Affective Encounters and Trajectories of (Im)mobility: Towards a Politics of Hope

by

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B.A. (Hons.), University of Western Ontario, 2011

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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This thesis maps out the phenomenological and ontological contours of 'hope' in an attempt to challenge traditional individualistic, psychologized, and normative accounts, and to reconceptualise hope as a practice of control. Spinoza and Deleuze's theory of affect is used to develop an understanding of the 'hoping body' as the effect of a symbiotic encounter with a conglomerate of forces. The spatio-temporal dynamics and relations of power at work in this larger conglomerate are also explored through Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory. Ultimately, this thesis argues that hope inaugurates complex practices of mobility control by operating as a claim about the necessity of a particular pathway and vehicle in the present that is grounded on the possibility of a desirable destination in the future.

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Introduction

In *All Families are Psychotic*, Douglas Coupland wrote:

> I have this friend, Todd, who got cleaned out in a divorce, and so now he sells lottery tickets in a mall booth out in Richmond. He asked me once what day of the lottery cycle is the biggest day for sales. I said, I dunno, when the jackpot's really big – but he said, no way, it's the morning after the big jackpot. People come running to him the moment the door's open. They want to have that ticket in their hands for the maximum amount of time possible. Unless they have a ticket in their hand, then they don't have any hope, and they have to have hope.[1]

I begin with this short anecdote because in just over one hundred words it manages to articulate some of the most fascinating aspects of hope. First, it exposes an interesting interplay of temporal elements. Coupland has framed hope as something that occurs in the *present* when people have a lottery ticket in hand. Hope is not construed as the possibility of a better future, but rather the certainty of empowerment in the present (or near-present). This should immediately raise suspicions about the accuracy of the popular claim that hope is 'future-oriented.' Second, by depicting hope as the effect of purchasing a ticket, the anecdote draws our attention to an *affective encounter* that conditions and characterizes the emergence of hope. Coupland could have said that people "want to have that ticket in their hands" because it gives them the power to win the jackpot (insofar as the odds of winning go from zero to some positive number), but instead, he chose to write: "Unless they have a ticket in their hand ... they don't have any hope." Either statement would have been accurate. People are called to hope when they purchase a lottery ticket because the ticket has given them the capability (however weak it may be) to win the lottery. Hope *is* power. Third, the anecdote offers a glimpse into hope's *trajectories of (im)mobility*. By offering people the hope of winning millions of dollars, the lottery system is able to mobilize and channel people's energies away from whatever else they would be doing on

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[1] Douglas Coupland, *All Families are Psychotic* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2002), 77.

"the morning after the big jackpot" and towards the lottery kiosk. In the pursuit of wealth, people will take the lottery system's fast and easy 'route to riches' and beeline towards the tollbooth, knowing quite well that they will likely be denied any further movement. Indeed, this might be the most interesting take-away from Coupland's anecdote: once people are assured of the location of 'hope for X,' they will race towards it and happily come to a standstill once 'hope for X' has been reached (*not* X as such). Fourth, and finally, Coupland's anecdote invites us to consider hope as something that is so much more than a private, individual feeling or an emotion that is generated in the interior life of the subject and then moves outward towards others. It invites us to conceive of hope as the product of a larger, exterior relation of forces, as a symbiotic relationship, as a claim about accelerated travel along a particular route that works before and after the constitution of a hoping body, as a principle of organization that produces motion and inertia, and as a strategy of control and capture that is premised on the promise of escape.

Hope has been largely disregarded and considered unworthy of serious analysis in the political science literature.[2] It is occasionally addressed indirectly as a category of analysis or as a springboard for a discussion on social movements or policy agendas, but more often than not, hope is evoked for purely rhetorical reasons. Hope rarely takes center stage, and when it does, it is usually considered as something positioned in, or pertaining to, *future* occurrences. And when hope is given a futural orientation, it tends to be conflated with 'feelings' of desire and optimistic anticipation or the 'object' of desire and anticipation, both of which lead to abstract normative discussions or 'rational calculation of outcome' analyses (e.g. should we hope for/desire X? Are we justified in believing that X will occur? Is it 'false' to hope for X? Is it detrimental to hope if

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[2] Ernst Bloch, Bernard Dauenhauer, Mary Zournazi, and Ghassan Hage are a few notable exceptions to this trend.

X does not occur?). These types of discussions, while admirable and interesting in their own right, draw our attention away from the relations of power that enable the emergence of hope and the generalizable function that reverberates in its practice, and as a result, tend to contribute to the relative insignificance that is ascribed to hope (particularly in the critical theory literature). Accordingly, this thesis takes a radical departure from much of the existing literature and approaches to the analysis of hope.

My primary goal is to develop an account of the phenomenological event of hope and to map out the ontological contours of the practice of hope. By exploring *how hope is experienced* and *how hope functions*, I aim to expose the deficiencies of the traditional emotionalist, psychologized, and normative understandings of hope, and overturn the notion that hope *as such* is unworthy of serious political analysis. The main argument of this thesis is that 'hope' is a spatio-temporal claim about 'the means and the way' to progress from a deficient present to a superior future, which inaugurates powerful practices of mobility control by grounding the *present necessity* of the 'means and the way' on the *possibility* that they might lead to a desirable destination in the *future*. As we shall see, this claim emerges in the socio-political realm as the organizing principle of composition for 'Hope Assemblages' – ad hoc, non-totalizing, non-localizable entities that are composed of heterogeneous parts – which function coherently to channel movement along a particular pathway and towards a particular vehicle.

Chapter 1 offers a critical analysis of some of the most notable political and theoretical literature on hope for the purpose of understanding why hope has been largely overlooked as a category of experience and analysis in the social sciences, and to recover a coherent form of hope from the collection of discourse and theories in which it is buried. My primary argument in this chapter is that hope's low appraisal is due to four interrelated trend lines in the literature: (1)

conceptual underdetermination and confusion. Hope is, admittedly, an underspecified concept. But it is also frequently alluded to in popular politics, religion, psychology, medicine, the news, music, movies, books, etc. This 'nebulous ubiquity' has had the unfortunate effect of producing equivocal and lyrical definitions of hope, and confused analysis that reduces hope to either an aspect of its phenomenological expression (i.e. a bodily sensation or subjective emotion) or to its object (a target, goal, or event that dwells in the future); (2) *inappositive associations*. Hope is firmly entrenched in the Judeo-Christian and utopian ethical traditions in the West, which have bolstered the association between hope and faith, idealism, and wishful thinking; (3) *metonymic slides*. Hope is often conflated with 'optimism' or 'alternatives.' This leads to interesting discussions about emancipatory politics, social transformations and future possibilities, but it also effaces hope *as such* and draws our attention away from the questions that can be interrogated when hope is considered as something that *works* and *constitutes* (e.g. what are the conditions under which we are enabled to imagine our future possibilities?); and (4) *uncritical acclaim and reverence.* Along this trend line, hope is regarded as an ethical orientation or method of engaging with the world that ought to be adopted. Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope* and Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and Social Hope* are perhaps the best examples of this school of thought. I argue that their praise of hope is misguided and that hope should be severed from the 'ethical' label that is ordinarily ascribed to it. Bloch and Rorty's work is, however, helpful in setting the stage for the analysis of hope that follows, insofar as it effectively exposes the agential and justificatory/regulatory elements in hope.

Notwithstanding the subject matter of the first chapter, it should be noted that no attempt to exhaustively examine every text pertaining to hope was made, and that a large number of books and authors dealing with hope were not explicitly addressed in this thesis. This omission

was knowingly effectuated. Rather than developing an argument that deductively reasons out the universal form of hope from a variety of works and variables, I have chosen to pursue my inquiry into hope through an alternative method that does not depend for its validity on a comprehensive catalogue of hope literature; namely, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's minor science: *nomadology*. Nomadology does not seek to extract and demarcate a sedentary structure from a set of variables, and it does not attempt to infer an array of properties from a constant and identical essence. Its goal is not to represent a de-facto and pre-codified complex, or to syntagmatically trace or plot a structure. In fact, nomadology's approach and operation is the complete opposite. Nomadology begins by adopting the point of view of a 'singularity of matter' (i.e. a figure/individuation/body) and, as such, does not seek to reproduce, but to *construct* and *create*. It resists the presumption of a pre-existing body, and can only define a figure by its particular *synchronic affective state* (i.e. the sum total of the powers – the active and passive affects – that it wields at a given moment as an elemental part of a larger individuated assemblage). It examines figurations as *events* on *planes of consistency*, and "*follows* the connections between singularities of matter and traits of expression, and lodges on the level of these connections, whether they be natural or forced."[3] Accordingly, this thesis will not attempt to extract the essence of hope from a cluster of literature and then deduce its properties. Instead of embracing the logic of *representing* and tracing an already coded structure called hope, I aim to follow hope and draw a map of its phenomenological and ontological expressions. I aim to understand how hope *works*, not what hope *is*.

Chapter 2 employs Benedict de Spinoza and Deleuze's theory of affect to explore the phenomenological dimensions of hope and develop an understanding of the constitution and

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[3] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 369.

characteristics of the 'hoping subject' that is divorced from the traditional emotionalist conceptions. My central argument is that hope is experienced as an *affective encounter* that increases the subject's capacity to act towards a desirable object. More particularly, I argue that there are three important aspects of the phenomenology of hope: (1) it is the result of a symbiotic encounter with another body that *increases* the subject's bodily capacity to act, which (2) doubles over as consciously registered and somatically felt power to act towards the object of desire, and thus (3) reconstitutes and empowers the subject's body with the capacity to achieve the object of hope (i.e. it produces the 'hoping subject'). To develop this argument, I begin by briefly exploring the difference between affect (an intensive variation) and emotion (a somatic feeling) and argue that the notion of affect allows for a much more productive engagement with hope than emotion because it is capable of bringing together the *social* and the *somatic*, while accounting for embodied agency and larger networks and assemblages of power. Then, I move on to develop a more comprehensive account of the Deleuze–Spinoza theory of affect and advance the claim that affect is an increase or decrease in a body's capacity to affect and be affected that re-individuates the subject and is doubled over and registered as the felt reality of this new relation.

By repositioning hope within Spinoza and Deleuze's affect theory, I am also able to develop three secondary phenomenological lines of thought. First, insofar as Spinoza and Deleuze consider pleasure or 'the good' as an increase in the power to act and sorrow or 'the bad' as a decrease in the power to act, it becomes possible to account for the tendency to attribute positive significations to hope and negative significations to fear, while problematizing any *a priori* praise of hope: the 'goodness' or 'pleasure' of hope only resides in its universal law of production – particular assessments of an event of hope must consider the encounter that

increased the subject's power to act before any normative qualifications can be made. Second, reading hope *qua* affect allows us to dispel any notion of hope as a codification of a psychological disposition at the scale of the individual subject or as a feeling that is transmitted to an already constituted body that somehow increases agency, and develop a much stronger claim. Using the example of the post-Cold War era of renewed hope for international cooperation and security via United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, I argue that hope is not simply 'within' or 'without' the body – it actually constitutes the very boundaries and capacities of bodies. Third, and finally, I set the stage for the analysis in chapter 3 by suggesting that hope *qua* affect radically displaces the individual/collective human subject from the locus of agency and posits a *relational*, *distributed*, and *composite* account of agency that exceeds the subject. Using Margaret Thatcher's success in the United Kingdom as a demonstrative example, I argue that the subjective capacity for acting that emerges with hope is the composite effect of an assemblage of beings, entities, and forces. The agency of the subject is only a partial expression of a Hope Assemblage that has its own distinctive efficacy. Ultimately, this suggests that a political analysis of hope can never examine the hoping subject in isolation and must always pay critical attention to the assemblage of forces enabling the subject's agency and the agency proper to the assemblage itself.

Chapter 3 employs Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory in order to map out the ontological contours of Hope Assemblages and develop an understanding of how hope operates 'in between' the before and after of the hoping subject. The main argument of this chapter is that hope is a spatio-temporal claim about the deficiency of the present and 'the means and way' to achieve a superior future, which draws its authority in the *present* from the promise of the *future*. In the socio-political realm, this claim manifests itself as an orchestrating principle in Hope

Assemblages: heterogeneous, functional aggregates that inaugurate complex practices of control by attracting bodies towards the 'vehicle of hope' to produce hoping subjects (i.e. by limiting movement to the *means* and *way* to achieve the object of hope). To develop this line of thought, I begin by parsing out the details of Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory for the purpose of exposing how well attuned their theory is to thinking about the cluster of heterogeneous, non-localizable forces that not only produce the 'empowered' hoping subject, but also the spatio-temporal claim that conditions and characterizes the hoping subject's emergence. Insofar as assemblages function "as a name for unity across difference, i.e. for describing alignments or wholes between different actors without losing sight of the specific agencies that form assemblages,"[4] these 'functional aggregates' offer us an excellent conceptual tool for thinking about the generalizable model of functioning that reverberates in the relation of forces that produce hoping bodies.

After outlining the features of assemblage theory, I move on to the task of outlining the characteristics of Hope Assemblages. First, I offer a cartographic representation of the relations of forces that obtain in Hope Assemblages by using Immanuel Kant's transcendental and political hopes as demonstrative examples. Insofar as Kant meticulously outlines the conditions under which one is permitted to hope for the realization of: (1) an otherworldly synthesis of virtue and happiness; and (2) the worldly perfection of mankind's natural abilities in a cosmopolitan political order, his work offers a powerful articulation of how hope works as a regulatory claim about a vehicle and trajectory in the present that will usher in a better future. In particular, the engagement with Kant's work invites us to conceive of hope's logic as the inverse of Thomas Hobbes' infamous inside/outside dualism. Instead of drawing authority from the *past*

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[4] Colin McFarlane and Ben Anderson, "Thinking with assemblage," *Area* 43, no. 2 (2011): 162.

as the point of origin from which the present must have developed, hope grounds its claim about

the present necessity of a particular pathway and vehicle by projecting it forward into the *future*

as the point of arrival that the present might lead towards. Second, I examine the Hope

Assemblage that obtained in Barack Obama's 2008 American presidential election in order to

bolster my argument that hope operates as an organizing principle of composition that selects,

arranges and connects disparate elements into a functional aggregate that attracts bodies towards

the 'vehicle of hope.' Finally, I conclude the chapter by directly addressing the 'control' function

of Hope Assemblages. Reflecting on the various Hope Assemblages that were scrutinized

throughout this thesis, I argue that in its most abstract formulation, hope can be reduced to the

ability to channel human behaviour.

1   The Canon of Hope

How wrong Emily Dickinson was! Hope is not "the thing with feathers." The thing with feathers has turned out to be my nephew. I must take him to a specialist in Zurich.

– Woody Allen, *Without Feathers*

I cannot in good conscious claim that hope has been thematically ignored in the social sciences, or even political science in particular.[5] Such a claim would be almost comical considering the abundance of articles that contain some variation of the twin assertions: 'hope has been neglected as a topic of study' and 'this paper remedies that blunder.' To list only a few: Vincent Crapanzano declares that "hope is rarely mentioned [in the social and psychological sciences], and certainly not in a systemic or analytic way," and then sets out to "look critically at the discursive and metadiscursive range of hope."[6] Loren Goldman argues that "hope has remained stubbornly overlooked as a topic of serious theoretical and practical inquiry" and proceeds to outline what hope is, and what role it plays in political thought.[7] And Luc Bovens notes that "it's a scandal that a philosophical theme that is so central to how we should live our lives… has gone virtually unnoticed in the philosophical community itself," and proposes to explore "the nature and the value of hope."[8] So despite the constant affirmations of hope's absence from theory, it is clear that there is in fact a respectable amount of political, philosophical, and anthropological literature on hope. It is not true that hope has been ignored, but it is the case that the literature dealing with hope has been disregarded – research on hope has

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[5] Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope*, Bernard Dauenhauer's *The Politics of Hope*, Judith Green's *Pragmatism and Social Hope*, and Valerie Braithwaite's (ed.) "Hope, Power, and Governance" are all explicit political examinations of hope.

