. This protection comes, as will be demonstrated in the second part of the third section, at the cost of being ultimately unable to accurately fulfill political projects, teleological or otherwise. The simulated dream world is one of constant measures and invariable political arrangements, enabling the perpetual though illusory applicability of a given set of parameters for the mental filter and of established habituated reactions. This final, overwhelming example of stoppage made through imperceptible journey is characterized by familiar though inappropriate or outmoded actions repeated to detrimental excess and the closing of the affected subject's world. It is the combination of human character and contingent epochal decision which has fomented frenzied political advance and the abstraction of concerted action from the needs of reality. While habit in its initial stages is a complimentary force to teleology through increasing the efficiency and reducing the

shared temporality. Instead, politics involves a collection of socially-negotiated and distinct temporalities and therefore precludes a common narrative. With the predominance of extremely rapid economic and cultural temporalities however, the deliberation necessary for negotiation to occur between political temporalities is lost. Political life is thus placed in peril. Sheldon Wolin, "What Time Is It?" *Theory & Event* 1, no. 1 (1997). The present argument demonstrates that certain conceptions of political temporality can also work to undermine the pace necessary for proper deliberation. The unilinear teleology of modern Time and its demand for predictability work against the appreciation of complexity and irreducible narratives as much as do concurrent economic or cultural conceptions of time. A useful phrase may be lifted from Auerbach: "the transformation here is one whose course progresses...to the coincidence of all times[.]" Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis* (New York: Anchor Books, 1957), 39. Though Auerbach speaks here of the Christian transcendental project, the connection between this endeavor and modernity will be made clear in the second section of the present chapter.

reaction time of the subject, left unchecked it ultimately opposes and overtakes a predictive politics by calcifying intermediate motions and furnishing the impression of a skewed non-reality. A practical critique of political teleology for the sake of embracing uncertainty and processual flux—the overarching goal of this thesis—must thus begin at a critical assessment of subjective automation and habit formation then as these movements effectively mask and subsume the various modern projects’ “keys to history.” Complicating our understanding of habit is a necessary step in challenging a political paradigm of linear and universalizing forward advance and in creating a more open and multiplicitous political milieu.

1: Bergson’s Theories of Cognition and Habituation

The rational mind desires clarity and unity; in essence, a reduction of the complexity and contradictions of the world to the familiar.³⁵ There is arguably nothing which is more devoid of clarity and knowable reality than the unexperienced future. The distant and even the relatively proximate unknown weigh heavily on all those whose thoughts (have the privilege to) leave the confines of the present moment. The problem to be addressed currently is when this basic desire of the human mind—to know with certainty how one should act in the ongoing world—is mirrored by the dominant political project or selection of competing projects.³⁶ But the exploration of this problem must begin first at the level of human disposition. Bergson’s account of cognition and

³⁵ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O’Brien (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 22-3.

³⁶ The present argument does not intend to follow a Cartesian duality of mind and body. When one (similar) term or the other is used, this is only to emphasize one part of a more complex, interlaced whole. Bergsonian cognition exemplifies a holistic understanding of the human subject and this sense of interconnectedness is taken up herein.

perception is taken up by the present argument.³⁷ He posits the mental processes as being decidedly utilitarian in character, as oriented toward action rather than speculation.³⁸ He ascribes to the brain the role of receiving and distributing the impulses sent by the sensory organs; it adds nothing to these signals, yet instead selects the responsive movements to be made.³⁹ These selections are made in reference to the degree of possible indeterminacy able to be exerted upon the perceived object.⁴⁰ In this way, the brain serves as a filter of sorts. Those objects which may be manipulated are given perceptive priority relative to the capabilities of the self in question, while that which cannot be influenced is left out of conscious thought entirely. This mental filter poses several dire problems when arrayed alongside several other aspects of Bergson's philosophy (in addition to some elements missing from his own works); not a problem as a matter of logical inconsistency, but in terms of the disposition of the human body towards a homogenized and linear political environment. Of greatest concern to the present analysis regarding Bergson's own theorizing is the omission of specifics regarding the parameters of filtration. Is knowledge of what is impossible to influence a purely internal negotiation? Or rather does this reflection upon capability take cues as well, or entirely, from the outside world? Given that Bergson asserts that the general determinations of the nervous system, as an object, are not isolated but rather related to the rest of the objects of the universe, the latter possibility is more sensical.⁴¹ This line of

³⁷ For a discussion of how this account continues to be supported by contemporary scientific developments, see William Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 32-49.

³⁸ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, xvii.

³⁹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 19.

⁴⁰ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 29, 34.

⁴¹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 12.

inquiry generally descends into a standard nature versus nurture debate, but it is important to consider even the possibility that external influences may be understood in such a way that they nullify themselves from conscious perception. Bergson does vaguely concede that it is the uninteresting which is discarded from perception.⁴² Connolly helps drive the point home in his own explanation of the Bergsonian filter: “As your affect-charged biocultural memory deems particular elements unnecessary or unworthy, they are subtracted from the myriad sensory materials rushing in.”⁴³ A component of this “biocultural memory” can easily be furnished by a political structure which construes itself as uninteresting, as irrelevant, so that it may ultimately convince the filtering brain to ignore its existence altogether. Up to this point, what has been said is simply that the way a brain processes perceptions potentially enables socially-negotiated structures in the outside world to evade conscious perception.

This theoretical outcome must be considered in relation to several of Bergson’s other positions. And after this outcome is explored in theory, a practical example will be analyzed which also begins to address the political ramifications. The concept and ramifications of the mental filter will now be analyzed in conjunction with Bergson’s theory of habit formation. He states that perception needs uncertainty, distance; it cannot occur when there is a necessary reaction to the object in question.⁴⁴ This necessary reaction takes the form of a habit, an attitude of the motor reflexes which makes the reaction occur below the threshold of consciousness and active selection.⁴⁵ There is here

⁴² Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 30.

⁴³ William Connolly, *NeuroPolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 28.

⁴⁴ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 22.

⁴⁵ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 41.

the initial trappings of a vicious cycle which progressively shrinks the actor's world and which can potentially be exploited (intentionally or not) by an external world bent on control.⁴⁶ Take a simplified example: given received stimulus 1, the brain selects from the possible reactions A, B, and C. Reactions D and E, for example, have already been excluded from the list of potential actions by the mental filter, which has been conditioned by a life of particular educational curricula and social mores, *et cetera*, to think that such subjective movements are ineffectual and therefore counter to an active mentality. Given a sufficient series of perceiving stimulus 1, in similar contexts 1_a, 1_b, *et cetera*, a certain pattern of successes and failures emerges. It appears as though reaction B, given sufficient leeway for contextual variation and imperfect application, most often produces the most desirable outcome. Reaction B therefore becomes the habitual motor reflex to stimulus 1. This satisfaction of need orients the mind toward resemblance; the general law of cause and effect is felt as similarity between disparate events and which in turn produces habitual associations.⁴⁷ More broadly, Bergson asserts that fixity in appearance is a product of our base needs as the relative constancy of these needs is projected outwards, in a sense stabilizing the world around the inevitability of hunger and thirst, *et cetera*.⁴⁸ This decomposition of the process of becoming into relatively stable causes and effects, of needs and satisfiers, is a necessary substratum for the mind oriented

⁴⁶ As detailed in the introduction, habit is not a wholly negative (or positive) phenomenon. The present section deals with the most dangerous aspects of habit in order to subsequently show how the broader political environment provides a quite poor response to those specific dangers. An analysis of the positive aspects of habit occurs in the third section of the following chapter. Habit enables perception (by conditioning perception and prohibiting sensory overload) at the same time that it limits it. Between these two sections is developed a multivalent (both/and) conception of habit which appreciates both the constraining and empowering aspects of individual habituation. While a polarized treatment of habit aids in the clarity of the theoretical analysis, it should always be considered that habit in practice is not a clear-cut benefit or hindrance to the active subject.

⁴⁷ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 206-9, 217.

⁴⁸ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 290.

towards survival and action. Without these virtual halts in flux, measurement and therefore rationally-measured action would be impossible.⁴⁹ The beneficial aspects of habit will be further analyzed in the following chapter. But to return to the present problem: reaction B has become habitual, and therefore can be acted by the body without the additional interval of conscious perception and selection of that particular action (general perception still occurs, but there is a minute blind-spot whose outline is described by the habitual action). In this way, the ability to perceive stimulus 1 has been effectively lost by the mind in question. But it is not just stimulus 1 that cannot be perceived, in its original and pure state, but also stimuli 1_a through to an infinitely expanding series of similar scenarios. It feels almost impossible to guess at how many perceptive possibilities are lost by a single habitual action-reaction couplet. Virilio's notion of picnolepsy is immediately called to mind (the similarity is perceived, as it were); the picnoleptic 'experiences' daily innumerable moments when their perceptions are closed off from consciousness, without any subjective indication that the absences are occurring.⁵⁰ Recurrent breaking of conscious perception challenges the common sense that much of an individual's life is actively perceived and known by that actor. One need not suffer a medical condition to undergo such recurrent lapses, as each subject's numerous habits have been shown to undertake functionally similar escapes from conscious perception. There is in these autonomous reactions a sort of Kafkaesque immediacy in their imperceptible quality; the "journey" of the habit is over before it is ever consciously registered. In the cases of both picnolepsy and habit, the active subject

⁴⁹ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Mabelle Andison (New York: Dover Publications, 2007), 3.

⁵⁰ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, 19-20.

goes through their day-to-day activity with a multitude of evasive and constraining blind spots. An effective politics must deal with the unknown not only of the future then, but also of the past.⁵¹ As will be shown in the third section, a focus on *movement towards* a preordained goal accomplishes neither, rather tracing a present moment known by those in power onto both the past and future of all affected by the dominant political arrangement. Furthermore, it is not only the perception of the recurrent stimulus which is lost to the actor in this account of human disposition. As Camus writes, “The regularity of an impulse or a repulsion in a soul is encountered again in habits of doing or thinking, is reproduced in consequences of which the soul itself knows nothing.”⁵² Nor is it also only the proposed alternatives to the selected and repeated reaction which are lost. Most importantly, knowledge of the already lost is itself erased. Through the sense-deadening aspect of habit, the mind has forgotten again which was already forgotten in its exclusion by the mental filter described by Bergson. That which has been repulsed by the “soul” is severely cut off from critical examination. Reactions D and E have undergone a double expulsion from possibility in the sense that the circumstance which initially prompted the mental selection from constrained reactions A to C has been hidden beneath the unconscious reaction to that circumstance by an acquired motor reflex. Potential movements which are not authorized by the mental filter are eventually forgotten a second time and are thus that much more distant from being actively realized. The latent external forces which partially informed the criteria of authorization and “interest” of the filter are even more deeply suppressed once the habituation of reactions makes the

⁵¹ Only the former is dealt with during the course of this paper, for the sake of space and focus. The latter presents an important area for further research.

⁵² Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 17.

process of authorization and conscious selection of actions a redundant process. Alteration of habits, and at a grander scale the revision of a society's course, is thus impeded by at least a pair of inhospitable expanses built into human cognition. These distances are not ones of indeterminacy and thus beneficial to a creative politics but rather serve as the undisclosed and presently absent substrate of the already determined. Similarly, Benjamin's archetype of the "destructive character" habitually clears away not only all that exists in front of them, but also all traces left behind of this destruction; and for this absence of trace they in turn completely lack creative potential.⁵³ The disposition to activity which involves mental filtering and habituation thus tends towards a simplification of perception and a shrinking of the active subject's apparent world and capacity to interact with that world. The relatively fixed and simplified real is experienced by the active political body and body politic as an at least two-fold removal from the once possible or conceivable, hence as a particular sort of stoppage which is coupled to the rapid journeys of habitual reaction.

What does this stoppage look like in reality? Connolly provides an example of habituation which touches upon the many aspects of the problem posed above and that also foreshadows a more political treatment of habituation. After hearing a story of a party being broken up by police and affirming the students' decisions not to directly interfere with the officers' arbitrary use of power, he goes on to examine several interactions which he himself has had with the police.⁵⁴ These encounters were all of a negative nature and Connolly concludes that they have "colored" his impression of the

⁵³ Walter Benjamin, "The Destructive Character," in *Reflections*, ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken, 2007), 301-2.

⁵⁴ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics*, 30-1.

police “blue,” in that future interactions with the police are accompanied by a strong feeling of withdrawal or retreat.⁵⁵ Furthermore, he describes how such impressions may generally produce an automatic deference to law and order or a sort of “urban rage” depending upon one’s status of privilege and social marginalization.⁵⁶ Putting aside the expressly political instance of a power dynamic for a moment, this example briefly encapsulates the dangers inherent but by no means inevitable within habit. Several distinct encounters with the police are able to make a unified impression upon the percipient subject. The habitual response is therefore spread across similar but non-identical situations; one’s response to police intervention becomes progressively unified despite contextual specificity. Once deference is perceived enough times as an effective response to an abusive officer, it easily becomes the automatic response to a broader array of police interactions. What is perceived first, the uniform or the act of power abuse? If the uniform, which serves to signify the latent authority of the state and the officer, becomes the stimulus which activates the reaction to defer to power, regardless of the arbitrary use of that power, then one’s encounters with the police take on a measure of constrained reproduction. Connolly insinuates that his several negative experiences with the police were enough to form a generalized cognitive impression of them. Not only does the alternate response (deference versus “rage”) to police abuse become increasingly difficult once the other is habituated, the distinction of abuse and non-abuse of police privileges is also lost beneath the automatic response to the presence of police. Hence distinct situations are made by cognitive elements to increasingly resemble one another and the perceived similarity of these situations continues to ingrain an established

⁵⁵ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics*, 31.

⁵⁶ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics*, 32.

habitual response. Furthermore, if deference and resentment were the two reactions made available to the active subject by their mental filter, what other responses are further buried beneath this loss of contextual distinction? In more political terms, state authority is inherently affirmed beneath the automatic deference to police power. Other potential challenges to that authority are restricted by being unable to perceive the stimulus which originally prompted the subjective choice between deference and resentment. Cognitive constraints in this way prevent many possible courses of action from ever occurring or make such motions require a significant outlay of effort, much more so than is needed for more “sanctioned” actions. Connolly’s example of reaction to the police is only one political event out of an innumerable array which can be impacted by habituation. This inherent process of cognitive simplification is made all the more deleterious to a creative means of political life once it is immersed in the modern project of rendering all circumstances as similar as possible and the subjective consciousness as universal as possible, both aspirations being in pursuit of a final politico-historical end. Before attention can be shifted to the conditions of modernity however, closer examination of the appearance of fixity in the human intellect and its relationship to individual habits will help to prefigure the political aspects of habituation and its interaction with teleological prediction.

Bergson also explores the tendency in extended consciousness to fix or eternalize a given arrangement of the world; a process complimentary but not identical to habituation when the latter is appreciated in the fullness of its positive and negative aspects. The passage in which he introduces such a concept is dense in ideas and worth examining in full:

Our estimate of men and events is wholly impregnated with a belief in the retrospective value of true judgment, in a retrograde movement which truth, once posited, would automatically make in time. By the sole fact of being accomplished, reality casts its shadow behind it into the indefinitely distant past: it thus seems to have been pre-existent to its own realization, in the form of a possible.⁵⁷

As many notable readers of Bergson identify, the primary philosophical contribution of this passage is the ontological claim concerning the tendency of real space to decompose or mask the real mobility of time (this temporal mobility is duration for Bergson and those who take up his ideas, which is discussed at the end of the following section).⁵⁸

While the mind in a proximate moment does correctly identify that a judgment proceeds from the scenario or arrangement of elements which it judges, when given enough extension the specific circumstances preceding the judgment fade from view while the judgement itself remains apparently free-standing and “eternal.”⁵⁹ The affirmative judgement is understood as a fact of reality which has always existed and which will always exist. There is a dualistic tendency within conscious experience to divide judgments between the fixed and the fluid or temporary.⁶⁰ Bergson determines that, “From this [fixing of judgment] results an error which vitiates our conception of the past;...”⁶¹ In the identification of this false movement is founded Bergson’s critique of the possible. It is erroneous to believe that the possible comes before the real he asserts, that reality pre-exists itself in a sort of unrealized state, as the irruption of creation cannot

⁵⁷ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 11.

⁵⁸ Whitehead writes that the tendency to spatialization is for Bergson “an inherent necessity of the intellect.” Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 297. Deleuze specifies that “The retrograde movement of the true is not merely an illusion about the true, but belongs to the true itself.” Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 34 (original emphasis).

⁵⁹ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 11.

⁶⁰ Larry McGrath, “Bergson Comes to America,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 74, no. 4 (2013): 606.

⁶¹ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 11.

be predicted from its antecedent conditions.⁶² Free-standing judgments may give the appearance that a decision necessarily derived from preceding states, but this retroactive logic could just as easily justify a different choice proceeding from the same past.⁶³ He gives the example of so-called romantic elements in classical literature; these elements could not be understood as “romantic” until that category was later devised and to claim them as romantic in an eternal sense belies the selective emphasis given to a particular part of the past by present interests.⁶⁴ The possible is actually limited by realization, rather than the real being open to the possible; life is not preformed.⁶⁵ This spatializing illusion is in the nature of the human intellect, but it is not a mono-faceted tendency. The present analysis intends to draw attention to the epistemological consequences of this ontological position, following the forms of knowing which are overlaid upon the prior layer of natural inclination.

This secondary account is drawn from Bergson’s, albeit brief, distinction between “retrograde movement” and “retrospective value” in the passage above. There is a difference in the subject position between that which is “going” backwards (retrograde) and that which is “looking” backwards (retrospective). Retrograde motion refers to the illusion of fixity as it is objectively participated in by all subjects, hence the ontological aspect, while the retrospective value relates to the illusion of fixity as it is subjectively known and expressed. All intellects fix the world and therefore *move* backwards alike, but each individual consciousness *looks* backward at its own particular, contingent conception of the fixed real. The former movement marks a relatively stable subjectivity

⁶² Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 12-3.

⁶³ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 12.

⁶⁴ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 12.

⁶⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 97-8.

in extension, while the latter conception is the emphasis, or valuation, which grounds and expresses that subjectivity. In this way, the existence of the illusion of fixity is necessary while its appearance is conditional. This distinction relates to the present argument in the parallel distinction drawn between the inclination to habituation and individual habits themselves. Everyone has habits, but not everyone's habits are the same or remain the same for one person. Whereas habituation is part of the necessary basis of stable causality for action (and creation), habits are contingent forms of seemingly fixed knowledge of how to act, as the above discussion examines in detail, and hence they participate in the secondary epistemological layer of illusion. While ontological necessity is essentially beyond the scope of political contestation, these forms of knowing can be worked on politically and in turn mediate the impact of necessity; either negatively, as in the following discussion of habituation's interaction with modernity (the third section of the argument), or positively as will be explored in the following chapter.⁶⁶ Though habits partake in illusion and are constraining upon the active subject, they are also useful to that subject within certain parameters; this discussion of the beneficial aspects of habit will again be deferred to the second chapter, but it is important to remain open to the non-binary logic of habit which simultaneously spans limitation, creation, social control, and individual freedom. What will be shown in the penultimate section of this chapter however is the specifically negative reaction which takes place between the constraining aspects of habit and a constraining political environment. In terms of the retrograde motion of the true, this reaction marks a merging of the ontological and

⁶⁶ The present argument agrees with Deleuze that the illusion of the retrograde true can only be "*repressed*," not dispelled altogether. Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 21 (original emphasis). Moments of intuitional clarity will always succumb to the retrospective direction of being and hence require further interruption by direct experience of duration. The following chapter deals with this perpetual conflict between stability and fluidity, not with an impossible attempt at re-forming ontological necessity.

epistemological layers of the illusion of fixity. The contingent elements of retrospective knowledge undergo a process of crystallization whereby the empty form of retrograde necessity is petrified as particular, functionally eternal modes of action and reaction. At that point, specific habits become bodily necessity rather than only the process of habituation being a necessary falsity of the intellect. To reach this crux of the argument, attention will now be turned to the other set of reactant conditions. The predictive and teleological aspects of modernity provide the social setting for excessive habituation and the impairment of individual political efficacy.

2: Modernity as Teleological; Voegelin's Account of Modern Gnosticism

Having examined one of the components of the argumentative "reaction," attention will now be shifted to the modern context within which the active subject is situated. As these two components are taken as separate items of analysis, the works of Bergson do not figure into this new section. It should be noted at this point of transition as well that, although the following account deals with a societal-level history, the argument of this chapter as a whole concerns itself with the impact that the collective political decisions of modernity have on the life of the individual actor and claimant to society. Such an account is necessarily limited by the scope of its analysis; political life is more complex than the forces which play between a disembodied system of power and the individual agent. However, by beginning the interaction of habituation and modernity at the level of the individual, the argument remains general while also preserving the corporeality of individual consciousness and experience. Possible moves beyond this level of analysis will be gestured to in the final conclusion, which could provide a more complex societal-scale interpretation of the dangers and benefits of habit. What will be

analyzed now are the literal problems experienced by the political agent which emerge when a cognitive model founded in the habitual is immersed in a broader environment bent on predictability. To this end, the underlying reasons for this systemic focus on prediction will now be examined. An aspect of the modernist political and philosophical project is again the spatialization of time, whereby time is understood as a linear unfolding into the future that is made to invariably point towards some kind of conclusive condition.⁶⁷ All teleological ideologies, which follow this logic of linearity, in some way attempt to make the future predictable by claiming to know the specific form of this historical end in order to overcome anxieties regarding forthcoming intentions and actions. In general, this political task of rendering the uncertain knowable demands more control of the present.⁶⁸ Present control correlates with a known future by supplying a bounded object whose advance can be directed to a determinate destination. Voegelin here provides much of the relevant historical description of modernity. History and human effort first “acquired direction and destination” in the western mind (the subject position which this chapter and thesis addresses) when Augustinian speculation introduced history’s end as an “intelligible state of perfection.”⁶⁹ More contemporarily and whether it be class-based Marxist revolution, the unfettered free market of the neo-liberals, or the anarchical abolition of the state, for some examples among many, there is in the dominant ideologies of modernity a projected image of a worldly yet fully determined future, functionally knowable in its totality. This prescriptive certainty guides present actions with the hope of the ideal’s actualization through anticipated cause

⁶⁷ R. B. J. Walker, *After the Globe, Before the World*. (London: Routledge, 2010), 5.

