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Atëphobia:

On Lovecraft, Deleuze and the limits of affectual geography

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Abstract

Over the past two decades non-representational and affectual geographers have cited the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze to the point of exhaustion. In this thesis I read Deleuze's interpretation of Spinoza through the weird tales written by the American horror author H. P. Lovecraft to argue for a radicalization of the former's work within geography. To this end I examine the often recognized, but largely ignored problem of representing affect *qua* autonomous force: Only upon a pre-personal plane of existence can affect be grasped, meaning that a symbolic language will not suffice to describe it. Aided by an experimental writing style, I argue that affectual geographers have been unwilling to push aesthetic risk-taking far enough in their attempts to understand the conditions of actuality and thus inadvertently insist on articulating the inhuman from the viewpoint of human experience.

This does not mean that affectual geography should be abandoned. On the contrary, the goal of reaching an inhuman experience remains valid both within a Deleuzean ontology and may act a potential counterpoint to contemporary transcendental and needs oriented understandings of subjective worlds. Accordingly, I seek to show that the path that Lovecraft opens towards the inhuman is not one easily traversed and may require a violent escape from the Self. Affectual geographers would do well to remember what is at stake in the inherent horror of the inhuman if they are to pursue more radical forms of stylistic and aesthetic experimentation than they have done so far.

Keywords: Affect, Deleuze, Lovecraft, Non-representational theory, Aesthetics, Literary geography, Experimental writing

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Table of contents

Introduction: At the gates of the Anthropocene

'We must forget Deleuze' (Berry & Galloway, 2016: 7). The exasperation of this call may well be characteristic of a broader sentiment of exhaustion within geography and critical theory alike. To be certain, the influence of French post-war philosophy has been both varied and profound in geography, but few philosophers have had the staying power of Gilles Deleuze. Few if any of the conceptual developments related to the intersections between space, materiality and representation that have appeared in Anglophone geography over the past two decades have remained unaffected by Deleuze's thought. His influence is evident within the development of non-representational theories (e.g. B. Anderson & Harrison, 2010; Dewsbury et al., 2002; Stewart, 2007; Thrift, 2007), post-phenomenological and affectual geographies (e.g. B. Anderson, 2014; Massumi, 2002a; Thrift, 2004) and various approaches to networks and relational space (DeLanda, 2006; Murdoch, 2005).

Affect, in particular, has become a topic of great interest for geographers working in the intersection of emerging materialist and post-phenomenological thought (B. Anderson, 2012; Highmore, 2017). Affect is sometimes taken to be similar to feeling or sensation, though recent use of the concept in cultural geography and cognate disciplines has been inspired by a conception of affect as autonomous force, deriving from Deleuze's influential readings of Spinoza (1988, 1990), Nietzsche (2006) and Bergson (1991a). These have been instrumental in facilitating an expanded interest in pre-cognitive interactions between bodies and has been coupled with a hesitant consensus around an ethics of vitality, affirmation and joy.

In this intellectual landscape dominated by narratives of joy and affirmation it is cogent to ask questions like: What exactly is being affirmed? And what remains opaque during affirmation? As we stand before the gates of the Anthropocene; a geological era of ongoing mass extinction and imminent ecological collapse, the turn to vitalistic brands

of materialism may seem naïvely hopeful. Indeed, more pessimistic stories are emerging within geography and beyond, some scholars having begun to examine the dark side of affect and the limits of happiness (e.g. Ahmed, 2010b; Harrison, 2015).

Is the Deleuzean moment then best left to the annals of intellectual history? Perhaps. Yet there is another – albeit controversial – way of reading Deleuze that goes contrary to the affirmative, materialist, complexity theoretical, connective and thoroughly toothless narrative of contemporary geography and critical theory. In this context Peter Hallward has suggested that:

> Rather than a philosopher of nature, history or the world, rather than any sort of 'fleshy materialist', Deleuze is most appropriately read as a spiritual, redemptive or subtractive thinker, a thinker preoccupied with the mechanics of dis-embodiment and de-materialisation. Deleuze's philosophy is oriented by lines of flight that lead out of the world; though not other-worldly, it is *extra-worldly.* (Hallward, 2006: 3, emphasis in the original)

To resuscitate Deleuze from death by network and happiness, the weird tales penned by the early 20th century author of cosmic horror, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, may provide the triple possibility of intensifying the nefarious side of the world's primary generative activity, reinvigorating affectual geography, and of interrogating our own atëphobia – fear of ruinous becoming – by altering the Spinozist-Deleuzean narrative in monstrous ways. Deleuze is not to be forgotten but transformed; the philosophy of creation is to have its untold destructive potential unleashed.

Atëphobia is an attempt to recognize, problematize and express the negative and ruinous forces that may be unleashed by Lovecraft upon cultural geography grown tired of Deleuze; forces born from the hubris of modernity and threatening to sideline the privileged position of the modern form of subjectivity. *Atëphobia* concerns a problem that is becoming ever more crucial in a world where anthropogenic environmental destruction, ecological collapse and runaway biotechnichal innovation are no longer looming threats but ongoing realities. As other ecophilosophical thinkers like Gregory Bateson, Arne Næss, Bruno Latour, Rosi Braidotti and Donna Haraway have helped articulate various ways, these threatening realities signal the acute need for a new,

posthuman, aesthetic and ethical paradigm capable of accepting the activity of the world itself and which levels the transcendence of form over matter, man over world. *Atëphobia* finds its ultimate justification and context in our desire to facilitate an exploration of those regressive forces that seek to block the arrival of an inhuman thought; forces that find their unpleasant enunciation but also an unexpected reversal in Lovecraft's stories.

For a long time Lovecraft remained an outsider to the American literary canon, and his excessive literary style has often been seen as the epitome of mediocrity. The academic reception of his work has been further complicated by the extent to which Lovecraft's infamous racism haunts many of his stories (Lovett-Graff, 1997), a fact that raises serious ethical concerns for anyone seeking to engage his texts and that we, too, must account for. Despite the influence of his work on contemporary horror and science fiction – for instance on authors such as Stephen King, Thomas Ligotti and China Miéville – the combination of xenophobia and stylistic excess has resulted in a relative shortage of secondary literature that has only recently begun to be ameliorated.

One of the main recuperation programmes has been spearheaded by a number of philosophers active in the loosely assembled speculative realism movement. For instance, Graham Harman (2012) has conducted an extensive analysis of Lovecraft's style, and others have used the latter's work in debates about negativity and 'cosmic pessimism' (Thacker, 2015). What is more, Deleuze and Guattari make a number of references to Lovecraft's fiction in their *A Thousand Plateaus*, and Patricia MacCormack (2010) has proposed a basically Spinozist-Deleuzean framework for interpreting Lovecraft. But little has been written about Lovecraft or his work from a geographical perspective (see, however, Kneale, 2006) and with the current flourishing of themes pertaining to materialism, attunements, atmospheres, and ruins in the discipline it is time to re-examine his work from this point of view.

In keeping with the non-representational and performative methods that we aim to critique, *Atëphobia* aims for intensification rather than representation, seeking to facilitate the creation of a stage whereupon Lovecraft's weird fiction and geographies of affect can be usefully conjugated and problematized. We do not endeavor to study,

critique or interpret Lovecraft's fiction in isolation but to explore a connection that finds its origin in the conviction that theory cannot stand *a priori*, as an intransitive lens or stable framework ready to be deployed for the interpretation of a text. Instead we depart from the admission that an object of study, in this case a set of fictional encounters with weird landscapes, can bare its fangs and bite back when connected, 'plugged in' (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013) or knotted together with an appropriate conceptual framework to express problems that have real and potentially unexpected consequences for thought and life.

Deleuze once described his essentially pragmatist methodology as not being: 'a question of commenting on the text by a method of deconstruction, or by a method of textual practice, or by any other method; it is a question of seeing what use a text is in the extra-textual practice that prolongs the text' (Pierre Boudot et al., 1973: 186-7, cited in Boundas, 2005: 112-3). In our pursuit of such an extra-textual prolongation we will follow two closely entangled lines of inquiry with the explicit aim of infecting a hesitantly affirmative geography with horror by mobilizing the debilitating and ruinous forces that can be found throughout the many weird encounters in Lovecraft's work. Along one line we will approach these encounters through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari's notions of affect and becoming, coupled with subsequent work in geography. Simultaneously, the other line will extend out of Lovecraft's work to infect the foundations of affectual geography, provoking new imaginations of inhuman life, and inducing us to rethink the role of an interpretive lens vis-à-vis its object.

When posed as questions the lines appear as follows: *How do ruinous encounters in Lovecraft's weird tales appear in the light of Deleuze-Guattarian affectual geography?* And *how can the potential of affectual geography be amplified by engaging with Lovecraft's weird tales*? While these questions may initially appear to be manifestly circular, it is our hypothesis that they will place us in an increasingly intense spiral between theory and fiction; a conceptual vortex by virtue of which we will be able to *engage the problem of atëphobia as one central to modernity itself.*

The substantial body of *Atëphobia* will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter will serve to contextualize the affectual concerns inherent in Lovecraft's work and

studies thereof within ongoing debates in cultural geography that concern the limits of representation. Upon this base, we will assemble an experimental literary-geographic method appropriate for the task of reconstructing Deleuze's reading of Spinoza via Lovecraft's fiction. In the second chapter we will conduct this reconstruction and fold it back into affectual geography's concern with atmospheres to uncover a pretension to represent the inhuman while remaining within the human. In the third and final chapter we will extend our analytical lens to offer a preliminary examination the dangers and possibilities of overcoming the human in the micropolitical context of the understanding of subjectivity belonging to the modern subject.

I.
Background and methodology

I.I.
Approaching Lovecraft and the weird

It is not beyond irony that the broad return of materialist thought to geography has led to an increased reliance on various theoretical and philosophical styles of argumentation. One of the clearest characteristics of this trend has been a tendency to conceptualize affect as something ontologically pre-cognitive, incomplete and transpersonal, vaguely related to the study of more commonplace notions such as feeling and emotion (e.g. Massumi, 1995). But whether or not this 'ontologisation' (Barnett, 2008) of experience is seen as a continuation, response or even obviation of the crisis of representation that arose from poststructuralist, feminist and postcolonial critiques, the effect has been ever more refined conceptions of relationality, performativity and feeling. These articulations have led to a diminished focus on textuality and revealing hidden meanings and structures, which have been abandoned in what has become echoed as the 'ruins of representation' (e.g. Lather, 2001; MacLure, 2011; Olkowski, 1999; Pierre & Pillow, 2002). In this expositional chapter, we will examine a number of attempts to work an intellectual landscape riddled with these ruins, and discuss the methodological potential of literary geography within this context. But first we will have to review the rather unlikely field of Lovecraft studies.

H. P. Lovecraft was born in Providence, Rhode Island, in the late summer of 1890. After the untimely passing of his father, the young Lovecraft grew up under the watchful eyes of his mother and two aunts. Already at an early age, he took an interest in astronomy and began editing a local periodical dedicated to the subject. He may well have progressed to higher education had not an unexplained illness befallen him to prevent his graduation from high school. Emerging five years later from a period of relative isolation, Lovecraft would become involved in the United Amateur Press

Association, giving him the opportunity to correspond with other amateur authors from across America. In 1923, two years following his mother's death, the still reclusive Lovecraft married Sonia Greene who at the time was working a well-paid job at a department store, and moved into her Brooklyn apartment. Following a period of initial enchantment with urban life, it all went sour when Greene lost her job, fell ill, and moved inland in search of new employment. Two years after marrying, Lovecraft returned to Providence alone when he received a long awaited invitation from his aunts. There – further busied with copious epistolary correspondence and editing work – he, a self-described old man before forty, would spend the majority of his remaining years working on a study of supernatural horror while writing for various pulp magazines. He passed away in 1937.

As a writer Lovecraft did not live to experience much commercial success, but the posthumous reception of his work in popular culture has nevertheless been massive. Lovecraft was primarily a writer of short stories, and influenced by writers and poets like Edgar Allan Poe, Lord Dunsany and Arthur Machen, he would become the genre defining author of so-called weird fiction; a form of post-gothic or proto-science fiction that tends to eschew the known world with references to an altogether alien universe, inhospitable to human life. The most well-known of Lovecraft's works are the foundational texts of the 'Cthulhu Mythos' – a loose amalgamation of cosmic horror stories that were later canonized by one of his friends and protégés, August Derleth, and further expanded by a number of other writers. These – though perhaps less so than his earlier stories – are written in an extravagant style, characterized by adjectival flourishes and a penchant for describing monstrous entities and ancient derelicts as unspeakable or otherwise beyond ordinary representation.

Undoubtedly, Lovecraft was both a weird author and one of the foremost and imaginative authors of the weird. Despite its ties to Anglo-American folklore there are no vampires, zombies, dragons, giants, gnomes, elves or fairies in Lovecraft's work. It is rather an uncomfortable mix of tentacled monsters, Cyclopean architecture, pseudo-Einsteinian relativism and a deeply pessimistic attitude to the human condition. The futility of human endeavor is only rivalled by the fortunate ignorance of the same, a

point that is conveyed most forcefully in the famous opening paragraph of *The Call of Cthulhu*:

> The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age. (*The Call of Cthulhu*: 355)[1]

Inspired by both Edgar Allan Poe and Lord Dunsany, Lovecraft's work features the discovery of these unspeakable horrors, in addition to dreamlike journeys and occasionally elliptical passages of highly stylized prose. With this in mind it is perhaps not surprising that a growing number of philosophers interested in speculative forms of realism (Harman, 2010, 2012), new materialism[2] (Negarestani, 2008) and pessimism (Brassier, 2007; Thacker, 2011) have appropriated his work in recent years.

Prior to these applications of Lovecraft, the academic study of his life and work was dominated by a small number of prolific scholars, most notably the independent S.T. Joshi, who has written extensively about Lovecraft's life and edited a number of volumes dedicated to the same end (e.g. 1980, 1996; 2016), and who followed the earlier analyses by Donald Burleson (1983, 1990) and Dirk Mosig (1997). Yet earlier studies and critique of Lovecraft's life and work were at best sporadic and limited to exclusive circles and publications despite the relatively wide dissemination of his work. Consequently, parts of the field remain somewhat dated in regards to the conceptual and methodological frameworks that were employed (Airaksinen, 1999). Although such

[1] All references to Lovecraft's fiction are to the Barnes and Noble edition of *H. P. Lovecraft: The Fiction Complete and Unabridged* (2008). Page numbers follow the title of the cited story when relevant.

[2] The 'new' of new materialism is not entirely uncontroversial. As Sarah Ahmed (2010a) rightly remarks, emphasizing the recent upsurge of materialist thought as new hides its indebtedness to its antecedents, including but not limited to feminist phenomenology. Further, new materialism encompasses several subfields that despite linkages emerge from different schools of thought. Ahmed is writing from a different perspective than the speculative materialists I am referring to here. In our present context, the new is best thought of as a break with some forms of historical materialism.

datedness does not necessarily diminish the validity and importance of these results, some studies also contain inaccuracies regarding Lovecraft's biography that have since been amended, largely owing to Joshi's efforts.

As P. Smith (2011) has remarked, Roland Barthes's (1977) influential essay, *The Death of the Author* seems to have been curiously disregarded by Lovecraft scholars; the author's biographical details having received almost as much attention as the stories themselves. Perhaps this is partially because of the details contained within an estimated 100 000 letters left behind by Lovecraft, some of which have been (selectively) published, yet Barthes's argument that the meaning of a text is determined by its reader in the final instance is significant since it opens up the question of how we may 'hack' (Camara, 2016) Lovecraft's work rather than interpret or comment on it or its author.

But even if meaning is determined in the reception of a text, rather than in its genesis, some biographical details have been useful for context – especially due to the all too often downplayed fact that Lovecraft's fiction intersects with his xenophobia at a fundamental level (Kneale, 2006) – but our aim is in no way to posit these as determinants for what Lovecraft's fiction can be appropriated to do for us now. Despite the field's relative inattention to what Lovecraft may yet become, we are not the first to walk this road and although this is not the place for an extensive overview of the evolution of Lovecraft-scholarship, some of the most influential readings deserve to be examined as they bear a curious relationship to geographical efforts to work the ruins of representation.

In particular, Michel Houellebecq's (2005) essay on Lovecraft has been developed in intricate ways by contemporary artists and speculative philosophers (cf. Mackay, 2008). Despite, or rather thanks to the veracity of its representation of the life and work of the 'hermit of Providence' (Houellebecq, 2005: 8) being questionable, Houellebecq's essay offers a tantalizing portrait of a man that was strangely out of time and space, not unlike the characters of his own stories. In a way, Houellebecq's characterization of Lovecraft is typical because of the almost hagiographical mystique that surrounds the invocation of his name (Simmons, 2016); often celebrated as a troubled genius and would-be gentleman by his supporters and denounced as a vehement racist by his detractors.

While Houellebecq manages to bring an uneasy balance to this nearly diametrical opposition by recognizing the interplay of both sides throughout Lovecraft's work and biography, the mystical shroud remains intact. In this way, Lovecraft becomes a figure of legend and myth for his posteriors. Just like his creations, the Lovecraft persona takes on a strange life of its own.

It is this persona, in conjunction with Barthes's insights, that lets us resist the temptation to explain Lovecraft's work with reference to his social and psychological context, something that has already been attempted by those qualified to do so (see Mosig, 1997). Accordingly, it is simply not within our scope to dispel the almost arcane veil surrounding Lovecraft, and we merely seek to haunt affectual geography with the cruelty, the masochism and the deranged fear of radical otherness that his writings offer. We will be more than happy to work with a spectre and an ideal. At any rate, a serious biographical or psychological attempt is unlikely to be an adequate explanation for the work by the odd writer from Rhode Island. Instead, our Lovecraft will be synonymous with the vertiginous horror that his historical double released upon our world; not so much an archetype as an overwhelmingly affective force to be reckoned with.