[6] Vincent Crapanzano, "Reflections on Hope as a Category of Social and Psychological Analysis," *Cultural Anthropology* 18, no. 1 (2003): 4-5.

[7] Loren Goldman, "The Sources of Political Hope: Will, World and Democracy" (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 2010), 1.

[8] Luc Bovens, "The Value of Hope," *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research* 59, no. 3 (1999): 667.

had a marginal impact on the social science disciplines, at best. The question we need to ask, then, is not: why has hope been overlooked? but rather: why do the vast majority of theorists and intellects attribute so little significance to the study of hope?

Accordingly, the following chapter has two goals. First, I seek to address and controvert the relative unimportance ascribed to hope through a critical interrogation and analysis of the most notable political and theoretical literature on hope. I argue that hope's devaluation is due to four interrelated proclivities in the literature: (1) conceptual underdetermination and confusion; (2) inapposite associations (e.g. the religious and utopian misappropriation of hope); (3) erroneous metonymic slides (e.g. conflating hope with optimism or alternatives); and (4) uncritical acclaim of hope as an ethical and responsible orientation and practice. All of these broad gravitations disfigure, misrepresent, and obscure the nature and functionality of hope, and are thus complicit in the academic inattention to hope. Second, I aim to set the stage for the analysis in the chapters to follow by parting company with these traditional approaches to hope and inaugurating the recovery of a unified and coherent form of hope from the cluster of discourse and abstract ideas that it is buried in.

1.1   Conceptual Underdetermination and Confusion

What exactly is hope? This deceptively simple question has proven difficult to answer, as the precise meaning of hope is nebulous and will vary with context and usage. The word itself is used as a noun, verb, and intransitive verb – hope is something that you can *have* or *possess*, something that you *do*, and something that you *feel*. Hope may allude to optimism, chance, or uncertainty, but can also be a simple articulation of desire. At times it will be experienced as a positive feeling or sensation, and at others times will only be colloquially mentioned as a synonym for 'preference.' Hope may be experienced emotionally, cognitively, or both, and can

also be an individual or collective *experience*, while being placed *in* an individual, social, organic body, or otherwise. It may refer to anticipation (i.e. prior action that provides for action of another) of a practically possible state of affairs, but can also refer to desire for a practically possible state of affairs without personally taking action to ensure its manifestation. In other words, hope does not lend itself to conceptual clarity – attempts to capture hope's meaning in a neat sentence or two will unwittingly exclude a feature or dimension. And yet, despite how difficult it is to capture hope in discursive form, we have no issue with recognizing its quantitative presence. Hope is easily detected in songs, movies, books, and poems. We see it in politics, in religion, psychology, medicine, and history, and we notice it in the news, in our actions and words, in conversation and in thought. How is that we have no issues discerning hope, but cannot easily formulate a comprehensive description of what it is? Alas, it would appear as though hope carries with it a regrettable combination of attributes: *it is both nebulous and ubiquitous*, a set of characteristics that has the unfortunate effect of inviting a flood of formulations and analyses that are, nonetheless, vague and muddled. This is a serious barrier to the systematic study of hope. Its 'nebulous ubiquity' has given birth to equivocal and lyrical definitions, and confused analysis that reduces hope to either an aspect of its phenomenological expression or to its object.

First, the emotive qualities of hope have seen to a plethora of perfectly vague, sentimental, and poetic definitions of hope in the academic literature. Emily Dickinson's poem on hope is quoted *ad nauseam*: "Hope is the thing with feathers – That perches in the soul – And sings the tune without the words – And never stops at all," and if it is not Dickinson, some other whimsical or oneiric elucidation is never far off. Mary Zournazi, for example, states that "to me, 'hope' is about a certain generosity and gratefulness that we all need in life… It is a basic human

condition that involves belief and trust in the world. It is the stuff of our dreams and desires, our ideas of freedom and justice and how we might conceive life,"[9] while Bovens suggests that, "In hoping for something, I tend to fill in the contours in the brightest colors."[10] Furthermore, even if conceptual precision is attempted, exegeses are often unhelpful. Stating that: "hope is the belief in the possibility of a better future, and thus our sense that our efforts to "make a difference" might be worthwhile,"[11] "to hope is to entertain expectation of something desired,"[12] or that "hope in the present is a projection forward of a wish for repair of the past" does little to expose the significance of hope to the practice of power, and unfairly relegates hope to the realm of 'emotive keywords' or frivolous academic banter.[13]

Second, hope *in toto* is often confused for one aspect of its phenomenological expression and is consequently reduced to an individual's bodily sensation or subjective feeling/emotion. Within this understanding, hope is again devalued and displaced from the political terrain, as even if one does not subscribe to the hierarchy of reason over emotion, it models hope on an 'interiority' presumption that effectively psychologizes hope and reduces it to a discrete, internally coherent emotion that resides in the mind of an individual. That is to say, the interpretation of hope as a psychological state assumes that hope either originates endogenously and then moves outward towards others when an individual expresses themselves (i.e. the inside-out model), or that it develops exogenously and moves inward as it imposes itself on the

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[9] Mary Zournazi, *Hope: New Philosophies for Change* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 12.
[10] Bovens, 670.
[11] Julian Edgoose, "Radical Hope and Teaching: Learning Political Agency from the Politically Disenfranchised," *Educational Theory* 59, no. 1 (2009): 106.
[12] Barbara V. Nunn, "Getting Clear What Hope Is," in *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hope*, ed. Jaklin Eliott (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2005), 63.
[13] Lisa Duggan and José Esteban Muñoz, "Hope and hopelessness: A dialogue," *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 19, no. 2 (2009): 275.

individual's psyche (i.e. the outside-in model).[14] In either case, hope *belongs to the individual* –
it is something that we 'have' – and is either a matter for psychologists or sociologists. This
paper however considers this model as highly problematic and radically deficient. Consider the
success of Barack Obama in the 2008 American presidential election. His election campaign saw
to the highest voter turnout rate since 1968, the most racially and ethnically diverse electorate,[15]
and one of the highest recorded youth voter turnouts.[16] And while it would be difficult to argue
that the production of hope did not have a significant impact on these outcomes, the
psychologized notion of hope yields little explanatory power. If we regard hope as a subjective
feeling we are restricted to saying that: 'Obama and his campaign made the American population
experience a positive feeling of hope, and as a result of a secret alchemy in hope, they voted for
him.' The bodily sensation of hope certainly existed during Obama's campaign, but it is also
clear that this bodily knowledge was only one nodal point in a powerful economy of hope; the
feeling of hope only attested to a larger material phenomenon. During the 2008 presidential
election, the very shape of the American electorate was changed, the surface and boundaries of
the American body/'nation' were altered, the figure of Obama was constructed, new political
possibilities and spatio-temporal trajectories leading towards their attainment were fashioned,
and, importantly, the *capacity* and *means* to achieving these political possibilities and moving
along these spatio-temporal trajectories were also established. Put differently: both the
inside/'subject' (experiencing hope) and outside/'object' (causing hope) were shaped and
distinguished through the circulation of hope. Hope was not just experienced as a self-contained

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[14] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 8-9.
[15] Mark Hugo Lopez, "Dissecting the 2008 Electorate: Most Diverse in U.S. History," *Pew Research Center*, accessed July 31, 2012, http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1209/racial-ethnic-voters-presidential-election.
[16] Emily Hoban Kirby and Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, "The Youth Vote in 2008," *The Center for Information & Research on Civil Learning and Engagement* (2009).

feeling or emotion – it *worked, constituted,* and *effected*. This is precisely why the association of

hope with a feeling needs to be abandoned. The interiority underpinning that equation shrouds

hope's productive power and dissuades political scientist from casting a critical gaze on hope.

When we begin, however, by considering hope as the distinctive efficacy of a machinic

assemblage that constitutes individual and collective bodies, and shapes their present, future, and

means of attaining that future, power and authority re-enter the picture, and hope becomes a

political thematic worthy of attention.

Finally, another common thread running through the literature on hope is the confusion of

hope *in toto* for the *object* of hope. The presence of hope (i.e. the event of hope occurring here

and now) is ignored and it is assumed that hope *per se* dwells in the future as a goal or target.

This is partially due to the way we talk about hope in popular and academic discourse. 'The hope

is that X will occur' is, after all, a fairly common locution, and even theorists who know quite

well that hope is palpable in the present sometimes waver in this direction. Bloch, for example,

states that:

> …hope must be disappointable because, even when concretely mediate, it can never be
> mediated by solid facts…. Consequently, not only hope's affect (with its pendant, fear)
> but, even more so, hope's methodology (with its pendant, memory) dwells in the region
> of the not-yet, a place where entrance and, above all, final content are marked by an
> enduring indeterminacy.[17]

All the same, the relegation of hope to the future is a mistake. Hope is not simply an adverbial

modification, nor is it a possibility that does not exist *per se*; hope is an event in its own right.[18]

The focus on hope's future-oriented component only creates a space for misunderstanding, as it

draws attention away from hope *per se* and (1) misleads us into confining hope's ontology to

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[17] Ernst Bloch, *Literary Essays*, trans. Andrew Joron, et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 341.
[18] Bernard P. Dauenhauer, *The Politics of Hope* (New York: Routledge, 1986), 106.

lack, absence, and negation, and (2) leads us towards trite and abstract normative and calculative questions.

The temporal dimension that immediately stands out when we think about hope is certainly the future; hope always involves the desire for something that has not yet occurred. So when hope is brought to mind, it is easy to associate it with a lack, an unsatisfied desire, a longing, or a horizon that teases our thirst. And when this association is made, it is easy to conceive of hope as 'not yet' – a desired occurrence positioned in, pertaining to, or being the promise of *a future* – a possibility that does not deserve serious attention from political theorists until it materializes. Or, conversely, attention may be paid to it, but only with respect to normative questions (e.g. what should we hope for? Is X the right thing to hope for? Are we justified in believing that X will occur? Is it detrimental to hope if X does not occur?), or rational calculation of outcome discussions (e.g. is it 'false' or 'well-founded' to hope for X? What is the probability that X will occur?). All of these questions are tiresome and, again, work to efface hope *as such*. I will insist here, and many times again, that hope is only tangentially related to the future insofar as the *object* of hope may actualize in the future, but if and when it does, hope ceases to exist (i.e. one can only hope for X when X is unrealized, yet possible.) *Hope occurs in the present*. It arises when *a spatio-temporal line connecting here/now to there/then* has been set, *a plane of immanence* to move across has been mapped out, and when *a body with the capacity* to advance towards the there/then has been produced. Hope unsettles the present (as something to be transcended), while simultaneously constituting the present as a sufficient starting point that will enable the desired future. Hope is *present* because an object is *absent*. What is at stake in thinking about hope, therefore, is not unanswerable normative questions, but rather new

insight into how the present (and its lines, planes, and bodies) is constituted and enabled by an imagined future.

1.2   Unfitting Associations

Notwithstanding all of the conceptual confusion, situating hope in the political and engaging with it in a critical manner may be viewed as controversial because of the heavily overdetermined conceptual network and field of significations that it is embedded in. Hope is firmly entrenched in the Judeo-Christian and utopian ethical traditions in the West, and has long since been associated with (and metonymically slid into) words such as: faith, salvation, redemption, utopia, ideals, dreams, and alternatives.[19] First, hope is considered as a principle virtue in Judeo-Christian theology and figures in prominently to narratives and discourses regarding eschatological waiting, messianic expectations, eternal salvation, ethical redemption, and final judgment. Religious authorities and communities uphold it as a spiritual gift and personal disposition that is actively acquired, maintained, and cultivated through heavenly grace,[20] while theologians place considerable emphasis on the concept as a virtuous, functional, and enabling orientation and disposition that corresponds to God's promised future.[21] Hope, for example, features strongly in Jürgen Moltmann's *Theology of Hope*, and is an essential element in Harvard theologian, Paul Hanson's idea of a 'community of faith.'[22] The positioning of hope in the realm of 'transcendental ethics,' however, has only worked to the detriment of the concept, as it obfuscates the complex network of power relations and temporo-spatial affirmations that

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[19] Phillip Mar, "Unsettling Potentialities: Topographies of Hope in Transnational Migration," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 26, no. 4 (2005): 364.

[20] Jarrett Zigon, "Hope dies last: Two aspects of hope in contemporary Moscow," *Anthropological Theory* 9, no. 3 (2009): 256.

[21] Jaklin Eliott, "What Have We Done With Hope? A Brief History," in *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hope*, ed. Jaklin Eliott (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2005), 5.

[22] Crapanzano, 5.

make up an expression of hope, and invites unfair associations with wishful thinking, blind faith,

illusory expectations, and deluded belief. By particularizing hope as 'the proper attitude and

outlook' of upstanding believers and fixing strong religious connotations to the concept of hope,

then, the Judeo-Christian tradition only contributed to the gradual occultation of the

phenomenology and ontology of hope, and created a fissure between hope and politics by

ensuring that its entry into the political field would be a categorical mistake.

Likewise, the assumption of a close relationship between hope and utopia has also had a

pernicious impact on the study of hope, as many academics have banished hope (alongside

utopia) to the realm of 'unavailing anachronisms' with the relative failure of socialist and utopian

experiments in the 1960s. Utopias, as they are traditionally conceived, are perfect spatial

elsewheres.[23] The attainability or impossibility of utopias is debated (usually along religious and

secular lines), but the 'figure of the city' or 'paradise' has long since been intertwined with

utopia, and it is widely maintained that utopian imaginaries involve spatial play. This is,

however, precisely why utopianism has fallen on hard times. Utopias require for their existence

as such (i.e. their ideality and state of perfection) a fixed spatial structure that excludes "the

temporality of the social process, the dialectics of social change – real history."[24] But a perfect

ideal state immunized against process, finitude, and contingency, cannot exist or function as a

practical social force – we can never escape time's arrow. Consider, for example, Thomas

More's *Utopia*. More's artificially created island is only able to achieve a perfect harmonious

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[23] While there has been attempts to revitalize utopianism by appealing to the notions of 'utopias of process' or 'spatio-temporal utopias' (See Boris Frankel, *The Post-Industrial Utopians* and David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*) in what follows I only consider traditional utopian formulations (which are spatial in form) because (1) the usual association between hope and utopia is one in which they are both taken as synonymous for 'spatial ideals,' and (2) while the concept of a 'process-oriented utopia' is formidable, I am not convinced that it does not completely falsify the notion of a utopia.

[24] David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 160.

moral and social order by excluding "the potentially disruptive social forces of money, private property, wage labor, exploitation (the workday is six hours), internal (though not external) commodity exchange, capital accumulation, and the market process (though not a market place).[25] Had he included these features in society the utopia would have destroyed itself. The exclusion of temporal processes, however, ensures that the utopia could never be instantiated, as the forces that would mobilize its materialization are prohibited.

It is no wonder then that many consider utopianism as dead; utopias "elude the constraints of efficient and durable action and the hard paradoxes of institution, authority, sovereignty, law, and coercion," and, consequently, can never actualize as such – they offer a point of arrival, but no pathway. All the same, we should not make the mistake of throwing out hope with utopia. Whereas utopia is an imagined spatial order in the future that excludes temporality, hope exists in the present as a spatio-temporal system. Utopia establishes an impossible far-off ideal, while hope constitutes a present and future, and confronts us as a temporo-spatial *trajectory* linking the here/now to then/there and *vehicle* to move along the groove (i.e. as agency). Utopia is an impossible ideal, while hope is a regulative ideal. So, ultimately, hope is unaffected by the damaging 'futility' claims brought up against utopia and should not be associated with the latter. Affiliating hope with utopia only effaces its productive power and conceals the fact that hope – a lines, planes, and bodies producing machinic assemblage – is anything but an impotent and otiose notion.