⁶⁸ José Brunner, “Modern Times: Law, Temporality and Happiness in Hobbes, Locke, and Bentham,” *Theoretical Inquiries in Law* 8, no. 1 (2007): 284.

⁶⁹ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 118.

and effect. Voegelin identifies modern teleological mass-movements as an aspect of a more general attempt at worldly re-divinization, which was begun in order to undo the radical secularization of the temporal world effected by the ascendancy of Christianity.⁷⁰ As links to the discussion above regarding the uncertainty of future action, this process was meant to alleviate the anxieties inherent in living in a world from which all pagan traces of divinity were expelled.⁷¹ In pagan society, there existed “the simultaneousness of human and divine institution of a social order;” gods were inextricably linked to a variety of specific worldly things which each provided a concrete link to their transcendent stability.⁷² This mythical social and political order was upended by the abstraction to a singular, unitary God which stood apart from daily human existence.⁷³ The Christian world was one which was entirely separated from any direct connection to divine assurance, not in an atheistic sense but rather in the sense that the dominant conception of divinity became more distinct or distant from lived human experience; for instance, the concept of the Holy Trinity, of three distinct manifestations of identity being one, is decidedly opposed to the conventional understanding of the singular and unified human self. No longer were future promises to be kept up on the end of the more accessible pagan deities. Connolly identifies conceptually consistent “salvational insecurities” within Christianity, which produce amongst Christians a particular resentment against their own doctrine for being both highly demanding and highly uncertain.⁷⁴ To counteract this loss of direct assurance, political subjects themselves

⁷⁰ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 100, 107.

⁷¹ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 122.

⁷² Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 88-91.

⁷³ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 89, 101.

⁷⁴ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics*, 119.

were made to be self-understood as capable of realizing worldly paradise: gnostic civilization emerged once God was “drawn into the existence of man,” and civilizational collectivities on their own became the means to their salvation.⁷⁵ Gnosticism (conventionally understood as originating in a second or third century Common Era Christian heresy) espouses a doctrine of the material world, full of evils, as being the creation of a lesser divinity.⁷⁶ Humanity meanwhile, divine in its potential perfection, is understood as having a direct link to another, ultimate God.⁷⁷ There is thus a radical break made between divine care for the “cosmos” in its entirety and care for a chosen humanity.⁷⁸ Humanity is favoured in its rational faculty or *gnosis*, salvation being derived through this direct knowledge of divine origin.⁷⁹ *Civilizational* Gnosticism is used by Voegelin in the sense that, at the historical juncture of modernity, political groups transferred the direct salvational function of divine connection and knowledge onto themselves. He adapts the term to follow the increasing social normalization of what was once a limited heretical idea. *Gnosis* therein is made both immanent in its connection to human designs and more broadly available to a range of ideological proponents. The political subject under a gnostic regime immanently serves the transcendent role of keeper of truth and of final redeemer. Camus understands such a “triumphal reason” to be a function of nostalgia, which exemplifies the logic behind the process of re-divinizing the lost pagan world in its rearward field of view.⁸⁰ Following

⁷⁵ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 124.

⁷⁶ Dylan Burns, “Providence, Creation, and Gnosticism According to the Gnostics,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 24, no. 1 (2016): 56-8.

⁷⁷ Dylan Burns, “Providence, Creation, and Gnosticism According to the Gnostics,” 56-8.

⁷⁸ Dylan Burns, “Providence, Creation, and Gnosticism According to the Gnostics,” 65.

⁷⁹ Dylan Burns, “Providence, Creation, and Gnosticism According to the Gnostics,” 78.

⁸⁰ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 48-9.

the history of this process, Voegelin thus considers modernity to start as early as the ninth century common era, rather than into the sixteenth.⁸¹ It is not until the eighteenth century however that the gnostic telos was fully secularized by a notion of progress and scientism which was developed to provide new absolute laws and knowledge of the world in order to guide the now godless gnostic adherent.⁸² The goal of this secular eschaton is the “revolutionary transfiguration of the nature of man” through the active realization of a known state of perfection; Voegelin explicitly draws a connection from this project to Marxism however it is equally applicable to any of the various forms of modern teleology.⁸³ Nietzsche characterizes this broad philosophy perfectly in its reaction with the cognitive disposition towards action: “monoto-theism.”⁸⁴ One’s attempt at approaching the state of perfection will be shown to eventually strand them in a perpetual present of incomplete and monotonous movements. Voegelin’s own conclusions regarding the historical process of modernity contribute to the current interpretation and they will be consulted in the second part of the third section. While some small parts of his account of the implementation of modern doctrine will be introduced in the first part of the next section, the historical circumstances around the emergence of modernity will not be examined further. Before transitioning into a discussion of the implementation of gnostic perfectibility however, the ontological substrata of this political claim will be addressed. This analysis focuses on modernity’s conception of time and will return to the works of Bergson, but the connections to his theories of habituation will not be directly

⁸¹ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 133.

⁸² Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 127-9.

⁸³ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 121.

⁸⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* and *The Anti-Christ*, trans R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 35.

addressed until the third section. As Voegelin's history of modernity dealt with scales greater than the individual, so too does the upcoming discussion of Bergson's philosophy work with a broader understanding of the world that encompasses the individual consciousness but also extends beyond it. An explicit treatment of modernity's limited understanding of time will help to situate the actual implementation of modernist assumption and its consequences for the individual political actor.

Modernity sets the stage for a condition of ever-heightened immediacy. The more one believes that they possess the capital 'T' truth of the world, the more inevitability there is in their individual selection of a reaction to a given action. As the perfected future condition is already envisioned by various gnostic ideologues, all that is left to do is implement the predetermined model. There is a dire problem here which involves the meaningful experience or lack thereof of the passage of time. Modernity's spatialized and linear understanding of time was already alluded to earlier in this section, but what exactly is meant by this description and what does a potential alternative look like? The difference between space and time for Bergson consists in the respective conditions of immobility and mobility.⁸⁵ He understands the true condition of time as continual and indivisible, intuitively passing through, but not reducible to, the fixed points conceived by the instrumental cognition detailed in the first section.⁸⁶ This latent mobility is for Bergson duration. The concept of duration consists in the addition of all past states to each current one, the perpetual building-up of the past as it endures into the present.⁸⁷ It is both all of these distinct states in multiplicity and that which ties them together in

⁸⁵ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 152.

⁸⁶ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 153-4.

⁸⁷ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 150-1.

unity.⁸⁸ Duration is not sequence or juxtaposition but rather a collection of elements both heterogeneous and interpenetrative. The mobility of duration is the possibility of a real creation, which is the addition of something new to a whole, rather than the rearrangement of already existing and juxtaposed elements.⁸⁹ While a mobile time enables the continuous accumulation of complex, durable experience, that which only selects from apparently existing objects gives no particular attention to this potential complexity. Modernity must spatialize time so that it can declare possible the completion of time, the perfectibility of a human condition. The gnostic end is that which cannot be added to and therefore must exist apart from duration. The atemporal nature of rearrangement is replicated by modern ideologies in that the orienting end is effectively determined prior to the intermediate steps of its actualization; the physical time it takes to realize the given projection is not a salient political factor beyond logistical necessities. The form and content of the modern political telos exists independently of its realization. Such a rearrangement of ostensibly existing components occurs in the same way regardless of the pace of its development; Bergson uses the example of a fan being unfurled at various rates to display the fact that the image embroidered upon the fan remains the same regardless of how quickly it is opened.⁹⁰ In the case of modernity, the embroidery which adorns the fan is made up of the perfected image of the future. Modernity thus gives political primacy to cognition's greatest necessity-turned-vice, the subordination of the mobile to the fixed. There is great sense in such a project, as it was a multitude of human minds which devised various modern doctrines in the image of

⁸⁸ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 156.

⁸⁹ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 9.

⁹⁰ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 9.

their prevailing mode of thought. But this apparent legitimation of the vice only obfuscates further its erroneous assumptions. Modernity envisions politically what is in essence an immediate journey, within which experience of the terrain passed over has no bearing on the destination or outcome of the passage. The end precedes the intermediate and that meaningless expanse can therefore be passed through as quickly as is possible. In expectation of the image within, the fan might as well be opened immediately. As with Kafka's fictional doctor, there is nothing in the time between the journey's beginning and its destination. In this potential rapidity, there is much more at stake than the misrecognition of the nature of time. The modern desire for immediacy as it extends beyond its ontological legitimation in spatialized time, the initial topic of the preceding section, manifests itself in several ways which interact negatively with the outlined active disposition of individual cognition, contracting potential avenues of action and ultimately undermining one's ability to meaningfully influence the political world around them. A shift in attention now towards late modernity helps give an in-depth account of the deleterious reactions between the model of cognition and habituation developed above and the implementation of the perfected end just outlined.

3: Modern Perfectibility Implemented; Interaction of Telos and Habit

What will now be examined is the persistent interaction of a political system and cognition both oriented towards fixity. Gathered from Voegelin is the reason for such political assuredness and from Bergson the potential for the ontological claim of temporal linearity authorizing an unchecked increase of velocity. Other necessary concepts will be reintroduced as required alongside the new material of this section. Due to its length, this section is also subdivided into two separate components. Returning to the chemistry-based resemblance, the first of the two subsections examines the period of reaction between teleology and habituation. The second subsection will then examine the resulting condition of habit's supremacy over depleted teleological intention. Treated before in the abstract, the modern image of political perfectibility will now be put into practice. An increase in societal velocity, while not directly relevant to any of several modern political ends in itself as that goal is closed off from duration, does however serve to protect a particular conception of conclusion against competing teleological accounts in a prophylactic fashion.⁹¹ With rapidity comes a perverse sort of security. It is chiefly Virilio who follows this investment of political power in acceleration within the development of modernity.⁹² "The acceleration of bodies, the fugacity of movement, as perceived by the vulgar eye, demand a guidance of vision disengaged from mnemonic traces."⁹³ The advanced modern condition essentially moves too quickly for the human subject and their unaided sense faculties to keep up. Implicit in this disengagement

⁹¹ For a discussion of the distinction between "speed" and "velocity," see Simon Glezos, "The ticking bomb: Speed, liberalism and resentment against the future," *Contemporary Political Theory* 10, no.2 (2011): 155-9. The term velocity is used herein to emphasize the extensive element and its potential expulsion of novelty.

⁹² Paul Virilio and Sylvere Lotringer, *Pure War* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1997), 51.

⁹³ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, trans. Philip Beitchman (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009), 61-2.

“from mnemonic traces” is that the passage of the present can, and has, become too rapid for the past to keep pace: accelerating political life nurtures a growing gap between one’s memory and the active moment. With memory being a key component of novelty, as will be explored primarily in the second chapter, this gulf serves to maintain the dominant political trajectory through a tacit prohibition on the formation of competing ideas. What remains after this expulsion of the memorial is a politics founded upon an absence of time for reflection, dialogue, or intervention.⁹⁴ How could an alternative to the dominant ideology emerge under such uncondusive conditions? The “guidance of vision” is supplied through the technique and devices of entrenched sources of power. And meanwhile the rational mind feels decidedly comfortable within this heightened state of velocity as the expulsion of descriptive alternatives serves to maintain an established repertoire of causal linkages and hence criteria for the mental filter. With heightened velocity comes a heightened sense of activity, pushing speculative movements further to the back of the mind. Already an alliance emerges between the disposition to action and the conditions of modernity. Active cognition and teleological prediction, operating from similar premises of anxiety regarding the uncertain, intensify each other’s projects by imposing a shared condition of certainty. The nascent frenzy of *movement towards* thus also necessitates and produces, more than just advance, an ever-increasing rate of motion in such a direction. Under this project of simplification, the given body in society is to be made speed, not just the possessor of speed, to secure power’s project of ubiquity.⁹⁵ And it is no surprise that the body generally agrees to this metamorphosis, given its desire for simple cause and effect. By disengaging the

⁹⁴ Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer, *Pure War*, 34.

⁹⁵ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, 53.

memorial past from the active present, the anticipated future is able to be precisely modelled by the present powers that be and is then able to be executed with an equal precision by the habitual-body-made-speed.

There is therefore a dual alignment between burgeoning political *movement towards* and instantaneity. In the completed nature of the prescriptive conclusion, the instantaneous represents the lack of variation within the vision of that particular end. Given a fundamentalist reading of any teleological ideology, the final form of society is known prior to its realization and thus the process of its coming into being has no influence on the end result itself. While acceleration of society in approach to the instantaneous aids in the homogenization of the accepted interpretation of a given political telos, it meanwhile insulates that regulated idea from subsequent contestation and external amendment, if not abandonment altogether. Both the ideological adherent and their opponents who attempt to keep pace with modern society undergo a process of memorial alienation through political acceleration. As the present and the past grow further apart, it becomes increasingly simple to replicate that present state indefinitely rather than pushing into the bounds of an unknown future. One begins to believe in the prophesized goal, regardless of their prior disposition on the subject, as a function of it increasingly being the only conceivable path. Only with memory is the mind capable of “drawing something new, of subtracting something new from the repetition that it contemplates.”⁹⁶ The repetitive movements shared from one day to the next, the general habits of life, become nothing more than bare resemblances of each other when they are performed so quickly that the greater whole of lived experience cannot be recognized by

⁹⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 14.

the faculty of memory. A discussion of novelty will once again be deferred, yet it continues to suffice to know that the pace set by modernity carries with it several characteristics which are anathema to any emergence of the new. And this exclusion perfectly suits the project's purposes of making the future known. If the primary cause beneath the fear of uncertainty is that change constitutes loss, then the dual functions of instantaneity both serve to lessen anxiety by cementing a given state of affairs.⁹⁷ Virilio identifies for instance that there is no unpleasantness in going nowhere.⁹⁸ This stabilization is performed in a top-down fashion, which passes teleological certainty from political elites to subjected persons. The social conditions of modernity play upon the body as much as the body acts within the modern setting. With the past inaccessible and the immediate future no more than a meaningless blip on the predetermined "path" to the final end, the acceleration of life leaves the simultaneously high-velocity and stationary present as the modern actor's overwhelming sense of time. The expulsion of duration and delay makes the presently lived world into a reflection of the political project concerned with the end of history.

The apparent trivialization of time effected by the socio-political pursuit of the instant is in turn doubled by heightened cognitive expectations of outcome and habituation of reflex. This process is intimately linked to and not fully separable from the exclusion of alternative visions of the future fostered by constant acceleration. In the case of habituation however, it is a bottom-up movement of stabilization which passes the cognitively-desirable perpetuation of a given state of affairs from the body up to the

⁹⁷ Sandra Bloom, "Some guidelines for surfing the edge of chaos, while riding dangerously close to the black hole of trauma," *Psychother Politics Int.* 15, no. 1 (2017): 9.

⁹⁸ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, 78, 80.

societal level. In the interaction of bodily habit and political teleology it is ultimately the former which undoes the realization of the latter, but this final stretch of analysis has not yet fully arrived in view. The interaction between disposition and condition is first a positive one for the modern project. Life at a high velocity breaks the present away from the past, but such unmitigated efficiency requires the economic movement of a well-choreographed, hence highly habitual, society. The cognitive problem is analogous to that which Bergson identifies with bloated philosophical concepts: increasing extension diminishes comprehension.⁹⁹ The more one lives in the accelerated world and their body adapts to that external rushing, the more their mind is turned outward as a switching station for signals eliciting automatic responses.¹⁰⁰ As the body becomes increasingly integrated into the external world through its internalization of the extensive as its criteria of possible action and habitual response, the less is the associated consciousness able to understand of its environment. Life's impulses are received by the brain and muscles, but no longer perceived by any faculty of conscious memory or creative imagination. Furthermore, what are the criteria of potentiality of the partly-externally-originated mental filter other than the measures necessary to protect the predetermined destination of teleological advance? There is no better place to expunge subversive alternatives to the dominant trajectory than in the means to perceive their possible paths of realization. The integrated nature of social pressures and obligations outlined by Bergson points to their being in service to the totality of not just the present, but also to the predicted

⁹⁹ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 35.

¹⁰⁰ One is led to wonder about the conclusions reached by Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. The switching of absurdity for religion aside, what does the intensification of life really mean? Increase along a quantitative scale is tied up with rate of action and number of operations performed. The cost of absurdity may very well be the abandonment of novelty through (accidental?) hyper-routinization. Though this may be the diametric opposite of Camus's intended outcome, it is difficult to say given the vagueness of his own prescriptive position.

political consensus in the future.¹⁰¹ Each habit therein carries the pressure of the whole project as the authorized reaction represents a particular element of a systemized totality which cannot suffer exception along any line. The “closed society” in modernity is an instantaneous one.¹⁰² Acceleration to a threshold is regulation, which is in turn the expulsion of indeterminacy. The assumed givenness of problems, i.e. moments where action must be taken, serves as a means of social control which prevents those without authority from thinking their own problems.¹⁰³ If indeterminacy rests upon subconscious knowing of what is and is not already fully determined, thus alterable, then the conscious mind is not particularly amenable to altering a given state of affairs. Deleuze’s rejection of thinking as being a natural faculty is right in line with the mind’s apparent disposition towards automatic response and perceptive fatigue.¹⁰⁴ With a disposition towards habituation comes a disposition towards avoiding moments conducive to conscious thought. Thought is delay, not bodily action, and reducing the occurrence of the former in any way serves the political project of securitization through acceleration. A more technical description of the relationship between modern velocity and a disposition to action may be borrowed from De Landa. As he puts in general terms, “Automation results in self-sustaining autocatalytic loops of routines, with a limited capacity for spontaneous growth.”¹⁰⁵ This notion of autocatalysis is extremely useful. It represents not simply a linear relationship between acceleration and habituation, but rather a mutually-beneficial one with processes of feedback and circularity between the original

¹⁰¹ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 2-3.

¹⁰² Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 21.

¹⁰³ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 158.

¹⁰⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 132.

¹⁰⁵ Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (New York: Zone Books, 2000), 97.

reactants and their reactive by-products. The by-product of the process of habituation, more speed through more efficiency, serves to intensify the reaction between a predetermined future and the political present in the perpetual recreation of the former image. Likewise, any narrowing of the spread of possible reactions by the conditioning of a dominant teleology means that any given remaining possibility is to be selected more often by the actor and therefore more readily available for habituation. The parallel processes are mutually nourishing and intensifying; the products of each reaction catalyze the other set of collisions. In each case, it is the accessibility of consciousness to knowledge which is limited, be it of memory or perception. Yet despite these favourable conditions, modernity has not reached the zenith of any of its various utopian projects. The autocatalytic reaction is seemingly not enough on its own to ensure the arrival of the preordained future through the hegemony of the present. The reason for this absence of realization is that the loop or series of loops drawn between modernity's desire for a controlled future and the body's cognitive disposition towards action favours not the future, no matter how predetermined, but rather the present of an intermediary set of habitual actions and expectations. Virilio asserts that instantaneity creates the instant.¹⁰⁶ For the current argument, this is true in that the modern desire for immediate reaction does precede and subsequently produce a sort of political instant. However, the political instant, as frenzied advance freed from any glimmer of creativity or unexpectedness, eventually undermines the apprehension of teleological projects and freezes modernity into a perpetual state of incomplete idealizations. The argument now turns to analyzing

¹⁰⁶ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, 117.

the first impressions of this final and overpowering example of journey stoppage, in preparation to transitioning into the second part of the current section.

Returning to Voegelin's account of modern Gnosticism for a moment, he demonstrates that the specially-revealed knowledge of the "cause" behind the teleological political movement results in the striation of its membership into a structure of validation whereby those initiated to the gnostic truth are viewed by the broader base of adherents as being of "singular integrity, zeal, and holiness" and possessing of ideas which the masses would have never been able to devise on their own.¹⁰⁷ There is something in this attribution of creative genius to the gnostic initiate which perversely mirrors the retrospective movement of judgment examined in the first section as part of Bergson's theories of cognition. The life of the uninitiated adherent is "known" by the gnostic, in the sense that the gnostic's universal truth fully encompasses the adherent's world, without the gnostic actually knowing the specific circumstances of that other's existence. It is a free-standing truth which has been created without actual reference to the real circumstances to which it claims to apply. Rather than having lost its specificity to eternalization then, as is the general cognitive movement, the gnostic truth begins without it. It is an entirely spatialized claim, free of any reference to the past experiences over which it presides. This truth, which then already extends beyond its own claims of reality, is taken up by the adherent for specific reasons at a specific time. Whatever these reasons and circumstances may be however, they are eventually lost underneath the retrospective affirmation of the judgement to adhere to the gnostic movement. This fixation is made even easier than other such examples of the cognitive illusion as the

¹⁰⁷ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 135-6.

initial judgement was made regarding a truth that has no actual basis in the reality of those judging. The gnostic truth is an anterograde reflection of retrograde fixity. It takes comparably little effort to dehistoricize a truth which is already atemporal and, hence, ahistorical. In this dehistoricization, the adherent is able to see the gnostic truth wherever they look. Again, Bergson contends that it is erroneous to understand the possible preceding the real if that reality contains genuine articles of creation and novelty, as these durational elements are impossible to foresee and hence to be known as possible before they are made real; and yet for the gnostic the predetermined political telos sees its possible realization spread throughout a universal history full of signs pointing to its realization.¹⁰⁸ The entrenchment of the precession of possibility is another instance of modernity playing to the most constraining aspects of human cognition. Furthermore this is not the lived past that is observed, which is forgotten or never perceived under the autonomy of habitual movements and the draconian expectations of acceleration. Rather, it is the imagined past of the ahistorical political ideal; a shared sense of origin and trajectory which is part and parcel with the notion of a common and conclusive destination. More will be said regarding the interaction of the real and the possible, alongside the virtual, in the next chapter. However, the imaginative interpretation of past signs of future realization pre-empts a discussion to be made shortly regarding the descent into dream and nonreality which characterizes frenzied *movement towards*. Comfort and certainty is accrued, however illusory they might be, by molding one's existence, both as experienced in the past and in its ongoing form, to the dictates of the political eschaton ensconced within the mental filter and muscles of the body. While the

¹⁰⁸ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 10-1

passage of time may be irrelevant for the prophesized end, every moment of lived reality which does not invalidate that prediction serves to affirm it. An end which cannot be proved impossible validates itself by appropriating any and all historical moments. Its truth is the line of all human efforts which have preceded it; no logical connection is too tenuous to be grasped by the gnostic adherent. There is here the illusion of a zero-sum game between human redemption and decline which will be dealt with in the following chapter as well.¹⁰⁹ Each (interchangeable) step towards the political conclusion grants further credence to the notion that such an end is possible and that the means of its realization are known.¹¹⁰ The problem however is that one is never actually one step away from the realization of a political end. The retrospective metric of advance always finds its substance amongst the radically imperfect, as the habitual body performs its actions in the here and now, not in the perfected *then*. And it is this *now* which is finally cemented by habituation through reaction with political prediction into the permanent present, leaving undone one's supposed progress into the promised future.