Another important precursor to our project is Burleson's (1990) attempt to deconstruct Lovecraft's fiction, in the process of which he discovers the presence of oddly postmodern characteristics. Certain aspects of Lovecraft's stories already prefigure and anticipate certain elements of deconstruction that would come to dominate American literary criticism. In particular, Burleson locates four themes to this end: 'forbidden knowledge' that threatens to ruin subjectivity; 'denied primacy' of human dominion of planet Earth; 'unwholesome survivals' of beliefs and beings thought to have been surmounted; and finally 'illusory surface appearances' that may yet be unmasked (1990: 156-7). In Burleson's reading the four themes interact to unsettle the text, leaving it in an indifferent relationship to its stabilizing ground. The apparent refusal of Lovecraft's text to adhere to solid foundations will return to help guide our own reading of his work that concerns not so much any purported (lack of) meaning, as it does the ungrounding human perception and practices of habitation on a planet of dubious hospitability.

Contrary to an understanding Lovecraft's work as postmodern fiction – fiction that is characterized by ontological hybridity, as has been posited by Brian McHale (2003) – Noys and Murphy (2016) have suggested that Lovecraft provides part of the ground for a new 'pulp modernism', a term which they take to mean

> the emergence of the weird in a fraught dialogue with modernism and also to suggest that contemporary articulations of the weird rely on a complex range of influences and materials that do not sit comfortably in the category of the 'postmodern.' Weird fiction's engagement with both the epistemological and the ontological and its estrangement of *our* world unsettle the terms that have been used... to delineate postmodern fiction as an ontological fiction of hybrid worlds. (2016: 128, emphasis in the original)

The presence of themes relating to 'forbidden knowledge' and 'illusory surface appearances', makes evident the epistemological problems present in Lovecraft's work and it would be unfair to reduce it to a form of proto-postmodernism. The other reason that we hesitate to label Lovecraft a 'postmodernist', is the decidedly modern setting of his life (Joshi, 2016). While postmodernism may be distinguished from postmodernity as a historical condition (see Hutcheon, 1989), Lovecraft's nostalgia for the past makes both 'modern' and 'postmodern' strange epithets for works that, perhaps more than anything else, seek to reveal the implicit terror of modernization. The epistemological nature of Lovecraft's work further means that its horrors are rarely frightening any absolute sense. It is rather in the shock of discovery and the corresponding sidelining of human primacy that is the immediate source of estrangement of his characters from their universes of references in stories such as *The Whisperer in Darkness*, *The Outsider*, and *The Rats in the Walls*.

Moreover, the many direct and indirect continuations of Lovecraft's work, stretching across rock music (Sederholm, 2016) and video games to internet fan sites and occult practices (Bolton, 2011), are fascinating in and of themselves. Perhaps it is because of the close correspondence between Lovecraft and his protégés or a result of the pulp like character of his work, but Lovecraft's writing has been prolonged and appropriated by a range of writers contributing to the mythos in an almost unique manner that exceeds

what is typical for homage; a practice that was generally encouraged by the would-be gentleman himself (Houellebecq, 2005).

In addition to these mad proliferations, there is an extra-textually affective dimension present in Lovecraft's weird fiction, which Stoneman and Packer (2017) suggest may allow the genre function as a particularly effective mode of pessimistic argumentation. Pessimism, they argue, otherwise struggles under an ostensibly rational standard of debate. In this sense, we may think of weird fiction as non-representational by virtue of its ability to more or less effectively estrange its readers beyond any mere representational content. In Lovecraft's work, such weirdness is typically evoked through rich descriptions of atmospheres, replete with inconspicuous monsters, ancient architecture and oneiric sequences. Perhaps it is due to his stylistic excess, but these sequences are problematic to interpret not only because the possibility of representing them is limited (see Harman, 2012 for a discussion about the limits of paraphrasing) but also because the affects they bring into our world tend to thoroughly unsettle it. While Lovecraft's horror is undoubtedly that of a xenophobe, he touches upon something far more profound by rendering visible unspeakable entities that rattle the relationship between his readers and their perceptual worlds. And perhaps most interestingly, his irrepresentable atmospheres spread beyond themselves to reveal forces hidden from the human gaze; bringing them to presence and making us question our role on this Earth. Before this horror we are only ever left as insufficient witnesses.

I.II.

In the ruins of representation

Lovecraft's work leaves us with the problem of how to express forces and phenomena that can be felt but not fully captured in language. This aspect reflects a problem implicit in the burgeoning field of affectual and emotional geography; the methodological cul-de-sac arising from the speaking of pre-cognitive and autonomous affects that are purportedly unspeakable (Pile, 2010). This apparent impasse of representation explains the affinity between research into the affectual and the wider paradigm of various non-representational and post-phenomenological methods and theories (e.g. Dewsbury et al., 2002; Simonsen, 2007; Thrift, 1996; Vannini, 2015).

Non-representational theory, or alternatively 'more-than-representational theory' (Lorimer, 2005), typically refers to a loose synthesis of theoretical and methodological approaches originally synthesized by Anglophone cultural geographers during the final decade of the 20th century. Its first developments followed partly from Deleuze's (1994) critique of representational thought (Hinchliffe, 2003; Thrift, 1996), and although the theoretical scope has since been greatly expanded, a Deleuzean tone and vocabulary remains present within the field.

So what is non-representational theory? While a single definition is difficult if not impossible to give, the alternative label of 'more-than-representational' is apt insofar as it considers at once theory as intrinsically representational while highlighting the act of theorizing. At the heart of this is a conception is the embodied aspects of research activities as 'performative in themselves' (Dewsbury et al., 2002: 438), which has led to an emphasis on partial and creative attempts to express the irrepresentable, instead of automatically relying on interpretive methods that have often seemed to fall short. As the practical and theoretical diversity of the field can hardly be emphasized enough, it would be borderline disingenuous to do anything other than think of non-representational theories in the plural (Lorimer, 2008). We may, however, find some internal touching points within this vague body of post-representational thought.

As Kathleen Stewart asserts about her own style of non-representational research: 'This is writing and theorizing that tries to stick with something becoming atmospheric, to itself resonate or tweak the force of material-sensory somethings forming up' (2011: 452), a position that is nearly echoed by Ben Anderson and James Ash when they suggest that 'a non-representational method involves an intensification of problems and requires staying with those problems for a while' (2015: 48). One might say that non-representational theory seeks intensification rather than revelation.

But intensifying an incessantly undulating world may require a certain intuition or artistic gaze to transcend an otherwise tyrannical present, as was expressed by the Swiss painter Paul Klee:

> [The artist] looks inside the finished forms that nature sets before his eyes. The deeper he looks, the easier it becomes for him to extend his view from today to

> yesterday. And in place of a finished image of nature, the crucial image of creation as genesis imprints itself on him. It dawns on him that the process of world creation cannot, at this moment, be complete. He extends it from past to future, gives genesis duration. And he goes further. Standing on earth, he says to himself: This world has looked different and in time it will look different again. (Klee, 1969: 92)

What Klee captures is a vision and imagination of nature as an open process of ongoing creation that has become inspirational for some geographers working with non-representational theories (see Dewsbury & Thrift, 2005). For Klee, attentiveness to change, itself a prerequisite for artistic work, requires that one develops a certain rapport with the mobilities of a world undergoing intensive processes of open-ended ontogenesis. Such rapport is immanent to the act of intuiting the world's incessant movement behind the stability of our reductive representations. Although the insight that the world seems to be some sort of Heraclitean flux is itself mundane, its assumed reality serves as a starting point for utterances about the autonomous forces that unfold throughout its course, grounding a criticism of Cartesianism and, more generally, of most forms of Enlightenment humanism (St. Pierre et al., 2016b).

To avoid reducing the inhuman forces underlying representational thought, the act of doing research becomes for the non-representational theorist, following Bergson, Klee and Deleuze, a strategy partially aimed at deferring the question of something's fully determinate presence by relying on an active 'material imagination' (Anderson & Wylie, 2009). Whereas it has been argued that such imaginations can draw attention to the vitality and affectivity of a creativity that exceeds its capture in representation (Richardson-Ngwenya, 2014), it is not entirely clear how this alleged graspability of the material world differs from the dogmatism of pre-Kantian metaphysics. It is in this context that Deleuze's reading of Spinoza and Bergson offer what we might term a philosophical technology for getting out of representation, a point which we will develop further in the next chapter. Yet it remains a serious problem that the practical conditions under which it is possible to intuit or intensify the world's excessive and itinerant generativity in practice still seem relatively unexplored and one may suspect

that some of the most egregious speculative claims would be significantly less optimistic if these conditions were revealed.

Before returning to this issue we should make some additional remarks regarding the scope and criticisms of non-representational theory. Although its initial formulations were markedly Deleuzean and Spinozist (see Thrift, 1996), the field's concerns have intersected with aspects of phenomenology and post-phenomenology (e.g. Bogost, 2012; Shaw, 2015; Simpson, 2009); new materialist considerations of things possessing independent efficacies (e.g. Bennett, 2009; Latour, 2005; Stewart, 2017); embodied and multisensory ethnographies (e.g. Paterson, 2009; Pink, 2009); and feminist, queer, and hybrid geographies (e.g. Tolia‐Kelly, 2006; Whatmore, 2002).

On a similar note affectual, non-representational and post-phenomenological geographies could probably be delimited on a methodological or historiographical basis, but they all inhabit the same zone of indiscernibility surrounding human access to the inhuman, which, as we shall see, is the proper concern of our present investigation. If we occasionally lapse between the labels of affectual, non-representational and post-phenomenological it reflects our desire to employ the term that seems most suitable to illustrate any given argument.

Others have mobilized the eclectic vagueness of non-representational theory to claim that the role of social research is not limited to expose, quantify or otherwise represent the causal structure behind social phenomena, or to implement any one philosophical project (Thrift, 2007). Rather, social research can seek to intensify and express hidden problems and to discover lines of escape from predominant and normed understandings of what the social and cultural are and must be. The challenge lies in following these trajectories to a point where they no longer have any answers to give. The resulting exhaustion is not to be conceived as a failure of representation and could rather be viewed as an opportunity to invite others to continue.

In practice, theorizing the non-representational seems to be about the incessant innovation of style (Vannini, 2015), concerned more with recognizing the negotiated nature of space, the possibility for future change and the embeddedness of a 'flow of responsive activity' (Thrift, 2007: 147) than with any grand claims to nomothetic

certainty. The playfulness of dancing bodies is perhaps the best metaphor available for the non-representational geographer trying to uncover the conditions of actual experiences, as has been shown by a number of case studies (McCormack, 2002; Thrift, 2007). While geographers struggling with the non-representational have sought to offer the possibility of activating latent material imaginations by 'dancing open' new fields of inquiry, using ontological speculation, and experimenting with new forms of language to discuss the affective and embodied conditions of our experience there remain several basic methodological questions to answer, and the very utility of non-representational theory rests on unstable ground.

One such issue regards whose bodies' non-representational theory concerns. Non-representational theory could be a way to take serious Donna Haraway's (1988) important essay on the privileged epistemologies of partial perspective, but it has not always risen to this challenge. The partial and situated nature of knowledge has sometimes been overlooked, and non-representational geographers have rightly been criticized by feminist and postcolonial theorists for being inattentive to socio-historically contingent modes of embodiment and for not adequately addressing the cultural and social dimensions of who is embodied, while also overly privileging intentionality and purposive action (see Tolia‐Kelly, 2006). Similarly, Deborah Thien has argued that non-representational theory has utilized a set of metaphors for relationality that seem predominantly 'masculinist, technocratic and distancing' (2005: 452)[3]. Such criticisms are crucial because they highlight the importance of the ethical modes of thought pertaining to proper care, modesty and above all accountability of research that should be implicit in the experimental attitude of contemporary attempts to overcome Cartesianism (see Haraway, 1997; St. Pierre et al., 2016a).

In response, non-representational theories must be careful to position ethics alongside ontological speculation, where the latter cannot mean thoughtless experimentation but responsible probing into different ways of practising situated 'knowings-in-being' (Barad, 2007). Again, we must account for these aspects, and keep in mind who remains invisible in our exploration. In doing away with the supposed view from nowhere; the

[3] See also McCormack (2006) for a response to Thien.

city seen from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center (de Certeau, 1984), it may become possible to seriously consider one's subjective positionality and the potential for opening up new modes of practice as old possibilities close. In the context of Lovecraft, MacCormack (2016) poses the central question of whose fear he writes about. As we will see in the following chapters, atëphobia is a relational fear, and one that does not affect all subjects equally. We need to continuously remember the overt racism and innate misogyny of Lovecraft's work. Our primary methods for dealing with this issue will be deliberate misreading and tactical 'cherry picking'. In anticipation of the warranted criticisms against such an approach, we may invoke our stated aim of monstrously transforming Deleuzean affectual geography. We care little for Lovecraft or his opinions.

Another set of criticisms of non-representational theory has emerged from a predominantly Marxist camp and concerns a perceived lack of political relevance, or deferral of political action in favor of moot philosophical innovation (Harvey, 2006; N. Smith, 2005). While such criticism could be met by claiming that not all academic activity needs to vie for radical political change, this response would raise the question of the social relevance of non-representational theory. Instead, the perceived lack of political consequentiality has been faced with an increased interest in the potential manipulation and control of affect and feeling across different spaces and times (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Thrift, 2007). For example, a substantial body of research concerning previously overlooked problems related to the production and manipulation of affective atmospheres of architecture and various public spaces is now beginning to emerge (see Bille et al., 2015; Edensor & Sumartojo, 2015; Shaw, 2017).

Finally, let us return to the looming question of the formal distinction and relation between affective forces and their linguistic articulation. At the heart of this issue is the relationship of affect to the individuation of subjectivity. Pile (2010) suggests that many geographers interested in affect have seemed to insist on the concept's status as an autonomous, pre-subjective force that is ultimately impossible to represent linguistically, while *de facto* seeking to represent it in their research. Interestingly, geographies of affect and emotion are often closely related, although they seek to engage with separate levels of existence. Nevertheless, both emotional and affective geographies have

typically been committed to ethnographic, archival and media based methods (Curti et al., 2011), and for all the talk about experimental writing and the novel vocabularies of intensity and affect (see Vannini, 2015 for a number of attempts to experiment with alledgedly non-representational language) non-representational and affectual geographies remain stuck in the ostensibly inescapable trap of human language, relying on a relative ease of mediation between researcher and world *en route*.

Even though affectual geography provides useful tools to overcome remnants of humanistic thinking and the Cartesian dualism by insisting on a Spinozist mind-body parallelism (Curti et al., 2011), adequate knowledge of affect is not immediate and introduces another problem. By remaining in language it seems that affectual geography ultimately represents the allegedly inhuman from the viewpoint of the human, despite its claims to the contrary. It has long been argued that the seemingly insoluble problem of representing the affective cannot be overcome and so can only be recognized and negotiated (see O'Sullivan, 2001 for an early example), presumably by methods aimed at intensification. However, such a circumvention of the problem raises serious questions about validity, practically being an endorsement of the following statement: 'If we cannot represent affect we will simply proceed as if we could'. While it could be claimed that affectual geography seeks to produce rather than make visible already existing affects, that would make the label superfluous because it could easily be countered that *all* research is affective by default. Of the three problems we have discussed; *inclusiveness*, *political consequentiality* and the *representational bind*, the third seems most serious at the ontological level and it will henceforth be one of our principal concerns. It will, however, become evident that the intensification of the bind could have a transformative and defusing effect on the problems concerning inclusiveness and politics as well.

In Lovecraft's work the efficacy of that which cannot be spoken is a central matter, and we will see that encounters with the truly other may offer an interesting twist of the *representational bind*. While crude, affective and horrifying dimensions of happening upon that which is hidden from a governing paradigm of thought is, paradoxically, well expressed in the inexpressible prehensions that Lovecraft's characters have with ancient, inhuman and otherworldly beings and spaces that were purportedly not supposed to be.

These spaces pose the question of how to live on a planet that is not entirely for us. The ostensibly rational subject of modernity, the stereotypical man of science, discovers, contrary to his anthropocentric ideology, something efficacious that breaks his world apart by not only reconfiguring his field of vision but by also insisting on having always already been present. We no longer need to wonder what might have happened if Bruno Latour's (1999) Pharaoh had had teeth, because great Cthulhu certainly does. Central to Lovecraft's work is an imagination of an inhuman efficacy that reveals the inadequacy of all forms of representation. Weirdness brings to light an essential and innate horror that non-representational geographers seem to have overlooked. Could this horror be the condition that enables geography to follow Klee's (2014) famous dictum to render visible rather than to merely render what is visible?

I.III.

Literary geography as atavistic teratology

To explore this possibility we will need to develop a method appropriate to the task. The question is if and how we can use Lovecraft's work to transform Deleuze and Guattari's Spinozist cartography to open a path for non-representational theory. We are faced with three corpora – Lovecraft, Deleuze and non-representational theory – that are concerned with the limits of representation, but that are also inherently difficult to represent themselves. In the final section of this chapter, we will attempt to assemble an adequate method for the literary-geographical task of transforming both non-representational theory and a general paradigm of atëphobic thought from the perspective of a Lovecraftian Deleuze. Our means of doing so will be a series of overlapping theorizations of the relationship between two texts.

As part of a wider development of the geohumanities (see Dear et al., 2011), interest in the connections between literature and geography is already taking off in ways that go beyond its traditional scope, which typically includes interpreting literary representations of space and place, in addition to historicist examinations of the time-space contexts of writing (Saunders, 2010). The expansion of literary-geographic inquiry can be linked, on the one hand, to computational methods and big data that is impacting the wider social sciences and humanities (e.g. Berry, 2011; Kitchin, 2013).