1.3   Metonymic Slides

Another troubling phenomenon in the hope literature is the subtle conflation of hope with alternatives, social transformation, or optimism about change. Hope is of course inextricably

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[25] Harvey, 159-160.

linked to progressive and emancipatory politics – as Lisa Duggan recognized, "most calls to progressive left organizing stress the importance of finding and sustaining hope"[26] – but these metonymic slides only work to draw our attention away from hope *per se* and towards unavailing normative discussions of 'good' hopes/alternatives and 'bad' hopes/alternatives, defeated statements about the hegemony of capitalism, or quixotic declarations of alternative political possibilities. And while these discussions can be interesting at time, they are played out, and they obfuscate some of the most interesting questions that arise when we consider hope as something that works, constitutes, and effects. *How is it that capitalism has come to be seen as the only political possibility? Why is imagining other accounts of viable spatio-temporal relations so difficult? What are the conditions and assumptions under which we are trying to imagine future possibilities?* These are all questions that can be addressed through a critical interrogation of hope but that are nonetheless swept aside in discussions about 'finding hope for alternatives.'

Zournazi's work is perhaps most guilty of this metonymic slide. Her book, *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*, can hardly be ignored by anyone interested in the subject of hope, not least of all because its distinctive conversational format allows the readers access to Zournazi's conversation with some of the world's most renown writers and intellectuals: Alphonso Lingis, Michael Taussig, Julia Kristeva, Nikos Papastergiadis, Christos Tsiolkas, Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, Ghassan Hage, Gayatri Spivak, Michel Serres, Brian Massumi, and Isabelle Stengers. The book is advanced as a reflection on hope that works towards the development of a philosophy and politics of hope for the Left by exploring the various facets and contours of hope.[27] And as one might expect from a book about hope that engages with such brilliant thinkers, Zournazi's conversations read as elegant, inspiring, and perceptive expositions of the

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[26] Duggan and Muñoz, 275.
[27] Zournazi, 19.

idea of hope. In dialogue with Mouffe and Laclau, we learn of the relation between hope and mobilization, and how easily hope is appropriated by the populist movements of the Right;[28] with Hage we examine how hope is unevenly distributed in capitalist societies;[29] in conversation with Spivak we see the relationship between hope and crisis in political struggles;[30] and with Massumi we come to understand hope as an affective experience that is intimately tied to movement.[31] However, notwithstanding the many particular insights and astute observations that are strewn across the pages of the book (and which have in fact deeply influenced my own thoughts on hope, as we shall see in later chapters), Zournazi's own purpose and focus end up obscuring and diluting the concept of hope, and *Hope: New Philosophies for Change* ultimately becomes a discussion of: 'where and how the Left can locate hope for social transformation and progressive politics amid the hegemony of capitalism and neoliberalism,' and 'can we be optimistic about the possibility of social transformation?'

The book in itself emerged as a response to (and was entirely shaped by) "one of the most despairing and 'hopeless' periods" of Zournazi's life.[32] She is candid about writing the book during a painful stretch of time when she was dealing with "the death of a close friend, the ending of a relationship, unemployment, and lack of faith in the political process,"[33] and admits that "hope and change, it is said, are about 'the end of our winter days', but in the years of writing this book I sometimes felt that my winter had only just begun."[34] In fact, a general anxiety regarding the Left's inability to formulate alternatives to capitalism pervades the book,

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[28] Zournazi, 122.
[29] Ibid., 150.
[30] Ibid., 172.
[31] Ibid., 210.
[32] Ibid., 274.
[33] Ibid.,
[34] Ibid., 14.

and it is clear that Zournazi undertook the project as a means of lifting herself out of despair and experiencing hope, both as an individual and Leftist academic. Given the original purpose of the book, then, Zournazi frames all of the interviews as discussions of 'hopeful visions of a better social and political future' and 'where hope for social transformation can be found in everyday life, experience, and politics.'[35] Put otherwise, hope *per se* barely figures into Zournazi's account; she either considers hope as a discussion of 'alternatives to capitalism' or 'possibilities' that will push forward the emancipatory politics of the Left (i.e. 'hope is an ethical issue'), or considers it as a feeling of optimism amidst disparaging circumstances (i.e. 'hope is a state of mind'). In brainstorming for alternatives, Zournazi not only overlooks hope's central role in capitalism's longevity, but she also refuses to seriously engage with why the Right has been able to appropriate 'societal hope' and 'political possibilities' so thoroughly – considerations that need to be addressed if we are truly interested in actualizing political alternatives.

1.4   Uncritical Acclaim and Reverence

Finally, the last type of reflection that pervades the literature on hope is one of undue reverence and praise of hope as an ethical and responsible orientation and political practice. Within this school of thought, hope is approached as a *method* of engagement with the world instead of as a subject matter or object of study, and proponents make sweeping calls for the practice of hope: "There is, or so I claim, a specific, deliberately adopted and sustained attitude that best supports those who aim to engage in political practice that is fully responsible. This is the attitude of a properly conceived hope,"[36] while extolling the virtues of hope in their pedagogies: "It is a question of leaning hope. Its work does not renounce, it is in love with

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[35] Zournazi, 19.

[36] Bernard P. Dauenhauer, "The Place of Hope in Responsible Political Practice," in *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hope*, ed. Jaklin Eliott (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2005), 81.

success rather than failure."[37] Here, theorists choose to focus less on the ethical questions

surrounding the content and consequences of hope, and more on the function of hope as an

ethical practice and orientation. They advance both a reflection *on* hope, and a politics *of* hope.

Suitably then, this next section delves into the work of two of hope's biggest advocators:

Bloch and Rorty. Both theorists uphold hope as an ethical method of engagement with politics,

imbue hope with great emancipatory potential and oppositional consciousness, and place

extraordinary faith in the ability of hope to push forward their Marxist and Liberal goals,

respectively. At root, their seductive endorsements of hope are founded on two crucial

assumptions: (1) *hope is an agent of change*. It names the functional motivation and prospective

energy or agency that a subject is endowed with when they begin to transform the present and

achieve a futural goal; and (2) *hope is superior to fear*, a belief derived from reflection on the

tone of the age, as it is hardly controversial to claim that contemporary politics has been

predominantly shaped by the amplification and distribution of fear. As Susan McManus notes,

"The political landscape is scarred by the cultivation, intensification, mobilization and

calibration of fear, in response to risks and threats from the economic and ecological, to the

amorphous and relentlessly virological, to the persistent and ever more insidious 'security'

measures core to the strange war of terror/counterterror."[38] Hope, then, is presented as an

antidote to fear that galvanizes people into transformative action through its agential capacities

and "disruptive forward glance."[39] And while this line of thinking is difficult to quarrel with in

the abstract (and tends to reflect our intuitive assumptions about hope), it is nonetheless highly

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[37] Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight, 3 volumes (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1986), 3.
[38] Susan McManus, "Hope, Fear, and the Politics of Affective Agency," *Theory & Event* 14, no. 4 (2011): 2.
[39] Ibid.

problematic in principle and in practice. As we shall come to see, the unequivocal privileging of

hope as an ethical and emancipatory orientation disregards the conditions under which a subject

is enabled to hope, and encourages us to ignore the fact that hope is always expressed in relation

to an account of possibilities and a temporo-spatial trajectory leading to the former, both of

which require an authoritative act of drawing a limit and a line.

1.4.1   Bloch and the Imperative of Hope

If there were ever an authority on 'hope' it would be the utopian Marxist philosopher,

Ernst Bloch. With a voluminous corpus almost entirely devoted to the subject, his very own

proper adjective of hope (Blochian hope), and the revered title of 'the political philosopher of

hope,' it should come as no surprise that hope theorists rarely ignore Bloch's magnum opus, *The*

Principle of Hope in their work, even if only to extend a courteous nod in his direction. What is

interesting, however, is that most of the 'hope theory' literature looks to *The Principle of Hope*

as a lengthy study of the widespread manifestations of hope and proclaims Bloch's primary

contribution to be the justification and celebration of hope or utopianism.[40] Ruth Levitas, for

example, states that "Bloch's central project… is the rehabilitation of the concept of utopia. In

attempting this, he draws attention to the utopian element in a wide range of cultural forms,"[41]

while Darren Webb remarks that Bloch "treated hope as a highly differentiated human

experience and *The Principle of Hope* offers a lengthy meditation on the various modes in which

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[40] Bloch uses the terms 'hope' and 'concrete utopia' interchangeably but employs the term 'concrete utopia' in a very particular sense. For him, concrete 'utopianizing' is the positive effecting and anticipating the future; it *does not* coincide with an ideal/perfect state/non-place. (See Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 12 and 15.)

[41] Ruth Levitas, "Educated Hope: Ernst Bloch on Abstract and Concrete Utopia," *Utopian Studies* 1, no. 2 (1990): 13.

it has become manifest."[42] I argue, however, that while the celebration of hope is certainly an

important thematic in Bloch's work, it is only one part of a much more magnanimous project to

explore the function of hope as a method of engagement with the world in order to expose the

power of hope to catalyze a better future. In this way, then, it is clear that Bloch's theory

constitutes a significant departure from the theorists of hope that pay homage to him, for as

Hirokazu Miyazaki has pointed out, "Bloch's proposal does not treat hope as a *subject* of

knowledge. Rather, it is a proposal to regard hope as a *method*."[43] Accordingly, Bloch's project

in *The Principle of Hope* consists of two parts, one that is celebratory and another that is

didactic. He advances both an evaluative system for distinguishing between fraudulent and

genuine hope, and a critical pedagogy that stresses the centrality and function of hope in political

praxis and radical social transformation. Above all, however, Bloch is interested in realizing

Marxist goals and believes that the widespread adaptation of hope will ensure this – *The*

Principle of Hope should therefore be read as Bloch's plea and apologia for society to learn

'hope.'[44]

 In attempting this argument, Bloch develops a distinction between abstract and concrete

utopia. The distinction proves crucial to his overall argument insofar as: (1) it works to address

and counteract the pejorative accounts that have discredited utopian thinking for centuries as

futile dreams and musings disconnected from reality. With the evaluative concepts of

abstract/'bad' utopia and concrete/'good' utopia, the derogatory sense of the term utopia remains

with abstract utopia, while the positive aspects get pinned onto concrete utopia/hope; and (2)

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[42] Darren Webb, "Exploring the Relationship between Hope and Utopia: Towards Conceptual Framework," *Political Studies Association POLITICS* 28, no. 3 (2008): 198.
[43] Hirokazu Miyazaki, *The Method of Hope: Anthropology, Philosophy, and Fijian Knowledge* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 11.
[44] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 3.

considering that Bloch sees all of human activity as essentially 'hopeful' (i.e. oriented towards an imagined future) and discerns utopian images in music, architecture, literature, religion, and the economy, the distinction allows him to preemptively absolve concrete utopia from any suggestion that it is mundane, trivial, or insignificant.

For Bloch, abstract utopia is immature, wishful thinking that compensates but does not anticipate. It is either a desire to transform one's place in the world, but not the world itself – "There is enough happiness in the world, only not for me: the wish tells itself this, wherever it goes. And it thus also demonstrates, of course, that it merely wishes to break out of the world somewhat, not that it wants to change it;"[45] – or a desire for a transformed future that is "without relation to the Real-Possible," as it is not feasible given the current state and interaction of will (i.e. human agents) and world (i.e. material reality).[46] Concrete utopia, however, "reaches forward to a real possible future, and involves not merely wishful but will-full thinking."[47] It is not simply desire but *hope* for a transformed future that is produced through the combination of the *warm stream* of desire, imagination, and passion, and the *cold stream* of analysis of the "historical-situational stretch" and objective possibility.[48] Concrete utopia (hope) distinguishes itself from abstract utopia through its conative element or "act-content" – its movement towards the Not-Yet-Arrived – which is, ultimately, the "positive utopian function of hope" that Bloch wants to draw our attention to.[49]

Having laid down this reflection on hope, Bloch is free to lay out his politics *of* hope through an exposé of its function ("docta spes"). In this context, his primary insight is the

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[45] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 33.
[46] Ibid., 145.
[47] Levitas, 15.
[48] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 209.
[49] Ibid., 146.

insistence that concrete utopia is immanent in the present as a disruptive and mobilizing force, or prospective momentum that encroaches on the future. For Bloch, the ontological status of 'present reality' is not settled, static, or closed; reality is an incomplete 'open system' that can only be understood as presence and absence, of what is, what is becoming, and might become. It is constituted by a three-dimensional temporality: the unfinished past, what has become, and above all, possible future (i.e. the unrealized latent potentialities and tendencies contained within the present). As Bloch puts it, the present reality:

> …rules *together with the horizon within it*, which is the horizon of the future, and which gives to the flow of the present specific space, the space of new, feasibly better present. Thus the beginning philosophy of revolution, i.e. of changeability for the better, was ultimately revealed on and in the *horizon of the future*; with the science of the New and power to guide it.[50]

Our task, then, is to acknowledge these latencies and tendencies and assume an 'Anticipatory Consciousness' that works towards enacting a better future by pushing the Not-Yet forward towards realization.[51]

Traditional contemplative philosophy, however, does not lend itself well to this task, as "contemplation can only refer by definition to What Has Become," and cannot grasp the Not-Yet or Becoming that resides in the present.[52] Recourse to anamnesis and its associated teleological courses presupposes a closed world with fixed categories that have already become (i.e. it regards reality as dead), which overwhelms what is approaching with What Has Been: "the collection of things that have become totally obstructs the categories Future, Front, Novum."[53] As Bloch laments,

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[50] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 283.
[51] Ibid., 18.
[52] Ibid., 8.
[53] Ibid.

…the previous lovers of wisdom, even the materialist ones, posited the Authentic as already ontically existing, in fact statically closed: from the water of the simple Thales to the In-and-For-Itself of the absolute Hegel. Time and again, it was ultimately the ceiling of Plato's anamnesis above dialectically open Eros which kept out and, in a contemplative antiquarian fashion, closed off previous philosophy, including Hegel, from the seriousness of the Front and the Novum.[54]

Ultimately, this is troublesome for Bloch because it seals off the genuine and open transformative social action that is possible within reality's 'open-system' ontology. The inability of contemplative knowledge to grasp the 'Novum' – that something that has not yet realized itself but is coming into being on the horizon of the real[55] – or to address the "future of the genuine, processively open kind" forecloses the possibility of affecting or being affected by the Not-Yet.[56] Put otherwise, the retrospective character of contemplation is temporally incongruent with the prospective character of reality and, as a result, is not responsive to futuristic properties in the present and cannot act as a driving force for intervening in the Not-Yet and fostering change.

Hope then becomes an imperative as a method for engaging with the world because unlike contemplation, it does act as a driving force and catalyst for social transformation. Hope suggests a radical temporal reorientation away from What Has Become and towards the future, the Becoming, and the Not-Yet. It acknowledges a lack or absence in the present, and "heralds the possibility that the spatial/temporal here and now may become otherwise."[57] Moreover, according to Bloch, hope's anticipation of a possible future also entails a prospective momentum, or commitment to action that is directed at changing the world: "Only thinking directed towards changing the world and informing the desire to change it does not confront the

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[54] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 17-18.
[55] Ibid., 193.
[56] Ibid., 8.
[57] Ben Anderson and Jill Fenton, "Spaces of Hope," *Space and Culture* 11, no. 2 (2008): 76.

future (the unclosed space for new development in front of us) as embarrassment and the past as spell."[58] *Hope, in other words, is anchored in the present as agency*, it is the driving force that confronts Becoming and carves out a trajectory towards the New.[59] Hope activates the utopian latencies and tendencies within the present by acting as conscious action oriented towards their realization in the future, or as Bloch puts it, by acting "as exodus – though into the always intended promised land, promised by process."[60] In brief, Bloch suggests that we divorce ourselves from contemplation and adopt the principle of hope because hope acts as both the *catalyst* for social transformation and *driving force* on the path to the New: Hope is "nothing other than the driving force, the That-factor, consequently the intensive aspect of the realizing element itself."[61] Or, to put it even more briefly, Bloch urges us to engage with the world through *hope* because hoping for something better entails taking action aimed at negating the present and achieving the future.