3.1: Aleatory Life, Habit as Dream/Simulation

The consciousness may claim to view future historical conclusion, yet the unconscious remains immersed in the presently-unconcluded. And as the gnostic end has extended, universalized itself in a dual charismatic and cognitive movement of truth, it has no means of excluding the imperfect from its supposed knowledge of the perfected. The focus on preordained conclusion results in the inability to identify intermediary moments as such because the gnostic truth cannot admit the potency of duration. This

¹⁰⁹ The point to be made here is in regards to partial redemption or political improvement as the quantitative reduction of violence in mythical time.

¹¹⁰ The tautology here is that though the metric for advance has itself been constructed with the subjective end as its referent, the incremental segment sends concrete examples of the units of measurement into the (however recent) past to predate and thus justify the metric itself.

subsection follows the undoing of the pursuit of ends by the movements which came before it and once aided its mission. Bergson's theories of cognition and habituation persist in the background here, but any specifics beyond the tendency towards simplification and fixing of the subject's world are not immediately relevant. There will be continued analysis of Virilio's works alongside a return to Voegelin for his own conclusion regarding the modern project. But first, Baudrillard helps describe the fundamental divergence between habit and teleology as it manifests in late modernity, which he identifies as the creation of the "hyperreal."¹¹¹ Of particular interest for the argument is a terminological distinction which Baudrillard draws. This creation of hyperreality is a process of the purely operational, with any reference to the rational expelled: while teleological assumptions maintain some sort of logical means to realize their enlightened ends, the hyperreal measures itself against no such ideal and is characterized by the indefinite operation of reproducing and simulating a fictive truth.¹¹² The logic of interminable operation overtakes any sense of finality. It is in this supremacy of the operational that habit's triumph over teleological intention is found. While the rational and operational can coincide in the effective and incremental realization of a political goal, this hypothetical simplicity does not play out so cleanly in practical application. The function of hyperreality is to serve as replacement to the subjective past which has been outpaced by the collective rate of advance of modernity, as examined in the preceding subsection through Virilio. As Baudrillard explains, "Our entire linear and accumulative culture collapses if we cannot stockpile the past in plain

¹¹¹ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1.

¹¹² Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 2.

view.”¹¹³ The simulated past is built up to furnish both the active present and the expected future. The visible, contiguous origin myth offered by the hyperreal reassures the political membership of its predicted end.¹¹⁴ *Movement towards* necessitates the abrogation of the memorial past to ward off the possibility of deviation, but meanwhile operates in conjunction with this plaintive and self-serving past of appropriated objects and signs. Despite the mind desiring such clear-cut origination, it can supply for its purposes only appropriations tainted by the real. Hyperreality cannot simulate the perfected state because it has no real knowledge of that conclusive moment. Simulation in modernity is devoid of rationality because it claims to model itself upon that which it does not know. The only operations available to the hyperreal for reproduction are those current, high-velocity though intermediary steps which may have incrementally served the political end but which taken on their own are only disjointed and relatively feeble actions. Hyperreality would be quite pleasant for many if society was just upon the precipice of utopia, but modernity has not reached such a critical juncture. All this description is to point to the claim that habit is the stuff of the hyperreal. “When memory and anticipation are completely absent, there is complete conformity to the average influence of the immediate past.”¹¹⁵ In the case of late modernity, it is any sense of consciously distinct *memories* which is absent, alongside an anticipation severely dulled by perceptive fatigue. Habituation has distilled the subject’s multitude of memories down into far fewer but also far more economical contracted understandings.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 10.

¹¹⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 10.

¹¹⁵ Alfred North Whitehead, “Immortality,” in *Essays in Science and Philosophy* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), 70.

¹¹⁶ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 89-90, 93.

Meanwhile conscious anticipation has been undermined by the monotony of a world kept as perceptively constant as possible by imperceptible mental authorizations. The subject's past has been lost through memorial distance and then replaced by a simplified simulation of memory in preparation for the arrival of a unified future. And within the conditions of late modernity, it is the same habitual actions constrained by a well-developed mental filter and pressures to effect ever-greater economy of movement which compose "the average influence of the immediate past." The argument regarding the potential dangers of the mental filter as regards a simplification of the actor's reality has thus come full circle. Habit affirms its dominance over the influence of actions by already being the dominant form of action. There is a theoretical point somewhere in one's experience of "middle" modernity where habitual actions correspond with the eventual realization of a given teleological project. However, as the rate of advance continues to increase and the subject's perceptible world continues to shrink, there arrives a watershed moment where the known past is fully saturated with the body's present collection of motor-reflexes and the future becomes only the reproduction of this defined set of autonomous movements. Habits acted out *ad nauseum* thus become the only remaining memories of the political subject. At this moment, habit becomes a more powerful influence over political action and interaction amongst political actors than is ideological reason or prescriptive certainty. This is not to say that all subjects experience late modernity in the same way however. Forms of relative privilege variably insulate the political actor from the deleterious effects of late modernity and their disposition to action can quite simply be partly resisted by a life afforded a great deal of leisure and an absence of pressing demand. What has been detailed thus far is a sort of worst case

scenario, where some of the worst parts of modernity are reacted with the most dangerous (again in terms of creative action) aspects of human cognition. In examining this theoretical outcome, one is better prepared to deal with its non-ideal manifestations in lived reality. With these caveats in mind, Voegelin presents his own account of the decline of modernity in its descent into a “dream world,” which parallels the present application of Baudrillard’s concept of the hyperreal and which helps to further explore the suppression of teleological intention by habitual motion.

While modernity has thus begun to be shown to undermine itself vis-à-vis the force of habituation, this internal disconnect between bodily disposition and social condition leaves the affected subject in a very precarious position. To Voegelin, the self-defeating factor of modern Gnosticism is its necessary misrepresentation of reality; rhythms of growth and decay are ignored for the sake of the re-divinizing eternal truths and final battles which are the lifeblood of the gnostic citizen.¹¹⁷ Rather than acknowledging these fundamentally unpredictable currents, Gnosticism creates a world of nonreality or dream so that its leadership and in turn membership may claim to know the final end.¹¹⁸ This is another reading of the same process which Baudrillard identifies as the production of the hyperreal. In both cases, an illusory world is constructed to preserve a particular conception of truth which would be inevitably undermined by various processes of becoming. As the dream world is a component of the gnostic project which itself has been shown to demand a high-velocity and strictly controlled society, once again the substance of this nonreality is the habitual motions which the Gnostics instigated and cultivated. The stabilized opposition to the rhythms of becoming must be

¹¹⁷ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 166.

¹¹⁸ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 167.

appropriated from somewhere or when, and the habitual provides this wellspring. The actions which were said to contribute to the atemporal gnostic truth are retemporalized as the immediate past which is then petrified as the dream world and projected into the future. In this dream world, it is possible for the diligent adherent of the political eschaton to fully embrace that doctrine as fixed truth and their intermediary habits as the means to realize that truth. There then emerges a radical break between the world as it (perhaps) is and the world as understood by the political gnostic.¹¹⁹ It is in this schism between perceived world and actual world that the ever-immediate journeys of automatic motor-reflexes become radical stoppage.

The impossible journey in the gnostic dream world is characterized by the law of unintended consequences driven to absurdity. Voegelin provides an effective visualization: “The attitude [of the political gnostic] toward reality remains energetic and active, but neither reality nor action in reality can be brought into focus; the vision is blurred by the Gnostic dream.”¹²⁰ In this altered mental state, the actual consequences of actions taken are entirely different from their intended effects.¹²¹ Not only do the teleological projects which began this entire process thus become impossible, but the affected subject’s individual ability to act and thrive is placed in great peril. A turn to a historical example of descent into dream gives a clearer image of this dangerous stoppage. The analysis will now turn to the recent past of Chile, and the violence and ideological conflict which took place there.

¹¹⁹ Is it possible to argue that the world is misrepresented without having a clear representation of the world oneself? Voegelin’s Aristotelianism grants him a certain subjective stability in his understanding of the right and the existent. Here the world as fundamentally being one of duration and becoming is taken as true. Hopefully this axiomatic assumption is enough to ground the preceding analysis.

¹²⁰ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 169.

¹²¹ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 169.

In an interview conducted in October of 2000, Milton Friedman reiterated his “Miracle of Chile,” this time specifying that the truly important historical fact was not solely economic but rather that the privatization of industries and the liberalization of the Chilean market brought about the downfall of the authoritarian Pinochet regime.¹²² This statement, founded in an absolutist neo-liberal ideology, is far removed from the reality of the situation in Chile along a number of analytical lines. To start at the beginning, the democratically-elected Marxist government of Salvador Allende was deposed in 1973 by a military coup which eventually coalesced into a junta government under the direction of General Augusto Pinochet (who would remain in power until 1990).¹²³ The change in power was quickly followed by a “National Reconstruction Plan” which was “aimed at erasing every trace of Marxism and structuralism” left over from the previous government.¹²⁴ A key aspect of this plan was radical market liberalization, and to this end the Pinochet government recruited Friedman and his cadre of University of Chicago Economics Department postgrads (the “Chicago Boys” as they would come to be known—or more locally as just “*Chicagos*”) to oversee the implementation of economic deregulation and reduction of public spending.¹²⁵ This implementation included building a network of reform supporters to help quell internal opposition to the new policies, as well as the brutal suppression of those critics broadly deemed “a threat to national

¹²² Milton Friedman, “Commanding Heights,” *PBS*, 2000. Retrieved May 16, 2019. https://pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/shared/minitext/int_miltonfriedman.html#10.

¹²³ Claudi Kedar, “The International Monetary Fund and the Chilean Chicago Boys, 1973-7: Cold Ties between Warm Ideological Partners,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 54, no. 1 (2019): 179-80.

¹²⁴ Claudi Kedar, “The International Monetary Fund and the Chilean Chicago Boys, 1973-7: Cold Ties between Warm Ideological Partners,” 180.

¹²⁵ Claudi Kedar, “The International Monetary Fund and the Chilean Chicago Boys, 1973-7: Cold Ties between Warm Ideological Partners,” 180.

security.”¹²⁶ In economic terms then, the Pinochet junta was itself oriented to neo-liberal doctrine. Furthermore, the pursuit of the perfectly free market in Chile would end up causing a widespread increase in poverty through cuts to social spending and the authoritarian destruction of community organizations.¹²⁷ Beyond the terrible human costs such policies engendered, the associated economic indicators by no means showed the miraculous happening.¹²⁸ The specifics of the economic failure are not immediately pertinent, but the idea that the “booming” Chilean economy saved Chile politically from the very neo-liberals who installed that economy is a critical image. Friedman perceived, in what was in reality a failure of neo-liberalist policy, a successful example of neo-liberal doctrine that in turn saved Chile from the neo-liberals, and which was therefore a triumph *of* neo-liberalism. In no way is the reality of the situation accurately represented by his claim that neoliberalism succeeded in ending the Pinochet regime. The professed causality is absurd.¹²⁹ This is Friedman taken on his own as being unable to perceive external events which run contrary to his gnostic expectations and thus twisting outcomes to suit his predicted reality; a fate similarly shared by the other individuals of the Chicago Boys and subordinate adherents. Their (received) teleological fervour and associated ingrained habitual responses preclude the correct recognition of a divergent situation;

¹²⁶ Claudi Kedar, “The International Monetary Fund and the Chilean Chicago Boys, 1973-7: Cold Ties between Warm Ideological Partners,” 184. Ángela Vergara, “Writing about Workers, Reflecting on Dictatorship and Neoliberalism: Chilean Labor History and the Pinochet Dictatorship,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 93, no. 1 (2018): 54.

¹²⁷ James Petras and Steve Vieux, “The Chilean ‘Economic Miracle’: An Empirical Critique,” *Critical Sociology* 17, no. 2 (1990): 63.

¹²⁸ James Petras and Steve Vieux, “The Chilean ‘Economic Miracle’: An Empirical Critique,” 59.

¹²⁹ There is a problem here in the interpretation of Friedman as believing in what he is saying. The distinction between a statement made in good faith from misunderstood premises and one founded in cynicism is contestable, perhaps intractably so. Hinging an alternative argument on meaning quickly becomes solipsistic however in the inability to confirm good faith beyond any doubt. Nonetheless, it is an important nuance to consider when dealing with disparities of power and potential for ulterior gain.

they cannot conceive of alternative political responses to privatization and economic liberalization and their associated positive outcomes. Whatever successes these policies might have enjoyed in the actors' accelerated pasts are eternalized as a fixed consequence of those actions. Furthermore, it is also a telling example of how political effort focused along a single line of perfectibility (economic liberalization in this case) can deaden ideological adherents to other important metrics of evaluation (the dramatic social/human costs of austerity measures). With the nonrecognition of reality as the primary imperative, so as to accomplish conformity with gnostic expectation, one living in the dream world loses the ability to critically reflect upon their notions of cause and effect.¹³⁰ As Adorno and Horkheimer lament, reflection is never as compelling as false immediacy.¹³¹ Such inability is further demonstrated by the Chilean example in the continuation of the same failed economic policies by the democratic government which followed the end of Pinochet's regime.¹³² This forceful attraction to the unreal can be understood as an intensified form of the doubled forgetting wrought by habituation.

Under the influence of the dream world, or hyperreality, one's very conception of life and the interpretation of their past seals off a variety of possible results from intentional actualization. Modernity is ground to a halt and in this immobility the dreaming subject is left without an effective means of engaging with the world. While the limitations pressed upon possibility by dominant, yet useful, habits may be understood as ontic in nature, once those limitations are passed into simulation by the modern project and enforced by the dream world they take on the authority of being

¹³⁰ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 169-70.

¹³¹ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, 161.

¹³² James Petras and Steve Vieux, "The Chilean 'Economic Miracle': An Empirical Critique," 57.

ontologic, at least in appearance to the percipient subject. In the merger of the ontological and epistemological layers of retrograde illusion, mutable limits imposed by knowledge inscribed upon the muscles are passed into fixed necessity and constrain one's very self-conception of being. Despite similar effects, there is therefore a difference in kind between the limitations posed only by habit and those by the more complex descent into unreality. If all of modernity's conditions, the high-velocity, technologically-augmented journey along a singular line, were immediately rescinded, those who were forced to experience frenzied advance would still be left in an altered, impaired position. In the autocatalytic reaction of the cognitive disposition to action and the teleological projects of modernity there is created an extremely constrained and inefficacious subjective world. Under the Gnostic dream, the political subject really can perceive themselves and others as behaving in the same manner of physical instantaneity as the cue and billiard balls. The fixing of a particular idea of causality "obstructs and even prohibits an *investigation* of cause."¹³³ Likewise, "our mind has an irresistible tendency to consider the idea it most frequently uses to be the clearest."¹³⁴ The suspension of modernist teleological assumptions would not immediately restore one's capacity for critical reflection as the self is still inscribed with the overwhelming influences of the habits which it has established. Past this point of treacherous thought, it is difficult to see the means of one's return; no less as an external participant than as the subject themselves. How to effectively manage such warped subjectivities is a pressing matter for further elaboration; the following chapter deals mainly with the means to avert such circumstances rather than their post-hoc rectification. Thus far, a theoretical path has

¹³³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*, 51. Original emphasis.

¹³⁴ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 153.

been followed which shows how the interaction of a subjectivity emphasizing action and the ideological choices of modernity has produced a political subject dominated by habits and forced to live in a self-replicating state of nonreality.

To characterize the life of the political subject after this condition of frenzy takes hold serves to exemplify the ultimate futility of a concentration on even an apparently bloodless civil teleology, and helps shed an introductory light on a possible alternative attitude of political motion. But before the worst case scenario itself can again be discussed, the (unperceived) moments before its arrival must be elucidated. What dressings make up the stage of this final act? The means of perceiving and interpreting the world of the teleological adherent have been blurred by their own obsession with the intensification of progress. Reactions have become rote and misguided as thought has been canalized and creativity altogether abandoned for the sake of established motor-reflexes. This is a life in which to appear to act is to not actually have a meaningful influence on one's surroundings. Bergson concludes that the solidarity of the past and present is the essence of movement.¹³⁵ Elsewhere: "Without the survival of the past in the present there would be no duration, but only instantaneity."¹³⁶ Given the unhinged acceleration demanded by the eschaton and the intermediary habits subsequently engendered by that end, this temporal unity and thus the condition of possible displacement in time and space is left decidedly unmet in the affected subject. What does the impossibility of movement really mean however, when it is readily apparent that the modern can still walk to the store to buy groceries or fly half-way across the world to an all-inclusive resort? It is the inability to act intentionally, to meaningfully exert one's

¹³⁵ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 291.

¹³⁶ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 151.

creative potential. Voegelin already motioned towards this state in his image of blurred vision but Virilio best identifies the condition, as already quoted in the epigraph:

“progress has pushed over hyper-anticipatory and predictive society toward a simple *culture of chance*, a contract on the aleatory.”¹³⁷ He gives the example of hospital staff betting on the time of death of patients; it exemplifies not only the random condition of death, but also that of life as the means to furnish one’s existence (capital) is inextricably linked to that capricious conclusion.¹³⁸ One’s death is another’s life, but the relation between the two is left up to unpredictable circumstances and arbitrary decisions. That is the aleatory life, where the distinction between life and death is entirely beyond one’s own influence.¹³⁹ The rational efficiency of habit has become pathological excess and the desire for comfort and security simple arbitrary control. There is no greater stoppage in life than when one’s bodily actions entirely constitute nonaction. Under this regime of chance, the act of going on living becomes pure accident. Kierkegaard identifies a generally “wrong sort of repetition” where “barren” thoughts dominate and there is only an emptiness that repeats.¹⁴⁰ This is the aleatory life, where the absence of a memorial past causes every present to be lived like the preceding one and the subject cannot even perceive the mortal predicament which encompasses them. Both the past and the future are dominated by the same constrained array of potential perceptions and habitual reactions, neither of which accurately correspond to the world as it exists in fluctuation

¹³⁷ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, 30. Original emphasis.

¹³⁸ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, 31.

¹³⁹ One may of course step out of their front door and immediately be struck by a car swerving onto the sidewalk. But it is a matter of tendency. In the habitual culture of chance, such arbitrary deaths are the norm posited by the system rather than the exception.

¹⁴⁰ Søren Kierkegaard, *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs*, trans. M. G. Piety (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 37-8.

beyond the dreaming subject. More than the impossibility of movement, this life outside of time renders mobility and immobility indistinguishable.¹⁴¹ To act in this situation is practically equivalent to one remaining passive and static. The unerring pursuit of what was once a defined (to various degrees) political goal has become a sedentary instant or “voyage without destination.”¹⁴² “*Movement kills motion,*” or has killed it.¹⁴³ More specifically, it is unfettered or unalloyed *movement towards* which perverts the subject’s ability to move. The self is able to kill motion unless effort is also put against the basic desire to always be moving; modernity provides no such counterbalance and in this absence movement acts out its own undoing. With this perversion comes a simple inability to effectively meet one’s political needs in terms of accuracy of outcome and sustainable repeatability.

The state of accidentally living is tantamount to being rendered politically impotent. Spontaneity, inward intention of the subject, is necessary not just for freedom but the base act of living.¹⁴⁴ This claim by Arendt will be worked on further in the proceeding chapter. Part of this base act of living is one’s inherent immersion in the social and political. The quashing of spontaneity and concerted attention by frenzied advance ultimate undoes one’s ability to pursue serious political projects. Without an accurate understanding of one’s lived situation, even the most basic political outcome is placed behind an impenetrable series of probabilistic barriers. It comes down to a matter of chance that sufficient circumstances will accidentally fall in to place to deliver the

¹⁴¹ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, 38-9.

¹⁴² Paul Virilio and Sylvere Lotringer, *Pure War*, 63, 67-9.

¹⁴³ Paul Virilio and Sylvere Lotringer, *Pure War*, 78. Original emphasis; indicates that it is Lotringer’s statement.

¹⁴⁴ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1968), 438.

realization of anything. More than this stoppage however, the individual experiencing frenzy is effectively insulated from exterior reproach. Voegelin contends that it is the remainder of nonbelievers who are blamed for the unintended outcomes experienced by those in the gnostic dream world.¹⁴⁵ Those whose specific circumstances imperil them less to the autocatalytic reaction of their cognition and modernity become the enemy of those whose descent has been quicker or more brutal as well as the cause behind the misfortunes of the frenzied. In this way, one's impotency becomes the result of a conspiring other and is therefore not at all perceived as a failing internal(ized) to the one in the grip of aleatory life. The inability to achieve the orienting political end is masked through nonrecognition of the real situation, hiding the fact that the instantaneous present can reproduce only the barren and politically-stagnant. The subject-object is apparently constrained through the subjectivity of another. Take Camus's characterization of one's succumbing to his particular sort of plague:

...it was almost always without [the deceased] having time to realize it. Snatched suddenly from his long, silent communion with a wraith of memory, he was plunged straightaway into the densest silence of all. He'd had no time for anything.¹⁴⁶

Right until the end, the affected subject continues to correspond with the "wraith" of their dominating habits and overly simplified experience of the world. This spectral vision keeps the subject completely enthralled and mute to the world beyond their gnostic truth. Their life is constrained to a static point, being cut off from duration and having had "no *time* for anything." Once the connection to the real is severed, motor-reflexes and stereotyped circumstances serve to resist intrusion by those less taken over by the

¹⁴⁵ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 170.