And, on the other hand, to theoretical reconfigurations of the relationship between literature and geographical theory as such, for instance in the emerging notions of geocriticism (Tally Jr, 2011; Westphal, 2011) and geopoetics (Cresswell, 2014; Magrane, 2015; Prieto, 2011), or in literary applications of assemblage thinking (J. Anderson, 2016). Noting the latter set of reorientations in particular, we want emphasize that literary geography is close to tautological. Geography has been predominantly literary throughout its history in some sense; geography taken back to its etymological root to mean the practice of writing on, with and about the Earth.

When imagined in this manner, literary geography comes to encompass a far wider spectrum than the academic subdiscipline, spanning diverse media and genres concerned with the Earth. It includes cinematic depiction, travel writing, parts of utopian and dystopian science fiction and such horror stories that concern tremors in our perception of the world itself. As one might expect, it is this expanded sense of geography as Earth-writing that we will work with here, vaguely utilizing what Rita Felski (2015) has referred to as a postcritical stance that remains agnostic to the end goal of unveiling hidden meanings. Ultimately, we contend that geographers write not to represent the Earth that is or the Earth that was but in the service of a new possible Earth to come (Deleuze, 1998: 4). They write not in its place but to call it forth; to orient a past and present towards a coming of the future. A future that must, for the sake of our survival, be less Anthroposcenic than the present.

It is the harrowing aspect of these lines of passage to a future Earth that we seek in Lovecraft's work, analogously to how loose threads may exist on the edges of a frayed piece of fabric. Our task is to weave these together in suggestive patterns quite removed from their origins. When Michel Serres refers to time as a 'crumpled handkerchief' (Serres & Latour, 1995: 60), it is perhaps topological connections of this sort he had in mind, or better, what Tim Ingold (2007a, 2015) suggested when he invoked Klee's wayfaring dots[4] in his seminal work on lines as this recognizes the crucial difference between drawing and the drawn. The threads that concern us do not follow any preconceived or already mapped out paths and have little actual existence prior to the

[4] From the following line: 'A line is a dot that went for a walk' (Klee, 1961: 105).

act of their traversal, which enables them to be woven together in unpredictable, emergent ways between the reefs and islets that constitute the great sedimentations that constitute the academic disciplines (see Latour, 1987; Serres, 1980).

By thinking in terms of wayfaring lines, we will seek to bring ruin to the privileged position of theory vis-à-vis fiction; that is, theory as a lens through which one might interpret a fictive event or set of events, a lens that lays an exclusive claim to epistemic certainty. We insist that such apparent certainty remains in perpetual historiographical contingency and is thus subjected to future reconfigurations (Szerszynski, 2017). Seeking to rework the relationship between theory and fiction, we aim to assemble a theoretico-fictional collage that incorporates aspects of both. Such genre blurring can help diversify the language of Earth-writing by exploring its metaphorical potential, as well as by politicizing how the Earth is written by revealing the complexities of normed understandings. In a way, it can be thought of as an 'undisciplining' of geography and the social sciences more widely (Springer, 2017: 2). Like many innovative terms, however, theory-fiction lacks a static definition. And although such instability may be primarily beneficial rather than immediately problematic for experimental styles of Earth-writing, we will need some form of *ad interim* definition. Following one of Szerszynski's (2017) suggestions, we will understand the notion of theory-fiction as a relationship of mutual implication of its constituent terms.

The original exposition of the relationship between theory and fiction as one of mutual implication can be traced to Shoshana Felman (1977), who, drawing on Jacques Lacan's work, has disrupted the dialectical relationship between literature and psychoanalysis, where the former had been traditionally perceived as subordinated to the latter as evidence. On the contrary, Felman argues, the relationship is characterized by the mutual enfolding of both psychoanalysis and fiction in an intricate system of mutual dependency and potential. A relevant example of this can be found in Sigmund Freud's (2004) analysis of the *Unheimliche*, often translated as the 'uncanny', a curious text that according to Hélène Cixous 'may strike us to be less a discourse than a strange theoretical novel' (1976: 525). In Cixous's eyes, Freud manages to turn his discussion exceed a representation by making his own exposition double the object of study, that is, by making it uncanny. As we will discuss the *Unheimliche* in greater detail towards the

end of Chapter III, it currently suffices to note the methodological recursivity of Freud's text, whereby the object of study folds into its own theorization.

In line with contemporary postcritical agendas, our enfolding of Lovecraft's work will not proceed through any form of 'deep' or 'close' reading but via pragmatic appropriation; through a recursive tracing of lines of escape out of his work towards our time and context. Just like the remnants of a ruined house or a forgotten tool can rise up through sedimented and incremented temporal layers to bring to bear on a present far from its original genesis. The fact that Lovecraft is already present in Deleuze and Guattari's thought via references in *A Thousand Plateaus* lends legitimacy to this approach. In a sense, then, our present project can indeed be described an intensification of this aspect, and a subsequent re-application of the results further down the intellectual lineage, seeking to empower affectual geography with his horror to extend its problem to the modern condition itself. Our method will be one of circumscribed genealogy via archaeological exhumation; a form of temporal vertigo that will function as a curious recursion of Burleson's four themes. Another possible name for this method may be 'atavistic teratology', as it essentially signals the resurgence of a monstrous past that had remained latent or asleep.

Following Jackson and Mazzei (2011, 2013), we will attempt a form of 'plugging in' – a practice of connecting theory and data in experimental ways – of Lovecraft's work into a machinic constellation with Deleuze's reading of Spinoza. For Jackson and Mazzei, such a conceptual move constitutes 'a rethinking of an interpretive methodology that gets [them] out of the representational trap of trying to figure out what the participants in [their] study "mean" and helps [them] to avoid being seduced by the desire to create a coherent and interesting narrative that is bound by themes and patterns' (2013: 262). It is our belief that a similarly machinic method may be employed in genealogico-archaeological literary geography in general, and in our present project in particular.

As Claire Colebrook (2002) has explained succinctly, a machinic mode of organization is distinct from both the functionalism of the mechanical the organization of the organic. Machines, in the Deleuze-Guattarian conceptual repertoire, refer to an immanent

conjunction of parts without reference to a previously organized ground. That is, a productive connection without any pre-given map for its organization. Organisms, on the contrary, require a transcendent point of reference against which they are constituted; a form of priestly judgment. In several places, Deleuze and Guattari (e.g. 1987: 257) use the example of the workhorse that has more in common with an ox than it does with a racehorse[5] by virtue of its emplacement in an emergent context. A machinic mode of organization is thus defined by its corporeal capacities to affect and be affected, rather than its subsumption under an Aristotelian taxonomy in accordance with a species and an associated genus (DeLanda, 2010). Instead, each actual entity follows a logic of 1+1+1+..., while being unified on a substantial level (Galloway, 2014). In this sense, thinking machinically may reveal the conceptual power of theory-fiction as an immanent implication of its terms that does not afford any hierarchical privilege to either.

In what follows, we will read Lovecraft's stories in parallel with Deleuze and Guattari's Spinozim, which grounds a significant portion of affectual geography. Although we will not exclude any part of Lovecraft's work, our primary focus will be on his description of affective encounters with strange architecture, ancient ruins and inhuman beings, which will naturally make the stories with a strong presence of these elements more interesting to us. For the same reason, stories that seem to be primarily inspired by Poe may be more interesting than those following Lord Dunsany. Like Felski and Jackson and Mazzei, we reject any 'close', 'critical' or 'deconstructive' reading, instead hoping that our attempt at extra-textual prolongation will render the relationships between Lovecraft and Deleuze sensible and efficacious by borrowing from its structure and stylistic excess. Make no mistake, what you are reading is much more a theoretical horror story than a study of Lovecraft's work. We take *impli*cation seriously and some connections will therefore seem premature, hidden, insufficient or outright obscure. There are two reasons for this. First and seemingly paradoxically, our machinic reading is altogether superficial; there is nothing to interpret, no layers to remove, no depth to dig into. But this is precisely how the secret that is already present can be revealed.

[5] It would be more appropriate to say that a *plowing* horse has more in common with an ox, as it is capacities to act within an assemblage that matter for Deleuze and Guattari.

Second, we have knowingly chosen broad brush strokes over a detailed description of Lovecraft's stories. This is both a stylistic wager and a means to maximize the potential for experimental appropriation of our work. We want to leave the question of how its own actuality can be transgressed as an open challenge to the reader.

With this in mind, we are prepared to transform Deleuze's philosophy to call forth a space for those whose unheard voices may guide us through the Anthropocene. Recalling Freud's seemingly recursive method of discussing the *Unheimliche*, we will proceed by unleashing the full force of Lovecraft's weird tales upon the Deleuzean roots of affectual geography's still too human relationship with *this* Earth, hoping that it may enable us to act for a new Earth to come. We must no longer doubt that the inhuman will arrive from within.

II.
Affect

II.I.
Spinoza and the powers of action

How can we enter into Lovecraft's work? This work is an infection, a serpent's bite. The sunken city of R'lyeh rests quietly beneath the sea, and its resurfacing will be the premonition of our doom. We enter thus from outside and below, seeking to arrive at the truth of atëphobia, the great fear of becoming only gradually. The epidemic begins in secret with the notion of affect and its conceptual derivations. As we have already hinted, the twisting of phenomenology and affect that is at the forefront of current debates in cultural geography has been a far from homogeneous movement. Aside from the cross-fertilization with emotional and psychoanalytic geographies (Pile, 2010, 2011), there are a handful of partially contrasting theorizations of affect that support the notion's recent popularity in geography and cognate disciplines (Thrift, 2007).

One of the key starting points can nevertheless be traced to Deleuze's (1988, 1990) interpretation of the Dutch 17th century philosopher Baruch Spinoza's[6] work. Besides being a cited influence on several strains of affectual and early non-representational geography (e.g. Thrift, 1996), Deleuze's collaborative work with Guattari developed an ever-shifting accumulation of notions like rhizome, becoming, assemblage and deterritorialization, all of which have seen effective appropriation by geographers and critical theorists alike. Becoming, in particular, is one of the ways in which the Lovecraftian encounter has been interpreted (Fisher, 1999; MacCormack, 2010), a line that will help us carry the infection forward into the wider context of affectual geography. If Deleuze and Guattari are the philosophers of the decentralized rhizome, Lovecraft is the fungus that arrives from without to help form a malicious mycorrhiza.

[6] These works were originally published under the less known Latinized name of Benedict de Spinoza.

For both Spinoza and Deleuze, the founding principle of metaphysics is that being is univocal – all beings are said to be in the same way. Corporeality is the modal expression of extension as an attribute of an infinite single substance, which in Spinoza is termed 'God' or 'Nature'. Curiously, it is Spinoza's pantheism that will enable us to reconcile his philosophy with the atheistic – and atëphobic – Lovecraft by way of Deleuze and Guattari. They, in turn, render this peculiar deity as a plane of immanence or composition[7], thereby formally eliminating God. But as Hallward (2006) has emphasized before us, even if Deleuze overcomes the name of God[8], a theology of disembodiment remains a significant part of his philosophical project. For Deleuze we are all drops (1+1+1+...) united in a single ocean (Deleuze, 1994). The key problem to this end is how a finite mode can come to understand and affirm itself as an aspect of this divine power that conditions it; the general motion of Deleuze's Spinozism extending from finite, actual experience towards its potentially infinite, virtual conditions.

A body, as a finite mode of God's infinite power, can be defined as an enduring compound of moving parts. At the lowest level, all compound bodies are constituted by infinitesimal unformed elements that can only be distinguished in terms of their relations of relative speed and slowness. For Deleuze these simplest bodies are not substantial atoms but differential relations between intensities. An extensive body is thus tantamount to the endurance of the very complex 'ensemble of relations which compose it' (1978), and what amounts to the same thing, a continuous variation of a degree of power to interact with other bodies; a 'capacity to affect and be affected' (Stewart, 2007).

It would not be far from the truth to say that interactions, meetings and encounters are everything in Spinoza. Whenever two bodies interact it is always a matter of a mixture

[7] The identification of the plane of immanence with Spinozist substance is a hot topic, recently argued against by Elizabeth Grosz (2017). But whether or not an exact equivalence exists matters little as both the inspiration for and function of Deleuze and Guattari's plane of immanence is clearly related to the Spinozist conception of God. We do, however, simplify the matter to some extent by glossing over the influence of Bergson on Deleuze.

[8] When Deleuze and Guattari (e.g. 1984; 1987) discuss God, it is typically in relation to Antonin Artaud's radio-play *To Be Done with the Judgment of God*, or otherwise as an enemy to be overcome akin to the institutionalized form of psychoanalysis. The meaning and significance we attach to the divine is, however, exclusively Spinozist.

that cannot be said to properly belong to either nor to both. To take a macabre example from Lovecraft's *The Whisperer in Darkness*, one might imagine that an American folklorist by the name of Henry Akeley has his brain removed by fungoid invertebrates from the planet Yuggoth. The interaction takes place between the two and depends on the bodies' respective capacities – the implements' capacity to remove a human brain and Akeley's capacity to have his brain removed – for it to take place.

The mixture of bodies resulting from an interaction is either joyful or sad, depending on whether the interaction has inspired an idea that increases or attenuates its subject's future capacity to endure as a composition. One might for instance imagine that Akeley's brain being removed would reduce his ability to partake in certain activities until such a time it is returned to his cranium, which would effectively make the event sad for the subject that is Akeley. Simple as it may seem, the practicalities are far more complicated by the fact that a lower part of a composition may be empowered at the same time as the whole is weakened or vice versa.

For Deleuze, the most fundamental question of Spinoza's philosophy is thus: '*What can a body do?*' (1990: 218). As the former elucidated during a lecture course at the Université Paris VIII Vincennes, Spinoza's notion of *affectio*, or affection, can be defined as the state of a body under the influence of another body (Deleuze, 1978). At this early stage, however, we only understand effects. In a less obscure example than the previous, Spinoza sees 'the sun as a flat disk situated at a distance of three hundred feet' (Deleuze, 1978). Although the sun acts on Spinoza's body, he knows only its effect without understanding the cause behind it. Ideas such as these are inadequate because they are derived from the effects of an interaction absent sufficient understanding of its cause.

The notion of affection is doubled by *affectus*, or affect. This is the pre-subjective variation of a body's power to act and interact in exchanges with other bodies according to the vectors of joy and sadness. The modulation of body's power to affect and be affected, 'insofar as this variation is determined by the ideas one has' (Deleuze, 1978). But while an affect presupposes an affection, it is never reducible to it (Deleuze, 1998: 140). It is also important to understand that although a subject's body and mind are not

causally linked (thought and extension are different attributes), any impact on the one will always reverberate upon the other. As Deleuze puts it, an 'action in the mind is necessarily an action in the body as well, and what is a passion in the body is necessarily a passion in the mind. There is no primacy of one series over the other' (Deleuze, 1988b: 18). But while an affection of the body necessarily reverberates in thought, it does not follow that either belongs to the subject's awareness or can be easily represented in language – one may recall that affect allegedly works across an autonomous or pre-personal register (Massumi, 1995).

Affect is the continuous variation of a body's duration that corresponds to adequate ideas, its degree of power to act and interact. For instance, in Rosi Braidotti's nomadic philosophy – which largely follows from Deleuze's reading of Spinoza – it is the continuation and sustenance of such biophysical power to act that grounds the ethical behaviour of a subject-in-becoming (Braidotti, 2009). Contrarily, an unethical action is one that hinders a subject's desire to sustain itself by attenuating its power to action, and thereby separating it from what it can do, the sensation of fear being a paradigmatic case of immense relevance. The fundamental basis for ethical praxis is to seek 'whatever gets you through the day', the main concern of which is the exasperated cry at the limit of one's ability to endure; the desperate '*Too much!'* (Braidotti, 2006).

Furthermore, an affect implies an adequate understanding of both the affected and the affecting body in their mutual interaction as common notions, culminating with an understanding of natural laws as a part God's, the single substance's, infinite essence. For example, Akeley may undergo an encounter during which his brain is removed, and understand the nature of its source as being of a visitor from Yuggoth intent on removing his brain, and comprehend the transformation of power the interaction will impart on his body. For Akeley, what matters is this knowledge of what the relevant bodies can do and undergo in interaction; what is common to them. The appropriate way to gain such knowledge is to subject it to carefully experiment to determine their limits, their poisons and their joys (Protevi, 2011). It is only by putting a body to the test that one may form adequate ideas of its affects as laws of nature. No doubt it is a dangerous, but necessary path.

But we have yet to reach a third knowledge of all that exists as particular essences of the Spinozist God. So far we are confined to the second knowledge where one might have an adequate idea of an affect, although that is only a trace of a pre-personal degree of power that extends outward beyond the self. The route to this third knowledge, that is, to adequate ideas of one's body as a finite mode of God's conception is difficult, filled with the risks of untested affections and aleatory encounters that must be affirmed. That the stakes are high in the process of experimenting to gain knowledge cannot be emphasized enough, lest we risk inadvertently going too far and end up destroying ourselves. In Deleuze and Guattari's words:

> We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 257)

It is thus not by mere happenstance that Spinoza's most famous work is known as the *Ethics* (de Spinoza, 1970). The degree of power associated with an embodied subject can be conceived as its productive 'desire to become' (Braidotti, 2006: 134) and act for self-preservation in the search for the supreme blessedness that is to be found in the understanding of oneself as a part of God, the single substance. The affirmation of chance encounters, daring to encounter the world and to learn from it, forms the basis for ethical behavior. There is no morality in Spinoza; there are only good and bad encounters.

In geography, Derek McCormack has followed Massumi (1995) and Deleuze and Guattari to distinguish between the 'categories of affect, as a field of pre-personal intensity; feeling as that intensity registered in sensing bodies; and emotion as the sociocultural expression of that felt intensity' (2008: 414). There is, however, little consensus regarding the exact boundaries of this distinction, which has been criticized for reifying what is otherwise perceived as a relative fluidity between these terms and for simultaneously construing an illusory internal homogeneity (Bondi & Davidson, 2011). In other words, a tidy separation between affect, feeling and emotion risks

glossing over the intricate ways in which the associated terms move and leap between and across different subjective and pre-subjective registers (e.g. B. Anderson, 2009; Edensor, 2012; Wetherell, 2012). Despite these problems, McCormack's distinction provides a useful analytical toolkit to understand how bodies – and the subjects that inhabit them – act and are acted upon by their environments, and we will use it without modification while admitting that not every geographer of affect agrees.