1.4.2   Rorty's Justification Through Hope

Interestingly enough, Bloch is not alone in calling for hope as a method of engagement with the world. As Miyazaki has pointed out, Bloch's "intense concern with hope resonates, albeit in an unexpected manner, with the American pragmatist Richard Rorty's own turn to hope."[62] Like Bloch, Rorty's endorsement of hope stems from his concern with making the future better than the present and his belief in meliorism – "the abilities of human effort to create better future realities."[63] Both thinkers take issue with traditional approaches to inquiry that have

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[58] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 8.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid., 205.
[61] Ibid., 193.
[62] Miyazaki, 14.
[63] Colin Koopman, "Pragmatism as a Philosophy of Hope: Emerson, James, Dewey, Rorty," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 20, no. 2 (2006): 109.

impeded this transformative capacity. They view 'the method of hope' as a positive alternative to the backwards temporal direction of knowledge formation that was inherited from the Greek's anamnesis, and as a much needed break with traditional philosophy, which, according to Rorty, has been "an attempt to lend the past the prestige of the eternal."[64] In fact, their theories of hope only fundamentally differ in their emphasis – whereas Bloch focuses on the *prospective energy* inherent in hope, Rorty chooses to concentrate on the *justification for action* inherent in hope. At bottom, they are both urging society to adopt hope and abandon the quest for certainty, stability, and essence – to stop attempting to understand the world and start trying to change it.

For Rorty, however, the value of hope only becomes apparent through an exploration of Pragmatism and, in particular, the work of his philosophical hero, John Dewey. Pragmatists reject the 'correspondence theory of truth' and oppose the idea that the task of inquiry is to mirror or represent the 'real world.' They believe that the Platonic quest to penetrate behind the veil of appearances to find the intrinsic nature of reality is futile, as there is no such thing as 'things as they *really are*.' The usual objects of philosophical theorizing and inquiry – truth, knowledge, morality, and reason – have no essence or intrinsic nature. External reality permanently secured in some transcendental realm does not exist.[65] This rejection of ahistorical essence or foundation does, however, have consequences. As Rorty admits, the philosophers who eschew the Greek appearance-reality binary, "must abandon the traditional philosophical project of finding something stable which will serve as a criterion for judging the transitory products of our transitory needs and interests… We have to give up on the idea that there are unconditional, ahistorical human nature."[66] And this is potentially troublesome for pragmatists, as it becomes

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[64] Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope* (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 30.
[65] Ibid., 49.
[66] Ibid., xvi.

difficult to answer the questions: why is X justified? why is X ethical? and why is X better than Y? when you have discarded all the conventional answers and have no justificatory foundation.

It is in regard to these questions that Rorty finds solace in hope, as hope *is* justification for action in the present; *it is the solution to our lack of ultimate grounds*. Drawing on Dewey and his desire to make philosophy an instrument of change rather than conservation, Rorty suggests that in politics we "substitute *hope* for the sort of knowledge which philosophers have usually tried to attain."[67] When there is no foundation for belief and action, and no 'truth' to aim inquiry at, justification (i.e. explaining the purpose or utility) is the only resource available to us. And, again, when there are no unchanging principles to base justification on, according to Rorty, believing that it will contribute to a better human future is the only justification that we can have; we can only *hope* that our actions and principles will be useful for creating a better future, that it will increase human solidarity, freedom, and equality. Humanity will never have the certainty and knowledge that Plato and Aristotle aspired to, but we can hope that the action we take will transform an unsatisfactory present into a more satisfactory future. This is what is distinctive about pragmatists: taking inspiration from Charles Darwin, they are fully willing "to refer all questions of all ultimate justification to the future, to the substance of things hoped for… The only justification of a mutation, biological or cultural, is its contribution to the existence of a more complex and interesting species somewhere in the future."[68] Pragmatists have substituted our notions of reality, reason, and nature for the notion of a better human future – reason and justification are cast into the future, and only upon the future. So If you hope that A will be useful for X in the future, a pragmatist would say: 'A is a justified action.'

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[67] Rorty, 24.
[68] Ibid., 27.

1.4.3   With and Against Bloch and Rorty

What can be taken away from Bloch and Rorty's method of hope? Of course, their broad framework and underlying 'openness' and 'transformation' aspirations are quite attractive and difficult to take issue with. They eschew structural continuity and praise historical and structural change, they criticize predetermined ends and reject the idea that history is a teleological course disclosing 'essence,' they are progressive instead of reactionary, they regard the future as open instead of closed, and prioritize the 'new' over the security of the unchanging and the retrospective gaze. And in terms of their insight into 'the workings of hope' much is to be preserved. With Bloch, *the agential element* in hope is highlighted and it becomes clear that hope is a force of change. We see that the presence of hope heralds the possibility that the spatio-temporal now may become otherwise, and that, within the radical insufficiency of the present, hope can be found as the positive drive pulling the subject towards a representation of the future where they no longer reside in a state of lack – the "darkness of the lived moment is animated by venturing beyond into dreams of a better life."[69] With Rorty, *the justificatory* and *regulatory elements* in hope are highlighted and it becomes clear that hope is a plausible temporo-spatial narrative of progress (i.e. trajectories, means, and ends) that gives grounds for, and regulates, action in the present. We see that hope is a claim about the potentialities of a temporo-spatial process that would be enacted once a particular action is taken.

While I do not disagree with Bloch's argument that hope manifests as a catalyst for action and exodus trajectory towards a desirable state/object, or oppose Rorty's claim that hope is justification for action in the present, I do think that their praise of hope is misguided. They have approached the concept without thinking about power and authority and have therefore

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[69] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 11.

evaded many considerations that, when actually acknowledged, force us to think twice about the aggrandizement of hope as a political practice. That is to say, both Bloch and Rorty have fallen prey to the illusion of finality and free decrees and, as a result, have failed to acknowledge that *hope is an effect that is constituted by particular conditions of emergence.* It is true, of course, that we are in a condition such that our consciousness only registers effects (i.e. what happens to our body) and knows nothing of the causes, but it is a mistake to satisfy this ignorance of the forces, ideas, and order of composition and decomposition of relations acting on our body by taking effects for causes and construing an effect on the body as the final cause of its own actions (the illusion of finality) or by imagining consciousness as the 'organizer of ends' that holds power of the body (the illusion of free decrees).[70]

The overarching problem with both Bloch and Rorty's arguments is that they ontologically privilege the sovereign individual subject and *take the already constituted self-contained individual as a given.* In doing so, they impose strict analytical blinders on their field of vision and are limited to analyzing hope myopically as a disposition in the individual rather than as the result of an interaction with a field of forces. That is to say, Bloch and Rorty's analysis: (1) can only account for the characteristics of the individual – its 'hopefulness' – and must neglect its relation to the other forces that have conditioned its emergence yet disappeared in its production (i.e. they cannot remark on the process of ontogenesis); and (2) cannot comment on the larger assemblage that is produced in the process of (de)individuation (i.e. they cannot remark on other social, political, technological, or economic variations that occur as the

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[70] Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), 19- 20.

individual becomes hopeful).[71] Hope does not occur in a vacuum. And contrary to what Bloch and Rorty might have us believe, we do not simply will ourselves to hope, open up a route to emancipation and a better future, and then take flight out of our own accord. Hope is not the zero-point of action.

Hope may increase agency, and incite and justify action – but this is far from an intrinsically emancipatory recipe. To engage with an 'increase in agency' (i.e. an instance of empowerment) is always to engage with intervening forces and bodies that have reconstituted the subject and increased its capacity to act in such a way as to endow them with the necessary power to achieve a particular goal. To engage with an 'incitement to action' is always to engage with a particular account of space, vector, possibility and impossibility. And to engage with 'justification for action' is always to engage with the inscription of normative ends and a temporo-spatial pathway progressing towards it. So while the universalizing ambition of Bloch and Rorty is admirable, the extolment of the method of hope falls apart when we acknowledge that hope emerges as (and affirms) a particular account of possibility and route to achievement. Did not the United States count for its reason and justification for intervening in the Middle East upon the hope of democracy in the future? Was it not the hope of restoring Germany to greatness that initially allowed Hitler to rise to power? We should not be so naïve as to assume that fear belongs to dominant forces and that hope belongs to the emancipators seeking freedom, equality, security, and justice, nor should we subscribe to the modern narrative that proclaims the distinctive self-determining capacities of the individual. Hope is easily asymmetrically appropriated by those in positions of power, and individuals to do not simply will themselves to

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[71] Gilbert Simondon, "The Genesis of the Individual," *Incorporations*, ed. Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter, trans. Mark Cohen and Sanford Kwinter (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 298-299.

hope for a better future and then set about it. Both the capacity to hope and the contours of hope are shaped by a larger field of forces that the subject is embedded in.

Hope is hardly an innocent concept, nor is it as simple or trivial as some would have us believe. It always involves authoritative knowledge and a particular account about what the present is and why it is insufficient, what is possible and desirable in the future, and how the future will be actualized. Ignoring these facts will only work to distort the concept of hope, or over-determine it with progressive politics and social transformation leanings. Before we either commend (or indict) hope, and attribute little or a great deal of political significance to its operation, much more attention needs to be paid to what exactly the event of hope is, what its conditions of possibility are, how it works and effects, and how it is experienced and internalized by individuals – all questions that are addressed in the following two chapters.

2   The Phenomenology of Hope

The implementation of neoliberal policies and practices has generated new conditions of possibility for the British; now every one might get rich, including you – one simply must work hard.' This was the crux of the incredibly successful 'Thatcherism' that saw to Margaret Thatcher's eleven year run as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The leftist Labour party was completely unable to weaken her electoral appeal, not even among the working classes who suffered the most from the increase in unemployment that her policies resulted in. Their relentless emphasis on the inequalities that Thatcher's policies were generating and the tireless stricture: 'a few might get rich, but the majority will not' simply did not hold any weight. But, of course, it was because the Labour Party's counteroffensive missed the point. Thatcher's discourse was not successful because it promised that you 'would' get rich, it worked because it gave people the hope that they 'could' get rich, and identifying with this possibility was enough for them. "Wealth was right around the corner… maybe."[72]

The following chapter investigates and parses out the phenomenology of hope in an effort

to understand what the event of hope is, how it affects individual subjects, and how it pertains to

agency. To this end, I rely primarily on the rich theoretical stockpiles of Spinoza and Deleuze to

hone the conceptual tools necessary for an understanding of the experience of hope, and to

ultimately develop an argument that elevates hope to the political terrain as a concept that marks

the intersection of the somatic and the social, and the modulations of larger assemblages and

individual agency. The central argument advanced in this chapter is that hope is experienced as *a*

particular type of affect (i.e. a variation in capacity) *that is enveloped in an affection* (i.e. a

composition of power) – or, to be more precise, this chapter reads hope into Spinoza and

Deleuze's theory of affect and proposes that there are three important aspects of the

phenomenology of hope: (1) it is an increase in the subject's bodily capacity to act (as the result

of an encounter with another body), which (2) doubles over as consciously registered and

somatically felt power to act towards the object of desire, and thus (3) reconstitutes and

empowers the subject's body with the capacity to achieve the object of hope. Hope, in other

words, is a sense of empowerment – it is a new capacity to achieve a desirable goal. But

ultimately this argument is only the starting point. By adopting affect theory, we can take the

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[72] Slavoj Žižek, "It Doesn't Have to be a Jew," *Lusitania* I, no. 4 (1994): http://lacan.com/perfume/Zizekinter.htm.

phenomenology of hope in several directions and develop three interrelated secondary lines of thought. First, the Spinoza-Deleuze theory of affect allows us to account for the tendency to attribute positive significations to hope and negative significations to fear while dislodging these attributions from a transcendent system of values and repositioning them in a typology of immanent modes of existence. In their theory, the 'good' (joy/pleasure) and the 'bad' (sadness/sorrow) are two different variations in the power of acting. The good is that which increases or enhances power for acting, while the bad is that which decreases or restrains power for acting. This repositioning allows us to argue that *hope is pleasure* while nonetheless problematizing any *a priori* praise of hope, as its 'goodness' only resides in its universal law of production – particular assessments of an event of hope must consider the encounter that increased the subject's power to act before any normative qualifications can be made. Second, reading hope through affect theory allows us to dispel the notion of hope as a 'feeling that positively resides in a subject' and develop the stronger argument that hope boasts the productive power to reconstitute and inscribe the boundaries of the subject's body. And third, hope *qua* affect radically displaces the individual/collective human subject from the locus of agency, and suggests that a political analysis of hope can never examine the hoping subject in isolation and must always pay critical attention to the assemblage of forces enabling the subject's agency and the agency proper to the assemblage itself.

2.1   Affect versus Emotion

Before delving into an exegesis of the theory of affect it will be worthwhile to address a question that always seems to accompany appeals to affect: *is affect the same thing as emotion or feeling?* and briefly justify my reasons for rejecting this equivalence and assuming a particular understanding of affect. To be sure, the term 'affect' is a contested one – it is employed and

defined in a divergent manner in the broad spectrum of literature that engages with it. But more often than not, it is morphed into (or, at the very least, associated with) terms such as: mood, emotion, feeling, intensity, and passion. Fredric Jameson regards affect as a 'subjective feeling' that can be contrasted with "free-floating and impersonal" feelings he entitles 'intensities.'[73] Sara Ahmed and Lawrence Grossberg equate affect with emotion.[74] Antonio Damasio does the same but makes a further distinction between the psychological and linguistic: whereas emotions "play out in the theater of the body. Feelings play out in the theater of the mind."[75] And Brian Massumi defines affect as 'impersonal intensity,' and contrasts it with emotion, a 'qualified intensity' or "the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal… it is intensity owned and recognized."[76] While the debate is anything but settled, my understanding of affect comes primarily from Deleuze, who himself has retrieved affect from Spinoza's theory in *Ethics*, "where it had long been mutilated and reduced in translation as "affection" or "emotion." "[77] The confusion surrounding the term 'affect' in Spinoza's work comes primarily from translation inconsistencies. Two words appear quite regularly in *Ethics*: *affectio* and *affectus*. As the book was originally published in Latin, some translators have conflated the terms and translated both as 'affection,' while others still have taken *affectio* to mean 'affection' and *affectus* to mean 'feeling.' Following Deleuze, I view this

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[73] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 15-16.

[74] Ahmed; and Lawrence Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

[75] Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 2003), 28.

[76] Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movements, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 28.

[77] Gregory J. Seigworth, "From affection to soul," in *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, second edition, ed. Charles J. Stivale (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 182.

fusion as a translation error and consider *affectio* as 'affection' and *affectus* as 'affect.'[78] Accordingly, the term 'affect' in this paper will refer to Spinoza's *affectus*.