¹⁴⁶ Albert Camus, *The Plague*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Penguin Books, 1964), 65.

incomplete realization of teleological endeavors. Thus the inevitable failure of a teleological account of politics is hidden behind the more severe failure of excessive habituation. Political prediction is made extremely difficult to critically analyze by the very reflexes which it engenders and by which it is undone. The logic of frenzied *movement towards* is self-preserving even in the face of futility, which makes it all the more dangerous. The illusion, inexperience, and velocity all come together in a lethal affliction of unlivability and confusion. All that is left is monotony, “the slow, deliberate progress of some monstrous thing crushing out all upon its path.”¹⁴⁷ The intractability of such a condition makes its recognition and opposition all the more pressing, otherwise imperceptibility grows with decline.

Characteristic of the reaction between a subject disposed to action and the political teleology of modernity, several facets of frenzied *movement towards* have been explored in this chapter. First examined was the acceleration of political life. There were several intermingled and simultaneous causes and effects of this process. The prescriptive aspect of the determined political end provides a given number of action-reaction couplets which are easily habituated by the subject whose disposition embraces stable understandings of causality. The heightened economy of these learned movements produces a greater velocity of political collision, excluding the preservation or even emergence of competing political alternatives by expelling periods of pause and reflexion. While proximity between actors and objects of knowledge is increased in the present to accelerate life, this autocatalytic increase in velocity ultimately serves to distance the lived present of these subjects from the possible memorialization of actions

¹⁴⁷ Albert Camus, *The Plague*, 76, 148.

and results. Without the prospect of memory-aided novelty, the present circumstances of the subject constantly repeat and thus undergo even greater impression upon the muscles of the political actor. Not only is there a process of acceleration at work here, but also a parallel one of a loss of perception as repeated stimuli dull the senses and dip below the unexpectedness necessary for conscious awareness and selection of reaction. With progressive intensity then, the subject in a state of constant advance loses grip on both their present and their past. The project which is used to rationalize such drastic injuries, that of political eschatology or Gnosticism, is itself undone by the harm that it causes. The second aspect of this frenzy motioned which was explored was the transition into a world of illusion and dream. The participating subject's senses and actions are further constrained therein by the misrepresentation of reality. There comes an indeterminate moment when an established collection of habits and criteria of mental filtration overtake the progressive realization of the original political goal. The gnostic end has only the imperfect movements of the immediate past to form the basis of its simulation of the anticipated future. Logical cause and effect become disjointed as expectant results are not forthcoming from misunderstood premises. This descent into dream was then shown to mark an aleatory life and in turn the end of political potency. Action becomes practical nonaction under habitual nonreality and thereby the process of living grinds slowly, but persistently to a halt. This political impotency is founded upon the inability to properly seek out solutions in conjunction with the flows of a changing world, representing the subject's failure to meet relevant individual and social needs. The intention of this chapter has been to follow the deleterious effects of a dogmatic advancing motion in politics, precipitated by the reaction of subjective disposition to

action and the premises of modernity, from the restriction of choice, to the abandonment of materiality, and finally to the pitiful but no less malignant incapability of the misguided subject and society. Much like the multifarious journeys present in Kafka's writing, *movement towards* is a peculiar hybridity of imperceptible speed and morbid halting. In much the same vein, Virilio identifies the contemporary world as having succumbed to the generalization of arrival, there being no more departure.¹⁴⁸ Habits play themselves out interminably, with no effective means to alter or abandon them. With this expelled direction of movement and attention at the fore, the next chapter will explore what it potentially means to depart in a political sense. To this end and the opposition of frenzy, it will be a discussion of another aspect of basic political displacement. As a foil to *movement towards*, the possibility of *movement away* is a vital step to a more diversified and complex political environment.

¹⁴⁸ Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer, *Pure War*, 72.

Chapter 2: Access, Departure, Relation

“There is no discipline of forgetting; we are at the mercy of random natural processes, like stroke and amnesia, and such self-interventions as drugs, alcohol, or suicide...[however]...Once I know that I can remember whenever I like, I forget.”¹⁴⁹

“[O]nly a redeemed mankind receives the fullness of its past — which is to say, only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments.”¹⁵⁰

As a politics of arrival encompasses an improbable mixture of acceleration and stoppage, similarly does a proposed politics of departure alloy ostensibly contradictory processes of memorization and forgetting in specific patterns and structures. Eco’s Jacopo Belbo catches a passing glimpse of an active and symbiotic relationship between memory and a more conscious ability to forget. He cannot willfully forget until the point when he has the capability to remember at will. Intentional forgetting in this case requires a simultaneous capacity to actively access one’s memories. This relationship will be expanded over the course of the present argument to include the inverse as well: that the active capacity to forget is also crucial for one’s ability to remember. While overwhelming habituation and the dream world takes memorization to the extreme of forgetting and unconsciousness, the dynamic subject requires a different application of the two mental forces. For political intention to remain in the process of forgetting, so that it may be more than the aleatory imperceptiveness of frenzied advance, complimentary usages of memory remain vital. The purpose of this chapter, by examining several specific relationships between memory and the forgotten, is to detail how the individual may more effectively respond to the potential negative outcomes of

¹⁴⁹ Umberto Eco, *Foucault’s Pendulum*, trans. William Weaver (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989), 23.

¹⁵⁰ Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 2007), 254.

the human disposition to constant action while still being able to realize meaningful political projects and thus improve the conditions within which they live. Not a once-and-for-all solution to the ills of frenzied *movement towards*, what will be described rather is a recurrent counterthrust (hence *movement away*) made against the problem of excessive habituation along several intersections between creation and limitation. This task is carried out over five sections of analysis; two which provide the argumentative basis for a politics of departure and then three which model actual cases when departure must occur. The first section is a re-introduction of the concepts to be used throughout the following argument, in which these concepts are contrasted to elements of the previous chapter through metaphorical image and then tied to another, orienting image. The image of memory as harbor is introduced to provide a point of common reference across the later three sections of general cases. The second section provides a two-part sketch of a non-redemptive political ontology which ties political improvement to one's improved access to memorial detail. First reached by intuitive feeling through a reorientation of the quoted passage by Benjamin, that initial route to a progressive politics built upon something other than perfectibility is then re-examined analytically through Bergson's theories of memory and action. A doctrine of contingent political improvement is shown to be established in increased access to the details of the problem(s), as found in the memories of the relevant actors. Temporary solutions are the product of mechanisms which enable affected political actors to balance withdrawal from the problem (so as to have time for reflection upon that problem) with the practical fact that one cannot have all the details of a problem with which one is not immediately engaged. In this distinction between understandings of progress (progress as means to

perfection or means to limited improvement) is a certain ambivalence which permeates this chapter and renders it political in itself: while the most axiological elements of modernity are opposed to reflect the imperfectability of political life, a direct challenge is not made to a less idealized but nonetheless teleological account of politics.¹⁵¹ As the previous chapter has demonstrated in its account of the eventual dominance of habit on the back of the perfected but simulated future, a practical doctrine must challenge political impotency prior to grappling with the ethics of teleological accounts of human effort. After these two grounding sections are established, the argument puts forward three sections which detail resistance to the pathologization of habit and support for improved memorial access. They are made in the form of orders of departure, which address general circumstances or moments of importance that signal to the active subject that they must remain cautious and pay attention.¹⁵² The first order of departure justifies the temporary unconsciousness of the habitual motion as a relation of accumulation to expenditure with respect to the creative act. A positive conception of habit derived from Bergson and Gilles Deleuze, amongst others, is hence put in dialogue with the dangerous

¹⁵¹ “The Christian symbolism of supernatural destination has itself a theoretical structure, and this structure is continued into the variants of immanentization...one can distinguish the movement [towards a goal] as its teleological component, from a state of highest value as the axiological component.” Voegelin then goes on to specify that an immanent movement which focuses on teleological advance without a perfected image at the end of that advance results in a progressivist history while the opposite prioritization produces a utopianism. Only when both aspects of the original eschaton are translated in their fullest does the movement produce the gnostic excesses examined in the first chapter. The translation of both eschatological components into secularized modernity is treated as “teleological” in the preceding chapter for the sake of simplicity. Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, 120-1. Hence, this chapter does continue to follow a “progressivist” program in its determination of problems and contingent solutions. Rather than abandoning “progress” altogether, the dangers of that advancing motion are balanced out with attentions elsewhere so that meaningful political improvement can still take place.

¹⁵² The term “order” is used here to signify a sort of magnitude associated with the departure as well. The third order of departure is a *greater* departure than the first for instance. Though difficult to quantify, this ordination generally encompasses the potential dangers involved in ignoring the need to depart as well as the losses which must unfortunately be incurred when the subject follows through with the departure. The orders are presented as such to provide another means of gauging their importance and to determine allocation of ever-limited individual resources.

imperceptibility identified in the preceding chapter. The second order of departure addresses more directly the serious threat which human cognition and habituation makes against the potential of creative advance. If creativity is to be sustained, a habit which has lost its relational meta-characteristic, i.e. one which acts only for its own sake, must be abandoned by the subject. While the subject remains relatively stable through the course of the second order of departure, only abandoning one habitual motion amongst a varied repertoire, the third order examines the need for a radical readjustment of the self in the form of abandoning a large proportion of established habits. The subject retains their memories and some sense of stable self-image through this major departure, yet also discards a great deal of what they once prioritized and foresaw. The third order of departure hence, more so than the others examined, exemplifies the interrelation of memory and forgetting. The general argument made across these orders of analysis is that the shifting of attention to things (being) left behind opposes the modern tendency towards excessive cognitive filtration and simplification and therefore re-enables the progressive realization of novel political projects. It is this shifting of attention which is foundational to a politics of departure and a better reaction to human cognitive disposition than the one offered by orthodox modernity. The three orders of departure examined are not claimed to be the exclusive forms of such a political outlook, but they do exemplify the qualities which compose the general direction of movement. There is a balance to be struck in the two mental processes of memorization and forgetting; as there is in the more general yet still isomorphic equilibrium to be maintained between political *movement towards* and *away* so as to prevent the emergence of another frenzied form of politics and further political impotency. This admixture is a necessary component in the

fair recognition of the world of human lives and society as complex and multitudinous. The general relations of political departure to arrival, and thus of balanced forgetfulness and memory compared to their scalar extremes, will now be reintroduced conceptually through a pair of existing and, interestingly enough, relatively contemporaneous metaphorical images. These images will serve as referents throughout the argument, providing a red thread to be woven between the works of several potentially disparate theorists as well as applied examples to help orient the reader.

1: Two Images of Memory: Wreckage as Pile and Wreckage as Harbor

The first image to be examined effectively summarizes the previous chapter. It is neither an unequivocal nor holistic presentation of the preceding arguments, and yet still is so efficient regarding economy of visuals and connections that it cannot be done without. Though it was only to be published posthumously, Benjamin completed his “Theses on the Philosophy of History” in 1940.¹⁵³ The reason for one of the Theses being included in the epigraph here will be examined in due course. The ninth entry however contains the immediately pertinent metaphor, and is quoted here in full, minus its own epigraphic quotation:

A Klee painting named ‘Angleus Novus’ shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staying, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned towards the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly

¹⁵³ Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” 267.

propels him into the future to which his back is turned,
 while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This
 storm is what we call progress.¹⁵⁴

The notion of “wreckage” is interpreted in this argument as that of an instance of memory, and its piling the accumulation of memorized moments and actions; the historical past is retained in human memory, in an intermediate sense within texts and images but ultimately in the mind. The angel, as potential redeemer or savior, is eternally denied access to these memories of the past by means of an uncloseable distance and force. This inaccessibility leaves the angel wholly impotent. Hence it views the accumulated wreckage—the memorialized past—as simply a singular horror, the impossibility of ascension or even improvement. The mono-faceted nature of experience and possibility here is analogous to the deadening of perception and creativity furnished by frenzied political advance; as the gnostic truth finds signs of the determined future across the experienced past, so too does the angel experience the accumulated effect of a single, unbroken force of fate. The repulsive force between the wreckage and the angel is equivalent to the perceptive distance which opens up between the active present and the memorial past by means of a forever accelerating and more automated, as well as more illusory, political life. The experience of past events is lost or kept out of reach, leaving the subject or angel to reside in a perpetual recreation of the present. This conceptual interpretation is corroborated by the means which Benjamin uses to describe the time in which humanity currently resides. This epoch of the “mythical” as he describes it is characterized by an unending cycle of violence reacting upon itself; every making and preservation of a human law constitutes a crime which is met only by another injury.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” 257-8.

¹⁵⁵ Walter Benjamin, “Critique of Violence,” in *Reflections*, ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken, 2007), 283-4, 287.

The chain of historical events which “we” as humanity witness is an illusion presented upon the surface of an unchanging system; a trick of the mind through which the angel, ironic in its powerlessness, is able to see. The causality is different here between Benjamin’s presentation and the frenzy of political arrival. While frenzied advance renders political life uniform for the apparent sake of a particular project, the temporal world remains uniform in Benjamin’s account despite the contrivances of its political occupants. The effect is the same however. Human effort is rendered meaningless and the time of their existences becomes “homogenous” and “empty.”¹⁵⁶ Benjamin must resort to the theological and messianic to contend with this worldly impotency. To him, Paradise, the end of violence, can only be achieved through an instance of awesome “divine violence” to be wrought by the arrival of a redemptive figure.¹⁵⁷ This act cannot be known or justified in advance however and therefore carries no real political utility as an orienting goal or predictable event.¹⁵⁸ The transcendental and post-hoc nature of divine violence means that any policy or action which claims to hasten its arrival is fundamentally disingenuous and, more so, is all the more likely another instance of the mythical sort of perpetual violence.

What Benjamin chiefly ignores however is that human time is not entirely empty, that it has appreciably different characteristics at particular times. In most general terms, the notion of myth here ignores the fact that human politics can result in a quantitative reduction in the level of experienced violence, however contingent and constrained that reduction may be. Violence in the current usage is defined by Johan Galtung, as

¹⁵⁶ Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” 261.

¹⁵⁷ Walter Benjamin, “Critique of Violence,” 300.

¹⁵⁸ Walter Benjamin, “Critique of Violence,” 300.

occurring wherever “*human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations.*”¹⁵⁹ In this way, violence is whatever injures the human application of potential and a decrease in violence sees a corresponding uptick in the expansiveness of capabilities. Human potential thus does violence to itself when it becomes constrained by political *movement towards*. Likewise the reduction of experienced violence is correlated in the expansion of human complexity of direction. The contours of this claim will be explored throughout the chapter.

Redemption is not necessary for things to get better, so to speak, and to operate otherwise is to begin to fall into the trap of frenzied advance. Benjamin’s works are fascinating as he both resists the teleological excesses of modernity while also resorting to an adaptation of the theology of redemption which grounds those excesses. His theories thus emphasize the ills of modernity through both description and example, playing to two sides of the same logic. The angel is powerless because it has been told and has operationally internalized the idea that life is stuck along a single, unalterable course. The force that repels it from the wreckage of history, the memories which can be learned from and creatively adapted to, may in fact be an internal product of the angel in a form analogous to the mental filter detailed in the preceding chapter through Bergson. The primary presentiment to be had here as concerns the present argument is that access to the “wreckage” is perhaps much more important than it would at first appear and that this access is linked to the possibility of societal improvement without recourse to a universal political project. This linkage becomes all the more explicit in the second image to be introduced.

¹⁵⁹ Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 168. Original emphasis.

Under “The Theory of Feelings,” in Whitehead’s *Process & Reality* which was first published in 1929, there is a fascinating passage which shares similar language and substance to the one drawn from Benjamin’s Theses:

A chain of facts is like a barrier reef. On one side there is wreckage, and beyond it harbourage and safety. The categories governing the determination of things are the reasons there should be evil; and are also the reasons why, in the advance of the world, particular evil facts are finally transcended.¹⁶⁰

The impression of wreckage strikes out first as a connection between the two metaphorical scenes. Whitehead’s usage of the notion does vary from Benjamin’s however, though it can be fairly amended in such a way as to draw closer to this other treatment. Wreckage does not only exist beyond the bounds of the harbor, but also serves—replacing the notion of a naturally-occurring reef—to constitute the breakwater itself (in reality as in metaphor). Where Whitehead employs the name “facts,” there too can be meant the same thing as the “wreckage” of mythical time which the angel observes. Facts are historical; they are the actualities of the world and by extension the impression of these objects and events made upon the subject. Particular historical objects thus compose both the barrier and the debris which lay beyond. The discrepancy here vis-à-vis Benjamin’s account is that Whitehead does not view every snippet of historical memory as a disaster. He differentiates in some way historical failures and successes, despite the elements of both categories being composed of memories. There the immediate difference between the two passages emerges, in that this second image allows in some way for the particular improvement of the human condition.

Accumulation here, of historical-memorial components which make up the breakwater,

¹⁶⁰ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 315.

serves an immanent and productive purpose. Evils exist, yes, but their existences can be used to push them back, to lessen their human impact. The unlivable is used to help nurture the livable; at least as long as that particular place of harborage (conception of the livable) remains relevant. There is the possibility, however contingent, of partial improvement of life. This opportunity is held in stark contrast to the fundamental impotency of political interaction put forward by Benjamin. The tumultuousness of the ocean will never be stilled and the breakwater may need to be rearranged or abandoned altogether, but it is not possible to say that the violence of the waves therein always remains the same. This improvement is possible because the harbor is accessible. Its shelter and provisions can be reached by metaphorical ships, and the memories which constitute it can be retrieved by human minds. Rather than a force of repulsion, a harbor represents a point of attraction that can still be left behind voluntarily and whose attraction is not dependent upon a transcendental sense of safety. Above all, the harbor is a point of departure *par excellence*. It is a contained area of stillness and relative stability which opens up, past the gradual interface of the two worlds, onto seemingly unbounded flux and the unknown. The unpredictableness of weather patterns and the waves makes every journey from there an experiment of sorts, not even to mention the genuine novelty of arriving at a heretofore unseen place. The angel however witnesses no such surprises, only the constant arrival of the same underlying injustices. Viewed from another perspective, the harbor extends along a horizontal plane of immanence while the ever-growing tower of wreckage only creeps towards the (temporally) unobtainable heavens. The pile's footprint upon the ground represents little more than a static point, again harkening back to an obstinate fate or destination. Political movement under these

conditions is separated from impressions made by the real and is significantly closed off from the possibility of directional reorientation or alteration. The harbor image's extensiveness gives it place in both space and time, a geographic reality which is requisite for meaningful interaction with the world. The harbor represents knowledge not just of where one claims to be going, but also of where one has been and to where one may choose to return. Places and times are departed from (forgotten) yet are not effaced; their relevance to consciousness is lost, but not irretrievably so. As Jacopo Belbo celebrates, one may gain the ability in some sense to forget and remember at will, or at least when the need arises.

The image of the harbor yields a series of concepts which underpin a potential politics of *movement away*. These ideas will be built up and interlaced with one another throughout the course of the chapter and the examination of three orders of departure. Memory and forgetting play roles at several scales here, but their tasks remain generally isomorphic. The accumulation of wreckage is foundational to these orders and is analogous to the recollection of the past. Memory is integral to a politics which embraces creativity and complexity, as will be shown in the next section through the works of Bergson, Deleuze, and others. The existence of accumulated debris is not enough on its own however. There too must be meaningful access to these components, so that they may be fashioned into a pertinent and useful structure or structures (the complexity of the bustling marina or merchant dock perhaps). And as these structures do not stand alone in an otherwise empty plane (the harbor serves as an entry point to the coastal city and thus the deeper interior as well as a connection between foreign concentrations), there is the notion of geographic relation and adjacency. The utility of this recognition of place

herein is to explore in the third section the usage of habits (actions founded in memory and yet forgotten/unperceived) to delegate potential energies where they are needed most and thus to, again, accumulate conscious effort by not expending it where it is not vital. Habitual actions in one aspect of life can be a boon to novel movements in an adjacent area. Memorized movement at times gives one the chance to withdraw from the immediacy of need, to consciously expend the accumulated, and therefore (when circumstances are favourable) to create or express a free action. These processes of accumulation and withdrawal are critical to the first and second orders of departure (third and fourth sections), respectively. Habits cause one to forget some moments to yield other moments of greater importance, yet when these habits no longer enable this transfer of energy along interfaces they themselves must be forgotten. The pathologization of established movements and the detrimental consequences of this have been dealt with in great detail in the preceding chapter. Not announced by this initial metaphor is the centrality of a positive conception of difference and the partiality or quantitative nature of political improvement. These ideas are related to a virtuality read primarily through Deleuze in the fifth section that is not expressed in the notion of the harbor as a relatively fixed point. However, that image is still implicated as a place to be departed from to meet the impending virtual of the open ocean. While habits may lose their efficacy by a simple rearrangement of circumstances or priorities, there is finally the (inevitable though unpredictable) possibility of meeting an entirely new situation for which the self's automated reactions are entirely unsuited. This interaction of the harbor (or real) and the virtual marks a third and most pressing need to depart; a politics which considers the necessity of *movement away* must always consider the arrival of this moment, though it

can never be practically guaranteed. The metaphorical image of the harbor, adapted from Whitehead, efficiently encapsulates many of the mechanisms to be put forward here as central to a politics of departure. Before closer scrutiny may be put to these aspects of the argument, some effort will first be spent examining the underlying assumptions of the case being made. This ontological account is intended to be a counterpoint to the self-destructive political perfectibility assumed by modernist doctrine and hence extols a conception of political life characterized by contingent, reversible improvement and perpetual struggle of variable intensity.