But as a consequence of distinguishing between affect, feeling and emotion it becomes clear that whenever one purports to speak of singular, impersonal affects, one only ever speaks of the feelings they have conditioned. Because the infinity of God, the single substance, exceeds the finite modes it expresses itself within, adequate knowledge requires that the subject reaches towards Him; towards another plane of existence that bears no resemblance the actuality of subjects and forms. At this point that the subject enters into the third form of knowledge, of which the second is the moving cause (Deleuze, 1990: 301). This is the knowledge of God's eternal essence and of the subject as part of a univocal plane where she is but a singular essence of His infinite power; a degree of power and a set of relations of movement and rest. Within the third knowledge there is no joy without an understanding of God as its matter; oneself as its form. Within the third knowledge we go from the finitude to the infinite, from passivity to activity to blessedness, from the human to the inhuman within us. Our position is that geographers have rarely, if ever, reached this knowledge and the blessedness it entails, and has therefore constrained itself to articulate mere traces of the correlated modulations of extension and thought on the plane of already formed subjectivity.

What is necessary to reach this other, divine, plane, whereupon one is no longer a subject but a degree of power and a set of relations of movement and rest? If we expand our scope from those of Deleuze's books that have Spinoza as their direct subject matter, we find an intriguing case throughout *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), namely, becoming. Becoming is presented as the direct means of the subject's struggle to rid her body of subjective and organic stratifications (Ansell-Pearson, 2012: 187), after which she can understand the impersonal life that resides within herself as the condition of her existence. The almost Gnostic quality of the movement is evident. It reveals a structural resemblance between the event of becoming and the Spinozist

search for beatitude *qua* theophany, although we must remember that the notions remain irreducible. Unfortunately, the method proper to becoming is one of the most arcane aspects of Deleuze and Guattari's work. Their examples include becoming-animal of the human, -child of the adult, -molecular of the molar, and ultimately –imperceptible at which point one reaches a plane of pure difference and affect. This plane, we may read as partially realized in Klee's artistic vision of world's continuous genesis, or in terms of Bergsonian duration (e.g. 1911a). Different takes on becoming surfaces again and again in Deleuze and Guattari's work, and has become important to affectual geography. Over following pages we will focus on becomings-animal and -imperceptible, which is where Deleuze and Guattari draw most heavily on Lovecraft's work (see MacCormack, 2010). It is interesting to note that their treatment of Lovecraft has an almost joyful tone and seems to draw exclusively on his fantastical Lord Dunsany-inspired work, such as *Through the Gates of the Silver Key*, than any of the true horror stories. This is undoubtedly an oversight that we must now seek to ameliorate.

As Deleuze and Guattari explain, becoming-animal enacts a liaison with animality that is neither given in advance, nor based on resemblance or familiarity; one never imitates a dog to become one. On the contrary, it is a form of unnatural participation between genetically and categorically unrelated terms in non-dialectical conjunction; an escape towards a zone of indiscernibility, where the human can no longer be distinguished from the animal. Here, Deleuze and Guattari refer to Lovecraft alongside more well-known modernist writers, such as Franz Kafka, Herman Melville, Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence – all of whom were literary masters of their own becoming and bringers of the strange into view. But in a crude manner Lovecraft goes further than any of the canonical modernists, his 'powerful oeuvre' is credited with opening the 'doorways, thresholds, and zones that make up the entire universe' (Deleuze, 1998: 1). For Deleuze and Guattari, Lovecraft's unnatural participations reach out towards a pack or liminality; that intensive multiplicity that already constitutes us as a degree of power. A pack animal is not a beloved pet; an animal integrated into the family, specifically the Freudian or Oedipal conception of the family, and neither is it a mythological or symbolic state animal. It is one that passes along a border; a werewolf, a vampire, a rat. In Lovecraft it is the unspeakable entities that lurk just beyond the formed subject's

perception that play this role; encounters with Shoggoths, Deep Ones and the abominable Mi-Go all function like gateways to a becoming-inhuman of the human.

It is apparent that becomings occur between independent terms, via more or less affectionate alliances that launch the participants into movements of escape or uncontrollable transformation. This is the case in the coevolution of wasp and orchid; between Akeley and the instruments removing his brain. To become-animal is to enter in the pack assemblage, a relationship of contagious symbiosis:

> [An assemblage] is a multiplicity which is made up of heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures. Thus the assemblage's only unity is that of a co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a 'sympathy'. It is never filiations which are important, but alliances, alloys; these are not successions, lines of descent, but contagions, epidemics, the wind. (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007: 69)

This entering into viroid indiscernibility with another is at the heart of Deleuze and Guattari's Spinozism and grounds an affirmative ethics of impersonal life. Accordingly, Braidotti has argued that:

> The ethical relation is essentially a matter of affinity: being able to have positive encounters with another entity. They express one's [power to action] and increase one's capacity to enter into further relations and to grow. This expansion is ecologically grounded and time-bound: by expressing and increasing its positive passions, the subject-in-becoming empowers itself to endure, to continue through and in time. By entering into affirmative ethical relations, becoming animal... engenders possible futures. They construct possible worlds through a web of sustainable interconnections. This is the point of becoming: an assemblage of forces that coalesce around shared elements and empower them to grow and to last. (Braidotti, 2009: 531)

In this manner, a becoming-animal constitutes a process of combat or escape from transcendent laws, rigid forms or oppressive hierarchies, most famously those of the repressive Oedipus complex (Deleuze & Guattari, 1984). Kafka's '*head over heels and*

away' (1993: 178) is one possibility; an escape from the family via animality, although a flight of the kind always risks being brought back into other relationships of repressive power, as when Gregor Samsa in *The Metamorphosis* (Kafka, 2015), in the last instance, is unable to let go and grabs onto the sole remaining picture in his room, which effects his return to the family and prefigures his eventual death (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986).

At this point we need to recall that Deleuze and Guattari (1987) emphasize the risks of becoming repeatedly. Suicide or return to the black hole of too rigid subjectivity. We wonder if any becoming can avoid these risks, and if so, would the process itself not be too painful to undergo from the viewpoint of the subject? The apparent lack of becomings among affectual geographers undoubtedly seems to suggest the latter. Deleuze writes that 'the unbearable itself is inseparable from a revelation or an illumination' (1989: 18). A becoming is not necessarily a joyful event for the subject. It shows that in the end, 'I' is only a habit of speech (Deleuze, 1991b), covering a multiplicity of invisible forces on another plane. MacCormack (2016a) has argued that there is fascination waiting beyond the horror of Lovecraft's becomings; joy within the bliss of an impersonal life. But is this not only the bliss of resignation before the truth that seems to be the ultimate end of Spinozism (Howie, 2002); the truth that pertains to all that is inhuman within us? The God of Lovecraft's oneiric imagination remains eerily close to Spinoza's: Azathoth, the indifferent chaos at the center of the universe.

For past the far horizon of becoming is a clandestine, molecular state – a becoming-indiscernible of the subject and imperceptible of the body. These becomings are turns of the self to an already present plane whereupon one can no longer be distinguished from the surroundings; when the event deforming the self transcends the thin veneer of humanity and encompasses the complex variability of the world's indifference. At that point representational thought appears to dissolve into delirium. It is little wonder that mad dreams haunt those who handle the abominable idol of great Cthulhu himself:

> The figure... [that] was between seven and eight inches in height, and of exquisitely artistic workmanship. It represented a monster of vaguely anthropoid outline, but with an octopus-like head whose face was a mass of

> feelers, a scaly, rubbery-looking body, prodigious claws on hind and fore feet, and long, narrow wings behind. (*The Call of Cthulhu*: 362)

Grasping this nightmarish half-madness is what the ethical imperative of willing the event tends towards the final instance (Reynolds, 2007): That which is too much to bear for the subject. It is a revelation of an inhuman, even nonorganic life itself that must be faced with new paradigms of collective responsibility and accountability to render visible the autonomous expressivity of the Earth in hitherto unseen ways. Upon this virtual plane of 'pure immanence' thus opened (Deleuze, 1997), subjective and substantial forms and formations are replaced by impersonal degrees of power, relations of movement and rest. The affirmation of the infinite and inhuman is the death of the finite subject.

II.II.

Uexküll and the plane of immanence

On Deleuze and Guattari's plane of immanence processes of individuation proceed as nothing but intensive multiplicities. Borrowing from the medieval philosopher Duns Scotus, Deleuze and Guattari termed this mode of individuation, which is 'very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance' (1987: 261), referring to the particular 'thisness' of any given being or composition. A degree of heat or a color wants for nothing in its individual particularity. Individuations of this kind must be understood as uncompromisingly transecting and distorting the division of subject and object proper to phenomenology. Our previous example which used Akeley's brain that is removed by a finely crafted instrument operated by a visitor from Yuggoth can now be conceived as the advent of a brain-instrument-Yuggothian assemblage that emerges in the particular encounter and endures for a certain time: A 'thisness' with a certain duration and intensity of pain. However, note that we must avoid a simple distinction between these events and subjects or things, because as Deleuze and Guattari write, you 'will yield nothing to haecceities ['thisnesses'] unless you realize that that is what you are, and that you are nothing but that' (1987: 262); we are nothing but arrangements at 'five o'clock in the evening' (1987: 263). Our existence lasts as long as the bundle of

forces that is our bodies holds together. But what does it mean to reach this plane that one is already scuttling upon like a half-blind lobster?

In the concluding essay of *Spinoza: Practical philosophy,* Deleuze cites the Estonian-German ethologist Jakob von Uexküll, whom he credits with a Spinozist exploration of the peculiar worlds of animal semiotics. Uexküll returns in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and we will make a digression to explore his thought, since the ethologist's insights serves to elucidate Deleuze's reading of Spinoza with the notion of becoming, on the one hand, and links backwards to Kant and Heidegger, whose ideas we will explore in Chapter III, on the other (Chien, 2006). Uexküll's thought will also serve to situate an ensuing discussion of the geographies of atmosphere.

The most well-known of Uexküll's (1934) ideas concerns the myriad relationships that obtain between animals and their specific *Umwelten*, or perceptual and significant worlds. *Umwelt* refers to the integration of an animal in its environmental context as a system of signs and feedback loops between the coupling that are brought together via the animal's receptor and effector-organs. In one sense, Uexküll's (1926) position is basically Kantian, as it suggests that the world 'in-itself' is restricted from the domain of knowledge but not from thought itself. This inaccessibility holds, for Uexküll, equally for reaching out to the perceptual worlds of non-human animals; while Uexküll cannot know these, he goes to great lengths to imagine them. Uexküll's most famous example is that of the common tick, an animal that Deleuze (1988) will later take to possess three affects. According to Uexküll the blind animal

> is directed to [her] watchtower by a general photo-sensitivity of her skin. The approaching prey is revealed to the blind and deaf highway woman by her sense of smell. The odor of butyric acid, that emanates from the skin glands of all mammals, acts on the tick as a signal to leave her watchtower and hurl herself downwards. If, in so doing, she lands on something warm – a fine sense of temperature betrays this to her – she has reached her prey, the warm-blooded creature. It only remains for her to find a hairless spot. There she burrows deep into the skin of her prey, and slowly pumps herself full of warm blood. (Von Uexküll, 1932: 7)

This tick's world lacks or wants for nothing. It is fully complete in the same way as the world of a human being or other mammal is. It is merely a matter of embodied dispositions. The consequence is a veritable infinity of discrete animal worlds that are founded on semiotic relations between animals and the specific signs they are capable of reading and acting upon. The case of the tick is paradigmatic. For her, only three affections matter: the light of the sun, the smell of sweat, and the guiding warmth of her prey. She knows nothing else of the forest around her. This is how Deleuze can read Uexküll as a Spinozist. For Deleuze it is a matter of charting the affections of each species, and as for humans (and possibly other lives), there are additional socio-culturally specific capacities to affect and be affected (Deleuze, 1978), some of which we will explore in the following chapter.

At any rate, our concern is the interplay of modern systems of subjectification as the constitution of a subject-significant world coupling and the event of what Deleuze terms a 'fundamental *encounter*' (1994: 139) – an encounter with that which can be sensed but not recognized – with apparent configurations that differ from known extensive forms that 'may be grasped in range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering' (p. 139), insofar as it threatens to destabilize or crack open said coupling onto an already present plane. For the Lovecraftian Deleuze, the primary concern is the shock of the unexpected that engenders the cry: *"Too much!"*

In his conceptualization of *Umwelten*, Uexküll utilizes two recurrent metaphors. One is by reference to a soap bubble that surrounds each individual animal. No being can reach outside of its bubble, and everything that is given is so only within this perceptual sphere. The blade of grass which the deer or dog brushes against cannot be said to be same as that which the tick perches upon as she patiently awaits her desired host. Each affective sign exists exclusively within its own bubble. In a human cultural context, there is an added complexity – similar to what Guattari will refer to as 'universes of reference' (Guattari, 1995), as the field of actual conceptual entities posited as existing for a given group of people – according to which the world can be ordered *for* the human. For instance, the tick may be drawn to the functional warmth of the mammal's body, but she lacks a concept of the animal, whereas the cultured human perceives the

multiplicity that is represented to her as objects for potential interaction; hammers, houses, dogs and so on (Ingold, 2000).

Uexküll's other metaphor for animal *Umwelten* is musical. The specificity of an *Umwelt* emerges according to a symphonic composition where the animal and her surroundings are tied together in an intricate relationship of motifs and counterpoints, each of which works on the other. According to Brett Buchanan, 'the soap bubble emphasizes how Uexküll sees the *Umwelt* as finite and spherical by encircling the organism within certain limits,... precluding us from ever penetrating into another organism's soap bubble to fully understand the significance of its *Umwelt*' (2008: 26). In addition to this, Buchanan continues, 'Uexküll characterizes nature as a harmony... such that the emphasis in this analogy is placed not on the limitations that capture the organism within a confined sphere, but with how organisms express themselves outwardly in the form of interlacing and contrapuntal relationships' (Buchanan, 2008: 26). It is the double understanding of animal *Umwelten* as both self-contained affectual refractions and components in a complex harmony, however unavailable to any given organism in its apparent totality, that makes Uexküll's work so attractive to Deleuze, for whom 'Uexküll... is a Spinozist when first he defines the melodic lines or contrapuntal relations that correspond to each thing, and then describes a symphony as an immanent higher unity that takes on a breadth and fullness' (1988b: 126).

Indeed, the interplay of the musical and the spherical conception of *Umwelten* suggests an interlinkage of essentially finite perceptual worlds. A flower or blade of grass signifies one thing for the tick and another for the deer – each animal is, according to Uexküll, capable of interpreting only those signals that are of relevance to it. For the tick, the flower is of little consequence, except as a function by means of which she can remove herself from darkness; for the deer the flower might signify food; whereas for the human child it might be a potential ornament or gift. Neither can easily step outside of their *Umwelten* to see the flower as it really is (in Uexküll and Kant this would even be formally impossible). The result is a conception of nature as an almost infinitely complex orchestration of signs and finite worlds that form a larger symphony, a plane of immanence, by interlocking with one another.

This plane of immanence is attained in becoming; in the event of encountering the radically other. It is precisely the demise of a significant and homely world that Lovecraft explores in his strange tales of cosmic horror. In his mature works, like *The Call of Cthulhu*, *The Shadow over Innsmouth* and *The Shadow out of Time*, the minds and bodies of his characters become passive before a greater force. They are induced to enter dreamlike states or are altogether ripped from their bodies by inhuman entities like the vaguely crablike fungi from Yuggoth in *The Whisperer in Darkness*. Lovecraft collapses the ground of the finite world of the cultured human subject by positing to her a fundamental encounter. Eugene Thacker (2011) has argued that encounters akin to those we find in Lovecraft can be thought of as an opening towards the 'thing-in-itself', or, the conditions of experience. It is only via the transformation of perspective that the fundamental encounter may lead up to a deformation of subjectivity. A pre-subjective view of the ongoing generation and dissolution of form through incessantly shifting matter (see Ingold, 2009) is attained in the shock of the encounter, though this is hardly a joyful event in Lovecraft. If for Uexküll, the totality of *Umwelten* was harmonic, Lovecraft introduces discord by forcefully pushing his characters onto the clamorous plane of immanence, dissolving their representations and pushing them beyond the majoritarian forms of subjectivity they would rather remain within (MacCormack, 2016).

It is when the extensive world is understood as the actualization of an infinitely complex and immanent bricolage of interlocking speeds and affects that we can understand how dynamic and kinetic relations may take on consistency with other multiplicities. This is where we get to the heart of the importance of Uexküll for Deleuze's Spinozism. If Uexküll lays out a divine '*plane of immanence* on which all bodies, all minds, and all individuals are situated' (Deleuze, 1988b: 122 emphasis in the original), Lovecraft provides the model for reaching towards it. It is on this plane that individuations proceed impersonally, that terrible realization of which the so-called ethical behaviour of subjects-in-becoming strive towards in the final instance. This raises the practical question of how non-representational geographers have sought to reach behind the veil of actual experience to explore this strange, yet ever present, plane

of multiplicities and impersonal affects. We are now prepared to ask: What has become of becoming in affectual geography?