The Spinoza-Deleuze concept of affect provides us with an analytically rich concept that promises to make crucial headway in the task of understanding how hope is experienced, without falsifying or neglecting one of its many disparate facets. Much of the aforementioned literature on hope was deemed insufficient and misrepresentative because it failed to account for the full breadth of hope and often prioritized one of its features – be it the emotional, cognitive, subjective, social, or agential aspect – to the neglect of the others. Some of the literature ignored the social and political milieu surrounding the hoping subject while overemphasizing its agential element, while others went too far in the other direction and chose to wilfully forget that hope is a lived somatic and visceral sensation. This field of incoherence and contradictions is always the challenge to be faced when engaging with hope, as it can easily dissuade us from believing that a coherent and unified concept of hope is possible. We want to say that hope is a political concept but also a psychological concept, we want to say that it exists within a subject, but that it also occurs between bodies and exceeds subjective experience, and we want to say that hope is intimately related to drive, agency, mobilization, and change, but we also cannot help but acknowledge that hope may lead to docility and conformity with the agenda of a dominant power. And this precisely why the turn to affect allows for such a productive engagement with hope. The notion of affect allows us to develop a unified concept of hope while bypassing and

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[78] According to Deleuze, the translation of both terms into affection is a disaster. In his words, "I call this a disaster because when a philosopher employs two words, it's because in principle he has reason to, especially when French easily gives us two words which correspond rigorously to affectio and affectus, that is "affection" for affectio and "affect" for affectus." Gilles Deleuze, "Spinoza, Course Vincennes," *Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze*, trans. Timothy S. Murphy (1978).

encompassing these impasses: it brings together the social and the somatic, while accounting for embodied agency and larger networks and assemblages of power.

2.2   The Spinoza-Deleuze Theory of Affect

2.2.1   The Conative Body

The short answer as to why Spinoza is concerned with affect has to do with his larger ambition to venture off into a new philosophical direction. He wanted to establish the model of the body and learn *what the body can do* and *what forces belong to it*.[79] This is a central concern in *Ethics* and of fundamental significance for his larger philosophy. As he puts, "I shall consider human actions and appetites just as if it were a question of lines, planes, and bodies." For "the whole of nature is one individual, whose parts, that is, all bodies, in infinite ways."[80] Spinoza saw a peculiar vitality in all bodies – a *conatus* – or active impulse to persist: "Each thing, as far as it can by its own power, strives to persevere in its own being."[81] This power exists in all bodies – human and nonhuman – and is thus the nature of all material configurations.[82] And yet, despite the centrality of the conative body, Spinoza insisted that man was ignorant of what the body is capable of. In his words, "we speak of consciousness and its decrees, of the will and its effects, [which are only symptoms of a deeper bodily transformation] of the thousand ways of moving the body, of dominating the body and the passions – but *we do not even know what a body can do*."[83] In *Ethics*, Spinoza sets out to remedy this shortfall of philosophy, and this is precisely where we find affect entering into his thought. In his understanding, affect is

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[79] Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, ed. and trans. Edwin Curley (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 72.
[80] Ibid., 69, 43.
[81] Ibid., 75.
[82] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A political ecology of things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 2.
[83] Deleuze, *Spinoza*, 17-18.

fundamentally a bodily matter and a question of capacity and is thus the missing key promising

to open up the unknown of the body.

All the same, Spinoza distances himself from the familiar understanding of bodies, as he

does not consider the body to be a quantity. For Spinoza, (and Deleuze, by extension[84]) the body

is not a fixed medium or even a field of dynamic and chaotic forces, "for in fact there is no

"medium", no field of forces or battle."[85] The body – be it "an animal, a body of sounds, a mind

or an idea... a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity" – cannot be defined by its form or

function, nor as a substance, essence, or subject.[86] It is only constituted by an assemblage or

relation of forces[87] (i.e. modes of other bodies), which are themselves the effects of differential

relations between forces, and is thus only defined and distinguished by its *kinetic* and *dynamic*

determinations, or by its *longitude* and *latitude*, if we prefer Deleuzian terms. The kinetic

proposition or 'longitude' of the body refers to "the sum total of the material elements belonging

to it under given relations of motion and rest, speed and slowness" that make up its

individuality.[88] Whereas the dynamic proposition or 'latitude' of the body refers to the set of

capacities that it retains at each moment, "that is the intensive states of an *anonymous force*

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[84] Spinoza's concept of the body is mirrored in Deleuze's notion of the 'Body without Organs,' which is "not organized in accord with Oedipal relations, biological functions, organic forms, or cultural-historical values. Rather, a BwO deconstructs these seemingly inviolable arrangements, deterritorializing particles, intensities, energies in molecular lines of flows, thresholds and becomings." See Patty Sotirin, "Becoming-woman," in *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, second edition, ed. Charles J. Stivale (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 119-120.
[85] Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 39.
[86] Deleuze, *Spinoza*, 127.
[87] Within the Spinoza-Deleuze theory of affect, force is effectively generalized and simply refers to the power to act (i.e. the capacity to affect and be affected by other forces which are actualized in determinate form in material). All forces are differential and are essentially related to other forces. Each force's respective qualities are constituted by its quantities which are themselves determined by their quantitative difference from other forces. See Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, 42-43.
[88] Deleuze and Guattari, 260.

(force for existing, capacity for being affected)".[89] The body is always in transition and in the process of dissolving and reforming – it is always a relation between motion and rest – and each transition is accompanied by a variation in capacity to act. Put more succinctly, for Spinoza, the body can only be defined and distinguished pragmatically. What a body *is*, is what it can *do*. The map of the body – its very *haecceity* – is constituted by its *capacities*: the longitudes and latitudes that it carries from step to step, which are always changing, being altered, composed and recomposed, through interactions with others bodies and forces, and *by affects*, in effect.[90]

2.2.2   *Affectio* and *Affectus*

We are now ready to examine affect theory head on. Let us begin with the questions: what is affection (*affectio*)? and how is it different from and related to affect (*affectus*) in the Spinoza-Deleuze formulation? *Affectio* is, in the first instance, the modes of bodies (i.e. their state of essence/power) and in a second step, the transitive effect of these modes when they affect or are affected by an external mode (i.e. the state of a body as it encounters another body/ the effect of an encounter). Or, in Deleuze's summary:

> 1. The affections (*affectio*) are the modes themselves. The modes are the affections of substance or of its attributes… 2. At a second level, the affections designate that which happens to the mode, the modifications of the mode, the effects of other modes on it. These affections are therefore images or corporeal traces first of all… and their *ideas* involve both the nature of the affected body and that of the affecting external body.[91]

So *affectio* is that which names the instantaneous singularity or 'point of emergence' when forces impinge upon and reconstitute the corporeal topography of a body – it is a spatial state that arises from a passage from one state to another. But insofar as *affectio* is irreducible to the preceding and current state, it must be true that every *affectio* (i.e. every determinate relation of movement

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[89] Deleuze, *Spinoza*, 127-128.
[90] Ibid., 128.
[91] Ibid., 48.

and rest, speed and slowness) envelops and implicates a passage, *a lived phenomenon of duration*, by which the *affectio* is arrived at (and by which it is left for another *affectio*). And this is where a*ffectus* (affect) enters the picture, as affect *is* the passage; it is the transition or 'intensive variation' wherein the body's capacity to act – its 'force of existing' – is either augmented or diminished, aided or restrained.[92] Here, again, Deleuze's summary may be helpful:

> These continual durations or variations of perfection are called "affects," or feelings (*affectus*)... It has been remarked that as a general rule the affection (*affectio*) is said directly of the body, while the affect (*affectus*) refers to the mind. But the real difference does not reside there. It is between the body's affection and idea, which involves the nature of the external body, and the affect, which involves an increase or decrease of the power of acting, for the body and the mind alike. The *affectio* refers to a state of the affected body and implies the presence of the affecting body, whereas the *affectus* refers to the passage from one state to another, taking into account the correlative variation of the affecting bodies.[93]

So for Spinoza and Deleuze, then, affect is a lived passage that is either augmenting or diminishing the body's capacity to act. It is, quite literally, an intensity (a difference) that is then actualized and defined by its extensity through the affection.

At this point we should perhaps be a bit more explicit about what Spinoza and Deleuze mean when they say that affect decreases or increases the body's power to act. Let us begin with what is meant by a decrease in power. When I encounter another body whose relation does not compose with me, a sort of fixation occurs, "a part of my power is entirely devoted to investing and to isolating the trace, on me, of the object which doesn't agree with me."[94] Imagine that I encounter an aggressive individual on the street while out for a walk. A new composition of relations that does not agree with me immediately occurs, and a fixation quickly follows. A part

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[92] Spinoza, 70.
[93] Deleuze, *Spinoza*, 49.
[94] Deleuze, "Spinoza, Cours Vincennes."

of my power becomes devoted to circumscribing the effect of this encounter; I invest in the trace of the other body that is deterritorialized in me and I invest in the effect this trace is having on me – all in an effort to divorce it from my body, to subtract it and mitigate the effect that does not agree with me. This is what it means to say that my power has been decreased: the amount of power I devote to circumscribing the disagreeable trace and effects of the encounter is the amount of my power that is decreased, as it is removed from me and no longer at my disposal. I no longer have the power to daydream or to send a text message on my phone because my thoughts are caught up in ensuring my safety, and I no longer have the power to walk slowly along the sidewalk because I must hastily change directions to avoid the aggressor. Both of these powers are immobilized by the encounter, as I am invested in warding off the effects of the other body. In other words, "It is not that I have less power, it is that a part of my power is subtracted in this sense that it is necessarily allocated to averting the action of the thing."[95] On the contrary, when a body increases its power there is no equivalent fixation or investment of a part of its power. Imagine that I put on sunscreen while outside on a sunny day. This new composition of relations agrees with me and my power is increased. I become a superior individual that encompasses the part of the sunscreen that scatters ultraviolet radiation and dissipates its heat. My power is expanded and I now have the capacity to avoid sunburn and mitigate skin aging – the sunscreen and I are now the two sub-individualities of a newly constituted and formidable individual.

This variation in capacity is not, however, the full extent of affect – the event of affect always consists of a (somewhat) disjunctive self-coinciding when the body recognizes itself as itself. This is where Spinoza links affect to sensation, as affects are always doubled when the

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[95] Deleuze, "Spinoza, Cours Vincennes."

body registers the effect of the encounter and, as a result, also resonate in the emotional and

cognitive spectrum. In the same instance as the lived intensity of the *affectus* is embodied, the

'trace' left from the encounter is *doubled* by an experience of the experience and the new

'capture' of capacity is re-registered as an (already) felt state of the body, and socio-linguistically

qualified.[96] In other words, the effect of the impingement turns inward and is folded into the

body and doubled by 'the idea of the idea of the affection'[97] – or 'the feeing of having a feeling'

– and attains the level of conscious reflection. Massumi summarizes this 'second order' of affect

well:

> The link to sensation comes in with the added remark that the variation in intensity is *felt*.
> This brings us back to… self-relation: the feeling of transition by nature stretches
> between phases of a continuing movement. The sensed aspect of intensity doubles the
> affect understood as pure capacity.[98]

Affect, in other words, manifests as emotion when the intensity becomes "owned and

recognized" by the subject and the increase (or decrease) in capacity is socio-linguistically

fixed.[99] But again, the variation of the body is ontologically privileged, and affect cannot be

reduced to the 'sociolinguistic determinations' or 'idea.'[100] *Passage precedes constructions*, and

in spite of the fact that the construction does back-form the reality of the passage, the transition

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[96] As Massumi has pointed out, this doubling gives the body (in its infinite variation) a kind of depth that stays with it throughout all of its transitions and recomposition. See Brian Massumi, "Navigating Movements," in *Hope: New Philosophies for Change,* by Mary Zournazi (New York: Routledge, 2003): 213.

[97] For Spinoza, the word 'idea' refers simply to a representational mode of thought that, insofar as it represents something, has an objective reality in its own right.

[98] Massumi, *Parables*, 15-16.

[99] Of course, an emotion is only a partial expression of the affect and does not encompass the full depth of the body's 'experience of experiencing.'

[100] Affect *as such* is distinct from the idea (i.e. the qualified intensity) – it is strictly speaking a "a fall or rise in the power of acting" – but is all the same constituted by the idea, as the variation or lived passage from one capacity to another is determined by ideas. See Deleuze, "Spinoza, Course Vincennes."

in the body's capacity to act is ontologically privileged insofar as it is the condition of emergence for the body's ideas.[101]

This theory of affect can also be explored through a Deleuze-specific conceptual vocabulary. In the Deleuzian lexicon, affect is first and foremost a *becoming* – it is an event wherein an encounter with other bodies forms an emergent symbiotic unity that endows the subject with new forces (i.e. capacities) and thus a new composition of movement and rest, speed and slowness (i.e. a new self-organization).[102] Take for example one of Deleuze's favourite illustrations of this process: the coupling of the orchid and wasp, their shared deterritorialization, and the capture of code and increase in valence that occurs. As the orchid encounters the wasp, the wasp becomes a liberated component of the orchid's reproductive apparatus (i.e. it leaves a trace), while the orchid is reterritorialized by the wasp's transportation of its pollen and becomes a component of an orgasm in the wasp.[103] The *becoming* is a new unity between the wasp and orchid that nevertheless maintains the heterogeneity between the two bodies. It is a 'veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp… the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization ever further."[104] Additionally, while affect is always a process and variation, Deleuze also approaches affect in a more synchronic fashion through the concept of *intensity*, which is itself the result of a process of *emergence* (i.e. the diachronic composition of a body that achieves a synchronic regime of trans-bodily capacity/individuation). *Intensity* – or, the morphogenetic production of a spatio-temporal individuation – is the mediating register between the *virtual* (i.e. the purely differential field of topology that is composed of differential elements and relations,

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[101] Massumi, *Parables*, 8.
[102] Deleuze and Guattari, 258-259.
[103] Ibid., 293.
[104] Ibid., 10.

and that governs the emergence of intensive properties and processes) and the *actual* (i.e. the set of stable bodies endowed with extensive modes, ideas, and sensations), *from the point of view of the actual*.[105]

To sum up affect in a short hand formula, then, we should say that affect is an increase or decrease in a body's capacity to affect and be affected – an index of power that measures the force of a body – that re-individuates the subject and is doubled over and registered as the felt reality of this new relation.[106] And here, already, it is appropriate to revisit the claim made at the beginning of this chapter: phenomenologically speaking, hope is affect *par excellence*; it is experienced as an increase in bodily capacity (through the encounter with other bodies) that doubles over as a consciously felt and somatically registered power to act. Or, put more succinctly, hope is the feeling of an augmented power to act that occurs when a reservoir of agency ensuing from an encounter with another body is internalized as the ability to act. Of course, hope does ontologically require *affectio* insofar as it involves the following processual logic: *affectio* (as the mode of the body) – *affectus* – *affectio* (as the new mode of the body), but this not a matter for our present concerns and will be expanded on in the next chapter.

2.3   Hope and the Good/Bad Typology of Immanent Modes of Existence

… the action is a virtue! Why? Because it is something that my body can do; don't ever forget the theme of power (puissance). It is in my body's power. So it is a virtue, and in this sense it is the expression of a power.
– Gilles Deleuze

Much insight into the event of hope can be accrued by reading hope through the Spinoza-Deleuzian theory of affect. First, the Spinoza-Deleuze theory of affect accounts for why theorists (like Bloch and Rorty) are so prone to upholding hope as a necessary 'good' and ethical

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[105] John Protevi, *Political Affect: Connecting the Social and the Somatic* (Minneapolis: the University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 11.