2: A Non-redemptive Politics and its Linkages to Memory

The quantitative nature of immanent change is the ground upon which investigation of political departure is to be made. This section relates to the opening quotation from Benjamin that correlates redemption to knowing one's history in full, but this connection is made through significant adaptation of the original passage. The quotation itself places redemption prior to access to historical knowledge: “[O]nly a redeemed mankind receives the fullness of its past — which is to say, only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments;” redemption is the cause of this human reception or metamorphosis.¹⁶¹ This causal direction is a function of Benjamin's requirement for a qualitative shift in humanity's epochal experience if any change is to take place. The impotence of temporal action and the correlate necessity of decisive intervention on the part of divinity discussed in reference to the image of the angel of history excludes the possibility of shifts in intensity or degree of violence experienced within immanent time. The notion of “blasting” found recurrently in Benjamin's works

¹⁶¹ Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” 254.

is based upon the interpretation that the current line of human existence offers no shelter from the experience of unending violence and hence humanity must be blasted—forcefully propelled *upwards*—into a new time.¹⁶² History in his understanding is only to be completed by the Messiah.¹⁶³ Absolute access to memory then is a function of transcendent whims which cannot be readily influenced or understood by fallen minds. The character of its inaccessibility is irrelevant given the total lack of available tools to change that condition. As Tiedemann perhaps laments, Benjamin’s revolutionary doctrine is by no means seriously political.¹⁶⁴ In a lived sense as well, the notion of absolute memory, total consciousness of every time and place encountered and event experienced sounds even on the surface absolutely debilitating. How is one to act under the crushing weight of such a perpetual reverie? Reversing the causal direction of Benjamin’s assertion of connection between redemption and memory whilst maintaining its general premise however yields more to work with as regards a political interpretation. Here very much takes place an example of the Deleuzian motion to have concepts do work rather than be explained literally.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, this motion is done with regard to the position that political situations can be improved through solely human intervention. Rather than gaining access to memory through redemption, a politics of departure is built up from the standpoint that the improvement of human lives is a

¹⁶² For an example of the usage of “blasting,” see Walter Benjamin, “N [RE Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress],” in *Benjamin: Philosophy, Aesthetics, History*, ed. Gary Smith (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 65.

¹⁶³ Walter Benjamin, “Theologico-Political Fragment,” in *Reflections*, ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken, 2007), 312.

¹⁶⁴ Rolf Tiedemann, “Historical Materialism or Political Messianism? An Interpretation of the Theses ‘On the Concept of History,’” in *Benjamin: Philosophy, Aesthetics, History*, ed. Gary Smith (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 200.

¹⁶⁵ For instance, as detailed in Elizabeth Grosz, “A Thousand Tiny Sexes: Feminism and Rhizomatics,” *Topoi* 12, no. 1 (1993): 179.

function of that accessible memory. The most desirable interpretation of the linkage between memory and redemption for the present argument is offered by Whitehead, as observed in the previously provided passage concerning the harbor. The evils which are overcome are “particular,” there is no triumph over the abstract category of evil itself.¹⁶⁶ Adorno offers an analogous interpretation of political improvement: “Progress is not a conclusive category. It wants to disrupt the triumph of radical evil, not to triumph in itself.”¹⁶⁷ The notion of disruption is a far cry from final expulsion or redemption and leaves open the possibility of needing to disrupt once again. Mythical time under this interpretation is heterogeneous and at the same time interminable, a necessary correlate to a political outlook operating through the primacy of becoming and complexity. With this interpretation, the relationship between redemption and memory becomes more conducive to a balanced existence: the degree of access to memory is in some way correlated to the degree of conditional improvement (however that may be defined). However, the assumption is not made that memory may be accessed in a complete and absolute sense in order to also furnish a completely improved individual. The arrival at this hypothesis has been more by feeling and loose correlation rather than strict logic. How to bear out this intuition systematically then? Benjamin’s original statement has been so twisted as to become unrecognizable, but the clarity of the new assertion can be restored. The current ontological account has purpose and a vague form; it will now be filled in with an analytical “how.”

¹⁶⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 315.

¹⁶⁷ Theodor Adorno, “Progress,” in *Benjamin: Philosophy, Aesthetics, History*, ed. Gary Smith (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 101.

A turn back to Bergson offers a ground from which this process of opposing a redemptive understanding of political life (and more generally the fixed relationships established by the intellect)¹⁶⁸ may recommence. He asserts that the essence of life is the “slow accumulation of potential energy to be spent suddenly in free action.”¹⁶⁹ This is the ontological position that a human being is only free in a quantitative sense. Free is a quality of a particular action, while only a proportion of one’s actions are actually free. Grosz shares in this interpretation put forward by Bergson whereby the free act is a truly exceptional thing to the norm of obligated movement.¹⁷⁰ The free act here is entirely new, not the choice between possibilities but the creation of the possible itself.¹⁷¹ In effect, this action is the opposite of the pursuit of a predetermined truth which characterizes the movements of the previously analyzed gnostic adherent. The determination of the future by means of the free act creates a radically new present—unanticipated within the information of the past—rather than the recreation of expected possibilities and interactions. Drawing nearer to the principal claim that the degree of memory directly impacts the degree of human improvement, Bergson ties the intensity of memory to the degrees of freedom expressed by a given subject.¹⁷² Some clarification is necessary as to what is meant by intensity of memory however. He claims that the whole of one’s lived experience follows them as a chain of continuity, whereby

¹⁶⁸ It is worthwhile to recall that human cognition always desires stabilized relations of cause and effect. Political redemption is naturally the epitome of such a *process* of fixation. For a redemptive narrative of political progress to be challenged, a constant opposition must be fought through methods of unfixing relationships and cognitive expectations. As new expectations secure their place, new images of political perfectibility will emerge. Again, what is arrayed against these images is not a once-and-for-all solution, but rather a program of repeated contestation and return to fluidity of action.

¹⁶⁹ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 219.

¹⁷⁰ Elizabeth Grosz, “Habit Today: Ravaissou, Bergson, Deleuze and Us,” 225-6.

¹⁷¹ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 8, 85.

¹⁷² Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 269.

the synthesis of all past states informs decisions made in the present.¹⁷³ This memorial scheme is further evidenced in his figure of the cone: the point is the intersection of the active present and the subject's past in the form of their body, "the present perception...of a certain sensori-motor equilibrium," and the base contains the totality of that subject's past as it is contained in memory.¹⁷⁴ The decision being made in the active moment constantly passes between these two extreme states. It does so in reference to the variable impressions which the present and past moments exert upon the ongoing deliberation.¹⁷⁵ While memory is thus given to the subject over the course of an action as an undivided whole, it is the consciousness which expands or contracts this totality into varying degrees of tension or complexity of detail.¹⁷⁶ The closer one's state of mind is to the intersecting point, the more simplistic appear the details of the whole, while nearing the base of the cone opens the subject up to increasingly distinct recollections.¹⁷⁷ Between the influence exerted at the point, which produces "an inevitable deed," and at the base, resulting in "an arbitrary choice," the subject experiences a variable and hence partial impression of the theoretical total specificity of the whole of their memory.¹⁷⁸ Memory in some sense then is always absolute, in that each article of memory is permanently stored away in the depths of the spirit, to use Bergson's terminology, and retrieved by the active subject. Similarly, however, access to that memory in terms of fineness of detail is not absolute at all times or potentially ever. As explored in the

¹⁷³ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 188.

¹⁷⁴ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 210.

¹⁷⁵ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 210-12.

¹⁷⁶ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 216-7.

¹⁷⁷ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 217-8.

¹⁷⁸ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 219.

previous chapter, the demands of necessity will occasionally even completely close off the possibility of conscious retrieval of the memorialized past. Bergson contends that an attention devoid of practical interest could bring the entire history of a conscious being into the present, but it is not entirely sensible to imagine a living being that is in no way responding to some sort of need (no matter how distant that necessity may be from the given moment).¹⁷⁹ This injunction faces exception of course by Benjamin's redeemed individual, though the possibility of such a subject continues to be circumscribed in the argument. Access to memory then is never practically absolute and, as will be explored in greater depth with reference to the second order of departure's parting with the memorially-contracted, intensity is tied to one's inconstant ability to pull back from the immediacy of necessity and contemplate one's position. When the concept of "memory" is raised in the proceeding analysis it will be an implicit return to this distinction of pure memory and its practical retrieval, with the latter definition being the operant one. Both the ability to create and the substance of that creation then manifest as degrees along an intensive scale.

These quantitative limitations experienced by the creative subject in turn limit the capacity to improve a given political situation. The response made to a moment of conflict or need is always performed under the partial influence of one's past and therefore cannot account for the total complexity of the task at hand. Political life is interminable as it is never fully understood by the individual who acts within it. This incompleteness of comprehension is not solely a matter of being unable to learn or experience all of the particularities which make up a given political situation, a practical

¹⁷⁹ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 127.

impossibility in its own right, but rather is a limit inherently imposed by the way access to memory interacts with external necessities. Even if one did somehow learn all there is to know about “politics,” they would never be able to separate themselves so far from the present moment that they would be able to recall all they have experienced in exactness of detail in order to produce the perfect response. More than this inexactitude of knowledge however, the political problem continues to develop over the course of one’s withdrawal from the moment. Various actors do not break away all at once and independent mechanisms remain in motion. The question to be decided on continues to accrue complexity even as the deciding subject attempts to grapple with the previous stages of that question. Maximum detail of the problem is balanced against one’s cognitive time spent away from the ongoing reality of that problem. Theoretically imperfect knowledge of extension is always obscured by the imperfect intensive access to that knowledge. Therefore all political reactions are made under a certain degree of cognitive simplification and incompletely respond to the circumstances which have prompted them. Political life remains interminable as a function of those engaged within it being unable to fully articulate for themselves (let alone others) the experienced problem to which their novel actions attempt to afford a solution.¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, the accuracy of response is not limited in a fixed way and can be improved or diminished in reference to the degree of memorial detail enjoyed by the actor. Accuracy is still modelled along an asymptote however, and responses must be adjusted as their

¹⁸⁰ There is a very real issue with this cognitive limitation being used against marginalized persons and groups by those in positions of authority and relative privilege to suppress the former’s articulation of the systemic injustices which they face. It is worthwhile to consider again Deleuze’s idea that the gatekeeping of what constitutes a problem or a problematic structuring is a very powerful tool of social authority (Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 158). Those who seek a socially-just political environment ought to be extremely wary of any moves made to limit what may be understood as a problem, even if such problems cannot be perfectly articulated in their complexity.

inexactitudes become apparent. The externally-enforced unchangeability of the responses to life's needs has already been shown to be fundamentally disastrous to both political projects and the individual actors involved. Immanent political life, if it is to remain productive, thus must be rife with incomplete transitions from periods of conflict and the unending pursuit of more detailed conception of outstanding circumstances. Time regains its heterogeneity, and duration is returned to politics in the novel managing of ever-present but by no means identical conflicts. Freedom, duration, and intensity are inseparable and therefore positive political change must be at its basic level understood as series of fluctuating shifts across scales of capacity for action and memorial access to experienced injustices. The limitations imposed by human life within duration require talk of a total redemption to remain in the hands of theology and the transcendent; given finite access to potentiality and memory, the most which can be sought on the ground are contingent improvements and reversible advances. A politics purely founded upon arrival cannot effectively deal with this reality. The illusions fomented by descent into dream are a direct result of this disconnect between assumed changes (and then immobility) in the quality of human experience and the persistence of intensive flux. The rate of free acts occurring—and therefore of the establishment of beneficial contingencies—is still coupled to memory and creativity as opposed to a prophetic political doctrine. Mediation of goal-based intention through departure is necessary to help meet the complexities of lived experience; the three orders of departure to be examined subsequently all serve in different ways to appropriately maximize the political actor's access to memorial detail and accuracy of action against processes of cognitive simplification both internal and external. It should be noted at this point of transition from grounding sections to

expansion of the prescriptive argument that the following three sections to a great extent can be read on their own. While some concepts and imagery do weave their way through the three orders of departure, each of these individual moments or processes also stands alone to the percipient individual and therefore can be read as the analysis of a distinct phenomenon. Thus while it is important to consider the relationality of a habit as discussed in the first order when one examines the need to abandon a non-relational habit in the second order, the specifics of the former argument do not bear greatly on the analysis of the latter. Furthermore, only the conclusion of this current section is relevant moving forward; the reader does not need to hold in their attention more of the argument than the reality of a partial and quantitative sort of political improvement. The analysis of political *movement away* now begins at the scale of individual habit in order to remain at the level of cognitive experience and to address the positive role such unconscious motions may play in political life.

3: First Order of Departure: Consciousness Leaves Itself

The first order of departure addresses the interconnected nature of creative actions and movements constrained by learned repetition. The habitual motion causes consciousness to “depart from itself,” to have its contact with the world suspended, in the period that that reflexive movement makes conscious perception impossible. This parting, treated attentively, can be positively harnessed to redistribute effort elsewhere in life in order to meet the stringent demands of original creation. The ideal which ought to be leveled against one’s collection of bodily motor-reflexes is to find a sustainable sort of dynamism and indeterminacy that still meets pressing needs, political and otherwise. “Markovian processes” are systems which share no data from the past and where the

future is only determined by the present state of conditions.¹⁸¹ Such is the system for the subject-object under hegemonic Gnosticism, who may trace and reproduce the past but lacks the capacity to at all intentionally alter the real course of events. What in part is needed for a more complex political atmosphere is a non-Markovian system within which past experiences and accumulated knowledge may furnish novel actions and dramatic irruptions through the course of life.¹⁸² Adorno and Horkheimer lamented that a doctrine of relatively immediate action and reaction was held in a positive light by the modern tradition long after the notion that repetition could be emancipatory was dispelled.¹⁸³ The preceding analysis has shown how perpetual arrival in modernity does produce a *sort* of destructive and life-ending repetitiveness, but it is important to tease out the meaningful differences between a reproduction of the unlivable and the repetitive creation of the livable. While the process of reproduction serves only as a propagation of blockages, repetition itself is not equivalent to sameness and stagnation.¹⁸⁴ This section is in part instigated by and an exploration of an intriguing phrase found in *A Thousand Plateaus*: “[g]ain some time, and then perhaps renounce, or wait.”¹⁸⁵ It is fascinating but simultaneously intuitive that time can be gained while in a condition other than waiting. Actions can “create” more time by creating a more livable environment. It is not enough to think that actions, as the consumption of effort and time, only take away from some sort of finite reserve of existence. Actions under the influence of redemptive dreams produce no significant time (as each subsequent iteration of the same reproduces

¹⁸¹ Donna Jones, “The Career of Living Things Is Continuous: Reflections on Bergson, Iqbal, and Scalia,” 240.

¹⁸² Donna Jones, “The Career of Living Things Is Continuous: Reflections on Bergson, Iqbal, and Scalia,” 241.

¹⁸³ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, 8.

¹⁸⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 13.

¹⁸⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 378.

unintended consequences and tends towards a state of impotency), but this is not a tendency universal to unconscious movements.

The Ravaisson-Bergson-Deleuze school of thought regarding habit addresses the potential positivity in the role of autonomous movements. These authors collectively exist in sharp contrast to the originally Kantian school of thought which understands habit as unconscious automation in opposition to “processes of human self-making.”¹⁸⁶ This claim is not altogether wrong, as has already been demonstrated, but its assumptions are tied to a specific context which catalyzes opposition to “self-making” creativity. Grosz effectively summarizes the trio’s unified opposition to such an assertion: “Habit marks our modes of engagement with and transformation by the real; and this is quite precisely a measure of the extent to which the real is itself transformed by living beings;” habits enable living things “to accommodate real forces and affects through the minimization of the energy and conscious awareness that concerted action involves.”¹⁸⁷ This is habit understood as creative force rather than as mechanical subjugation.¹⁸⁸ More than a force in itself however, habit is a complimentary, contemporary power to the expression of free action. For Ravaisson, habit is change that has undergone compression and containment, a *potentiality* that enables the anticipation and addressing of future change, the “experience of the unexpected.”¹⁸⁹ In more words:

With the exception of change that brings something from nothing into existence or from existence to nothingness, all change is realized in time; and what brings a habit into being is not simply change understood as modifying the thing, but change understood as occurring in time. Habit has all the more force when the modification that produced it is further

¹⁸⁶ Tony Bennett et al., “Habit and Habituation: Governance and the Social,” 7.

¹⁸⁷ Elizabeth Grosz, “Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us,” 218.

¹⁸⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, “Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us,” 219.

¹⁸⁹ Elizabeth Grosz, “Habit Today: Ravaisson, Bergson, Deleuze and Us,” 220-1.

prolonged or repeated. Habit is thus a disposition relative to change, which is engendered in a being by the continuity or the repetition of this very same change.¹⁹⁰

Hyper-acceleration and the dream world of the instantaneous attempt to rid the objectified body of time by expelling the possibility of considered reaction and critical reflection. Yet habit, per Ravaisson, can do exactly the opposite as well. Habit in another form and mediated by a different attention imbues the subject with a concentrated temporality, thereby gaining the actor time, so to speak, through the efficiency and adaptability of a recurrent series of movements. This image of compression or concentration is shared by Bergson and anticipates the linkage of memory to habitual movement (in that a habit represents the distillation of memorial images of the repeated acting out of a suitable response to a given stimulus).¹⁹¹ In the spirit of non-Markovian process, the memorialized choices and consequences of the past reach out unconsciously to contribute to a more efficient and effective present and in turn a potentially novel future. There is a fine line to be drawn here however between useful contraction and the pathological canalization of reaction exhibited in the previous chapter. This threshold will be examined further with reference to the second order of departure and the conclusion of the useful lifespan of a habit. Habit in its beneficial morphology serves to draw off difference from repetition, bridging the experientially old and new.¹⁹² For instance, the refinement of technique and skills of fabrication are needed as intermediaries in the general process of free creation.¹⁹³ The work of art, able to be so broadly understood, is conventionally preceded by an element of familiarity with the

¹⁹⁰ Félix Ravaisson, *Of Habit*, trans. Clare Carlisle and Mark Sinclair (New York: Continuum, 2008), 25.

¹⁹¹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 87, 93.

¹⁹² Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 73.

¹⁹³ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 76.

desired medium and with the body of extant permutations of the method employed. Accumulation must occur prior to expenditure. Given the finite capacity to act freely which underpins subjective interaction with the world, the potentiality of these actions must be displaced in some aspects or areas of life in order to be deployed elsewhere. Activity is more than just creation in the now.¹⁹⁴

It is in this form of exchange between the daily efforts of life and the more radical emergence of novelty that a sort of geographic relation emerges. Energy and effort flows between interfacing and adjacent areas of life; habitual actions do not function entirely on the basis of their own isolated merits and jurisdiction. Familiar territory is repeatedly traversed but not for the sake of only reproducing one's life there. One may clean their home not only so that that familiar place remains comfortable, but so that it also serves as a place which inspires thought beyond that comfort and enables the realization of imaginative designs.¹⁹⁵ In their notion of "geophilosophy," Deleuze and Guattari connect the contraction of a habit to a sort of "inhabiting" of a known and familiar place.¹⁹⁶ In a parallel and simultaneous process, the "I" itself is a creation furnished by the habitual contraction of contemplated components which constitute the individual.¹⁹⁷ There is a spatialization of effort and potentiality in this simultaneous connection between the occupied milieu and creation. As with the image of the harbor, habitual motions maintain an extensive dimension which is both the cause of their existences and those existences' effects; each habit is characterized within the individual's lived experiences and

¹⁹⁴ Alfred North Whitehead, "Immortality," 61.

¹⁹⁵ Certainly for the author, there is a direct correspondence between the frequent cleaning and arrangement of their desk and the rate of creation as regards this text.

¹⁹⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Verso, 1994), 105.

¹⁹⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 105.

anticipated actions by porous borders and feedback loops between other habits and instances of free action. “The truth is that the reflex and the voluntary actions embody two views, now rendered possible, of a primordial, indivisible activity, which was neither the one nor the other, but which becomes retroactively, through them, both at once.”¹⁹⁸

The constructed harbor is functionally inseparable from the desirable sheltered atoll which both precedes and proceeds from it; ground and action upon it lose their distinctiveness. The point here is that a habit must be suspended at some point if it is to serve a productive purpose. A certain amount of stability is necessary in the subject for the possibility of social life to take place.¹⁹⁹ The subject’s potentiality accumulates in a given meta-stable arrangement—or subjective “place”—to be built upon or changed by the next free act of creation. Nonetheless, that place has no meaning on its own beyond the fending off of bare necessity. Habits ultimately mark relations of effort and potential, not fully isolated cases of action. Frenzied arrival constrains one completely to the familiar space however: habit becomes reproductive rather than repetitive and relational. The self which concretely stops at a given set of habitual motions loses their sense of internal adjacency and creative potential; they remain active but their actions become free-standing points—like the angel’s growing pile of wreckage—in terms of potential expended or reserved. There is no longer an exchange of energy or efficiency between constrained acts and those of a more open sort. The constant recreation of established political mechanisms and aspirations erodes both the cohesiveness of the subject and their ability to influence their surroundings in imaginative ways. Perhaps contra Ravaisson et al., habit can become a means of automation, but only if it is handled carelessly and with

¹⁹⁸ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 254.

¹⁹⁹ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 53.

inattention. Habits are only beneficial when they are contrasted with moments of creation, and the point to be made as regards departure becomes more lucid once the aspect of forgetting integral to habit has been thoroughly expounded.

At the same time as this accumulation of memory and displacement of potential takes place, the habitual motion also represents a particular form of forgetting. Conscious perception cannot occur within the interval of an automatic movement as there is no uncertainty or indeterminacy that would require the intervention of attention to take place.²⁰⁰ It is not as though the eyes do not see or that the hands do not feel during this lapse however. The habit marks as well a memory immediately forgotten. This particular arrangement of the buildup of memorial potential and the effect of forgetting characterizes the first order of departure. Virilio posits a causal linkage between mortality and the emergence of consciousness.²⁰¹ Consciousness needs a state of paradoxical “rapid waking”—of “*petit mal*” or imperceptible breaks in the experiences of the picnoleptic—which is equivalent to the relation of rapid-eye movement to sleep.²⁰² By acknowledging human finitude and the limits of consciousness, a more dangerous unconsciousness is warded off.²⁰³ The presence of life is reaffirmed in its momentary absence by the very fact that this absence is not greater than what it is already. One cannot live if they are permanently asleep, yet sleep is integral to a well-functioning existence; analogously, habits affirm creative life when they are a fractional aspect of that experience.²⁰⁴ Virilio may call periods of absence a “departure from duration,” but in the

²⁰⁰ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 22.

²⁰¹ Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer, *Pure War*, 121.

²⁰² Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, 24-5.

²⁰³ Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer, *Pure War*, 122.