II.III.
Affective atmospheres and cosmic horror

Although Uexküll's name has been surprisingly absent from recent cultural geography, Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of affect has been an important influence on those non-representational geographers who have been interested in processes of subjectification. As we have seen, Deleuze and Guattari provide the tools to theorize pre-subjective relationships that are irreducible to emotions or feelings. This aspect of their work is consistent with, and a partial reason behind, a wider shift from phenomenology to something that might be properly termed post-phenomenology, which arguably falls within the wider scope of non-representational theory. Post-phenomenology can be thought to constitute an attempt to re-read the canonical authors of phenomenology, such as Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, through the works of purportedly poststructuralist thinkers including, in addition to Deleuze and Guattari, Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida (Lea, 2009). According to Ash and Simpson (2016), this renegotiation of phenomenology has been characterized by an orientation towards relational and emergent notions of intentionality and subjectivity; the realization that matter might be said to possess an autonomous and potentially agential existence in itself; and new ways to conceptualize otherness and difference.

Following from the emphasis on the conditions of actual experience it has become increasingly important to understand how the world is affectively mediated between and informative of subjectivity and objectivity as such. In light of this, one the of central post-phenomenological objects of study has been a rather vernacular concept that was once considered too vague for social science (McCormack, 2013), namely affective atmospheres and their role in practices of attuning to the everyday. Lovecraft's work may be of interest in this context because his stories attack the habituated everyday lives of his characters by disrupting and transfiguring their significant worlds on a pre-subjective plane. Transformations of the kind is an issue of which the intrinsic horror has been largely overlooked in most geographical conceptualizations of affect, and

Lovecraft may provide us with a way to ameliorate this neglect. But before we can evaluate the potential importance of Lovecraft in this context we will need to recapitulate some of the primary concerns surrounding the atmospheric.

What, then, are affective atmospheres and why do they matter? According to the German philosopher Gernot Böhme (e.g. 2013; 2016), whose work has revealed how the intermediate and relational characteristics of atmospheres are situated in the interstices between subjects and objects, implicating and enveloping both to bridge the traditional dichotomy. For Böhme, affective atmospheres possess a reality irreducible to their capabilities as media of visual and audible representation, and are essentially that through which the world envelops as a *'sphere of felt bodily presence'* (Böhme, 2016: 69, emphasis in the original) in all its multisensory complexity, highlighting the physicality of affective-semiotic worlds. The important and oft overlooked senses of smell, hearing and touch are thus activated, thereby necessitating a break with exclusively visual relations with objects and landscapes and exploding the field of what must be accounted for in aesthesis.

Ben Anderson has similarly proposed that the 'atmosphere of an aesthetic object discloses the space–time of an "expressed world" – it does not re-present objective space–time or lived space–time' (B. Anderson, 2009: 79). His point being that atmosphere of an object or collection of objects can be understood as an affectual mediation in excess of its capacity to be represented, whereby and through which subjects can apprehend objects instead of a object that is only derived from and existing for the experiencing subject.

Aesthetics is thus conceived as a science above all 'concerned with the relationship between environmental qualities and human states' (Böhme, 2016: 14). Böhme proceeds to emphasize the relational and perceptual nature of atmosphere as the '*And*, this in-between, through which environmental qualities and human states are related' (2016: 14, emphasis in the original). The importance of the '*And*' is suggestive and may enable us to forcibly connect Böhme's atmospheres to the affective relations that enable becomings that Deleuze and Guattari gather from reading Spinoza and Uexküll. As does Böhme, Guattari in particular, refuses to limit aesthetics to the study of beauty, and

expands his view of the field to encompass perception in its multi-sensory entirety and the contact zones between subjects and their sensible worlds (Berardi, 2008).

But perhaps it is possible to go further yet. Following Deleuze and Guattari, McCormack (2008) has defined atmospheres as aerial, yet substantial bodies constituted by internal relations of speed and affect that envelops the physicality of subjects and objects both, essentially 'situating' atmospheres on the plane of consistency. Upon this plane, we may recall, it 'is the entire assemblage in its individuated aggregate that is a haecceity ['thisness']; it is this assemblage that is defined by a longitude and a latitude, by speeds and affects, independently of forms and subjects, which belong to another plane' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 262). Such an undercutting of the quotidian experience of our surroundings as discrete objects achieves the dissolution of the traditional boundaries between a seeing subject and a seen object by emphasizing the physicality of any mediation between the two.

To see what this understanding of atmosphere does to the subject/object distinction, it is perhaps useful to follow Uexküll to think in terms of bubbles and rhythms of interaction, and interpreting affectual geography as an attempt to explain the genesis of the creature/*Umwelt*-correlate. Deleuze and Guattari derived from Uexküll's almost cybernetic understanding of the organism the notion of milieu – referring at once to middle, surroundings and medium (Massumi, 1987) – portraying it as a sliding space-time condensate, born from the chaos of the Earth. Organisms emerge in the relations between interior drives and impulses, limits or membranes, exterior and circumstantial milieus, and annexed sources of power all of which are defined functionally as codes in periodic repetition. Let us use the tick as an example once more: Two of its counterpoints are found in the light that touches it and the animal that passes by. The passage of affect-signs in the action-perception loop is a rhythmic flow of code between the tick and its motif, or else an implication of both in a single compound (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 313; 1994: 185). Just like an atmosphere – understood as a directly physical medium for the conveyance of affections – is primary to the subject/object distinction but nevertheless is thought to hinge on the emergent organization of both the gazing subject and the things and surfaces she perceives for its specificity (B. Anderson & Ash, 2015).

It is precisely towards the intersection of atmospheres, milieus and rhythms that some affectual geographers have turned with their interest in the encounters between the affective modulation of sensing bodies and the animated spaces they move through (McCormack, 2013). In Bissell's (2010) work on the occasionally misanthropic atmospheres of collective travel, the formation of such affective timespaces can be inferred from the complex interactions between the various objects, unforeseen events and collective dispositions that work to propagate (negative) feelings and (sad) passions among passengers. The affections conveyed by these emanated media are capable of inducing feedback loops that strengthen emotional expressions of limitation, frustration and occasional anger, which can further enhance the circulation and proliferation of negativity. But again, it is the self-sufficient horror of reaching the third form of knowledge, of grasping any affect whatsoever, that is our primary concern and not manifestations of sad or disempowering affects.

At this point it must be remarked that far from all geographers concerned with the atmospheric have situated themselves within the context of a Deleuze-Guattarian ontology, but regardless of this, there has been some consensus around what is important about the atmospheric: First, encounters within affective atmospheres are viewed as dictated both by a subject's embodied capacities to affect and be affected, including socio-culturally conditioned dispositions for attunement in addition to the atmosphere's own capabilities of mediation, that are in turn derived from an underlying composition of geometrical features, light, reflective surfaces, various weather phenomena and the chemical composition of the air itself. In other words, the notion of affective atmosphere envelops two vernacular meanings of the word atmosphere; the physical layer of gases that envelops the lithosphere, and the medium through which affects travel before they can register as feelings in human bodies. Secondly, the construction or staging of atmospheres and affects has become seen an intrinsically aesthetico-political question for architecture and geography alike, since it works on the formative level of subjectivity.

Despite these insights it is only during the last decade that the negotiated aspects of affective and felt spaces have begun to receive sufficient theoretical attention by geographers (Adey, 2008; Bille et al., 2015; Edensor & Sumartojo, 2015), and many

questions remain regarding the role of atmosphere and affect in the fashioning of subjectivity, the conditioning of which has been opened up as an important object of inquiry in part due to the influence of Deleuze and Guattari's work. With this we have tried to show that the study of atmospheres both depends on and inform the non-representational paradigm insofar as it seeks to discuss bodily presences in ways that extend beyond phenomenology by inquiring into the affectual. Since atmospheres are subject to manipulation that may occlude or render visible certain aspects of the world by means of control over underlying forms or by deployment of various discursive apparatuses and techniques, what is at stake in the concept is the very manner in which the world is given to us as human beings.

Although many questions remain to be answered, there is already a fundamental problem present in much affectual geography. We have termed this problem the *representational bind*. The study of atmospheres and affects toys with the possibility of approaching human experience from an inhuman perspective, of shattering the *Umwelt* for the plane, while in fact it achieves the complete opposite in practice. In Bergsonian terms it conflates a difference in kind with one of degree. That is, it never goes beyond approaching the inhuman from the point of view of the human. The paradox has nothing to do with the general fallibility of linguistic representation and is not strictly particular to Spinozism, as it resides in assuming that the conditions of an experience resemble the conditioned experience enough to be intelligible and linguistically conveyable. If they are neither, affectual geography seems to end up examining the inhuman from a human perspective in lieu of reaching the inhuman itself whenever it resorts to symbolic language. Before we expand the scope of this problem in the next chapter we will briefly return to how Lovecraft's weird tales may pose a solution to this pretension of affectual geography and perhaps even open a portal to the inhuman itself.

Throughout Lovecraft's work encounters with strange and often nefarious atmospheres that assault the human psyche or understanding of the world is a recurrent theme, the entire rationale behind his stories having been 'some violation or transcending of fixed cosmic law' (Lovecraft, 2006: 211). Indeed, as Lovecraft wrote in an early letter to the publisher of *Weird Tales* – the magazine in which many of his stories were first published – the purpose of his writing was in the joy of creating 'strange situations' and

'atmospheric effects' (Lovecraft, 1923, cited in Houellebecq, 2005: 27). Böhme has argued that an atmosphere 'can come over us' as something 'into which we are drawn, which takes possession of us like an alien power' (2008: 3). Lovecraft, the committed materialist, shows this by juxtaposing the ancient, faraway and unknown with the realistic, present and close at hand. The consequent lacunae in his descriptions' precision create vertiginous gaps, endeavoring to provide his readers with a map of becoming; to affect them as his characters are affected by their own horrors (Houellebecq, 2005; see also Todorov & Genette, 1975). These are horrors that directly affect the flesh without ever touching it.

Mediated by the echoed whispers of remote and inhuman architectural environments, Lovecraft projects altogether weird atmospheres and geometries upon his unfortunate characters. In so doing, he manages to distort their experiences of spatiotemporal continuity and coherence. In *The Call of Cthulhu*, there are whispered mentions of the sunken city of R'lyeh, where one man 'talked of his dreams in a strangely poetic fashion; making me see with terrible vividness the damp Cyclopean city of slimy green stone – whose *geometry,* he oddly said, was *all wrong* – and hear with frightened expectancy the ceaseless, half-mental calling from underground: "*Cthulhu fhtagn*", "*Cthulhu fhtagn*"' (*The Call of Cthulhu*: 369-70). And in *At the Mountains of Madness*, there is that Antarctic city, so similar to certain scenes painted by Nicholas Roerich that first appears through an atmospheric effect, a bizarre mirage, just as the scientific exploration from Miskatonic University reaches the ominous mountain range:

> The effect was that of a Cyclopean city of no architecture known to man or to human imagination, with vast aggregations of night-black masonry embodying monstrous perversions of geometrical laws and attaining the most grotesque extremes of sinister bizarrerie. There were truncated cones, sometimes terraced or fluted, surmounted by tall cylindrical shafts here and there bulbously enlarged and often capped with tiers of thinnish scalloped discs; and strange, beetling, table-like constructions suggesting piles of multitudinous rectangular slabs or circular plates or five-pointed stars with each one overlapping the one beneath. There were composite cones and pyramids either alone or surmounting cylinders or cubes or flatter truncated cones and pyramids, and

> occasional needle-like spires in curious clusters of five. (*At the Mountains of Madness*: 746)

The fundamental encounters that these excerpts describe are not only examples of Lovecraft's exuberant style and trance-like descriptions of architectural environments that are difficult to even begin to imagine, but also of his ability to stage nebulous atmospheres that are characterized by such uncanny or abject forms that can only ever be insufficiently described by a confused spurt of adjectives and appeals to a sensation of wrongness. According to Harman (2010), the point of such passages is to evoke the insufficiency of description. It is simply not possible to represent the unspeakable sensations on the level of the flesh in a satisfying manner.

The affect rather leaves behind mere reverberations within representation, like a 'wound is incarnated or actualized in a state of things or of life; but it is itself a pure virtuality on the plane of immanence that leads us into a life' (Deleuze, 1997: 31). The impersonal or inhuman life that Deleuze refers to is already present within us, yet it is only in becoming through the sensory intensity of an encounter with that which is of another nature that we reach it. Unnatural participation. The pretension of non-representational and affectual geography lies in its attempts to present this life while refusing to pay the price of leaping through the gates to the indiscernible or atmospheric itself, thereby always remaining within a world that appears for the human gaze. This price not paid is the simultaneous death of the one's self via the dissolution of one's perceptual world as the process whereby one may approach the horror proper to viewing the human with inhuman eyes (Brassier, 2007: 185; Deleuze, 1994: 112-3): Atëphobia, the fear of becoming as the ruination of representational thought.

III.
The horror of becoming

III.I.
Atëphobia and the Anthroposcene

When James Duncan (1990) suggested that landscapes are texts to be read, or when Denis Cosgrove stated that landscape is a 'way of seeing' (1984), and for whom with Stephen Daniels, landscape became 'a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing or symbolising surroundings' (Cosgrove & Daniels, 1988: 1), a scopocentric tendency within new cultural geography reached its peak. As in the wider discipline, the ensuing turn has been characterized by a focus on embodied performativity (Macpherson, 2010; Thrift & Dewsbury, 2000), affect and emergent subjectivity, which constitutes a hesitant break with the antecedent the iconographic and textual approaches to landscape and architecture in cultural geography. In other words, affectual geography has sought to go beyond the visual and interpretive, towards bodies and their constituting forces in all of their haphazard thrownness, and has functioned as a response to a slightly too cultured cultural geography (B. Anderson & Harrison, 2010). We have suggested that the collaborative work of Deleuze and Guattari have been an essential part of this shift that has hamstrung itself by refusing to embrace inhuman becomings. But what is at stake in atëphobia goes far beyond a micro niche of geographical thought. In other words, the study of affect could become far more consequential if it was ever taken to its limits as a lived critique of a particular form of subjectivity in the realization of a superior empiricism on the plane of the inhuman. In this section and the next we will examine the political extent of the problem by discussing the shifting relations between time, form and matter after the onset of an industrial modernity characterized by its unprecedented dispersal of new technologies and apparatuses of subjectification.

As we saw in the previous section, sensible attunements to the quotidian have been increasingly described as embodied, auratic and relational and have been argued to not

merely depend on an abstract image imposed by a subjective gaze (Harrison, 2000; Rose & Wylie, 2006). Of course, sight remains a key component of the manifold ties between human subjects and their surroundings, but it is now increasingly understood as one part of how subjects orient themselves towards the world. Even the most ordinary activities, such as walking, can be an active experimentation that may lead to unpredictable meetings and chance encounters, involving the entire range of sensory registers. Such encounters have been explored in, for example, autoethnographical accounts of walking in different landscapes (Wylie, 2002, 2005) and in discussions surrounding the rhythms of everyday life (Edensor, 2010; see also Edensor et al., 2017). But whether the point of interest is the multitude of rhythms that surround us, or the reflexive attunements to the landscapes we traverse, the focus of inquiry has turned to embedded, and emergent subjective and embodied dispositions to physical environments and things that are themselves active in some sense of the word (Bennett, 2009). As Böhme has put it, the subject's perception of nature 'is much more like a co-design, a co-operation, or an interplay (of the subject's intention) with the object's emanations' (2017: 38).

To be sure, reducing our reliance on interpretation and textuality has been a crucial part in the effort to explore the modern experience of radical upheaval and change. Yet this experience seems to be simultaneously grounded in an unprecedented stabilization and normalization of the relationship between subjectivity and objecthood as an assemblage that is nevertheless grounded in human consciousness. The truly inhuman has yet to be reached in practice. In what follows we will seek to develop the possibility that while atëphobia is a near universal condition, it is perhaps one of *the* conditions of industrial modernity. The risks of going beyond subjectivity into a transcendental field of pure immanence have already been laid out, namely, the horror of inhumanity and complete delirium. Now our concern is to explore this horror of becoming as a pathway to a less Anthroposcenic thought, the possibility of which has been discovered by an affectual geography that, however, has not yet reached far enough. But what do we mean by the Anthroposcene, this seemingly arcane term?

In 2000 Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer first proposed that the Earth may have already entered a new geological epoch, the Anthropo*c*ene, referring to an era

characterized by a technologically advanced humanity as one of the principal agents of global geological change (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000). To this epoch we propose a corresponding paradigm of subjectivity; a homophonic Anthroposcene that unfolds from similar or identical technoscientific causes, yet possessing its own, autonomous rationale. It is the *Umwelt* of the modern human, as it appears *for* the human. This is by no means a new discovery, but our present delineation and choice of terminology will help us situate it in the context of atëphobia and reveal the potential efficacy of an affectual geography to come.

For the Anthroposcenic subject, the Earth has not only become a stage upon which the humans act, but its (multisensory) appearance has also become an arrangement explicitly under her power of action and for her pleasure. Accordingly, we may formulate an *Anthroposcenic principle* as follows: *All appearances must be – or be capable of becoming – intelligible to a human subject in a way that both guarantees and is guaranteed by the structure of her world*. The principle is a form of the *representational bind*, ensuring that whenever a world appears for a subject, it follows that it must function *for* that subject. Becoming is its overcoming. For the Anthroposcenic subject, matter can always be given an intelligible form that serves her desires and protects her *Umwelt* from instability.

As we will see, that which is Anthroposcenic is intimately related with an imbalance in the relationships between order and disorder; form and formlessness; and stability and decay as these tensions appear before the individual human subject. Moreover, the Anthroposcenic conception of the subject has a history that can be traced. We will now suggest the following hypotheses for a historical anthropology of subjectivity: During technological modernity the mobility of matter is increasingly subordinated to its representational form, as is movement to quantifiable, external time. As Heidegger – another interpreter of Uexküll's *Umwelten* – (1954) identified, an increasingly technological mode of revealing the real as ordering has eschewed our dwelling to enframe the world not in terms of true objects but as standing-reserve. The world becomes but a source of energy for human activity and matter becomes mere stuff to be formed with the mutually empowering advent of modern science and technology. Two sides of the same coin that ultimately purveys to turn the human into the orderer of

matter, purporting to give to her the role of sole source of activity in the world; to turn her into the director of the Earth as an Anthroposcene.