[106] Power, for Spinoza, always coincides with action. Power – *potentia* – is always a being's capacity for action (i.e. capacity to affect and be affected). See Deleuze, *Spinoza*, 97-98.

disposition while attaching negative significations to the practice of fear. Their theory brings these qualifications of hope and fear back to the level of the body and, in doing so, allows us to develop a more nuanced understanding of why these qualifications are so common. Ultimately, this section problematizes the *a priori* exaltation of hope as a 'good and ethical disposition,' but contends that this tendency will not likely falter as *hope in itself (as opposed to the achievement of the hope's object) is pleasure.*

Why is hope *qua* affect 'good' and fear *qua* affect 'bad'? Let us begin, once again, with the body. As we know, the essence of an individual is a degree of power that corresponds to a *latitude*: the characteristic relations/capacities for affecting and being affected, and a *longitude*: the particular state (or an affection) of relations of force; the reality that expresses a power to act. Bodies are always encountering other bodies – the formation of a new relation of relations never stops – so a body is continuously re-composing its individuation. For Spinoza, the good and the bad belong to these compositions of individuation insofar as goodness and badness are questions of the composition of power. However, while good/bad are instantaneous states of essence, *they are from the point of view of the affect* insofar as these very states are constituted *as such* and differ according to the affect (i.e. the passage which increases or decreases the power of acting) that has produced their existence.[107] It follows, then, that a 'bad' composition of power is one that has been produced by an encounter with another body that has decomposed the subject body's relation and diminished its power to act, while a 'good' composition of power is one that has been produced by an encounter with another body that has compounded with the subject body's relation and increased its power to act. So, for example, drinking poison is considered bad because poison's composition is such that its encounter with our body will not agree with our

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[107] Deleuze, *Spinoza*, 41.

essence and we will enter into a new relation that has decreased our power to act. Eating healthy

food, however, is considered good insofar as its encounter with our body agrees with our essence

and will combine with our relation in such a way as to increase our power.[108] Every state of

essence (i.e. composition of power) is instantaneous and expresses an absolute quantity of

reality, but it is one that envelops a variation in the power to act, and it is only on this stratum,

and from the point of view of the passage, that there is good and bad.

Spinoza also gives 'good' and 'bad' alternative names to better mark out their contours as

lived power: 'joy' and 'sadness,' and this is where we should locate the tendency to champion

hope and denigrate fear.[109] Joy is the affect that increases the body's power and sadness is the

affect that decreases the body's power, both of which are enveloped by an affection (a state of

essence). Neither is absolute, they are both transitive, and "are something of an index of the

variable capacity of this power of acting."[110] It is no wonder that the aforementioned qualitative

assessments always seem to follow hope and fear. Hope *is* the experience of joy. It is the

experience of an augmentation in being, the experience of an increased capacity to act *as it is*

happening – "it is the experience of that quantum leap of the body, of the self as it is moving into

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[108] Spinoza and Deleuze are categorical on this point: what is bad is a type of intoxication, intolerance, or poisoning, and what is good is a type of supplement or enhancement. And as Deleuze has pointed out, this model of 'poisoning' is valid even when we consider empirical cases in all their complexity:

> It applies not only to the harm that we suffer, but to the harm that we do. We are not only poisoned, we are also poisoners; we act as toxins and poisons… with the act of killing, I destroy the characteristic relation of another human body. With the act of stealing, I destroy the relation that joins a man and his property. And similarly with the act of adultery, what is destroyed is the relation with the marriage partner, the characteristic relation of a couple, which, though it is an instituted, contractual social relation, nevertheless constitutes an individuality of a certain type. Deleuze, *Spinoza*, 34.

[109] For Spinoza, joy and sadness are the primary affects, all other emotional dispositions that coalesce around affective encounters are considered as lesser or mixed compounds of joy or sadness.

[110] McManus, 9.

a higher capacity to act"[111] So when I feel hope, I feel joy; some or all of the power of another body has compounded with mine and allowed me to feel as though 'all is in order' – the power needed to achieve the desired goal has been attained. I am no longer enslaved by my situation, as I am now embedded in a body that is more powerful. A degree of freedom has opened up, I have accessed potential and can now take that next step towards the desired goal.

So of course Bloch and Rorty would say that 'we need to hope so that we can achieve the Marxist and Liberal goals' – because to actually hope *is* to believe that you have the capacity to act towards the achievement of a goal, and once you have the capacity, why would you not act? Conversely, fear *is* the experience of sadness. It is the experience of a decrease in the capacity to act. I feel fear when I encounter a menacing bear because the bear has jeopardized the cohesion of my body, and the encounter has diminished by ability to act and deploy myself in my environment. I feel fear when I encounter the terrorist through the media because the encounter has diminished my power to act and secure my life. Of course many will argue against the politics of fear – to *actually* fear is to believe that your capacity to act has been diminished, and this is completely antithetical to the neoliberal values at the root of the Western world.

2.3.1   The Agamben Reprise

Now, if it seems as though the notion of 'a body feeling joy while experiencing an increase in its capacity to act' is cogent enough, but that the particularity of hope within this broad affective phenomenon is not clear, or that it is strange to suggest that hope is joy when, in fact, it marks the absence of a desirable object, it may be worthwhile to reprise this idea through a different avenue. Understanding how hope *qua* 'increased capacity to act towards the achievement of the object of hope' is able to transform the absence of a desirable object into joy

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[111] Ghassan Hage, "'On the Side of Life' – Joy and the Capacity of Being," in *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*, by Mary Zournazi (New York: Routledge, 2003), 152.

is, admittedly, counterintuitive. It posits a strange problematic, as we do intuitively want to suggest that the achievement of the object of hope will produce joy, but that hope in itself will only produce an anticipation of this future joy, and it forces us to draw the conclusion that hope in itself is desirable, regardless of whether its object is actualized. How is this possible? How does hope appropriate the joy that is supposed to be reserved for the attainment of the object (and the effective termination of hope)? This aspect of hope is difficult to grasp, but it is possible to apprehend it and account for the problematic if we take a detour through a structurally parallel operation that bears a strong resemblance to hope: the fetishistic disavowal.

According to Giorgio Agamben in *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, the fetishistic disavowal encompasses an operation in which "desire simultaneously denies and affirms its object, and thus succeeds in entering into relation with something that otherwise it would have been unable either to appropriate or enjoy."[112] It operates by reversing privation into possession and is capable of taking on "the impossible task of appropriating what must in every case remain unappropriable," thus making it both *the presence of a thing and an indication of its absence*.[113] The fetish, in the first place, arises from:

> …the refusal of the male child to acknowledge the absence of the penis of the mother. Confronted with the perception of this absence, the child refuses [Freud used the term *Verleugnung* (disavowal)] to admit its reality, because to do so would permit a threat of castration against his own penis. The fetish is therefore the "substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believe in and – for reasons familiar to us – does not want to give up."[114]

In other words, the fetish is a substitute that simultaneously recognizes and disavows reality. It arises when the child is conflicted between the perception of reality (which urges him to abandon

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[112] Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas: The Word and the Phantasm in Western Culture*, trans. Ronald L. Martinez (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), xvii-xviii.
[113] Ibid., xviii.
[114] Ibid., 31.

the phantasm of his mother's penis) and the counter-desire (which urges him to abandon reality), but decides to choose neither, or rather, both – he "disavows the evidence of his perception *and* recognizes its reality" and thereby reaches a compromise: the fetish.[115] The fetish is, therefore, something which confronts us with a paradox – "an unattainable object that satisfies a human need precisely through its being unattainable."[116] The fetish is a *presence* – it has its own absolute reality; but insofar as it is the *presence of an absence*, "it is, at the same time, immaterial and intangible, because it alludes continuously beyond itself to something that can never really be possessed."[117]

    Now, I would like to venture a parallel between fetishism and hope. In the case of the fetishistic disavowal, the child both recognizes and disavows the fact that *in actuality* he cannot have the object of desire by substituting the object with the fetish, which allows him to gain pleasure. Similarly, in the case of hope, the subject both recognizes and disavows the fact that *in actuality* they cannot have the object of their desire (in this case, *in actuality* may just be referring to the present moment) by substituting hope itself for the object of desire, which is pleasurable. To be sure, the analogy between fetishism and hope is not superficial -- both the 'fetish' and 'hope' *deny and conjure up the object it replaces.* Consider the following example: after a successful interview, an individual hopes that they will be chosen as the applicant for that particular job, which is the object of their desire. The subject *feels hope* because they cannot have the object of their desire at the moment (i.e. they need to wait for the employer to inform them that they are hired), and yet, the individual still derives joy and pleasure from the hope

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[115] Agamben, 31.
[116] Ibid., 33.
[117] Ibid.

itself – they prematurely feel all the excitement and happiness that will come with being hired. Their hope has both *denied and conjured up the object it replaces.*[118]

There is good reason for exalting hope. In the words of Jack Layton, "hope is better than fear." It feels better to hope for a bright future, than to fear what will come next. It feels better to assume the power to act towards a desired occurrence, than to have that power seized away from you. Hope is not an ethics of deferring gratification. But insofar as this increase in power – this 'goodness' – is a matter of dynamism and composition of relations, it is not enough to merely posit empowerment as ethical. We need to look beyond the immediate contours of the subject to the diverse relations that have compounded to form the new composite hoping body. What forces did the subject have to fuse with in order to become a hopeful body? Is this particular relation of composition that is producing hope (and thus grounding the very conditions of possibility for action) really the best configuration for attaining the object of desire? Consider, for example, seventeenth and eighteenth century French Caribbean plantation slavery and the slaves' hope of attaining full political and human rights. In that context, the black slaves could only hope for emancipation and the advantages of citizenship by disciplining themselves according to Europe's 'figure of man.' The black populations had to 'sophisticate' themselves according to French ideals/customs and prove that they were 'culturally white' before they could even entertain the possibility of attaining rights. In other words, *hope for emancipation meant 'becoming a white body'* – do we really want to make the claim that this empowerment was 'good'?

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[118] To be clear, the paradox of 'hope' is the same as the 'fetish.' The *recognition* of the absence of the desired object occurs when the person 'hopes' (because one can only hope for something that is absent), while the *disavowal* of this fact also occurs when the person 'hopes' (because hope, in itself, generates the pleasure that attaining the desired object would).

2.4   The Constitution of the Hoping Body

The autonomy of affect (which derives from the trans-bodily nature of the capacities which are anchored in a particular body *while* escaping its confinement) also lends credence to the intuition that hope is not simply the codification of a psychological disposition at the scale of the individual subject, nor a feeling that is transmitted to an already constituted body and magically increases agency. Affect theory allows us to move away from the conception of hope as something that resides positively in a body or a signifier, or as something that is possessed by a subject, and towards the notion of hope as a particular effect of an interaction with a field of forces and bodies: the variation and reconstitution of the affected bodies and a felt intensity corresponding to the increase in the capacity to act. Hope, in other words, is not simply "within" or "without" the body – it actually constitutes the very boundaries and capacities of bodies.

Perhaps an empirical example will be useful in grounding this point. Consider the post-Cold War era of renewed hope for international cooperation and the incredible faith placed in the capacity of UN peacekeeping operations to achieve collective security. When the Soviet Union fell and the threat of nuclear destruction was mitigated, the UN was freed from its Cold War ideologies thus necessitating a new approach to international security. Member-states began to call for the rediscovery of the UN as the international agent capable of fulfilling the promise of the New World Order, the UN was 'empowered,' and an enormous increase in the demand for peacekeeping missions in the 1990s ensued. The UN was roused out of its impotence and empty formalism, and a cosmopolitan future suddenly became a possibility. Ultimately, the fear of global annihilation subsided, and in the midst of the complete absence of a coherent and cohesive international community, people felt hopeful for the coming era of peace, prosperity, and

security.[119] But, of course, we cannot say that the hope for the New World Order was a discreet, self-contained emotion existing in the psyche of individual people, nor can we say that it was a subjective experience or 'aspect of thought' that was socially constructed – hope did not reside in one figure or object, and it cannot be understood in isolation from its field of emergence.

Here, an overly reductionist account of UN hope may be in order. Hope was the effect of a dynamic process of events and interactions. First, there was the event of the Cold War and the dynamic encounter between the Eastern Bloc and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This, as we all know, resulted in the decomposition of the Soviet Union, an increase in the United States' power as the world's only remaining superpower, and the reconstitution of the international body as an incipient system of liberal democratic states. These new relations and ideas were then doubled over and internalized by Western liberal democratic states as an increase in their capacity to achieve security and impose neoliberalism on the international level. Second, the UN emerged as a potential vehicle for the spread of liberal democracy, and the result of the encounter between these newly empowered member-states and the UN is a recomposition of the UN as an agent of peace and collective security. Finally, it was the mobilization towards UN peacekeeping missions by states such as Canada that reshaped the body of the sovereign state as a composition endowed with the ability to promote peace and security both domestically and abroad. And it is here that we can locate the felt intensity of hope throughout the 1990s. The championing of UN peacekeeping that emerged from and within the new international milieu endowed the body of the nation and individual subjects with the effective capacity to achieve peace and security. The full extent of this disillusionment is irrelevant; the nuclear threat looming over the world during the Cold War rendered individuals powerless and alienated from

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[119] François Debrix, *Re-Envisioning Peacekeeping: The United Nations and the Mobilization of Ideology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 6-7.

the power to secure lives and freedoms, the renewed involvement in peacekeeping resulted in hope quite simply because it reconstituted the nation and individual subjects as bodies with the ability to act and foster peace.

The understanding of hope as a process of (de)individuation overcomes many of the problems associated with the conception of hope as the disposition of an already constituted individual. Instead of limiting ourselves to explaining the characteristics of the individual or simply classifying various bodies as hopeful, we are compelled to look backwards – to the processes, forces, bodies, and entities that produce and sustain the hopeful subject, sideways – to the effects of the process of (de)individuation that are not necessarily embodied in the hopeful subject, and to the environment that the subject is embodied in, and forward – to the effect of the production of the hopeful subject. What is interesting in an event of hope is never the individual hoping subject, it is the contingent and heterogeneous composition of forces that have empowered a subject to believe that they can attain their desired future.[120]

2.5   Distributive Agency

Finally, reading hope through affect theory allows us to discern a fundamental agential element at the core of hope. It is clear that agency is produced by way of hope *qua* affect insofar as hope marks the empowerment of the body to act towards a goal. However, insofar as Spinoza and Deleuze's theory indicates that a body increases its power through a concatenation of encounters with other bodies, and therefore *as a heterogeneous assemblage*, it is also clear that the traditional anthropocentrically humanist accounts of agency are mistaken. The conceptualization of hope *qua* affect posits a more a more nuanced account of agency, one that exceeds autonomous subjective control and comprehension, and is *relational*, *distributed*, and

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[120] Nick Srnicek, "Assemblage Theory, Complexity and Contentious Politics: The Political Ontology of Gilles Deleuze," *unpublished MA thesis* (2007): 29-30.

composite. This account undoes the human centred notions of agency that is located at the root of the all too simple and optimistic extolments of hope as a transformative and progressive disposition, and disturbs the usual 'structure versus agency' impasse. Ultimately, however, it is of fundamental importance for the present task of deconstructing hope and elevating it to a politically effective concept, as it suggests that any critical assessments of hope should not begin with questions about *is*, but about *and*. It is never a matter of saying 'hope *is* X,' it is rather the event of hope as a composition and grouping of relations – as …X *and* Y *and* Z functioning together as a hope-producing assemblage. Our task is not to simply point to a discourse or event and say, 'that is hope!', it is to identify the larger contours producing the singularity and to map out the relations obtaining between the components.