²⁰⁴ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, 24.

case of the unconsciousness proffered by habit it is as much a duration of its own as also a departure from perceived space to another space of the immemorial.²⁰⁵ The forgetfulness—the apparent deadening of the senses imposed by a habit—is as constitutive of the memory of the new experience as that memory is to the possibility of forging a new motor-reflex through cognitive contraction. Return after departure does not result in the barely same.²⁰⁶ Or: “no subject experiences twice.”²⁰⁷ Under habitual motion, as with the picnoleptic break, consciousness departs from itself so that it may itself emerge anew. This first order of departure indicates to the active subject that they must be aware of the relationship between conscious and unconscious motions so that their cognitive tendency towards the unconscious variety is not allowed to spiral unchecked. Here an explicit contrast between the instantaneous and the simultaneous must be drawn. Without the need for excessive recounting, habits, by taking on a pathological character, have every capacity to render the individual life as an essentially instantaneous point of “objective” actions and reactions. This instantaneity artificially eschews the relational basis of consciousness and unconsciousness however. As the geographically-adjacent habit occurs simultaneously with the accumulation of potential energies to be deployed elsewhere, it is therefore an indeterminate component within the duration of the free act. This is another way of formulating Bergson’s perpetual drawing of the past into the present. All actions either distribute or expend quantities of “freedom” and therefore are interpenetrative with one another from the point of view of the individual: the present action of the individual is a function of the multitude of

²⁰⁵ Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, 32.

²⁰⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 210.

²⁰⁷ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 40.

habitual and free acts which have preceded it in a continuum of accumulation and effect. These reserves of effort mark an unconscious sort of memory that is hidden beneath the momentary forgetfulness of the consciousness. Whether a given act of creation is then repeated into a habit or left as a singular moment of exception is not immediately relevant. What matters is that for an individual with the capacity to create, the departure from consciousness is only relevant to the consciousness which this absence founds and intensifies. Adjacent habit is a departure *from* consciousness without having an aspiration *for* unconsciousness. The same cannot be said of the imposed habits of gnostic instantaneity. It is again a matter of repetition versus reproduction: habit for the sake of emergence rather than habit of and for itself. The distinction is hazy and precarious however. The exchange of the unconsciousness and forgetting of habit for consciousness and accessible memory elsewhere is not unlimited, given the possibility of descent into dream. There is a sort of political struggle which occurs within the individual regarding the distribution of effort and creativity (perhaps an arch-micropolitics of sorts). Where ought novelty be “spent,” which actions may be safely rendered immediately forgotten? The “I” is characterized by a series of fractures and is no more a monolithic totality than the society in which they reside.²⁰⁸ These questions shadow the lines of breakage and are only made more imperative when some fragments of the I attempt through pathologization to overtake the multiplicity of the whole. Given the impact of memory on novel creation, sufficient thresholds of refinement and contraction must be loosely located to maximize the number of parallel accumulations undertaken by the individual. Contingent and open to negotiation, the individual must carefully consider their relations

²⁰⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 29.

to their own past and contracted memories. With the first order of departure also comes the first instance of the delicate balance between the forgotten and the memorized. Too few and too many habits are both very real problems. It is of the utmost importance to avoid the vicious spiral of frenzied political advance. There is not a wide gulf between select moments of immediate forgetting and the broader universalization of unconsciousness. Every habit carries with it the potential to overwhelm the immediacy of conscious perception.²⁰⁹ Likewise, having an insufficient number of habits means that the active subject is using a greater part of their potentiality on fulfilling basic tasks which should not require such conscious attention. What is given by attention to adjacency is a metric to evaluate limitation, a means to justify or invalidate a particular iteration of fixity. The notion of departure is used here to represent the continued recognition of what is being left behind by habitual action. The referent of adjacent accumulation is the creative act in the future, but also the conscious subject which at a prior time created that habit in order to further create. The habit must serve this creative subject, and not the reverse. So that the memorial past and open future are not wholly superseded by the rate of advance of an efficient present, the temporary suspension of consciousness proffered by geographic habit must in turn be regulated by the abandoning of specific habits once identified as unjustified. This subtraction is accomplished by way of withdrawal from the pressing needs of the moment.

4: Second Order of Departure: Consciousness Leaves a Habit

The second order of departure emerges for the individual when a habit begins to lose its relational character. This order is characterized by the pause or break, whereby

²⁰⁹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 93.

the consciousness reasserts itself in order to interrupt the autonomous continuity of a set of habitual motions. In the pause one finds two of the abilities Nietzsche deems imperative to learn: the patient eye, whereby the novel is allowed to approach one through the deferment of judgment and the suspension of immediate reaction; and the capacity to think with nuance and “intellectual *light feet*.”²¹⁰ Rather than the absence of consciousness which occurs alongside the habitual response, at this moment what is needed is the absence of action and in its stead careful consideration. As in the prior suspension however, paths of creation remain. All of this may be further explained after the need for the pause itself is more closely examined. The habit of contracting habits is the basis of a society: rather than a particular political arrangement, the only natural thing for a human collective is the existence of any given rule.²¹¹ This indeterminacy is a correlate to the aforementioned limited potential for political improvement, as well as to the discussion of the retrograde motion of the true in the first section of the preceding chapter. The interchangeability of dominant patterns of organization reflects the partiality of political improvement and the general relativity of a violent condition. Habits would have to be contracted but once if social interaction were perfectible; cognition would not have developed such a strong attraction towards habituation if one had to internalize only a limited array of automatic responses. Furthermore, this interchangeability is the distinguishing factor between the ontological and epistemological layers of the illusion of spatialization examined in the first section of the previous chapter. The need for *a* rule is the necessary but empty form of fixity, while any *particular* rule or habit is a component of the fluid epistemological layer of fixity. There

²¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*, 65-66. Original emphasis.

²¹¹ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 17-8.

is nothing in society or human nature which “mandates any particular habit.”²¹² Rules are forms of knowing how one should act and what outcomes should be expected. Their criteria may appear fixed, but this is an illusion furnished by the knowledge and experiences they center for the individual. Bergson is surely not positing an equivalency between all political arrangements however, nor is that the case presently. Nonetheless the contingent nature of habits is a vital reality to address. An individual habit, no matter how capable it is at a given point in time, will necessarily lose its correspondence with the reality of becoming. The habit of contracting habits enables the active subject to meet shifting external demands through individual re-habitation (as long as outstanding circumstances are not overly hostile to such a reorientation of the self). Contra this innate versatility is the naturalization of habits—the process of obfuscating the contingent quality of the habitual—which is the mirror image of one’s assumed “keys to history.” The so-called perfected end of history is the making permanent of a given set of relations (including but not limited to those of the political) and therefore of the calcification of particular individual modes of interaction with one’s neighbours and of meeting one’s needs. A rule and its (modern) disciples attempt to make a claim to it being *the* rule in its being rendered ontological. The habituation of skills beyond their usefulness impairs the creative subject however.²¹³ For a habit to be useful, it must do more than provide a basic satisfaction of need as the greater purpose of a habit is the accumulation of potential effort which occurs alongside the repetitive fulfillment of life’s necessities (as discussed in the first order of departure). The latent contingency of a given habit as a microcosmic component of a similarly contingent rule is indicative of a finite relevance of that

²¹² Alexandre Lefebvre and Melanie White, “Bergson on Durkheim: Society sui generis,” 467.

²¹³ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 479.

acquired motion. Though Deleuze writes the following in reference to history, it remains equally valid as regards consciousness: “no turning away is valid once and for all.”²¹⁴ As one must turn away from the conditions of history to create something new, so too must one turn away from consciousness at times in order to accumulate the provisions to be expended in such an act.²¹⁵ But as can be interpolated from Deleuze, there comes a point when those departures from consciousness no longer serve their additional geographic role.

Though habits are relational, they do not (fully) determine the substance of the free act. The displaced effort and potential is of an unassigned or indeterminate character, akin to a stem cell. How else could the act of creation be in some way free unless there is a meaningful emergence between its constituent efforts and the final result? This incongruity or nonequivalence between the accumulated and the expended demonstrates that the continuity of accumulation of and within the subject is not equivalent to a linear progression. The free act is prefigured in adjacent habits, but not in any knowable content or expression. Creative advance cannot be construed with serial advance: “There is a becoming of continuity but no continuity of becoming.”²¹⁶ Creation is a deviation from the material predictability of history, of which habits are a necessary antecedent but not the sufficient reason for creation's existence. Rather, it is the perishing of a habit which necessitates the act of creation. The contingent usefulness of a habit prefigures the habituating subject creating a new habit to replace the one which no longer yields creative dividends. This causality is not as simple as it may appear however. By

²¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 96.

²¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 96.

²¹⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 48.

its unconsciousness nature, the habit does not end when its usefulness does; the validity of the turn away is potentially outlived by that turn itself. Given that the process of accumulation and creation is nonlinear, the realization by the consciousness that it is no longer being served by its intermittent departures is not inevitable. One cannot readily know the difference between insufficient accumulation and the absence of accumulation. Reliance on the deadening of perception is an intractable weakness of the creative subject. The description of the mechanism(s) which enables the consciousness to ascertain that it is cheating itself is beyond the scope of the present research and points to critical further work. Suffice to claim now that it may be akin to the blink of an almost imperceptibly extended interval, which gives to the mind the first indication that it must change states—that sleep is required. This intuition is again an intra-personal political affair which occurs along the competing lines of the I's fragments. There is a perpetual struggle which is fought between the self which wishes to create and the same self which wishes to stabilize. As Bergson summarizes, “The body is indeed for us a means of action [free and otherwise], but it is also an obstacle to perception.”²¹⁷ Nonetheless, there are also the potential beginnings of claims made to others here. The present work does not attempt to distinguish if it is the self or society which invalidates a given habit's claim to adjacency; it is almost certainly a matter of a combination of those two and other sources of power with variable degrees of primacy given to one level or another. Regardless, suppose the need to end a habit has been apprehended and the subject must once again perform a sort of departure. The identification of a non-relational habit indicates to the subject that they must suspend that automatic motion as soon as possible;

²¹⁷ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 272.

hence, instead of acting, the subject must pause. Now that the need has been addressed, the form and content of this interruption will be examined.

While the initial departure examined herein essentially marks a sort of continuity between accumulation and creation, the second order of *movement away* is grounded in the discontinuous moment when the subject suspends their activity in order to break a habit.²¹⁸ Nietzsche considers it as a weakness if one is unable to resist from responding immediately to an external stimulus.²¹⁹ However, it has been explained that this “weakness” is a vulnerability which is integral to the status of subject as creator. Preliminarily—and to mediate Nietzsche’s elitist tendencies—it is important to understand that this order of departure is not rooted in a failure or foolish inattentiveness of the subject. There is no great blame to be placed, only a recognition that the consciousness cannot always keep pace with the implications of its comings and goings. There are not weak people as regards the uncertainty of accumulation through habit. However, it is possible that some may be intentionally ignoring the (currently undefined) warning signs for the sake of individual stability and comfort. Shadows of this negligence are found in the preceding chapter, though they are inseparable from the more pervasive influence of modernity’s demand for teleological perfection. If the cognitive vulnerability is primarily based in movement (the unending reproduction of a given intermediary movement), then there is sense in beginning the search for a response in stillness. To return to the passage from *A Thousand Plateaus*, to renounce in this particular case is also to wait, even if waiting is not equivalent to renouncing. To

²¹⁸ The semantic particularities of the phrase “to break a habit” are notable here, as the meaning of break as to shatter or destroy is not wholly displaced but rather complimented by the meaning of break as to interrupt or pause as well.

²¹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* and *The Anti-Christ*, 90-1.

renounce the habit which has begun the process of its pathologization, the subject must wait in the face of that bodily imperative to stay in motion.²²⁰ Deleuze also states that only the coexistence of contraries forces thought.²²¹ The habit which has been identified as only working for itself is a contradiction of the terms of adjacency and simultaneity. Conscious contemplation must intervene once this intuition has been felt, and to contemplate is to wait.

Heidegger provides an extremely interesting exploration of this linkage between thought and rest, and his conceptualization of inaction informs the pause which makes up the second order of departure.²²² In his memorial address to Conradin Kreutzer's 175th birthday, Heidegger contends that the dominant form of thought is calculative and instrumental, and must be pushed back against with impractical "meditative thinking;" "we forget to ponder" he proclaims.²²³ This dominant rationality on the one hand is based upon a single track or aspect of analysis, which indicates an easy throughway to the previous discussion regarding the deleterious monotony of a politics of arrival.²²⁴ Heidegger's own answer to the dominance of this instrumental reason on the other hand requires one's engagement with the seemingly disparate, "with what at first sight does not go together at all;" there is a possible path to follow to multiplicity which begins here,

²²⁰ Waiting without renouncing being primarily the indeterminate point of accumulation between creations, whereby the subject's habits are still accumulating potential and the free act is being limited by the delay of duration.

²²¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 141.

²²² It serves to qualify however that the interest here is in the tangential ideas provoked by his writing, and not in Heidegger's own project regarding tradition and Being. As Deleuze and Guattari proclaim, "Heidegger betrays the movement of deterritorialization [hence mobility] because he fixes it once and for all between being and beings." Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* 95.

²²³ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 45-50.

²²⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 53.

even if it was not originally anticipated.²²⁵ Intention aside, the process which is provided for meditative thought is of immediate relevance to the pause. Meditation occurs in waiting, the countermovement to the form of thought characterized by Heraclitus's "going toward."²²⁶ Continuity of mechanistic thought is balanced with a movement away. One must distinguish Heidegger's usage of waiting versus awaiting however; one does not wait "for" something while meditating (as in the condition of awaiting) but rather waits upon—leaving "open what we are waiting for."²²⁷ This concept of "waiting upon" corresponds to Nietzsche's didactic "patient eye" in that both recognize that the novel cannot be brute-forced into existence and rather must emerge in part by its own, unpredictable accord. In the context of the present argument, the act of creation is waited upon rather than for as the content of the free act is unknowable; it is a matter of surprise versus expectation. It is not a pure distinction in the current case however as the subject has a vague expectation that they are a creator and understands the general form of this act as disruption even if they know no more than that. Nonetheless the specificity proves useful in underlining the dramatic nature of the breakage or pause. When an ineffectual habit is identified, the subject must cease to perform that set of motions without expecting an immediate replacement. The notion of waiting upon also coincides with Bergson's linkage of indeterminacy to a withdrawal from the needs of the active moment.²²⁸ There is a particular sort of goallessness which accompanies waiting upon; the lack of definite expectation for what is to come cannot be said to relate to the satisfaction of immediate needs. However in this absence of expectation is the possibility

²²⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 53.

²²⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 88-9.

²²⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 65, 68.

²²⁸ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 94.

of the yet unseen. The comfort and apparent though illusory livability of the established habit which has lost connection to its greater purpose is to be gravely resisted, lest one descend into the impotency of frenzied advance. A new motion must take its place, but this cannot occur until one is at rest—with all of the potential loss and danger that comes with such a state. What is the substance of this rest? Bergson contends that there is no such thing as a real halt, that in every instance they are all merely virtual.²²⁹ The absence of movement can only be achieved as a relative appearance to a percipient that is traveling along an equivalent and opposite vector to the object in motion perceived.²³⁰ This specification is prefigured in waiting's opposition to the advance of mechanical reason however; the contrary of movement in a particular direction is not stoppage but deceleration, or more accurately acceleration in an opposite direction.

What appears as rest then in the pause is rather the body finding a momentary equilibrium between directions of movement, conforming to Bergson's expectations of flow. Any direction then becomes equally attractive to the subject as there is no pre-existing inertia or dogma; perhaps this corresponds with Heidegger terming rest as "the seat and the region of all movement."²³¹ Said another way, thought challenges the selective emphasis of the individual consciousness.²³² This selective emphasis is the singular direction which the body orients itself to over the course of the habitual movement. By "stopping" to contemplate this directionality, the subject enables the possibility of changes in course and hence of orienting goals. Connolly criticizes the tendency to slow down politically as a regressive tactic which typically orients itself to an

²²⁹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 247-8.

²³⁰ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 119.

²³¹ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 67.

²³² Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 20.

imaginary past unity in order to preserve a dominant status quo.²³³ But this is only one possible quality of political slowness, which is held in contrast to the one just outlined. The second order of departure indicates acceleration in the direction opposite the subject's current motion, apparently slowing them down while in reality preserving a great deal of speed (though maintaining an ambivalence regarding direction). This specific account of political slowness corresponds to the overall argument of this chapter not being a wholesale rejection of teleological or directed effort. Political departure is not a means to solidify a given political condition by placing foremost attention on some sort of perfection that was left behind. Rather, it presents a means to accomplish meaningful political projects by introducing a countermovement against the deleterious effects of an attention that is always focused on those projects. Connolly himself acknowledges that there still need to be mechanisms in place for political actors to be able leave fast-paced life in order to re-examine their assumptions.²³⁴ But more specifically, it is fast-paced life along a single direction of effort which must be interrupted at times if this sort of political existence is not to undo itself. To this end, the duration of the pause exudes creativity in its openness and lack of dominant vectoring. The conscious subject is given time to contemplate and conceive of a new means of fulfilling the need which was no longer yielding excess potential in its previous mode of satisfaction. Thus the political question to ask oneself and employ for guidance: Not only are my needs met, but do I feel as though I have the potential now or within a reasonable timeframe to figure out how to meet those needs if and when my current attempts to do so fail or the situation around me is rearranged? While a politics of arrival keeps

²³³ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics*, 143.

²³⁴ William Connolly, *Neuropolitics*, 144.

reproducing the present of the past into the immediate future, a mind towards departure and the pause thus is more able to contemplate needs both near and afar. The privilege inherent in such a question and contemplation will begin to be examined in the conclusion. Through the pause nonetheless, even the abandoned habit still serves an auxiliary purpose for the creative subject. In the apparent slowness of the pause, one is able to enjoy far greater memorial detail—and hence creative freedom—by expanding the contracted memories which compose a habit. The unnecessary cognitive filtration imposed by a non-relational habit (such as those amassed in a modern context) can thus be counteracted.

Once again the interplay of memory and forgetting is to be examined in relation to creativity, this time in the case of open deceleration. Is forgetting always the complete erasure of a memory? For instance, Deleuze writes: “That which is forgotten, in the empirical sense, is that which cannot be grasped a second time by the memory which searches for it (it is too far removed; forgetting has *effaced* it or separated us from the memory).”²³⁵ More specifically, what sort of loss comes with the abandoning of a habit? Part of the openness of the second order of departure or pause is (simultaneous with the equivalency of direction) the dilation of memorial detail once masked beneath the contraction of habit. The loss of a “bad” habit also comes with an increase in access to one’s past. Deleuze’s assumption that forgetting erases a memory places too much emphasis on a one-to-one relationship or ratio between something once remembered and then forgotten. The notion of “effacement” which he deploys is itself too assuming of a capacity to identify and erase a discretely-bounded object of memory. With this

²³⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 140. Emphasis added.

understanding, a finite memory is impressed upon a medium and, under however many possible circumstances, that impression may be completely removed from its carrier. Given the premise of durational flow however, “one” memory is ultimately tied to innumerable additional ones over the course of irreducible movements and experiences. What can be abandoned are discreet understandings of a given “memory” as they are related to the current emphasis of the conscious subject. As explored previously, one’s access to the specific details of one’s own spirit or collection of memories can ebb and flow. However, a lack of access is not equivalent to an instance of effacement. The substance of a given memory, whatever that may be, is not altogether expelled when the subject is not able to recall that memory.²³⁶ Traces of the memory always remain behind; the absence of a memory—for example not being able to remember a name—is not equivalent to a complete effacement of that memory as the name can still be recognized as the correct one if said by another.²³⁷ Bergson’s cone remains latent even if the needs of the immediate prohibit its involvement in depth. A competing account of forgetting to Deleuze’s is borrowed from Dostoevsky:

[I]t [Zosima’s memory of his brother] all remained in my heart, ineffaceable, but dormant for a while. In good time, though, it was bound to come to life again and make itself known. And that’s just what happened.²³⁸

Dormancy is a sort of absence, but not a total erasure. In the present case, the forgetting of a habitual reflex—as a sort of second order usage of the memorial in that it is a memory distilled from several (more) distinct memories—does not abandon the memories which were previously contracted into that refined and unconscious motion.

²³⁶ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 188.

²³⁷ William Connolly, *NeuroPolitics*, 72.

²³⁸ Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Andrew MacAndrew (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), 349.

The habit as a memorial consequence of memory is forgotten, but the original memories themselves remain in their durable persistence. Nothing new is immediately added in the pause, but in this way not all is lost either. The apparent slowness of the pause does not mark a radical reduction of creative potential. Old understandings of memories become opened up to reinterpretation as the subject alters the movements of their daily existence.

The persistence of the once-contracted is related to the rearrangement of the breakages within the self. In Hesse's *Steppenwolf*, the titular character's subconscious admonishes its host subject for believing his consciousness to be only distributed between two parts: man and animal.²³⁹ Despite his penchant for simple duality, the reality is that he is populated by a multiplicity of modes, of which only one or several may manifest for a given duration.²⁴⁰ Deleuze, for what it is worth, does not explicitly acknowledge in *Difference and Repetition* the recurrent fracturing of the I; for him, this event occurs once and for all.²⁴¹ Proleptically, there is a difference between the singular fracturing of the self as the moment when the subject's self-understanding transitions from ostensibly whole to fractured, and the shifting of these breaks which may occur within the "same" fragmented self. Nonetheless, this preference for a conclusive event can be linked to other problematic elements in Deleuze's philosophy which will be explored in reference to the third order of departure. All this is to point to the idea that the arrangement does not wholly subsume the arranged. Kierkegaard for instance understands the individual as being related to a multiplicity of shadows each of which individually and accurately

²³⁹ Hermann Hesse, *Steppenwolf*, trans. Basil Creighton and Walter Sorell (New York: Penguin Books, 1974), 71.

²⁴⁰ Hermann Hesse, *Steppenwolf*, 71.