And we may have travelled far on the path towards this potentially self-repressive condition since the dawn of the industrial revolutions. While industrialization is unlikely to have been the sole cause of our Anthroposcenic thought, it was undoubtedly a contributing factor. At the heart of the issue is the hypostatization of matter via the imposition of form, the problematic nature of which seems ubiquitous in geography, critical theory and philosophy alike.

In a sense we might describe the principle as a subspecies of what A. N. Whitehead (2011) famously termed the 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness', wherein consciousness hypostatizes an appearance into a seemingly concrete spatiotemporal object. In other words, the conditions of an appearance is hidden by the appearance itself. Additionally, we may think of a wider epistemic scission, whereby the individuated appearance is apparently cut off from the process of its individuation which is subsequently hidden from view. What concerns us here is the unprecedented and decidedly modern instrumentalization of the world that multiplied the efficacy of the Anthroposcenic gaze. This world is revealed before and to the individual subject, but is also claimed *for* her utility. Rather than reaching back through the veils of history to the Athenian city state and beyond, we can find a direct example of the philosophical technology behind the progenesis of the *Anthroposcenic principle* in the Cartesian *cogito*. But it was with Kant's Copernican revolution that it reached its completion. We will focus on the latter.

Towards the end of his *Creative Evolution*, Henri Bergson – who alongside Spinoza and Nietzsche remained Deleuze's most important influence – wrote the following lines about the consequences of the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

> The molds of the understanding and the understanding itself had to be accepted as they are, already made. Between the matter presented to our intellect and this intellect itself there was no relationship. The agreement between the two was due to the fact that intellect imposed its form on matter. So that not only was it necessary to posit the intellectual form of knowledge as a kind of absolute and give up the quest of its genesis, but the very matter of this

> knowledge seemed too ground down by the intellect for us to be able to hope to get it back in its original purity. It was not the "thing-in-itself," it was only the refraction of it through our atmosphere (Bergson, 1911a: 304)

This highly illuminating passage reveals the core of the *Anthroposcenic principle* and explains the emergence of atëphobia. Bergson's mention of atmosphere reminds us of Böhme's conception we discussed in the previous section, but with a number of significant difficulties that highlights Uexküll's Kantian heritage. For Uexküll as for Kant, the atmosphere is anchored in the transcendental subject, space being nothing short of its form of exteriority.

What we see is the primacy of the subject before whom phenomena appear, even though an unknown something must be behind appearances. The matter of the apparitions is controlled by the intellect to the extent that knowledge of the 'thing-in-itself' becomes impossible, making the correspondence a one-way street. Kant's problem, Bergson argues, is 'that he took for granted the idea of a science that is one, capable of binding with the same force all the parts of what is given, and of coördinating them into a system presenting on all sides an equal solidity' (1911a: 304). Bergson discovers an intuition beyond the intellect, effectively leading him to postulate a duality of correspondence; perception being representational and intuition leading directly into the vital. In practice perception and intuition remain mixed in images, and it is philosophy that can integrate one into a pure intuition of matter without the needs-oriented thought of consciousness. The atmosphere of the subject is thus transformed via the intermediary of Bergsonian intuition into something akin to Böhme's interplay of subject and object, or rather turns both to aggregations of images (Bergson, 1911b), moving us from the bare minimal requirement of a thinkable exterior towards one that is no less knowable than it is thinkable. In Deleuze, the exterior-within becomes the sub-representational plane whereupon both subject and object are eliminated for impersonal multiplicities. But reaching this plane of supreme blessedness requires that one is left at the mercy of the vagaries of the materials and forces that reside (t)here.

To the extent that is has sought to affirm the bilateral movement and mutual determination of matter and intellect the post-phenomenological turn can be considered

Bergsonian (Kelly, 2010). This is an important development for affectual geography, but it is not enough. While we concede the formal possibility of reaching a pure intuition of the 'thing-in-itself', there have been two implicit assumptions. First, affectual geographers have supposed that the subject will survive such a vision intact. And secondly, given that it does, any order behind the veil of hypostatized appearances is supposed to resemble the actual enough to be in some manner articulable in symbolic language. These are the two assumptions the negations of which constitute the *representational bind*. It is by borrowing the power of the weird becoming that we are now able to question both of these assumptions.

Although Bergson may have been correct in that humans have a natural propensity towards the habit of analytical and needs-oriented thinking (Bergson, 1968) – which itself tends to reduce time to an essentially spatial dimension – we have already suggested a historical intensification of this tendency. Such an intensification may be linked to a complicity between the hypostatizing force of technological enframing, the Aristotelian (viz. *hylomorphic*; matter/form-correlate) conception of substance belonging to what Deleuze and Guattari termed 'state' philosophy and 'royal' science (1987) and its correlated consciousness of time, all of which are brought together in the individuation of the modern, Anthroposcenic understanding of subjectivity. If the spread of industrialization and clock time exacerbated the dissemination of linear temporality, its most eminent philosophical liberator was indeed Kant (1998)[9], who by transforming time into a transcendental condition of experience, effectively reversed its relationship with movement and change. Through dissociating the phenomenal flow of time from its contents, such as the movement of celestial bodies, it became not only a transcendental form but was also liberated into linearity (Deleuze & Parnet, 2011)[10].

[9] Again, we must be careful and remember that even though Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* can be interpreted as a radicalization of the First Critique (Galloway, 2014), Deleuze's main concern is not with the formal conditions of possible experience, but with the more narrow real conditions of actual experience. While this lets us distort Kant to a significant extent, the reader may want to recall that we are contextualizing a hypothesis for an understanding of subjectivity belonging to a historical subject and that we are not presently embarked on a philosophical deduction.

[10] It is worth noting that Deleuze utilizes Kant's definition of time as a pure and empty form in his articulation of the third synthesis of time (Deleuze, 1994), although the concept of the refrain as it is discussed in *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy?* seems to change this to some extent. At any

As a result of Kant's effective inversion of the relationship between time and movement the relationship between movement and the appearance of entities within spatio-temporal extension was radically transfigured. Insofar as time and space are taken as *a priori* forms of intuition (confusingly, this should *not* to be mistaken for Bergsonian intuition) that structure experience, phenomenal movement must appear to inhere as experience within these forms, thereby subordinating matter to them just as it did movement to time. In Kantian hylomorphism of intuition, 'space and time are its pure forms, sensation in general its matter' (1998: B60). The consequence for the individual subject of the transcendental revolution was an increased importance of intelligible, durable, quantifiable and altogether demystified appearances that could be mastered to secure her conditions of existence, irrespective of their mysterious origins beyond the domain of knowledge. As an example, one might think of how the ontogenetical forces underlying the formation of an organism were for Kant, following Blumenbach, unintelligible for the individual subject (Bennett, 2009; Kant, 1987).

Further, when possible knowledge-claims were restricted to *a posteriori* empirical intuitions it effectively meant that stability must have at least two interrelated conditions: First, the transcendental subject must be capable of representing stability, a requirement that Kant satisfied with space, time and the twelve categories (Kant, 1998). And secondly, the 'in-itself', whatever it may be, must be capable of manifesting itself with enough stability to appear as phenomenon before the individual subject. Even if the appearance of the phenomenal world of motion is identified with contingency, the actual lasting of our representations both guarantees and is, in the final instance, guaranteed by this mutual stability of transcendental subjectivity and the 'in-itself' beyond an appearance. If either were to collapse, say, if matters were appear beyond intelligible form, the individual subject would collapse in delirium. In other words, the individual subject must condition her world to appear in accordance with the

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rate Kant posits the empty form before the actuality of appearances, whereas Deleuze identifies it in the virtual.

transcendental structure of her subjectivity. Any instabilities and vagaries of forces and materials are overcome by the philosophical technology that is the Kantian double lockdown.

The problem is that the abject shapes or transiencies hidden within all appearances are devalued; exorcized from the subject's world. As Georges Bataille emphasized, that which lacks form

> has no rights in any sense and gets itself squashed everywhere, like a spider or an earthworm. In fact, for academic men to be happy, the universe would have to take shape. All of philosophy has no other goal: it is a matter of giving a frock coat to what is, a mathematical frock coat. On the other hand, affirming that the universe resembles nothing and is only *formless* amounts to saying that the universe is something like a spider or spit. (Bataille, 1985: 31, emphasis in the original)

Here we must take formlessness not to signify the absence of form or order *per se*. Instead, we believe that Bataille's polemic should be taken as a denunciation of a common desire for appearances to be fully determinate and recognizable *for* the forms posited by a perceiving subject, or at the very least durable for the sake of incorporation in a formal system of intelligibility. This is precisely what is impossible with abject or unnamed appearances such as amorphous lumps of clay and other instances of apparent temporal or spatial disorder that simply belong to an inhuman order. It is not that the unintelligible constitutes the impersonal plane directly, but it may nevertheless serve as a mental model for it or a pathway towards it. Likewise, our concern in not subjectivity as such, but the understanding of subjectivity belonging to the modern subject. It is therefore not necessary for becoming that the *a priori* forms of intuition are truly transcended by the 'in-itself' or even their matter *qua* appearances, only that they appear to be so. We will see that the weird encounter found in Lovecraft provides the model for the overcoming of form and the dissolution of subjectivity.

While, indeed, recognizable appearances and categories are what enable us to interact with the world in an organized and meaningful way (Grosz, 2001), Kant's double-anchoring of possible appearances in the transcendental subject and the 'in-itself' meant

that any unexpected tendencies of matter were devalued vis-à-vis the individual subject's perception lest the Kantian transcendental would be revealed for what it was: A philosophical technology of subjectification. Before the rise of modern technology – philosophical as well as material – life with shifting matter required that subjectivity itself followed along its nomadic trajectories of differentiation (see Ingold, 2007b). With the advent of the transcendental subject and ever more powerful technology, however, it became not only thinkable, but necessary to formally reify matters of representation across both abstract and practical registers to guarantee the Anthroposcenism of the individual subject.

As we have seen, post-phenomenology and non-representational theory have already discovered the limited nature of the Kantian transcendental subject, but have failed to go beyond it in practice. Geographers have therefore yet to reach the inhuman foundations of the human. We see that atëphobia, as the fear of becoming-inhuman, or, of a blessed descent into infinitude, is complementary to the *Anthroposcenic principle* that posits the rational man at the center of the universe. Whereas we may now have reached a sufficient conceptual understanding of atëphobia and one of its coupled principles, we have let its efficient cause remain relatively speculative. While this is not the place for an extended historical exegesis, some support is still in order. We will therefore seek some preliminary validation for the present actuality and structure of the *Anthroposcenic principle* in addition to exploring its eventual overcoming.

III.II.
Dispositional attunements

We believe that the *Anthroposcenic principle* is a best demonstrated in the description of architecture or other atmospheric environments. The Norwegian ecophilosopher Sigmund Kvaløy Setreng's (2011) distinguishes between industrial and non-industrial modes of inhabiting the world. By contrasting Euro-American architecture with the houses typical of Nepalese Sherpa culture, Kvaløy Setreng suggested that the former are idealized versions of the archetypal Greek temple and function as supposedly perfectible snapshots in time. As such, the processual nature of Sherpa homes makes them look unfinished, primitive and neglected to European and American visitors.

However, ‘from the traditional Sherpa point of view’, Kvaløy Setreng argues, ‘the beauty... may only be discovered if you settle down for a couple of generations, build such a house yourself,... live with the house instead of being its architect’ and ‘repair it when (that frequent) need arises’ (2011: 7-8).

This is a problem ridden example and we must be careful to avoid a simplistic opposition between Occidental and Oriental or primitive and purportedly civilized modes of environmental relations. Above all we must avert the risk of jumping to premature and potentially primitivist admiration based on nostalgia. An opposition between East and West is not the point, nor is it the essential difference, albeit Lovecraft’s witch-cults appear to be mostly populated by people from the Orient. Despite Lovecraft’s racism, we feel safe to say that the spatializing gesture is intrinsic to the human intellect, and we have only argued that certain techno-scientific practices ties individual subjectivity to its grasp, increasing the ever-present propensity to fall into the trap of its hegemony. At any rate, an inhuman perspective could never be attained by merely emulating the thoughts or behaviors of another human being. In a certain sense, then, Kvaløy Setreng’s example does not push primitivism far enough. The cultural Other can never be foreign enough for a truly *fundamental* encounter. The example nevertheless reveals that the particular spatialization of time inflicted upon us due to the dissemination of technological devices is a historical and cultural contingency, and therefore subject to future change.

We must remember that processes of ruination are not exclusive to the slopes of the Himalayas; invisibly they transpire all around us – it is only a matter of attuning to them. In light of this it seems clear why the affective and material turns have brought a renewed interest in ruin, conservation and derelict landscapes to geography (López Galviz et al., 2017). Fortunately, geographers and anthropologists have begun reckoning with the exoticist and romanticist tendencies that antecede their work in this field (Edensor, 2005). In line with the wider changes to landscape geography that emphasize relationality, focus has shifted to the various economic and socio-materially embodied processes that cause ruination (see DeSilvey & Edensor, 2013), as well as to the networks that transect and produce new spaces from abandoned landscapes (Qviström, 2012). Such hybrid landscapes have been suggested to complicate relationships between

the imposed categories of culture and nature (Cronon, 2003; Hinchliffe et al., 2005), but processes of ruination also disintegrate and blur the perceived boundaries between decaying objects more generally (DeSilvey, 2006). Apprehending decay can probably never be enough to reach beyond the *a priori* constraints posited by Kant, but it may serve as the initial step in a movement of becoming.

As life in an era characterized by environmental change and rapid urbanization leaves previously inhabited locations in states of abandonment, this body of research has brought to light the importance of creating new paradigms of living with, imagining, remembering and anticipating an active matter involved in past and future processes of decay and accepting the presence of abject forms in ways that transcend narratives that equate indeterminacy with loss and passivity (DeSilvey, 2012). Inherent in there emerging narratives is the possibility of seeing the ruination of the actual as a gateway to the potentiality of what may yet come. Still, we would argue that there is always a certain sense of loss inherent in dereliction from the viewpoint of the subject who imposed certain order, insofar as an abject appearance may open perception of the virtual and affective. It is in the ruins of the actual that transgressions of form are revealed. Any transcending of loss in the face of this profound wounding ought to be carefully considered before it is affirmed.

At this point we must be careful in order to not conflate the *Anthroposcenic principle* with any true form of subjectivity. In the previous section we developed a hypothesis for a historical anthropology of subjectivity that may serve as a sufficient explanation for atëphobia as the fear of becoming. In other words, the principle concerns the modern subject's implicit and explicit understanding of subjectivity and its conditions. In our hypothesis, the principle was enabled by the philosophical technology of transcendental idealism. If the *Anthroposcenic principle* is not itself ontological but functions as a heuristic for making an atmosphere or world ordered and comprehensible *for* a historically contingent form of subjectivity, it follows that one of the things appearing to prevent the subject from overcoming the *representational bind* and reaching an inhuman form of knowledge is her own desire to keep her *Umwelt* intelligible; her own fear of affirming the aleatory that may destroy her.

Within the structure of Anthroposcenic subjectivity there appears to exist an entire politics of subjectification seeking to police intelligibility. In this domain Deleuze provides few answers for geographers, but his friend and contemporary, Michel Foucault, might. Our inquiry into the historical anthropology of subjectivity has focused on topics that run as tangents to certain aspects of Foucault's work. Whereas an extended inquiry into the relationship between the historicity of different techniques of governmentality and the *Anthroposcenic principle* would be worthwhile, this is not the place for such a digression. As to not stray too far from our previous exposition, we will limit ourselves to introducing two short essays that interpret Foucault's notion of social apparatus[11] by Deleuze (1991c) and Giorgio Agamben (2009), respectively. As we will see, these essays share a curious relationship to the *Anthroposcenic principle* and the atëphobic conundrum.

Let us begin with Agamben's rendition. Agamben (2009) has taken apparatus to mean anything that has 'the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviors, opinions. or discourses of living beings' (2009: 14), ranging from prisons to mobile phones and from philosophy to language itself. For Agamben, the end result of an apparatus is subjectification. Apparatuses, taken like this, can be traced to the 'humanization' of the human animal, a partition and suspension of the human from her *Umwelt* via 'what Jakob von Uexküll and then Heidegger name the circle of receptors-disinhibitors' (2009:16). Although Agamben's reading of Uexküll is somewhat confusing as the latter holds that all animals are 'machine operators' rather than thoughtless 'machines' (Von Uexküll, 1934: 8-10), implying that they possess some degree of intentionality within their *Umwelten*. Without delving into the adequacy of Agamben's reading of Uexküll, it is interesting to note that Agamben suggests that apparatuses are what gives the human her particular ordering power vis-à-vis her *Umwelt*. Indeed, apparatuses can be thought of as those objects and techniques that bring stability to subjectivity by inducing the human *Umwelten* with a particular form of

[11] Foucault's technical term *dispositif*, is often translated as 'apparatus'. But as Bussolini (2010) shows, 'apparatus' is also the translation of *appareil*, a term that has a different history. In the different interpretations of Foucault's term by Deleuze and Agamben have been translated as '*dispositif*' and 'apparatus' respectively. For the sake of coherence our use of the word 'apparatus' consistently refers to the French '*dispositif*'.

consistency, thereby stabilizing the appearances within them and deepening the scission between condition and conditioned. We will return to this point in a moment.

At the turning point of his essay, before he shifts to discuss his own problematic of the sacred and the profane, Agamben makes the revealing suggestion that Foucauldian apparatuses are proximate to the enframings that Heidegger identified as the very essence of modern technology, but which remain separate from technological devices and their assembly, instead constituting 'the way in which the real reveals itself as standing-reserve' (Heidegger, 1954). Apparatuses thus thought are any objects, practices and functions that are aimed to orient and induce consciousness to action. Apparatuses are political, and we may point to architecture as an example of their efficacy. We will see that architectural spaces work to, on the one hand, select a perceptual space for thought and action, hence exorcising its exterior, while, on the other, direct subjectivity by calling forth the world as atmosphere within this contingent interiority.