Agency has traditionally been viewed as a property and capacity of the self-contained sovereign and conscious subject that is "implicitly opposed to the external world."[121] It is conceptualized as the intentional, willed, and purposive action undertaken by a rational, autonomous, and sovereign subject. And according to Jane Bennett, we can parse out this notion of affect into three related aspects: efficacy, trajectory, and causality. Efficacy points to the productive power of agency (i.e. its power to create) and involves a pre-existing plan or intention, as agency it not just movement, but willed and intentional movement by the subject. Trajectory names the 'goal-directness' of agency, the directionality of the movement away from initial conditions and towards something else. And causality points to the notion of the agent as the isolated and efficient cause of a clearly identifiable effect.[122] Structure, on the other hand, is viewed as that which is external to the actor – it is a background setting or plane that humans act on it – and can therefore only ever act negatively as "a constraint on human agency, or passively,

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[121] McManus, 6.
[122] Bennett, *Vibrant Matters*, 31-33.

as an enabling background or context for it."[123] Actors are embedded in social, cultural, political,

economic, and environmental settings, and these structures and surroundings do 'socially

construct' the actors, but this constitutive or productive power always originates in human actors,

there is no agency proper to structure. Bennett summarizes this relation between agency and

structure nicely:

> Expressly creative or productive forms of activity remain the preserve of humans, and
> should an active form of power – an agentic capacity – seem to issue from a
> governmental institution, a virus, an architectural structure, or an arrangement of public
> space, this vitality is nervously referred back to its origin in persons – to avoid the moral
> sins of anthropomorphism, vitalism, or fetishism.[124]

The degree to which the structural conditions of possibility for acting and the complexities of

intentionality are emphasized in the literature will of course vary, but the locus of agency

remains constant – the rational human subject is always the wellspring of agency.[125]

The expositions of hope in the previous chapter that praised hope for its ability to

empower the individual and incite progressive action were symptomatic of this notion of agency.

Hope was understood as a galvanizing disposition wherein individual human subjects assume the

agential capacity necessary to achieve the object of desire and intentionally act towards its

actualization and against thwarting external structures, thus initiating transformation and social

change. Hope was the willed and intended motion of an individual subject towards a desirable

future. While the problems surrounding this contention should be quite clear by now, tackling it

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[123] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 29.
[124] Jane Bennett, "The Agency of Assemblages and the North American Blackout," *Public Culture* 17, no. 3 (2005): 455.
[125] See, for example, Diana Coole, "Rethinking Agency: A Phenomenological Approach to Embodiment and Agentic Capacities," *Political Studies* 53 (2005): 124-142. The article recognizes that a subject's agentic capacities will vary according to their larger intersubjective context but continues to give conceptual hegemony to the human actor and its 'motor intentionality.'

anew through the Spinoza-Deleuze notion of agency allows us to develop two related arguments. First, the case for the admiration of hope falls apart when we recognize that there can be no *a priori* normative assessment of hope. Hope is never just a subject mobilizing towards a better future, it is always a subject mobilizing towards a better future *by virtue of the capacities accrued through the bodily collaboration with other forces and entities.* Second, those who limit their analytical gaze to the subject's hope are missing the point; hope is irreducible to the individual or collective's experience of it. Hope emerges as the distinctive efficacy of a larger assemblage of heterogeneous elements – *which has an agency proper to the grouping itself* – and that is intended towards a particular future and particular pathway towards it. Much more attention needs to be paid to this process of emergence, the assemblage's constitutive elements, and its specific narrative of goal and pathway before any normative claim regarding the event of hope can be made.

Returning to Spinoza and Deleuze, their theory indicates that hope *qua* agency does in fact *vitalize* the subject's body, but that it also *exceeds* their body. The capacity for acting that emerges with hope is the composite effect of an assemblage of beings, entities, and forces. The agency of the subject is only a partial expression of this constitutive composition, as it is "made possible by, and impossible without, the encounter with the jags and crags of the world."[126] Within this distributive model of agency, efficacy is no longer localized in the subject's body (whether it is an individual or a collective). It is the effect of a 'swarm of vitalities,' a power that is possessed by an ontologically diverse grouping of bodies. And causality is no longer efficient but emergent, as the sources of the action are complex, heterogeneous, and only retroactively revealed after the assemblage is formed. As Bennett suggests:

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[126] McManus, 6.

> Instead of an effect obedient to a determinant, one finds circuits in which effect and cause alternate position and redound on each other. If efficient causality seeks to rank the actants involved, treating some as external causes and others as dependent effects, emergent causality places the focus on the process as itself an actant, as itself in possession of degrees of agentic capacity.[127]

In other words, the agency we locate in the event of hope is by no means the property or privilege of the human subject. The hoping subject, the supposed locus of agency, emerges through, and is constituted by, an assemblage of forces.

Let us return to the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter. We should say now that the hope injected into the British electorate during Thatcher's reign was quite simply the enhanced capacity to make money. The electorate felt hopeful for neoliberalism's promised future because the encounter with Thatcher empowered individual citizens with the agency necessary to secure and increase their wealth. Thatcher peddled agency, and that is exactly what every British voter bought from her when they voted her into power. Consider two key parts from the speech she made to the Conservative Central Council in 1986, one year before she was elected as Prime Minister for a third term:

> …We have restored honest money. *And by doing so we have given more confidence to men and women that what why give to their work, they will harvest.* And we have recovered much of the freedom of the individual from the socialist concept of the corporate state. Not only in home-ownership, where the most remarkable increase has been among manual workers and among young people in their twenties… *And I always like to see, on the National Freight vehicles, the slogan: "Now we're in the driving seat." Not the Government. Not the bureaucrats. Not the bosses. Not the militant unions. But the workers and management working together.*

> ...You may feel that the first seven years of Conservative Government have produced some benefits for Britain. And so they have. But the next seven are going to produce more – many more. And the next seven after that, more still. Let me tell you why.

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[127] Bennett, *Vibrant Matters*, 33.

> *Conservatism is not some abstract theory. It's a crusade to put power in the hands of ordinary people.*[128]

All the same, the agency (or hope) 'put in the hands of ordinary people' was not contained within their hands. The agency was the distinctive efficacy of a larger working whole: the weakened Labour party, Ms. Thatcher herself, the rapid inflation caused by Keynesian economics prior to Thatcher's first election, taxation imposed by the Labour movement, economic decline, and well-articulated neoliberal mantras about small government and market self-regulation. British people may have felt hope, but it was irreducible to their individual (and collective) experience.

Ultimately, what this suggests for the political analysis of hope is that critical attention must be paid to a much broader range of actants and forces than the hoping subject. Insofar as the capacity for hoping emerges from compositions or assemblages of human and non-human materialities, the hoping subject must be radically displaced from the centre of an exploration of hope and the larger enabling field must become much more predominant. Furthermore, it is also clear that hope must be conceptualized as the distinctive efficacy (i.e. the agency) of the larger Hope Assemblage. How is it that a heterogeneous conglomerate of forces is able to empower individuals to act towards a particular goal? What exactly is this Hope Assemblage doing? How is it functioning? And how is it produced in the first place? These are the questions that prompt us to depart from the phenomenology of hope and enter into the realm of ontology.

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[128] Margaret Thatcher, "Speech to Conservative Central Council, 1986 March 15," *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, accessed August 12, 2012, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106348. (Italics added for emphasis).

3   The Ontology of Hope

The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd … We are no longer ourselves. Each will know his own. We have been aided, inspired, multiplied.

– Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

The task of developing an ontology of hope is one that is fraught with difficulties. Amidst the wide variety of meanings and connotations that are attached to the word 'hope,' the disparate ideas and events that evoke its name, and the heterogeneous assortment of academic and non-academic work that the concept has inspired, it is not easy to find a generalizable form. As I have said before, hope does not lend itself to conceptual clarity. It is always tempting to conclude that the only common thread running through the eclectic series of 'hope' literature is a persistent signifier that refuses to refer back to the same signified more than one time. But as tempting as this conclusion may be, I am going to resist it because I believe that there is a particular relation of forces that regularly emerges in the socio-political field (and elsewhere) as a concrete assemblage that can be marked with the singular and asignifying proper name of *hope*.[129] If I have thus far been unable to impress upon the readers the existence of this 'thing,' I should apologize – it is misleading to consider this complex assemblage as one single thing.

In the last chapter, we saw that a hoping body is a symbiotic body, one that is empowered with the capacity to act towards the realization of a desirable object. We know that there is no essential interiority; a hoping body exists only through the outside – through the exteriority of the relations that have conditioned its emergence. But to stop at this point – to be content with an understanding of the key extensive property of a hoping body – is to privilege one unit of analysis (namely, the individual subject) at the expense of understanding the broader, productive

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[129] The label 'hope' can be said to be an asignifying proper name in the sense that it does not represent or symbolize any 'essence of hope' inhering in the assemblage (in similar fashion to the labels given to military operations or hurricanes). See Deleuze and Guattari, 264.

power of the relational milieu that precipitated the emergence of the hoping body. The focus of this chapter is on precisely that relational milieu. We know that a complex encounter between different forces can produce a hoping body, but what else can this field of hope do? How does it function? What is the effect of producing a hoping body? If we could map out the dynamics of this relational ontology, what would it look like? These are the questions guiding the analysis in this chapter. Our attention is no longer on the individual subject's experience of hope; it is on the relations of power that produce 'hoping subjects' and the effect of this production.

To anticipate the tripartite conclusion I will reach after a long journey through Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory, Michel Foucault's disciplinary power, Kant's hope for humankind, and 2008 Obamamania, the main finding of this chapter is that hope is (1) a spatio-temporal claim about a 'capsule–trajectory' coupling that will shepherd in a better future, which (2) emerges in the socio-political realm as a principle of organization for concrete assemblages that (3) initiate complex practices of control power. To substantiate this argument, the following analysis proceeds in four parts. Section 3.1 works through the details of Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory and applies the theory to Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power. The ontological framework that emerges from this Deleuze–Guattarian–Foucault engagement will prove fundamental to my understanding of hope as a *functional* multi-linear entity that is capable of operating across difference to enact practices of control. Whereas much of the social science literature approaches ontology through an anthropocentric world of categorical and fixed entities – and is, therefore, a poor fit for the study of the dynamism and productive capacity of hope – Deleuze and Guattari's theory, along with Foucault's analysis of power, allows us to engage with the dynamic ontology of a form of identity or unity that is not identical to itself, without destroying (or disregarding) its heterogeneity in favour of homogeneity and resemblance. Section

3.2 draws out the logic of hope in Kant's moral and political work in order to develop a cartography of hope's general strategy: to work as a claim about the 'here/now' and the 'what/how' that will usher in a better 'there/then.' Section 3.3 reconstructs the 2008 Obamamania Hope Assemblage in order to demonstrate how 'hope's claim' manifests itself in concrete assemblages as a particular organizing principle that works to attract subjects towards the 'vehicle of hope.' Finally, Section 3.4 reduces hope's strategy to one abstract formula of power – *the ability to channel human behaviour* – in order to advance the argument that hope inaugurates practices of control. Ultimately, by analysing the various facets of hope's productive power, I aim to show that the unique affective phenomenon of hope (i.e. the increase in the subject's bodily capacity to act) is part and parcel of an effective mechanism of control that works to synchronize and channel movement in space and time.

3.1   Deleuze and Guattari's Assemblage Theory

3.1.1   In General Terms: Assemblages are Becomings

On the highest level of abstraction, the term 'assemblage' refers to both the *process* of selecting, arranging, and connecting disparate elements (e.g. organic, inorganic, social or technological bodies, qualities, speeds, lines, etc.) and the provisional *arrangement* of elements that emerges and is held together through this process. As Deleuze puts it, an assemblage is "a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them … the assemblage's only unity is that of co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a 'sympathy'."[130] These functional aggregates are never static Beings – they are fluid Becomings that gather together, organize, and reterritorialize a cluster of heterogeneous elements and, as a

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[130] Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 69.

result of the new symbiotic relations that obtain, exert a distinctive efficacy that is proper to the assemblage as such. They are "living, throbbing confederations" that function and maintain a provisional coherence in the midst of "the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within" and the ever-present danger of breaking apart.[131]

Assemblage theory is, accordingly, quite attuned to both the properties and capacities that emerge out of (relatively) stable structures and the practices and processes that enable their emergence in the first place. As Ben Anderson et al. have pointed out, assemblage theory equips us with the ability to navigate "the stability of form and the processes of assemblage formation."[132] Invoking the notion of assemblages orientates analysis away from fixed or stable entities and toward the question of *how open-ended conglomerates achieve a functional coherence and provisionally endure while their constituent elements remain singular and heterogeneous*. Assemblages give primacy to formation over form, unstable durability over immutability, local finitude over universal infinitude, alliance over filiation, addition over opposition, and 'does' over 'is' – the term 'assemblage' is really more of a verb than it is a noun.

Moreover, assemblages are distinguished from other conceptualizations or models of socio-political entities (such as organic totalities, where the relations between the component parts constitute the very identity of the parts and the whole possesses an inextricable unity in which the parts function only to serve the whole and reinforce its boundaries) by at least three significant and interrelated features: (1) the form of unity that characterize these emergent functional structures; (2) the part-to-whole relations that account for their provisional coherence

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[131] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 23-24.
[132] Ben Anderson et al., "On Assemblages and Geography," *Dialogues in Human Geography* 2, no. 2 (2012): 183.

and continuous processes of movement and transformation; and (3) the agentic capacity or functionality that emerges out of the symbiotic vitality of assemblages' constituent materialities.

First, the 'unity' of an assemblage is not that of a totalizable entity (the One) or collection of discrete units (the Multiple), it is that of a *multiplicity* (the Many as such). The concept of multiplicity emerged out of Deleuze's solo work and is intended to replace the concept of an essence or 'timeless category.'[133] Multiplicities are never heaven-sent. They are historical and contingent groupings without an overarching unity, eternally defining form, or fixed archetype. In all cases, they are intrinsically defined without recourse to a supplementary or transcendent dimension that serves as an embedding ground or a more encompassing unity. As Deleuze explains, "multiplicity must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather an organisation belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system."[134] To put it briefly: a multiplicity is *a state of things*, rather than *one thing*. It is never a question of 'what *is* a multiplicity?' because multiplicities are not about essence: they are about events, about concatenations, connections and compositions, about *and* not *is*.[135] In fact,

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[133] Manuel DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2005), 9.
[134] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2001), 182-183.
[135] Following Henri Bergson, Deleuze and Guattari also differentiate between two different, yet non-oppositional and interpenetrative types of multiplicities: (1) numerical or extensive multiplicities, which are unifiable and divisable (i.e. striated/metric spaces) and (2) qualitative or intensive multiplicities, which are not unifiable and cannot be divided without changing their nature (i.e. non-metric/smooth spaces). The 'tree and the rhizome' is a rudimentary example of these two multiplicities. Arborescent systems are hierarchical and organized; they maintain clearly defined boundaries and fixed biunivocal relations between its parts through a strong principle of unity: "the pivotal taproot supporting the secondary roots." Rhizomatic systems, on the other hand, lack any kind of organizing unity or invariant relations; they have fuzzy boundaries and are only defined by the outside: by the line of flight according to which they deterritorialize and reterritorialize. But, of course, there is always "knots of arborescence in rhizomes, and rhizomatic offshoots in roots." The territorializing (i.e. stabilizing) operation of the root-tree can engender its own lines of flight, and the deterritorializing (i.e. de-stabilizing) operation of the canal-rhizome can always give rise to its own hierarchies and despotic channels

multiplicities are only properly regarded as *singular* entities if we acknowledge that they

preserve the heterogeneity of their constitutive parts and simply establish degrees of consistency,

or a co-functioning unity, between them; the ideal form of a multiplicity is always 'A *and* B *and*

C *and* D… as such (where *and* does not act as a numerical additive). Multiplicities only differ

from their constitutive parts in terms of spatio-temporal scale, not ontological status – *all*

multiplicities are flat.[136]

Second, and perhaps most importantly, assemblages are characterized by *relations of*

exteriority.[137] Unlike metaphysical essentialism, where the identity of the parts are reducible or

internal to their relations within the whole, the component parts of assemblages are self-

subsistent and do not depend on the assembled whole for their identity. The exteriority of

relations implies, first of all, that the components of an assemblage possess a certain autonomy.

As Manuel De Landa has pointed out, "a component part of an assemblage may be detached

from it and plugged into a different assemblage in which its interactions are different."[138] These

relations also imply that the extensive properties of the whole relational configuration cannot be

reduced to the properties of its component part. The properties of an assemblage are not an

aggregation of the components' properties, but rather the symbiotic effect of the exercise of the

components' capacities.[139] Again, as DeLanda has pointed out, "these capacities do depend on a

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– so there is really no axiological dualism to speak of. All multiplicities are 'arborescent-
rhizomatic' hybrids. Deleuze and Guattari, 5-10, 20 and 33.