²⁴¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 297.

represent that self.²⁴² The predominance of one shadow does not eliminate that shadow's status as still a *shadow*, a sort of projection, amongst a number of other equally valid ones. The parts remain beneath the expression of the surface. Unities exist alongside multiplicities: unities are imposed from above, but thus are added to an existing multiplicity rather than the multiplicity being subtracted from to form a unity.²⁴³ When a subject abandons a habit (a unified sort of memory), it marks a rearrangement of that subject's usage of their intensive multiplicity of distinct but interpenetrative memories into a different series of condensed products and irrelevancies.²⁴⁴ In this way, the pause is at least initially the opposite movement of habituation, whereby the memorially-contracted are returned to their fullness and specificity. There takes place a reinvigoration of the accumulated experience of the subject or the wreckage of their memory. Returning to the passage by Dostoevsky, the underlying memories again 'make themselves known' to the active subject. Memorial knowledge is passed from the muscles and motor reflexes in a transmission to the mind as such. The pause passes a habit into memory, from the repetition of a familiar "place" in the present to the experience of the past. Access to the ground of creativity is intensified in this movement. While habits indicate (or ought to) the accumulation of effort, the pause is characterized by the accumulation of access to memory and experience. Rather than losing potential in the indefinite reproduction of an intermediary movement, this renewed access to the past gives the active subject a creative edge in the realization of their intended political

²⁴² Søren Kierkegaard, *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs*, 24.

²⁴³ Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 55.

²⁴⁴ For a brief discussion on the distinction between intensive and extensive multiplicities, see Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 38.

endeavors. This creative boon will now be re-examined through several works by Whitehead, which serve a role of corroboration and conceptual specification.²⁴⁵

In all but the most absent-minded pauses—where subjective emphasis is completely suspended—withdrawal from the present is inseparable from a reexamination of the past. One becomes acutely aware of not only where they are headed, but also of where they have been. Such retrospection is a necessary component of creation. “We can only preserve the essence of the past by the embodiment of it in novelty of detail.”²⁴⁶ An appreciation of the already-experienced is necessary to begin to feel the contours of that which has never yet been seen. Whitehead’s philosophy of process is based predominantly on the addition of perishing to the supreme philosophical duality of being and becoming.²⁴⁷ There is perhaps nothing more indicative of *movement away* than the supplementing of attention to destinations with a view also to moments of parting. Every “actual entity” for Whitehead, that which no longer changes but has reached its complete realization, as being becomes a potential for every subsequent becoming.²⁴⁸ His theory of actuality is founded upon an immortalization of the completed, whereby the objectification of the actual entity is only relevant to subsequent novelty; the entity perishes in its satisfaction to become a fact in the process of creative advance.²⁴⁹ All

²⁴⁵ Boundas identifies a general criticism levelled against Bergson regarding the purely external nature of ends in his philosophy. Constantin Boundas, “Deleuze-Bergson: an Ontology of the Virtual,” in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1996), 98-9. As will be apparent shortly in his usage of the concept of perishing, the addition of a small fraction of Whitehead’s philosophy to the current argument helps to fill the potential absence of ends internal to the functioning of habit.

²⁴⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, “The Study of the Past—its Uses and its Dangers,” in *Essays in Science and Philosophy* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), 113.

²⁴⁷ Alfred North Whitehead, “Process and Reality,” in *Essays in Science and Philosophy* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), 89.

²⁴⁸ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 48-9, 61.

²⁴⁹ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 62, 113, 118.

endurance within this time of perpetual perishing is proffered by re-creation.²⁵⁰ Much as Bergson's cone carries the entirety of a subject's history into their present, the whole of actuality for Whitehead is in some way implicated by the current arrangement of things in becoming. This similarity is more than an analogy. Every memory is also an access point to an objectified (though subjectively-interpreted) condition that never will be again and yet always informs passage into the future. The novel is constrained by every actuality whose reemergence would be a reproduction rather than a genuine act of creation. The antecedent actual world is never destroyed; rather to it something is always added.²⁵¹ Becoming has no subject distinct from itself and its term only exists when taken up by another becoming; the new can only exist and be known in alliance with the old.²⁵² The pause places the focus of consciousness back towards this marvelous accumulation of the actual. Heidegger characterizes his waiting *upon* as transcendent of the duality between passivity and activity.²⁵³ An examination of the actual and one's increased access to one's knowledge of it in the pause shares this complexity of character. The cataloguing of the immortalized occurs at rest (without the intervention of extensive activity) and yet is also intimately figured in the process of the free act. One's previous modes of satisfying needs and furnishing a livable environment are passively examined and on their own yield no wholly appropriate solution to the present problem of a non-relational habit. And yet they also provide indirect guidance to one's new decision to be actively carried out—in the potentiality of the immediate future—against the

²⁵⁰ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 180.

²⁵¹ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 337.

²⁵² Dorothea Olkowski, "Body, Knowledge and Becoming-Woman: Morpho-logic in Deleuze and Irigaray," in *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, ed. Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 101.

²⁵³ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 61.

pressures of a partly unlivable milieu. The pause thus is neither indifference nor decision. Though Deleuze perhaps states too strongly that contemplation does nothing and yet the novel is done through it, the linkage between the two is nonetheless held.²⁵⁴ One requires a “double vision” to effectively engage in the active present, which looks both to the past and the present as the information of becoming.²⁵⁵ This examination precedes directional movement and shapes the course of the creative motion. The free act may well immediately replace the ineffectual habit with the first instance of a new repetitive series, or it may mark a singularity after which the subject takes on yet another trajectory. Shipping traffic must halt while the harbor is overhauled or otherwise reorganized, yet this stoppage is intended to produce a point of transfer and activity which better engages with the contemporary needs and expectations of the broader environs. A healthily-engaged and creative subject at times must stop, reassess, and devise a new course for meeting both their basic needs and the general need to accumulate effort. Through this departure, the actualities of the subject’s past again take on a measure of potentiality. Without these breakages, unconscious and imperceptible motions may continue along their own lines unhindered and well past the expiry of their usefulness. The dogmas of the body are no less dangerous to the accurate reception of the real complexity of the world and the capacity to meaningfully influence one’s surroundings than those of the mind.

²⁵⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 76.

²⁵⁵ Karen Houle, “Micropolitics,” in *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, ed. Charles Stivale (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 94.

5: Third Order of Departure: Consciousness Leaves a Self

The second order of departure is framed in such a way that there is not a dramatically new or yet unencountered need which must then be met by the subject. Rather the existing means to the satisfaction of an existing need are no longer effective in their relational role for a number of possible reasons and thus must be abandoned. Rationality is dominant throughout this process and though the subject does change under pause and duration, the change is only of a limited and intensive character. It is the third order of departure which engages with the radically new need and witnesses the qualitative metamorphosis of the subject-multiplicity. This order is founded in an examination of the Deleuzian Problem/Idea and its relation to the virtual. Deleuze defines the Problem as “the differential elements in thought, the genetic elements in the true.”²⁵⁶ The Problem is difference hardwired into the world: “Neither the problem nor the question is a subjective determination marking a moment of insufficiency in knowledge.”²⁵⁷ As in the second order of departure where the end of the relationality of a habit is not specifically a failure on behalf of the subject, neither is the problematic to be understood as an ignorance of the foreseeable. This point is to be further analyzed shortly. Rather, objects themselves possess a problematic structuring regardless of the percipient subjectivity.²⁵⁸ Part and parcel with the objectivity of the Problem is the character of the Idea, which “exceeds the bounds of possible experience.”²⁵⁹ Ideas are not “universal genres” but rather “systems of multiple differential elements;” they are differences in kind which transcend the contingency of solutions but which are also

²⁵⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 162.

²⁵⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 63.

²⁵⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 63.

²⁵⁹ Melissa McMahon, “Difference, repetition,” in *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, ed. Charles Stivale (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 46.

immanent to those solutions.²⁶⁰ The Problem exists whether it has been consciously-encountered or not and the Idea exists as the limiting factor of subjectivity. Both are real and yet they do not correspond to the actual experiences of a subject. Each characterizes aspects of reality which inherently contest expectedness and perfectibility. Most importantly for the present analysis, the truth of a problem is not contingent on a possible solution.²⁶¹ There is communication or an “echo” between the real series of events which operates at the level of a contingent solution and the ideal series of the conditions of the problem, but the two series do not resemble each other.²⁶² This passage from ideal problem to contingent solution grounds the third order of departure as *movement away* without a conclusive destination. Unlivability is ultimately a Deleuzian Idea, not a concept, and the claim of unlivability—forced by the emergence of a novel need—articulates a Problem, exposes the basic difference and impossibility of the world. Concurrently, the radical departure from a familiar place does not presuppose an image of the decidedly livable. The unlivable is varied in form and substance and is therefore pre-individual, unlike a concept which is grounded in identity; it is singular and continuous in thought and yet discontinuously-spread across an indeterminate series of manifestations.²⁶³ One’s conception of a situation that they would understand as unlivable does not need to share any concrete characteristics with anyone else’s self-understood image of the unlivable. Any situation may be unlivable to someone—anything may become a need—and therefore for there to be a concept of the unlivable, it would need to contain the whole of potential human experience (and thus be

²⁶⁰ Constantin Boundas, “Deleuze-Bergson: an Ontology of the Virtual,” 89.

²⁶¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 159.

²⁶² Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 189.

²⁶³ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 162-3.

decidedly useless as a categorical identifier). The matter here is one of virtuality versus the real.

Throughout *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze distinguishes the virtual object from its real counterpart. The evaluation of an action or activity is done so in reference to a real object, the expressed goal of that action.²⁶⁴ An action may then reach its real object if the goal which was set before it is accomplished; however it is also entirely possible—perhaps predominantly typical—that an action simply fails to fully have its desired impact on the real. Regardless of the active outcome, there persists in a different but equally relevant dimension the virtual object. This object passively compensates for both the successes and failures of an action.²⁶⁵ The existence of this perpetual compensator is a vital metaphysical aspect of a concrete theory of process. The virtual object is always partial or missing an aspect; it expresses a non-totalizable fragment or remainder.²⁶⁶ There is a character of unthinkability here which both grounds and ungrounds one's understanding of the world.²⁶⁷ The livability of one's situation—the relationality of their habits and the expression of their creativity—is not the mystery; rather it is the transition of that situation into a state of the unlivable, i.e. when habits begin to work only for themselves and accumulation of potential grinds to a halt, which is hidden from one's thought. Hostility and cruelty is a recurrent motif in *Difference and Repetition*, and the intervention of the perpetual incompleteness of the virtual object very much fits under this theme given a cognitive position which desires predictability and structural stability. Boundas describes the perpetual opening of life aptly: “A threatening

²⁶⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 99.

²⁶⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 99.

²⁶⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 100-1.

²⁶⁷ Melissa McMahan, “Difference, repetition,” 48.

otherness which subsists or insists.”²⁶⁸ No matter the hope to the contrary, any action carries with it the metaphysical promise of a remainder or difference. Success in the real is no more an assurance against the compensation of the virtual than failure. Whitehead’s words can help shed further light on the dissimilarity between the real object and the virtual. “[T]o say that human experience is limited is not to assert a standard limitation for all occasions of all humans;” yet he does concede that typical limits do exist.²⁶⁹ Nonetheless, the fluctuating nature of human limitation points to something more than the essentially fixed and intractable partiality of the virtual object being the sole limiting factor. For instance, Whitehead explains that actual things are unknowable because of number, not by their individual natures.²⁷⁰ There is a crucial difference between the unlivable situation which is a product of the unforeseen and the unlivable which is a product of the unforeseeable. When an action does not live up to evaluation alongside its real object, this result is in some way related to foreseeable systems and measurements. One takes stock of the present in their pursuit of the livable (including in an unconscious manner, as with the immediate perceptions of habitual reflex) and acts in best accordance with the available information and capability. The quantity and quality of resources in the active moment varies, and this variation corresponds with Whitehead’s recognition of the lack of fixity in concrete human limitation. One’s education, wealth, position in the social system, neurology and physiology, *et cetera* each in their own way contribute to that person’s experience of the world and in turn their capacity to interact with the real. Circling back to a previously and oft-made point for instance, there is a very basic

²⁶⁸ Constantin Boundas, “Deleuze-Bergson: an Ontology of the Virtual,” 98.

²⁶⁹ Alfred North Whitehead, “Analysis of Meaning,” in *Essays in Science and Philosophy* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), 95.

²⁷⁰ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 72.

process of filtering which occurs between the perceptive faculties and the brain as distributor of motivating perceptions. If one's resources and experiences, for internal or external reasons, are not utilized to their fullest extent in satisfying one's needs adequately, then it can be said that foreseeable circumstances have contributed to a condition of unlivability. A basic aspect of a real object is that it can be actually achieved and therefore everything which influences the achievement of that goal exists in the preceding actual. There is a theoretically-sufficient degree of retrospection and knowledge available which would indicate that the failure to reach the real object was caused by knowable circumstances (whether or not it is possible to meet this threshold in a given situation does not alter the fact that there is a difference in kind between the unforeseen and unforeseeable which must be accounted for in an effective political response to change). Deleuze's compensating mechanism meanwhile makes it possible for virtual, up-to-that-moment non-actual aspects of the world to realize a condition of the unlivable. The livable is perfectly rational up to this intervention. Whitehead contends that novelty emerges with the admittance of a non-conformal (false) proposition; the addition of something new necessarily alters the established logical order which could not account for it prior to that thing's emergence.²⁷¹ Deleuze concurs: "False becomes the mode of exploration of the true;" truth in this case being problems and questions—difference.²⁷² It is the unforeseeable which underpins this emergence of the false or irrational condition. At the level of the individual, the unforeseeable or virtual need necessitates the radical rearrangement of the habitual fragments of that self. The virtual object can and inevitably must introduce a situation of need which is at its

²⁷¹ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, 264.

²⁷² Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 107.

most elementary level beyond the scope of the experience and capacity of the subject. A mind which was to that point rational becomes irrational in its non-correspondence to a changed reality. The proper recognition and handling of this duration of radical change is fundamental to a politics of departure. The third order of departure is marked by the consciousness responding to the (possible) intervention of the virtual object and the novel situation which results from that object's displacement. This response is again conditioned by a particular entanglement of memory and the forgotten.

The subject who has become a "victim" of the violence of the virtual object must recognize the distinctiveness of their conditions before and after this compensation while simultaneously appreciating their durational continuity and status as an enduring thing in the world. An aspect of the former imperative involves the discontinuity of the self and the forgetting of the previous arrangement of one's fractures and fragments. It was alluded to previously that Deleuze does not explicitly address the re-fragmentation of the subject after an instance of fragmentation has already occurred to that self or I. Ironically enough, Deleuze as a serious proponent of forgetting potentially misses a moment of this mental movement which is key to a theory and adequate politics of process and becoming. The foundation of this occlusion again begins at the virtual object. He states that this compensating thing belongs essentially to the past.²⁷³ His reason for this placement is that the "never-seen" quality of the virtual object corresponds to the "already-seen" quality of a pure, repetitive past in general.²⁷⁴ Though the intervention of the virtual object takes on innumerable practical guises, each of these interventions is in its metaphysical function essentially identical to all others which have come before it and

²⁷³ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 101.

²⁷⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 109.

will come after it. Each displacement of the virtual object in its particularity is also a repetition of that displacement in general. What appears to be the unseen is then in actuality an instance of “hypernesia” or memory repeated to an extreme.²⁷⁵ While consistent with the rest of his metaphysic, it is worth taking a practical or non-ideal turn at this point of possible contention. There is an impression of paradise lost or primordial sin which accompanies a virtual remainder firmly rooted in the past. For instance, Camus rails against maintaining a memory of home if one is to lead a more intensive and open-ended sort of life.²⁷⁶ While a point or feeling of origin and a virtual sameness of difference in the past are by no means equivalent in nature, there is the possibility to construe or warp the two together for purposes political or otherwise. To be stuck in the past or regretful keeps one “apart from time” and therefore outside of duration and the creative moment; an intractable fragment or remainder fixed in the past is easily loathed or obsessed over, to the detriment of that subject’s present advance.²⁷⁷ The subject potentially fixates on their initial fragmentation and little beyond that previous trauma. Virtuality in the past carries with it the impression that subjects derive from the identical, which obfuscates the reality of ongoing process and permeable durational borders. The other face of the virtual coin is the “Eternal Return” which Deleuze derives from Nietzsche. As the remainder in the past resembles paradise lost, so does the Return approach a sense of redemption. Nietzsche sees an “eternal recurrence of life” whose promised future is “consecrated in the past.”²⁷⁸ Deleuze extrapolates this promise to one

²⁷⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 109.

²⁷⁶ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 13.

²⁷⁷ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 69.

²⁷⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* and *The Anti-Christ*, 109.

of exclusion, whereby the negative is wholly expelled for a final time.²⁷⁹ Nietzsche's conception of the future is less problematic for a politics of departure than Deleuze's, as the latter espouses a doctrine of apparent conclusion. This criticism is ancillary to concern regarding his locating of the virtual object. Malabou provides a compelling discussion of Hegel's anomalous role in the texts of Deleuze, being the only philosopher examined therein to be reduced to a cohesive unity.²⁸⁰ In attempting to completely expel the negative, Deleuze misrecognizes that "The pack is necessarily involved in a chase[;]" Malabou infers from Hegel's works that a pack cannot be a pack without lack or negation.²⁸¹ "It is teleology which, paradoxically, inscribes fatigue within difference, the dialectic that gives the pack the necessary wearing down [*usure*] of its being[;]" the pack or multiplicity relates to ends of some sort, but not to *the* end, and the contingency of becoming relies on this sense of direction.²⁸² The philosophical transition from mixed terms of positivity and negativity to the purely positive abbreviates the importance negation has to the fluidity of life. For the sake of this fluidity at least, the virtual object ought not to be understood as a component of the past. Massumi puts forward the Blanchotian position of virtuality as a "pure outside" rather than a pure past in order to dispel the inclination to conceive relations of space and time between points in the actual and in the virtual.²⁸³ The subject's interaction with this fundamental outside is always something that *will* happen; the outside is no longer such once it has entered into the

²⁷⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 296.

²⁸⁰ Catherine Malabou, "Who's Afraid of Hegelian Wolves?" in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1996), 120.

²⁸¹ Catherine Malabou, "Who's Afraid of Hegelian Wolves?" 130. It is important to note that a "pack" is equivalent to a "multiplicity" and that the difference in language used reflects a change in register, but not meaning, for instance from *A Thousand Plateaus* to *Difference and Repetition*.

²⁸² Catherine Malabou, "Who's Afraid of Hegelian Wolves?" 130.

²⁸³ Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 170.

inside of the percipient subject's life. The practical relation is an exceedingly vague one, with the outside always looming ahead of the political actor but with that subject never actually drawing nearer to it as such. "Placing" the virtual object in this sort of future serves to have one forget (but not efface the memory of) its permanent existence as part of pure generality. The fragmented self ignores the fact that they were already and always fragmented, which contributes to a more specific cognizance of their particular (re)arrangement at a given moment rather than a broad sense of being fundamentally fragmented. Rather than dwelling upon past interventions and "injustices," the subject shifts their attention to the inevitable yet unpredictable future moments of compensation. The fragmented body should not be understood as the loss of a prior unity, but as the possibility of new connection.²⁸⁴ This preparedness makes one more attuned to departure, more flexible in their arrangement of habitual motions and interactions with the real. The subject is not left ruminating on previous states which had to be abandoned, but rather is explicitly conscious of the fact that their current mode of interaction will almost assuredly need to be abandoned at an unspecified time to come. This specification of the practical sense of the virtual represents a latent aspect of forgetting which is necessary to the third order of departure. The distinctiveness of one's newly acquired habitual arrangement is facilitated in part through the understanding that such a response to the virtual was inevitably necessary. The emergence of a radically new need and subsequent metamorphosis of the subject was prefigured in that subject's knowledge that they were and are constituted by more than a single moment of fracture. Emergent

²⁸⁴ Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 85.

needs are apprehended as they are, rather than being construed as subordinate to existing needs or otherwise existing in a prior state.

There is a convergence of continuity and discontinuity in the awareness of radical departures by the subject. Some part of the conscious self endures through the various iterations of their fragmentary arrangement. This is not as alien a notion as it may appear on its surface. Conscious decisions to change one's diet from omnivorous to vegan, to change one's religion from Christianity to Judaism, to align with an environmental politics rather than one of labour, to simply generate several random examples, can all point to the dramatic rearrangement of the daily existence of the self to meet some sort of emergent need. One may have never before felt an ethical revulsion to the consumption of meat, or an affinity to the Torah. The satisfaction of such needs is beyond the experiential scope of the self as it exists during the emergence of those needs. Despite these radical changes and the novel habits which arrive with them, the I remains self-same to a minimum degree and is able to remember who it once was alongside who it is currently. One's long-ago organization of a wildcat strike is remembered alongside their current participation in the occupation of the site of a proposed pipeline juncture, all the while this past subjective emphasis informs in an indirect way the subject's current conduct. There is a function of memory here within the vague persistence of the self through dramatic upheaval which plays out alongside the "forgetting" of the permanence of virtual compensation. The actor's previous experiences and memories are carried into this new arrangement, and continue to provide ample background for moments of further novelty. The past remains accessible while the present continues into an uncertain and fundamentally unknowable future. To return to the guiding metaphor, with the

intervention of the virtual object the harbor is no longer in a logistically-viable location for its occupants and its component wreckage and assembly must be entirely relocated. Despite this relocation, there is a continuity of reason and construction between the two iterations. Contra the reality of such a project (where the breakwater materials would be more than likely simply left where they are), in this metaphor they are transposed into a new arrangement but with the same sense of purpose and belonging. Prior to this shift or relocation, the system could have hypothetically been in relative equilibrium. A politics of departure by no means insinuates that political life is constant struggle teetering on ruin at every turn. Rather it is attention to the fact that a political system or milieu cannot account for what it cannot at all imagine or envision. A politics of arrival or frenzied *movement towards* will forcibly insist on a determinate picture of the future so that it does not have to readily concern itself with the unforeseeable. A political rule or network of rules is selected as perfectible and then the blinders are donned. The response by *movement away* to the unforeseeable is a readiness to abandon the comfortable yet outmoded. More than this nicety however, it is the recognition of relationality and contingency between extant modes of being and of the inevitable but wholly unpredictable emergence of the novel need. Any striving for improvement is coupled to the understanding that not all necessary political improvements can be made at once or even be known at once. At its core, the condition of the world is the inexactitude of calculation.²⁸⁵ A politics which includes the possibility of departure in its calculus leaves itself more attuned to human creativity and the emergence of the novel in its various forms, while still attempting to improve political conditions and expand the capacities of

²⁸⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 222.

its practitioners. Bergson posits that, “To become conscious of [an inclusive morality] it is not necessary that we should picture a goal that we are trying to reach or a perfection to which we are approximating,” rather a more encompassing joy is required.²⁸⁶ There is more joy to be felt in embracing the necessary uncertainty, lack of predictableness, and unlimited possibility for creation in the world than there is in attempting to enforce disingenuous and outright dangerous forms of resistance to this fundamental becoming. Even more so than with the first two, an understanding of why the third order of departure becomes necessary and how it generally functions helps to establish and justify this particular embrace. Recognition of the impact of the virtual grounds not only a more inclusive present, but primarily leads to a means to include the unknown future in the political interactions of the now. If the future is always to remain partial and fragmentary, it is better to actively come to grips with the remainder as it appears than to fight a constant rearguard action against the inevitable.