Deleuze's understanding of Foucauldian apparatuses brings to light a different aspect of the notion, which makes for a potent dialectical tension between it and Agamben's reading (Legg, 2011). For Deleuze (1991c), an apparatus it is an agglomeration of tangled lines; lines that are never in equilibrium and always moving about. He distinguishes between four kinds of lines that act within apparatuses, namely: Lines of visibility and enunciation that render visible and obfuscate, dictating what is sayable and unsayable (clearly visible in architecture) about the world; lines of force that determine relations of power between points, subjects and objects; and finally, lines of subjectification that are historically contingent and culturally specific. If we consider Hume's thesis that subjectivity is a mere habit, it should be evident why negotiating the stability of certain discursive and visible elements of the environment is important to the formation of subjectivity as a contingent matter of fact. This is very different from Anthroposcenic subject that seeks to safeguard herself by requiring that all appearances adhere to a transcendental structure, and for whom the stakes are far higher. A habitual subject may be atëphobic, but the Kantian subject must be so since the intelligibility of the world is for her guarded by the *a priori* rigidity of space, time and the twelve categories (Kant, 1998). But the possibility of unexpected openings remains immanent

to processes of subjectification, and Deleuze indeed questions if new lines may not follow from the practices of an 'outsider' (Deleuze, 1991c: 161). Or why not, we ask, following an unforeseen encounter with a far more primordial 'outside'. Unsurprisingly, it is in Lovecraft's work that we find lines of escape leading towards this eventuality.

Lovecraft renders such lines visible by expressing the architecture of the 'outside' as a possible counterpoint to majoritarian modes of subjectification. Fundamentally, it functions as a disturbance of the subject-world interrelation by granting agency to the disprivileged part of the relationship. In Lovecraft all becomings are initiated by invisible forces that are rendered visible by virtue of a radical strangeness of their form and atmosphere. These becomings are too strong for the subject to sustain, belonging to another order that have little pity to spare for the Anthroposcenic subject; rather belonging to the possible structure of other rational beings, supposedly inaccessible to us (Kant, 1998: A42/B60). Harman (2010) is right on one point, the Lovecraftian weird is not noumenal. It merely twists the perceptible to collapse, opening up the infinite plane that lies beyond. There is hope in the resulting revelation of an Earth that will churn on without us, but also great pain. Lovecraft's weird tales achieve three things to this end: They show that the self has limited consistency in a chaotic, hostile and generative Cosmos; they articulate this fact as the ultimate source of pain and horror; and they subject their unfortunate characters to the painful realization of the same fact by initiating weird becomings with inhuman forces and architectures, the existence of which had been intellectually surmounted or otherwise hidden from view.

Returning to the relationship between apparatuses and affect, we will recognize that the relevance of architecture for subjectivity, always far from unified or finished, also becomes apparent in Guattari's late work. Instead of the *a priori* intentional subject Guattari prefers to discuss the intersections of itinerant '*components of subjectification'* (2005: 36, emphasis in the original); whereby diverse matters scuttle among ever-moving existential territories to singularly implicate affective, material, semiotic and historical components. The fractured nature of this understanding of subjectivity is more radical than what was proposed by structuralist psychoanalysis. The subject is drawn together from (and is pulled apart into) diverse segments that are not rooted solely in any individual and enclosed unconscious, rather emerging from the generativity of both

symbolic and a-signifying processes. This point had been, according to Guattari (2005) in the *The Three Ecologies*, woefully overlooked by scientific discourse and his contemporary psychoanalysts alike, leading him to propose a new ethico-aesthetic paradigm to facilitate the emergence of new subjective modes and opening the gates to the interplay of mental and social, in addition to environmental, ecological thought.

It is a complicated system of affectual counterpoints within the subject's external milieu that keeps her in check, dynamic and open to change. There are two major risks in this process, one of which comes from the overbearing force of a single temporality, congealing the subject's dynamism:

> Discordance in the ways of keeping time – what I call its ritornellizations – is not specific to an abnormal subjectivization. What would characterize the latter, rather, is that one mode of temporalizing, either temporarily or definitively, takes precedence over the others, whereas a normal psyche would always be more or less on the point of crossing from one to the other. (Guattari, 1996: 161)

The risk of neurosis or mental paralysis is inherent in the Anthroposcenic subject who, in the final instance, views the grounding of the world within itself and constructs a befitting system of apparatuses to impose its will on its *Umwelt*. In this light, the legal, bureaucratic, philosophical and technoscientific innovations following from the industrial revolution appears to have left a significant part of humanity within the overbearing temporality of modernity.

The opposite risk, just as real as that of paralysis, inheres in a deliric absence of any coherent temporality, aura or atmosphere whatsoever, which is precisely the object of the atëphobe's fear. Guattari writes:

> Without this aura, without this ritornellizing of the sensory world – which is established, moreover, in the deterritorialized prolongation of ethological and archaic ritornellos – the surrounding objects would lose their "air" of familiarity and would collapse into an anguishing and uncanny strangeness. (Guattari, 1996: 164)

The individual subject, aside from its transcendental structure, depends on an orderly *Umwelt* that appears *for* it. One turns either to rock or to dust. Guattari's call for an ethico-aesthetic paradigm concerns the myriad ways in which bodies, subjectifications and sensed intensities interact among each other, a problematic that for him is situated at the center of our increasingly technoscientific society, that we may add, is becoming ever more intersected by technological atmospheres (Agamben, 2009; Ash, 2013) and neoliberal architecture (Spencer, 2016) that challenge the hegemonic form of subjectivity. This may appear paradoxical given our previous discussion, but an overreliance on impersonal information processing poses a real threat the Anthroposcenic subject, the power of Schumpeter's gale opening for untold devastation. We are no Luddites but the self-serving technology inherent in Hayek-style market logic, with its need for continuous modulation of the human proper (see Deleuze, 1992), may well be our most ingenious simulation of a far greater horror, namely, that of the Cosmos itself. While we are all familiar with the former, it is by reading Lovecraft through Deleuze and Guattari's ethical lens that we perceive the inhuman becomings that constitute this other threat to the subject.

What is at stake in an affectual geography that has gotten itself stuck in the *representational bind* is becoming increasingly clear. The very subject for whom the world appears *for*, is becoming sidelined before a new locus of activity; the fate of being *for* the market. It is the irony of the master having lost herself to her tools of domination – much like the Elder Things have lost power over the unspeakable Shoggoths in *At the Mountains of Madness* – which opens for a reduction of the human to standing-reserve as human capital. Our intimate knowledge of this vernacular terror is perhaps what makes most of us fear the plane of immanence and its clandestine inhumanity, hidden from the remnants of the Anthroposcenic subject and her representational thought. If so, it is also what makes understanding the continuous affectual modulations that we undergo on the secret plane so important.

In his heretical project, entitled *Dark Deleuze*, Andrew Culp suggests that this secret outside

> appears like Frankenstein's monster, with a crack of lightning late into the dreary night while the atomist's rain patters away from the outside. Its darkness does not come from void worship or an existentialist reckoning with nothingness.... Rather, the outside opens out to a new milieu, like cracking the window in a house. The outside is seldom as pleasant as a breeze, however, as it invades in all its alien force. Thought here has a choice, to represent or intensify; the latter follows Paul Klee's famous formula: 'not to render the visible, but to render visible' (Culp, 2016: 44).

The secret behind the broken window is the wound that opens unto *a* life – not merely a visible landscape, but the potentiality inherent within the hidden substrate. As Maurice Lévy (1988) has noted, in Lovecraft the horror seems to always arrive from below, and whenever it does not above nonetheless remains below in a metaphysical sense. Lovecraft's inhumanism functions as the spark of a horrible Gnosis whereafter the Earth can no longer be viewed as an Anthroposcene. In an indiscriminately proliferating and contagious manner, the coming into sight of secret forces signals the necessary end of technological enframing *for* the human. We only need to put ourselves in the service of an inhumanity that engenders itself from the blackest pits of abominable chaos.

III.III.
Teratology of the subject

So far our atavistic project has unveiled a *representational bind* at the heart of affectual geography. We have argued that by refusing to go far enough in their bodily experimentation, affectual geographers have not reached its transcendental – but immanent – plane and therefore inevitably end up examining traces of affect rather than affect itself. While transcendental idealism has been overcome in theory, it has yet to be disrupted in practice. In other words, affectual geography has been afraid of becoming, a problem that seems grounded in the history of philosophical technology itself and which has become intensified after the onset of industrial modernity. Atëphobia has consequences not only for our everyday perception of the world as it appears *for* us but also constrains the range of imaginable responses to the current existential risks that face humanity by concealing the nature of our being within and alongside the

impersonal activity that conditions us. But let us be clear: We do not have a clear solution to the *representational bind*. Only through practical experimentation, as wild as it is dangerous can a new language be found for the inhuman people to come. All we have been saying is that affectual geography has yet to reach this point, regardless of whether it is desirable to do so or not.

Until now we have limited ourselves to exploring what appears to be a voluntary refusal of becoming, having elected to not articulate a central aspect of both Lovecraft's cosmicism and Deleuze's Spinozism, namely, that the horror is already upon us whether we render it visible or not. For the climax of this tale of horror, we will reconstruct a number of encounters from Lovecraft's stories to detail the practical choice underlying atëphobia and the affirmation of becoming itself.

Forces and materials that wrestle themselves self free from the spatial forms imposed on them by human understanding is a common theme throughout Lovecraft's work and is at the heart of its potential for any insurrection against subjectivity. In stories like *At the Mountains of Madness* and *The Call of Cthulhu*, the autonomy of the material vis-à-vis the human is expressed as a representational failure caused by abject forms that cannot be spoken. But there is also the problem of matter that reveals itself to be active by physically resisting its given form. In one of Lovecraft's greatest stories, *The Colour Out of Space*, we are told of the arrival of a strange meteorite to the unfortunate Gardner family's land. The meteorite, constituted by a strange material unknown to science, harbors a smaller globule that releases upon the Gardners' land an insidious agency of decay. The 'outside' agency infects the family's land and takes root in their well, spreading its unhealthy influence throughout the soil to upset the rhythm and routine of their daily life. As trees begin to move during windless nights, the Gardners gradually give in to solastalgic madness; either pulled towards and into the depths of the well or else gruesomely transformed to take on inhuman appearances and facial expressions. When the agent of ruin eventually takes off, it leaves little more than a lifeless 'blasted heath' behind. In this peculiar manner, Lovecraft reveals the agency of something that arrives and conceals itself in a seemingly tame and subjugated part of the Earth, thus challenging the distribution of forces that had governed the landscape.

The Gardners' fate is the result of what might be termed a dispositional misattunement. The malign infliction affecting them has all the usual characteristics: An unknown agency arrives to contaminate a home; the harmonic coupling of gazing subject and subjugated landscape and in so doing erodes the hierarchical relationship at its foundation by creating an affective atmosphere that is altogether inhospitable to human life. The superficial landscape rises up with hidden force, comes alive and gives itself to the subject in a manner that resists its status as a domesticated space induced to be productive. The soil, so essential to the Gardners' livelihood, is overtaken by an alien force and begins producing weird and unhealthy skunk cabbages. While no doubt a material transformation, its primary importance lies in its teratological effect on the Gardner family. In response to the event, the Gardners must change their way of perceiving and living in the landscape; but even in the final instance they are unable to come to terms with their becoming. And so, their lives turn disharmonic and their worlds uncanny as the land retakes control of the flesh that belonged to it. Following Negarestani's *Cyclonopedia*, Sciscione (2012) has suggested that when an inhuman agency is within the field of perception it causes a thoroughgoing ungrounding of the foundations of human pretensions to self-sufficient agency. It is in this way that the humans, quite literally, 'cease to be the master in their own house' (Harman, 2010: 342).

In another short story, the protagonist Randolph Carter retells the events leading up to his mentor Harley Warren's disappearance. In search of an object unknown to Carter they had left home to arrive in the derelict ruins of some ancient cemetery. The place was musty, overgrown and, as Carter tells it, 'haunted by the notion that Warren and I were the first living creatures to invade a lethal silence of centuries' (*The Statement of Randolph Carter*: 77). Warren soon disappeared into the recesses of a dark sepulchre and left Carter to wait in the musty cemetery – the only thing connecting them was an unsteady telephone line:

> In the lone silence of that hoary and deserted city of the dead, my mind conceived the most ghastly phantasies and illusions; and the grotesque shrines and monoliths seemed to assume a hideous personality – a half-sentience. Amorphous shadows seemed to lurk in the darker recesses of the weed-choked hollow and to flit as in some blasphemous ceremonial procession past the

> portals of the mouldering tombs in the hillside; shadows which could not have been cast by that pallid, peering crescent moon. (*The Statement of Randolph Carter*: 79)

This elliptical passage evokes the uncanny aspect of Carter's experience; shadows that cannot possibly have been cast by the moon itself, that were almost, but not quite alive. Although the phenomena are described as imaginary, their cause is an encounter with the sights, sounds and smells of an unthought, ancient dereliction where even the stones are in the process of rot and decay. When Warren finally calls, it is in dread-filled amazement and awestruckness. From Carter's story, we can infer that he has happened upon the unsayable and unthought *thing*, he was searching for. Whatever the *thing* was Carter did not yet know, since before long his paradoxically combined feelings of uncanniness and curiousity would turn to sheer and utter terror. As Warren's shrieks turned to silence a wholly different and far more sinister voice – which Carter, speaking in a delirious eruption of adjectives, attempts to describe as 'deep; hollow; gelatinous; remote; unearthly; inhuman; disembodied' (*The Statement of Randolph Carter*: 80) – emerged from the deep, eldritch caverns to announce the mentor's death.

Disquieting sounds, repugnant smells and uncanny, slithering movements seem to have just as much bearing on the disrupted worlds of Lovecraft's unfortunate characters as the visual impressions that he uses to threaten his characters' selves. It is only ever a matter of cutting straight into their flesh using any means possible. We find a particularly intriguing example of sonorous horror in *The Music of Erich Zann.* Alone, in the attic room in the tallest house on Rue d'Auseil, the old Erich Zann frenetically plays his viol to ward off the formlessness that will soon engulf him and throw him into madness. There is something compelling, yet horrifying about this old man who has erected a veritable fortification of music, 'a wall of sound' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 311), to keep self and *Umwelt* safe from the terrible forces that threaten to overpower him. When the descent into chaos is imminent, the unnamed narrator tells us that:

> It would be useless to describe the playing of Erich Zann on that dreadful night. It was more horrible than anything I had ever overheard, because I could now see the expression of his face, and could realise that this time the motive was

> stark fear. He was trying to make a noise; to ward something off or drown something out – what, I could not imagine, awesome though I felt it must be. The playing grew fantastic, delirious, and hysterical, yet kept to the last the qualities of supreme genius which I knew this strange old man possessed. (*The Music of Erich Zann*: 178-9)

When the window finally cracks open, the narrator is faced with an 'unimagined space alive with motion and music' without 'semblance to anything on earth' (*The Music of Erich Zann*: 179). And just like that, the void rushes in and the young student of metaphysics is forced to leave a horribly and irrevocably altered viol player behind as he flees Rue d'Auseil forever.

In Deleuze, the expression of secret forces figures as a free-ranging, almost wild force – an event not in the first instance tied to any enunciating subject who expresses something, though it may be caught in particular functions or territorializing marks (Massumi, 2002b). Deleuze and Guattari exemplify this with the song of the Stagemaker bowerbird, *Scenopoeetes dentirostris* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 331; Guattari, 1995: 15), but which we can also glean it from the case of Erich Zann's increasingly maniacal attempts at becoming-bird as he faces the oncoming chaos. The bird, perched above its stage of upturned leaves, and the old man, seated on his chair surrounded by musical scores strewn across the floor forms a remarkable couple, increasingly indiscernible from one another – who could ever tell the difference?

When we read Lovecraft, we know only one thing from the outset: There is no hope. From the moment the story begins its only function is to transport us through the disbelief – the impossibility of belief – in the reality of an infectious and unbound force (Negarestani, 2008), towards the point where it all cracks and the becoming of the world wells up around us and carries us off. The stark ravings of apparent insanity eventually reach the human to resound from her lips: '*Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn*' (*The Call of Cthulhu*: 363)[12]. Great Cthulhu is already sleeping beneath our feet. We are doomed and not even doubling down in our dogma – scientific or religious – will suffice to save us.

[12] 'In his house at R'lyeh, dead Cthulhu waits dreaming'

With that, we will return to Freud's analysis of the *Unheimliche*, which presents us with the cruelty inherent in determinations of the formless. The father of psychoanalysis shows by way of a double method, consisting of etymological tracing and a reading of E.T.A. Hoffmann's weird tale, *The Sandman*, that the *Unheimliche*, uncanny, coincides with its antonym, the *Heimliche*; meaning homely, safe, but also hidden and clandestine. It is this latter meaning of secret that becomes coincidental – the home is no longer known. The *Unheimliche* emerges when beliefs or ideas that were repressed, or thought to have been overcome by society return to perception, so that the 'most intimately known and familiar... is always already divided within by something potentially alien and threatening' (Lydenberg, 1997: 1073). Freud associated such threats with supernatural and animist beliefs. Although we once believed in them, we have now '*surmounted* such ways of thought; but we do not feel quite sure of our new set of beliefs, and the old ones still exist within us ready to seize upon any confirmation' (Freud, 1919: 17, emphasis in the original). While old beliefs may be superceded and overbuilt, they are so only hesitatingly, and the excluded past remains laden with the possibility of return to the present. And there is no apparent need to constrain ourselves to a temporal ancestrality; what came before is that which is prior or *a priori* (Thacker, 2011). Such returns to conditions – historical or metaphysical – are triggered in fundamental encounters, leading up to wild movements akin to Kafka's '*head over heels and away*' (1993: 178), or by shattering the memories and selves of those who disturb them by emerging from decrepit tombs. It is not a matter of romantically returning to a past social order or epistemic paradigm by means of effacing history. It is only ever a matter of transgressing the intelligibility of the present to unveil the prior that is already here.