The preceding orders of analysis are not to suggest that departure is some kind of unmitigated political good or perfect ethos. Quite to the contrary, there is no benefit in replacing one half of a two-fold frenzy with its counterpart. The active human disposition is not effectively mediated by another hegemonic direction of motion. Throughout what has been demonstrated, there have been concurrent moments and processes of arrival alluded to or fully incorporated into that instance of departure. The first order of departure involved the individual subject’s consciousness leaving that self for a temporary period of time in order to displace attention and focus conscious effort elsewhere. This process was explained as a sort of geography or relationality, whereby

²⁸⁶ Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, 39.

habits serve not only their immediate function as the satisfiers of needs and repetitive obligations, but also indirectly the creative act. The latter being more labour-intensive, physically, mentally, whatever it may be, the creative subject must continuously store up a sufficient amount of potential energy in order to engage in such actions. The habit as being for more than itself is already a sort of arrival as well as a departure. The free act is a goal motioned towards, regardless of its nebulous and unforeseeable realization. There is something to be said for the distinction between an indeterminate prospect and the rigid teleology of frenzied advance, but there is an underlying vector shared between the two paths. The second order of departure introduced a limiting case for the preceding order. The relationality of a given habit or reflexive motion is not a permanent fixture in life. Outstanding circumstances both internal and external can cause a habit to metamorphose into a pathological detriment. The subject is never instantly aware of such a negative transition however. Owing to the immediate forgetting enacted by an autonomous motion, the self does not maintain a direct memory and therefore consciousness of their adjacent accumulations. The second order of departure involves a process of introspection and discontinuous pause, whereby consciousness and the memories it assembles reassert themselves onto the continuous movements of the subject in order to assess relationality and leave behind certain habitual sequences if necessary. There is no clear or determinate doctrine to be found here. The opacity of both the free act of creation and its preceding autonomous adjacencies precludes obvious signals made to the subject. Vague feelings of inability and redundancy are what guide the subject to and through the second order of departure. And premised upon the fact that life cannot be lived to its fullest without them, the forgetting of a habit must lead to the eventual

adoption of a sufficient replacement. Through a creative act or otherwise, the subject understands that they arrive at habits roughly as often as they depart from them. The art is in the ebb and flow of these concurrent processes, deriving sufficient potential from the imprecise comings and goings of one's reflexes. Attention and access is redirected to one's past so that a new path into the future may be undertaken. The present moment—the intersection of these two temporalities—witnesses a subtle rearrangement of the subject so that they may better meet the demands and obligations of their current condition. The third and final instance of departure examined in the argument builds upon the introspection of the second to include not only the transition which has already taken place, but also those which will occur in the near and distant futures. This is a *movement away* which deals as directly as possible with the virtual, with the unforeseeable. The realization of the existence of the truly novel need foments the necessity of the radical rearrangement of the self. The emergence of such a need was explained as an inevitable consequence of the imperfectability of one's relationship to the world structured along problematic lines. The compensation of the virtual remainder takes the form of the re-fragmentation of the already-fragmented subject with a new need to satisfy. These moments of undoing and change are as unpredictable as they are inevitable in a system of process and becoming. In this order of departure the continuous and discontinuous meet, as the self-same subject simultaneously undergoes a drastic transformation of self (i.e. the subsequent arrival of an unforeseeably new self). Memories are carried forward but past I's are also forgotten. Where the second order of departure sees gradual changes to meet the shifting normal, the third order finds the promise of one—or many—metamorphoses. Each of these orders of analysis contain

notions of things which must be left behind, so that life may be improved in its nonlinear advance. Arrival after departure does not return to the barely same.²⁸⁷ They represent a shift of attention away from the realization of goals towards the presence of unlivable milieu to escape, and hence improve one's ability to reach those goals in an altered form and method. The preceding analysis has not always been outwardly political, yet it has detailed how to ground one's adequate interaction with the changing real given a very powerful human attraction to uninterrupted activity and illusory stability. In this way, what has been provided are sufficient bases for a more practical political doctrine. Prior to concluding this project, only a gesture can be made towards such principles by examining—not necessarily the inherent faults—but what has been missed by such an abstract treatment of departure. A re-embodiment of power and vulnerability will be briefly surveyed, with the intention of beginning a common measure between social justice, political expediency, and the intermittent necessity of *movement away*.

²⁸⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 210.

Conclusion: To Where Political Departure Must Next Go

“She had always felt that the essence of human experience lay not primarily in the experiences, the wedding days and triumphs which stood out in the memory like dates circled in red on old calendars, but, rather, in the unself-conscious flow of little things—the weekend afternoon with each member of the family engaged in his or her own pursuit, their crossings and connections casual, dialogues imminently forgettable, but the *sum* of such hours creating a synergy which was important and eternal.”²⁸⁸

“The important thing, as Abbé Galiani said to Mme D’Epinay, is not to be cured, but to live with one’s ailments.”²⁸⁹

What has been discussed over the course of this project is the potential roles that individual habituation can play in relation to two general conceptions of political improvement. The purpose of the argument has been twofold: to begin to come to grips with a sort of “progress” which does not rely upon a preordained and exclusionary image of the future, and to support the claim that this new progress must be built in part around a multivalent conception of individual habit which cannot be found in the contemporary literature. As the purpose is dual in nature, so is duality the common denominator of the arguments put forward regarding habit and political life. The duality of political advance and departure has been analyzed alongside the duality of habit as constraint and (simultaneously) as means to create. The two sets of antagonisms—crucially, not to be understood as oppositions in the strict sense of negation—are inseparable from one another. Habituation, implicated in some way in both rote and free individual actions, is always in contact with the social milieu which can either favor balance between the two directions of improvement or a focus upon one or the other. The project produces several important lessons from the detailed interaction of these two sets of conditions.

²⁸⁸ Dan Simmons, *Hyperion* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), 284. Original Emphasis.

²⁸⁹ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 40-1.

First is the danger of a singular focus upon one direction of improvement. The directions of political *movement towards* and *movement away* have been examined in their ideal states, as pure orientations *in principle*. While these two directions are never fully separate *in fact*, political life can lean towards an extreme and the near-exclusion of the opposite pole. This method of analysis by principle reflects the lived predominance of *movement towards* in modernity. The modern political environment is a specific case of Bergson's twofold frenzy (as found in the introduction), in which the balance of arriving and departing movements theoretically internal to political improvement is undermined by a lived hegemonic focus upon arrival. This frenzy breaks down the necessary duality of the two sorts of motion, giving the impression that political life can be performed fruitfully by (an impossibly) total articulation of its advancing aspect. The monad of advance—subtended in a linear, teleological account of human effort and time—materially replaces the reality of complex political improvement. Advance does not work alone to “secure” this frenzied position however. While ideological doctrine may insinuate that teleological advance is all that is needed to perfect political life, it is the putting into practice of this doctrine which ironically enough cements advance while also rendering the realization of the telos impossible. The divided duality of advance and departure has been placed in contact across multiple intersections with a specific account of the individual's capacity for pathological habituation. An initial emphasis given to advance in modernity produces a limited set of actions which are said to aid in the realization of the predetermined political endpoint. These doctrinal actions then pass through the processes of habituation meant to serve the active subject, increasing subjective efficiency and reducing divergence from the established schema. The problem

however is that the world continues to change outside of the closed circuit of doctrinal expectation and habitual inscription. The perfected future is not the imperfect present condition, and yet the actions of the present—on their way to that perfection yet also impossibly far from it—progressively dominate the subject's means of perception and interaction. While thinking that they act the future, those under the grip of frenzied advance perpetually reproduce the present. Habituation appropriates the now faster than can teleological intention, and therefore habit must undermine teleology if ultimate ends are the only form of political knowledge accessible to the subject. Hence, this usurpation is why modern "progress" is both so ineffectual (and deadly) and persistent. The modern subject cannot see beyond the present permanently instilled before them, nor can they see that present for what it really means. The first lesson is thus: advance to the future is *necessarily* lost to the present if there are no mediating forces in play.

Second is that the balance sought between modern arrival and the addition of departure rests on the understanding that habit is both constraint and benefit. Balance in the first duality is predicated upon balance in the second. Frenzied advance pushes habitual constraint into pathology, but this outcome is not a definitive consequence of the formation of habits (as detractors such as Kant may claim). Pathological habituation is the specific reason *for* needing political departure, but it is not the specific form which habit must always take. Departure is based upon the argument that habits can be as productive as they are constraining, if not more so. When *movement away* is invoked to justify the abandonment of a habit, it is not because all habits need to be abandoned or that each habit abandoned directly corresponds to an increased potential for the

individual.²⁹⁰ A habit is considered useful as regards creativity if it is relational, if its economy of movement provides a surplus of effort which may be redirected to the subject's other actions. The positive conception of habit follows Bergson in working from the ontological basis that the subject cannot act wholly freely, that each person does not possess the required energy to consciously intervene in every single action that they take. It then follows that each habit which contributed excess potential to the (occasional) free act is indirectly implicated in that later expression of creativity. Creation cannot occur without habit, and habits should only exist insofar as they aid creation (This "only" will be taken to task at the end of the chapter by situating the project in a greater political environment of negotiation between desires for originality and comfort). Frenzied advance being the elimination of political creativity by a perpetually reproduced present, departure provides a reinjection of novelty into political systems. This reinjection cannot occur without the "fuel" provided by individual habituation. Habit as pathology is balanced by habit as relationality, which in turn enables the balancing of advancing towards goals by departing from outmoded expectations. One cannot understand the danger of frenzied advance without there being a negative aspect to the concept of habit, while one similarly cannot understand a response to (some of) the deficiencies of modern teleology without there being a positive aspect to the concept of habit. Each of the two dualities is better understood as being two directions of a single respective tendency: advance and departure are both integral to political improvement as such, and constraint and opportunity are internal aspects of

²⁹⁰ As examined in the introduction, this linear relationship between habit and potential is the position taken by White and Lefebvre as well as Massumi in their readings of the primary texts of Bergson and Deleuze. Each reader in their own way posits that habits—even if they are necessary to life along a different axis of analysis—correspond to a limitation of the subject's ability to act freely.

every habit acquired. As the opening quotation from Camus gestures to, these internal differences can never be expelled but only worked upon. There is no “cure” to the give and take of complex progress, just as there is no means of knowing exactly which of one’s habits are useful and which are following the line of pathologization. Balancing these aspects cannot follow a middle-way or synthetic approach. Political life which recognizes the importance of departure in addition to advance must be understood as an ongoing conflict between passages to the limit and irreducible antagonisms. Balance here is teetering danger and arresting overcompensation, not the clean progression of negation; such risk is unavoidable with increased creative freedom however.²⁹¹ While this is not to be the last word on balance, several brief examples of how future research may move beyond the scope of this project will now be introduced.

To identify the deleterious reaction between teleological prediction and individual habituation is not to say that this is the only reaction which occurs between habits at the individual level and collective political decisions or norms. Attention has been focused on that reaction because it is extremely dangerous, but other reactions will need to be worked upon in order to create a more open political milieu. Analytical focus will now be shifted briefly to the possible interaction between treatment of individual habit and dominant conceptions of gender roles. Sophia identifies in online interactions a misogynistic need to dominate the virtual bodies which populate the Internet. From her research, she concludes that any cohesive feminine body encountered will foment “masculine paranoia,” and thus will be forcibly reduced to an object of knowledge (the

²⁹¹ Brian Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*, 85.

forced transformation of user into the user-friendly).²⁹² Any femininity in virtual space is displaced onto masculine technological fertility as part of a broader attempted rejection of maternal origins.²⁹³ This research is relevant through analogy (rather than literally, as with the arguments made in the preceding chapters) to the discussion of virtuality in the fifth section of the second chapter. There is a correspondence between the virtual—thus non-present—body on the Internet and the novel need which is indeterminately assured to emerge with the displacement of Deleuze’s virtual object. Both are real without being strictly actual. If there is a misogynistic tendency to dominate virtual bodies made real through online interaction, then there is cause for concern as to how hetero-patriarchal assumptions (and sources of power) will influence an individual’s relation to the effects of the virtual object. How will “masculine paranoia” interact with the third order of departure? The virtual object cannot be dominated or made knowable; it is even more out of reach than other noncorporeal bodies on the Internet. The need to conquer the future—examined above as the purview of teleological prediction— is thus found again in the “doctrine” of toxic masculinity. Assuredly the two sources of anxiety feedback upon on another, necessitating an intersectional approach to political departure. Teleology is not the only collective decision to influence the operation of one’s habits, and hopefully the introduction of a more complex understanding of habit will enable further insights to be found regarding the interaction between society and the individual.

While not directly relevant as a new direction to be taken by the study of habit, more needs to be said regarding the interface between political departure and the goals of social justice. Glezos prefigures an important potential conflict when he concludes in a

²⁹² Zoë Sophia, “Virtual corporeality: A feminist view,” *Australian Feminist Studies* 15, no. 1 (1992): 16.

²⁹³ Zoë Sophia, “Virtual corporeality: A feminist view,” 15, 21.

recent article that “The open temporality of [Bergson’s] moral vision which recognizes the possibility — and indeed inevitability — of novel moral claims (or old moral claims which an individual or society has failed to properly grapple with) is, ironically, exactly what ensures the lasting significance of Bergson’s moral and political writings” despite Bergson’s own problematic assumptions.²⁹⁴ What happens when the two sources of claims conflict and hence must be negotiated between? In this question is found the dangerous verso of the quotation from Camus. To say that everyone must live with their “ailments” is to easily draw an equivalency between all contingent political conditions. While human vulnerability cannot be wholly eliminated, it is not experienced by each person in the same manner and to the same degree and therefore must be (incompletely) protected against.²⁹⁵ There is a risk in the politics of departure to ignore the existing vulnerability for the sake of the novel one. As indirectly identified by Glezos, there are moments when departure should have occurred—to accommodate a new claimant—which individuals (and perhaps society more broadly) have ignored or otherwise failed to perform. The addition of departure to the subject’s repertoire of political tools cannot cause that individual to lose sight of present problems or to use future problems as a deflection tactic for consciously perpetuating the marginalization of oppressed groups. It is easy to think only of future departures which will need to take place at the expense of contemplating departures which *should* have taken place in the past. The sense of futurity which accompanies recognition of the potential displacement of the virtual object carries the risk of shifting attention too far forward at the same time that it redirects

²⁹⁴ Simon Glezos, “Bergson contra Bergson: Race and morality in *The Two Sources*,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 0, no. 0 (2019): 17.

²⁹⁵ Judith Butler, *Prekarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2006), 19, 43.

attention to the series of habits which must be left behind. Limited resources must be fairly distributed between working to improve existing social injustices while still accounting for the indeterminately assured emergence of the new need or social claimant. To excessively favor one aspect of need over the other is to do violence to the complex political situation of a multiplicitous society.

The topic of society more directly informs the second example of potential further research. This time, the example involves raising the discussion of habit itself to the collective level. Several contemporary works draw from Bergson's *The Two Sources* the importance of habits for social cohesion.²⁹⁶ Of all of Bergson's works however, *The Two Sources* contains his most negative treatment of habit. Lefebvre and White's adoption of this position was detailed in the introduction. Glezos similarly identifies the collective habits of obedience and command which impress social obligation upon the individual prior to the creation of moral law.²⁹⁷ This specific conceptualization of habit is again a constraining one, even if it is the limiting of free peoples rather than of free actions. The opening quotation from Simmons's *Hyperion* speaks in part to this idea. Individual acts of creation ("his or her own pursuit") contribute to a collective habitual, the orderly functioning of Sarai's family unit.²⁹⁸ More than this order however, the quotation also points to a resultant creative emergence: "the *sum* of such hours creating a synergy which was important and eternal." What is needed to bring a deeper understanding of habit (including a positive conceptualization) up to the social level is to first think more about

²⁹⁶ See for instance Simon Glezos, "Bergson contra Bergson: Race and morality in *The Two Sources*," and Alexandre Lefebvre and Melanie White, "Bergson on Durkheim: Society sui generis."

²⁹⁷ Simon Glezos, "Bergson contra Bergson: Race and morality in *The Two Sources*," 4.

²⁹⁸ The comparison is not to be overdrawn however, remaining attentive to the potential problematic nature of treating other political units as analogues of the (heterosexual) family organization. What is specifically interesting about this quotation is how conscious intention and habitual normalcy play out on various scales of organizational analysis.

how creation works in a connected society of individual creators. Even throughout the current project, the act of creation has not been treated in more depth than a relatively empty form. The analysis has always been centered upon habit, with the understanding that creative expression is the goal but that knowledge of its content is not vital to the task at hand. There are other tensions to be found specifically in creation as well, naturally. The individual may create for the ego or for the collective, or a mixture of both and more. But these are not the immediately relevant problems. Rather, how does society create for itself? Several authors approached in this project indicate the analytical usefulness of approaching society as a sort of collective actor with its own subjective position.²⁹⁹ How does this particular subject create? Research into this mode of creation can then be backtracked into an analysis of the role of habit in the collective subject. Section three of chapter two demonstrates the means by which habitual accumulation is indirectly linked to free acts of creation and that therefore the two categories of action are inseparable at a certain level of analysis. A more detailed understanding of society's free acts of creation may then yield insight into how those acts are fueled relationally by unconscious collective motions. The analogy between individual and collective subjectivity is not to be overwrought, but it may provide a useful starting place for a deeper look into social habituation and the political mediation of such processes.

Several lines of analysis thus open up from the current state of the project. To an understanding of the reaction between teleological intention and individual habituation may be added the complexity of other reactants such as dominant gender roles and systemic hetero-patriarchy. Beyond this reaction can also be studied a more collective

²⁹⁹ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, 40, 45. William Connolly, *Neuropolitics*, 6, 41.

sort of habituation, which functions at levels of organization involving a multitude of (more easily discerned) discrete members. All the while, it is important to balance out the predominance of futurity found in the current conception of political departure with the recognition that needed departures of the past must still be performed. Conflicts will certainly emerge between departures which should have happened and those which up until the present did not need to happen. For the sake of creative capacity, both categories of needed departure remain beneficial. It is not as though rectifying a lost opportunity for change will somehow produce less novelty in the new arrangement than the immediately pertinent opportunity for the same. This “creative capacity” however is the last element of the project which requires a measure of critical attention.

Throughout this project, there has been a very specific but also rather nebulous prospective goal. The maximization of creativity has been the metric used to both highlight one of the many deleterious aspects of the modern Enlightenment project and to furnish a potential countermovement to that inherent danger. This metric however is not the only one which enters into processes of political valuation. Though the project has been singular in its purpose, this has not been to imply that maximizing creativity is the only good which can come from political interaction. This maximization, put into practice, must be held up against however many other purposes engaged actors ascribe to their political acts. A reductive example can help to clarify the problem. Creative change and comfortable stability can be considered opposed aspects of an overarching duality. The familiarity of the old generally contrasts with the foreignness of the new. There may (assuredly) be those who wish to sacrifice the maximization of their creative potential for the sake of comfortably maintaining a number of non-relational habits which

are not excessively detrimental. A practical politics of departure cannot impose the dictate that every single non-relational habit or non-correspondent identity must be abandoned with all haste. To do so would be to re-institute a new “good sense” which itself is stifling in its unequivocal nature and closedness to difference.³⁰⁰ In addition to the dualities of arrival/departure and habitual constraint/habitual potential integral to the argument of this project is needed at the very least a meta-duality of creative dislocation/intentional stability which recognizes that novelty cannot be pursued at the expense of other important political values. There will always be some measure of novelty in political improvement as that motion exists within time—adds something to the existing—but how much is added and how much is perpetuated is up for negotiation between involved actors.

Even if one does not wish to maximize their creative potential, there is critical knowledge to be had regarding the responses which modernity has made to the individual’s cognitive disposition towards habit formation. It is one thing to generally accept the prescriptive message of the politics of departure developed in this project, but all must come to grips with the frenzied condition which is fomented between modernity’s obsession with predicting the future and the self’s ability to cultivate unconscious and imperceptible motions. Political inefficacy and stagnation is to be avoided and rectified wherever it or its presentiments are detected. There are many paths to be followed in order to oppose this decline and the doctrine of departure introduces another tool to the total arsenal. By focusing on how the individual’s habits literally interact with the contemporary political milieu, a strong foundation is established for

³⁰⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 33, 131.

further work which either (or both) maintains the corporeal reality of political habit or uses that reality to develop metaphors and analogies relevant to other political spaces and times. As one cannot depart without arriving and vice versa, there is no political doctrine built upon the primacy of change which does not contain the guarantee of its own outmodedness. The balances examined in depth by the argument are critical until they are not. For the time being however, this project presents the case that the introduction of modes of departure into the general political attitude of modernity is essential if things *are to get better*. Images of predictableness and perfectibility must be antagonized by the recognition of obsolete reactions and discordant relations with the external world. Habits are the way to both absurd rigidity and vibrant mobility. There are no perfect means of harnessing their potential, but the beauty of habit rests precisely in its lack of assuredness and openness to the unknown.

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