Indeed, Freud continues to state that an 'uncanny experience occurs either when repressed infantile complexes have been revived by some impression, or when the primitive beliefs we have surmounted seem once more to be confirmed' (Freud, 1919: 7), the latter of which seems to be the case in several of Lovecraft's stories, an example being Professor Peaslee in *The Shadow out of Time*. Similarly, in a letter to Wilfred Blanch Talman, Lovecraft described the weird as above all '*a strong impression of the suspension of natural laws or the presence of unseen worlds or forces close at hand*'

(Lovecraft, 1968, emphasis in the original). It is as though the weird and uncanny were nearly inextricably linked to a moment where an impression renders that which was hidden by a veneer of common-sensical instrumentalism visible once more. Both Lovecraft and Freud[13] seem to suggest that the extra-ordinary inhabits the ordinary, like disorder inhabits order. The connection between the weird and the uncanny is further corroborated by Stoneman and Packer (2017) who treat the terms as veritable synonyms in their analysis of weird literature as an affective style of argumentation.

But what is the relationship between uncanny horror and becoming? We must remember that Freud is one of Deleuze and Guattari's most favored enemies in both volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1984, 1987), his model of the theatrical unconscious being discarded for one of itinerant machinic production. Yes, Oedipus may be dead, yet it is perhaps with the transgressive uncanny that Freud came closest to discovering that which is inhuman within us; the *Unheimliche* within the *Heimliche*. Are not Deleuze and Guattari's unnatural participations simply transgressions of the shared Anthroposcenism of phenomenology and psychoanalysis? And it is Lovecraft, the master of the uncanny who

> recounts the story of Randolph Carter, who feels his "self reel and who experiences a fear worse than that of annihilation: "Carters of forms both human and non-human, vertebrate and invertebrate, conscious and mindless, animal and vegetable. And more, there were Carters having nothing in common with earthly life, but moving outrageously amidst backgrounds of other planets and systems and galaxies and cosmic continua. .. . Merging with nothingness is peaceful oblivion; but to be aware of existence and yet to know that one is no longer a definite being distinguished from other beings," nor from all of the becomings running through us, "that is the nameless summit of agony and dread." (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 240)

This reeling of self indeed inflicts the same Randolph Carter we discussed above, but the story, *Through the Gates of the Silver Key*, begins at a later point and it is clear that

[13] Interestingly, Lovecraft expressed a deep resentment for Freud's thought, particularly about the role of dreams in psychoanalysis, that he felt were irreducible to the unconscious (Lovecraft, 2006).

the intensity of Carter's becoming has increased since the disappearance of his friend and mentor. Becomings are nothing but a utilization of the radically other to reach the multiplicity that is already within us. Similarly, the narrator in *The Shadow over Innsmouth* discovers that not even his lineage is safe; the Deep Ones' blood is already flowing in his veins, his face is already beginning to exhibit the piscine and amphibian features that used to bother him so much: The dreadful Innsmouth look. Let us make Freud's theory of the uncanny monstrous: It is no longer to be equated with a transgression of present beliefs but must be expanded to include all transgressions of the actual.

What do we mean by transgressions of the actual? Although the existence of forbidden knowledge and hidden aspects of the self are common features of Lovecraft's stories (Burleson, 1990), these not horror-inducing solely in virtue of their particular contents. Rather, it is the affective capacity to shock thought via an utter incommensurability with both naïve and scientifically derived systems of knowledge that gives the fundamental encounter such force. And yet Lovecraft's monsters seem fully classifiable within these systems. We have previously suggested that the Old Ones and their architecture resist description and representation. This is by no means a contradiction. No, Lovecraft simply reveals the vertigo-inducing gap between affectual objects and their representation; a gap that tests the limits of both perception and language. With proper care and procedure, even great Cthulhu could be classified and measured with the most rigorous scrutiny (Harman, 2010). In the moment that the inhuman is grasped as similar to the human, the horror would be exchanged for wonder (Joshi, 2003). After all, this is what happens with the Elder Things found at the heart of Antarctica:

> Objects are eight feet long all over. Six-foot five-ridged barrel torso 3.5 feet central diameter, 1 foot end diameters. Dark grey, flexible, and infinitely tough. Seven-foot membraneous wings of same colour, found folded, spread out of furrows between ridges. Wing framework tubular or glandular, of lighter grey, with orifices at wing tips. Spread wings have serrated edge. Around equator, one at central apex of each of the five vertical, stave-like ridges, are five systems of light grey flexible arms or tentacles found tightly folded to torso but expansible to maximum length of over 3 feet. Like arms of primitive crinoid.

> Single stalks 3 inches diameter branch after 6 inches into five sub-stalks, each of which branches after 8 inches into five small, tapering tentacles or tendrils, giving each stalk a total of 25 tentacles. (*At the Mountains of Madness*: 738)

This excerpt constitutes but a fraction of a wireless message from the Antarctic inland that details the material existence of those primeval beings with utmost precision. It can hardly be emphasized strongly enough that for Lovecraft, the weird is characterized not by the suspension of natural law as such, but '*by a strong impression*' of suspension that signals the insufficiency of human knowledge of an infinitely vast Cosmos. The Elder Things only act as gateways to something else. Along a similar line Harman has suggested that the source of Lovecraft's horror 'comes not from some transcendent force lying outside the bounds of human finitude, but in a twisting of that finitude itself' (2010: 360). We are inclined to agree insofar as the twisting may unlock the infinity immanent to the finite. The weird encounter must be relative to a given universe of reference, and it will remain uncanny only until it is either incorporated into or manages to completely unsettle a discursive-perceptual world and rise towards the divine.

In other words, the expanded definition of the uncanny appears as an epistemological force proper to Spinoza's second kind of knowledge; adequate ideas as common notions which have yet to reach their divine origins. The limit of the uncanny experience is the vertigo of coming to see the world in an inhuman way, incommensurable with phenomena, which is precisely what constitutes the final passage onto the plane of immanence whereupon finite modes are born from an infinite chaos. Faced with this impetus, one can either turn back whence one came, reduced to a quivering pulp, or be thrown into atmospheric dissolution. The choice is between two kinds of death; between the 'nadir of extensive in-differentiation' and 'the apex of intensive individuation' (Brassier, 2007: 185-6).

To this end we have discovered a recurring theme of cracked foundations splitting open, a collapse of vertical structure of formed matters that in the final instance are nothing but differential relations of movement and rest between infinitesimal particles. Throughout his work, Lovecraft adheres to a strict protocol of realism, himself subscribing to a thoroughly nihilist and rationalist worldview (Lévy, 1988; see also

Lovecraft, 2006). But his realism is one of masochistic self-destruction, as it moves towards a limit beyond which the conditions of its finitude come to invade and disturb the actual. It is not without irony that one of the recurring tropes of Lovecraft's work is the self-declared man of science who refuses to comprehend the increasingly disturbed character of his perceptual world[14].

Yet it seems inevitable that this world must crumble before the appearance that exceeds its concept. The process whereby this happens is a disconcerting and disorienting mixture of *Heimlich* and *Unheimlich* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994: 182); the home is no longer safe and what lay beyond is no longer exterior. When the weird, paludal, tentacled and rubbery entities emerge from their ancient and hidden realms they annihilate the apparatuses that the modern culture, civilization and forms of subjectivity seek to control. And moreover, these 'Outsiders' do not arrive from far away. They were resting, dormant in their long forgotten tombs all along. In Lovecraft the ordinary is shot through with clandestine forces that at any time can render themselves visible to effectuate a total ruination of the known and intelligible forms of everyday existence. The choice stands between suicidal affirmation, mute acceptance and the futility of resistance. One must not mistake the apparent inaction of Lovecraft's characters for disinterestedness; the 'Outside' is not the sublime but the horrific realm of the inhuman.

From the radically cosmic perspective the individual 'I' appears inconsequential and the human agent, for all her self-declared rationality, is nothing but an evanescent coagulation of chaos, if even that. While notions of an infinite cosmos and human inconsequentiality are themselves common, even banal, the affective impact of encounters with the envoys and forces of a secret substrate finds its most painful articulation in Lovecraft's work. The Elder Things may not be particularly interesting in and of themselves, even though the paralyzing, irrepresentable and desubjectifying efficacy any meetings with their all too forceful, anomalous existence have on the supposed rationality of the unwary professors of Miskatonic University is. In a world where the threats to hegemony of the Anthroposcenic subject range from nuclear cataclysm or environmental collapse to takeover by hostile artificial intelligence or

[14] *At the Mountains of Madness* and *The Shadow out of Time* are both examples of this theme. See also Joshi's (2016) *The Decline of the West.*

extraterrestrial invasion (Bostrom & Cirkovic, 2011) a particular kind of pessimism before the cosmic may seem warranted or at least unsurprising. The reality of these threats, more often than not, decidedly anthropogenic in origin, pose the question of a new ethico-aesthetic paradigm and modes of responsibility. As Braidotti has argued, we ought to remember that the monstrous 'is the expression of a deep anxiety about the bodily roots of subjectivity' (2000: 162). Lovecraft's fantastic teratologies and weird bestiaries tell us that not only can we become monsters; we already are. It is but a matter of grasping the monstrosity within. Not only can the Earth become hostile; it already is.

Braidotti has further suggested that one of the great challenges of our time is to shift the alignment of thought from concepts to processes. To an extent we hope to ally her on that path, but we need to recognize what is risked in the process. The exasperated '*Too much!*' (Braidotti, 2006) signals a legitimate ethical concern, and doubly so whenever ruination is involuntary. As we have seen, the purported joys of becoming are often met with rigid restratification in the name of piety, safety and tradition. Such caution is entirely reasonable. While one side of Janus's face speaks that the vast Cosmos is threatening, cruel, even sinister in its indifference, the other poses the question of a radical reordering of the relationship between politicized and bare forms of life along new axes of becoming. The real challenge of materialism lies in affirming materials that do not matter *for* us. A different subjectivity; a different enframing of the world; a new inhuman people that hope for the arrival of a new Earth. Depending on one's perspective the following vision or prophecy may appear either dystopian beyond hope or intensively utopian, but it invariably forces us into creative reimaginings of the Earth, or, in other words, into new styles of geography: Whether we will it or not, it now seems inevitable that secret horrors will emerge from within to call us into an as of yet unheard of inhumanity. *Iä! Shub-Niggurath, the goat with a thousand young!*

Conclusion: Escaping the Anthroposcene

Having articulated a prophecy of an Earth to come, it remains for us to evaluate the relevance of the atavistic-teratological project for future thought and to predict what gates, if any, it may pry open. By reconstructing Deleuze's Spinozism beside Lovecraft's weird encounters, we have sought to push the already Gnostic desire of affectual and purportedly non-representational geographical thought to its limit and beyond. In lieu of a typical summary we would like to briefly explore four points that we have discovered during the course of our inquiry. These may function at once as an evaluation of our initial line of questioning and a toolkit for struggling against an Anthroposcenic subjectivity. In a way, we are simply stripping away the text's skin, so that whoever encounters its flesh may undertake the cruel task of weaving it together into a new constellation.

First, what Lovecraft offers is a method for leaving behind the tyranny of present experience all too concerned with the endurance of recognizable and functional forms. By rallying odd apparitions and inhuman figures to his cause, Lovecraft's work – and perhaps weird fiction in general – brings a hidden past to bear on the present; in an attack by the expressivity of materials and forces on form. The potential of abject architectural atmospheres brings itself to bear on the limits of representation, or what we have termed the *representational bind*, and in so doing, threatens the coherence of subjectivity with discordance and ruin. The unthought encounter entails approaching the absolute limit of subjectivity by means of an all-too-powerful affect which effectively utilizes an external point to implode the subject in a becoming-indiscernible or deformed. It reveals that it is not the inhuman that is born from the human, but that the human is born from the inhuman.

What is an encounter? Most fundamentally it is a meeting of body and thought with the virtual expressivity of unformed materials that themselves exist behind the apparitions

of meaningful forms; the force of the prior (past/*a priori*) that was not so much forgotten but repressed. The encounter at the mountains of madness brings this latent potentiality into plain view, the shapeless Shoggoth or the universal market – both of which we have hardly dared mention – being the most eminent harbingers of this violent end of phenomenology. It remains to be seen how geography will deal with the challenge from the inhuman.

Our second point follows from the revelation of the wholly exterior within. We join those who insist on the importance of insisting that the Earth no longer belongs to us, or indeed, that it never did (e.g. Brassier, 2007; Colebrook, 2014; Thacker, 2010). This is Lovecraft's assault on the subject as agent and what gives his work a potential relevance for dealing with the very real existential risks facing society insofar as they require responses that submit to the inevitability of an eventual end of the world as we know it. Such a recognition is wholly dissimilar from a fatalistic resignment in the face of difficulty. By recognizing one's finitude one is not giving in to powerlessness. One is simply seeking the conditions of escape from the paralysis of the present via the event. It is by radically decentring the human that inhumanism responds to concerns surrounding inclusiveness and politics. Submitting to (and actively calling upon) the eventual coming of an inhuman thought is a direct challenge to an Anthroposcenic understanding of subjectivity that refuses to admit the possibility that its hylomorphic perception may be unable to find a solution to its current crises. It is perhaps ultimately in the inhuman that a proper reappreciation of Enlightenment humanism can be found. Until such a reappreciation can take place the individual subject remains locked within the same 'royal' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) synthesis of transcendental form and intelligible matter that it must impose on its world to survive. To escape the double lockdown it needs a gate towards another imagery of thought – as brutal as it is impersonal. We may look for the outlines of such imagery among the strange becomings in Lovecraft's tales of horror and the weird in general.

Regardless of where it is to be discovered, the becoming-indiscernible of subjectivity opens the gate to an inhumanism that is as full of positive potential as it is dangerous. That is not to say that the inhuman, in the final instance, is related to the inhumane as Braidotti (2013) has suggested, rather, it must be carefully distinguished from its subset

of techno-posthumanism (e.g. Hayles, 1999, cybernetics and Silicon Valley techno-optimists). The difference concerns a real, crucial distinction and is irreducible to semantics. The prefix 'post' in the posthuman carries an inevitable sense of transcendence and overcoming, while the 'in' seems to signify only negativity. But even so we cannot reduce the inhumanist project to some nostalgic desire for a return to a pure nature or pre-technological era. The inhumanist gambit rather consists in uncovering a transcendental field within which the human is always already situated. In other words, the aim, or at least the effect, of inhumanism is to dismantle that which is human in us and turn towards an imagination of the Earth as it may be for a thought that is wholly other. From the start we have only sought to show that the realization of such an imagination is, and perhaps must be, too powerful and horrific for any subject to sustain: Can we approach an inhuman thought of the human, rather than a human thought of the inhuman as has commonly been sought by affectual and post-phenomenological geography? Whatever the method, the promise of an inhuman thought reveals a possible line of escape from the Anthroposcenic consciousness; the world posited *for* the human. At this point we can only propose an expanded inquiry into the aesthetico-political potential for violent action against the self since affectual and non-representational geographies have not yet reached the inhuman. Whether or not the inhumanist route is ultimately desirable requires contextual judgment which lies beyond the scope of the present project that has only sought to articulate the real potentiality of the inhuman.

Our third point is methodological, and concerns our subjection of Deleuze's work to the transgressive terror that Lovecraft invokes so forcefully. What is new in this relationship? In the end, we believe that we have discovered next to nothing that was not already there from the start. Just like the latent horror is already within the poor narrator from *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, Deleuze's work is already shot through with the horror of becoming. All that was required to send his work into the ruination of joyful Deleuzeanism was an activation of its hidden potential under the weird teratological light which we have cast upon it. It was by monstrously mimicking the structure of Lovecraft's stories that we fashioned a method aimed at infecting two texts with one another, wagering in that single gesture that we may produce something

genuinely new within the domains of literary and affectual geography. What we have explored is nothing but an increasingly intense bilateral movement from philosophical horror towards geography and vice versa in a single call for a new Earth to come.

Let us now, fourth and finally, return to our initial conundrum: Must we forget Deleuze? While our answer will tend to be negative, we must nevertheless steel ourselves to face the risks of remembering. In affirming Deleuze's thought we assume the need to renegotiate his and Guattari's work insofar as it has become canonical and therefore essentially toothless and devoid of critical efficacy within academic geography and elsewhere. This, we have tried to show, is a risky business. Yet instead of forgetting, we may approach Deleuze and Guattari with a teratological impetus. And this may be true of theory in general. While we hope that our effort has also served to highlight and problematize the modern fear of ruination that is impinging on our sociocultural and physical environments – but which also reverberates throughout an intrinsically hubristic form of understanding subjectivity belonging to the subject –we hope that a self-ironic aspect of our project has shone through. We are very much part of the movement that we have criticized. Conceptual narratives, like buildings, are perennially threatened by ruination, and for that reason it is easy to return to what constitutes familiar and essentially safe interpretations of the oftentimes intersecting histories of philosophy and geography. But in doing so we risk the stability of delineated snapshots over the continuity of duration within thought itself.

By bringing the decidedly problematic and unpalatable figure of Lovecraft into the spotlight, we have not sought so much to credit his beliefs as to lend the institutions of 'Spinozism' and 'Deleuze and Guattari' a set of much needed dental prostheses to challenge atëphobia in affectual geography. The reader may decide for themselves if we have gone too far or if Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual fangs need to become sharper and more dangerous yet. But even if this, the most critical aspect of our project is ultimately rejected we hope that it will have brought the unsettling nature of the clamor of being to resurface. Lovecraft teaches us that it is in the uncontrollable ruination of the actual that we first begin to grasp the meaning of *a* life. We would do well to remember that it is at the bottom of this single ocean that great Cthulhu waits dreaming.

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