[136] Delanda, *Intensive Science,* 12-13, 47.

[137] Another way of putting this is that *relations are external to their terms.*

[138] Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*
(London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006), 10.

[139] The distinction between the properties and capacities of an entity is crucial to understanding
an assemblage's 'part-whole' structuration. Properties are actual, extensive, qualitative, and
synchronic characteristics that can be attributed to a state of affairs. Capacities, on the other
hand, are not limited to the realm of the actual. They are the open-ended set of potential ways in
which an entity can affect and be affected by the external relations that it enters into; they are

component's properties but cannot be reduced to them since they involved reference to the properties of other interacting entities."[140]

Deleuze and Guattari's most famous example of relations of exteriority is one that we have already explored in its affective dimensions in chapter 2: the coupling of the orchid and wasp in a hetero-synthesis 'mating-pollination' process that has become contingently obligatory over the course of coevolution. The orchid and the wasp have no underlying element in common – they are self-subsistent and heterogeneous element – but when they interact in an evolutionarily necessary process, a new functional assemblage is formed, with its own unique properties and capacities. The orchid *becomes the sexual organ of the wasp* to attract the insect and encourage it to attempt to mate with the flower – "The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image." At the same time, the wasp *becomes a part of the orchid's reproductive system* and extracts pollen, which fertilizes the next orchid it visits – "The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen."[141] This assemblage is not a seamless whole with logically necessary relations between its components. It is a *single bloc of becoming* and an *increase in valence*, "a wasp-becoming of the orchid, an orchid-becoming of the wasp, a double capture since 'what' each becomes changes no less than 'that which' becomes."[142]

Finally, assemblages are also characterized by an *effectuation of a power* (i.e. an efficacy or an affective capacity) that is proper to the grouping as such and irreducible to the sum of its

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never reducible to the entity's properties because every entity retains an indefinite number of unexercised, virtual capacities that depend for their actualization on interactions with other entities. An entity's capacities always exceed those that are actualized in an assemblage.

[140] DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, 11.
[141] Deleuze and Guattari, 10.
[142] Deleuze and Parnet, 2.

constituent elements' affective capacities: the agency *of* the assemblage. Whereas much of social science finds itself stuck at the "structure versus agency" impasse – which only attributes to structures a negative-constraining or passive-enabling power and reserves agency and active action for humans alone – assemblage theory borrows from Spinoza's philosophy and regards agency as an efficacy that is *distributed* across a heterogeneous constellation of forces and bodies, rather than localized in a human or collective produced by human efforts, and *composite* insofar as bodies augment or diminish their affective capacities by entering into symbiotic compositions with other bodies. [143] Assemblages are not governed by a central power – no one component part is capable of determining the functioning of an assemblage; its agency or distinctive efficacy emerges from the affective, dissonant conjunction between the bodies that constitute it. As Bennett has helpfully pointed out, this type of distributed-composite agency is analogous to what is called *shi* in the Chinese tradition. *Shi* is the propensity or élan that originates in the very disposition or arrangement of things, not in human initiative. Originally used in the description of a military strategy (a good general was someone who could register and respond to the *shi* of a configuration of moods, historical trends, and armaments), "*shi* names the dynamic force emanating from a spatio-temporal configuration rather than from any particular element within it."[144]

3.1.2   In Particular Terms: Assemblages See and Speak, Glue and Cut

In more particular and technical terms, an assemblage is "a consistent 'material-semiotic' system that preserves the heterogeneity of its components even while enabling emergent

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[143] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 23-24, 29.
[144] Ibid., 35.

systemic affects."[145] These functional configurations are tetravalent; they are comprised of dual

forms and dual vectors that are composed along two axes: a *form of content* and a *form of*

expression on the horizontal axis, and *territorial sides* and *cutting edges of deterritorialization*

on the vertical axis.[146] The form of content refers to a machinic assemblage of bodies (i.e. a

symbiotic arrangement of heterogeneous matter and energetic components) that organizes a non-

discursive environment, or a field of visibility. It is a pragmatic physical system that determines

what is seen and *what is done*. Schools, for example, are luminous environments that are made

up of "classroom arrangements, methods of examination, instruction rituals, student

distributions, and so on," which display students in a 'field of surveillance' where they are

subjected to an observing hierarchy and normalizing judgment.[147] The form of expression, on the

other hand, refers to a collective assemblage of enunciation that consists of statements and

articulated functions that are attributed to the content of the assemblage as "properties." It is a

semiotic system that determines *what is said* and *what is meant.* To expound, schools are said to

function to education students, but this is a meaningless statement unless education is also seen

as "an interpretation of how the assemblage works – an interpretation that is conjoined to

statements about knowledge and truth … to systems of signification and subjectivisation."[148]

On the second axis, assemblages are defined by the movements and types of relations that

govern their operation: territorialisation and deterritorialization. While the horizontal axis

accounts for the elements that make up the visible and the articulated dimensions of the

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[145] Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2004), 54.
[146] Deleuze and Guattari, 88.
[147] William Bogard, "Deleuze and Machines: A Politics of Technology?" in *Deleuze and New Technology*, ed. Mark Poster and David Savat (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 16.
[148] Ibid., 16.

assemblage, the vertical axis is what accounts for the coherence of any given assemblage. It is also on this axis that we see the tension between assemblages as 'concrete arrangements' and as 'processual relationalities' that enact new connections and relations. The vertical axis' territorializing vector (i.e. the line of articulation) plays a synthesising role. It distributes "territorialities, relative deterritorializations, and reterritorializations" through stabilizing or 'stratifying' processes that imprison intensities and define or sharpen boundaries. The movement of the deterritorializing vector, on the other hand, produces change. It destabilizes boundaries, frees up fixed relations, opens the assemblage up to its outside and exposes it to new organizations.[149] This deterritorializing 'line of flight' is what is responsible for the assemblage's creative potential. Deterritorialization not only points to the preclusion of a permanent and fixed identity, but it also highlights the complex process of cutting, adjusting, untying, and transforming that an assemblage encompasses. Insofar as an assemblage is always constituted by relations of exteriority (or encounters, connections, and mixings, to be more specific), its relations are always deterritorialized and deterritorializing. As Bogard puts it, "an assemblage … works by breaking down or fleeing itself, by adding degrees of deterritorialization along its edges, and by conjoining or mixing together deterritorialized elements at its border with the outside."[150] Every act of refiguring and conjugation – every one of an assemblage's territorializing movements – is preceded by a corresponding action on the part of the cutting edge of deterritorialization.

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[149] Deleuze and Guattari, 145.
[150] Bogard, "Deleuze and Machines," 17.

3.1.3 In Topological Terms: Assemblages Embody Abstract Machines

The deterritorializing vector of assemblages is what most interests Deleuze and Guattari. It reveals for them the problem of the *abstract machine*,[151] a deterritorializing machine immanent in the concrete assemblage that catalyzes and directs its connections, de-stratifications, and reterritorializations.[152] While assemblages are *actual* co-functioning arrangements, their actualization and emergent mode of operation cannot be understood independently from this *virtual* incorporeal quasi-cause.[153] The abstract machine knows nothing of forms and substances (which is why it is abstract). It is defined by "a *pure function*, independent of sensible configurations and categorical forms in which it is embodied" and by "a *pure matter*, independent of qualified substances into which this matter enters."[154] The abstract machine is what integrates the assemblage's form of content and form of expression (which are always irreducible and distinct formalizations) and places them in a relationship of mutual presupposition.[155] It can therefore be regarded as something like a montage "capable of relating all the heterogeneous levels that [it] traverses … [and] that will or will not give these levels an

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[151] 'Abstract Machine' is a Deleuze-Guattarian expression ripe for misunderstanding. Despite its name, an abstract machine never exists outside of a concrete assemblage – so the word 'abstract' is perhaps better understood as 'extract' insofar as abstract machines extract multiplicities from actual intensive processes and mesh them together in new heterogeneous assemblages. Additionally, it is worth noting that Deleuze and Guattari and their commentators do, at times, use the expression 'abstract machine' interchangeably with several other monikers: the machinic extract, the deterritorializing machine, the diagram, and the quasi-causal operator.

[152] Bogard, "Deleuze and Machines," 17.

[153] In Deleuzian ontology, the 'virtual' does not refer to an abstract possibility that might be realized, nor does not stand in a mimetic relation to what 'actualizes' it. The virtual is already real – it refers to the potential affects that are already *immanent* to the actualized situation at hand.

[154] Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* (London: Routledge, 2001), 131.

[155] Deleuze and Guattari, 142.

existence, an efficiency, a power of ontological auto-affirmation,"[156] or a "non-unifying immanent cause … of the concrete assemblages that execute its relations."[157]

Here it will be worthwhile to linger on the notion of the abstract machine and unpack the rather cursory description given above, in part because this peculiar 'concrete empirico-ideal' machine will figure prominently in the subsequent analysis of hope, but also because questions relating to Deleuze and Guattari's motivation for postulating the concept of an abstract machine are bound to arise: If assemblage theory was explicitly introduced to overcome the limitations of essentialist and static typological categories, what need is there for a singular, quasi-causal operator? Is the abstract machine not tantamount to the essence of the assemblage process? The answers to these questions should become apparent in the exposition that follows, but to anticipate their discovery: the abstract machine is needed to: (1) explain the mutually supportive interaction between two formations (content and expression) that converge in an assemblage, in spite of the fact that they neither resemble nor correspond to one another, and have emerged out of their own history with their own distinct formalizations; and (2) to allow us to engage with functions that are generalizable across assemblages in an ontological materialist analysis, instead of on a purely conceptual level or by reintroducing immutable transcendent archetypes in the backdoor.

Instead of clarifying the ontological status and function of the abstract machine by elaborating on the description given above, it may be more useful to approach this task through an example that was offered by Manuel De Landa: the "energy-minimizing abstract machine" at work in the formation of two very different physical structures: soap bubbles and salt crystals.

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[156] Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Prefanis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 35.
[157] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. and ed. Seán Hand (London: Continuum, 2006), 32.

The operation at work in both of these physical structures serves to illuminate the abstract machine's *piloting function* and *divergent actualization*.

The phase space (the "space of energetic possibilities") of both of these molecular assemblages is structured around an endogenous topological form (a "single point attractor" or a "singularity"), which designates the point of minimal energy. Soap molecules 'seek' the point of minimal energy by collectively minimizing surface tension and in so doing acquire a spherical shape. Salt molecules find the point of minimal energy by collectively minimizing bonding energy, and as the molecules interact with one another in this fashion, they adopt the form of a cube. These two processes involve different substances (soap vs. salt) and different physical mechanisms (the minimization of surface tension vs. bonding energy), and result in very different physical forms (sphere vs. cube). Yet, both are 'minimizing' processes; the same topological form – the point of minimal energy – can be said to govern the collective behaviour of soap and salt molecules.[158]

The attractor-like operation of the point of minimal energy is an excellent illustration of the abstract machine's directive power (i.e. its ability to stimulate new deterritorializations and reterritorializations). From amongst the infinite number of trajectories and couplings available to each molecule, the point of minimal energy is able to link the molecules (within its sphere of influence) through non-physical resonances and 'assemble' them into a series whose collective movement is governed by the trajectory emanating from the point of minimal energy.[159] This tripartite operation of the point of minimal energy – *deterritorialization*, *composition*, and *forced movement* – perfectly exemplifies the 'meshwork' operation and 'piloting' task of the abstract

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[158] DeLanda, *Intensive Science*, 15; and Manuel De Landa, "Deleuze, Diagrams, and the Genesis of Form," *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 45, no. 1 (2000): 34.
[159] DeLanda, *Intensive Science*, 123-125.

machine. In Deleuze's words, there is a "*coupling* between heterogeneous systems, from which is derived an *internal resonance* within the system, and from which in turn is derived a *forced movement* the amplitude of which exceeds that of the basic series themselves."[160]

The fact that two very different physical structures (i.e. a spherical soap bubble and a cubic salt crystal) can form as their components try to meet the same energetic requirements – or put otherwise, the ability of one endogenous topological form to guide a process that results in different physical forms with distinct geometric properties – is also a great example of how one abstract machine can guide the processes that generate different assemblages with very different extensive properties. This process of *divergent actualization* is also what distinguishes an abstract machine from an 'essence' or a 'causal infrastructure,' since "there is no question of an essence of "soap-bubbleness" somehow imposing itself from the outside [or] an ideal geometric from (a sphere) shaping an inert collection of molecules."[161]

Essentialist accounts of the 'genesis of form' regard physical entities "as more or less faithful realizations of ideal forms."[162] They assume that material objects *resemble* the essences that they instantiate and are beholden to for their *identity*. This means that when two or more objects share the same essence they will resemble one another and assume the same identity (on

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[160] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 117. As DeLanda has pointed out, Deleuze also developed a "frequency entrainment" example to clarify the abstract machine's 'meshwork' operation:

> For two grandfather pendulum clocks to entrain, *weak signals must be transmitted* from one to the other to couple them … If the frequencies of the two clocks are close to each other they may resonate and the two clocks will lock into a single frequency. The resulting entrainment of the two oscillators represents a *much stronger linkage* (forced movement) between the two oscillators than the weak signals which originally coupled them. DeLanda, *Intensive Science*, 145.

[161] De Landa, "Deleuze, Diagrams, and the Genesis of Form," 34.

[162] DeLanda, *Intensive Science*, 6.

some level of abstraction).[163] By contrast, the quasi-causal, morphogenetic operation of the

abstract machine subverts the identity of the concrete assemblage and subordinates it to

difference: structures as different as soap bubbles and soap crystals can emerge from the same

topological singularity. As Deleuze put it,

> Actualisation breaks with resemblance as a process no less than it does with identity as a principle. Actual terms never resemble the singularities they incarnate. In this sense, actualisation or differenciation is always a genuine creation. It does not result from any limitation of a pre-existing possibility... For a potential or virtual object, to be actualised is to create divergent lines which correspond to – without resembling – a virtual multiplicity. The virtual possesses the reality of a task to be performed or a problem to be solved: it is the problem which orientates, conditions and engenders solutions, but these do not resemble the conditions of the problem.[164]

Moreover, the abstract machine cannot be said to act as an infrastructure, an idea that would

imply that an abstract machine superimposes itself on inert matter to shape the final form that it

takes. Abstract machines do not preside over concrete assemblages by dictating the final

organization structure that they assume – they give form to intensive processes, not the final

extensive product. Indeed, the extensive properties of an assemblage bear no similarity to the

abstract machine guiding their production. In principle, there is no end to the set of divergent

forms that an abstract machine might actualize (be it spheres, cubes, circles, or triangles).[165]

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[163] De Landa, "Deleuze, Diagrams, and the Genesis of Form," 34-5.

[164] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 212.

[165] As De Landa has pointed out, the abstract machine's role in the genesis of form mirrors that of DNA in a developing embryo:

> [T]he DNA that governs the process does not contain, as it was once believed, a blueprint fro the generation of the final form of the organism, an idea that implies an inert matter to which genes give form from the outside. The modern understanding of the processes, on the other hand, pictures genes as teasing out a form out of an active matter, that is, the function of genes and their products is now seen as merely constraining and channeling a variety of material processes, occurring in that far-from equilibrium diagrammatic zone, in which form emerges spontaneously. De Landa, "Deleuze, Diagrams, and the Genesis of Form," 37.

3.1.4   Foucault's Disciplinary Assemblages

To better understand assemblage theory and its usefulness as a theoretical resource in thinking about socio-spatial configurations that function across difference as 'multi-linear ensembles,' it is worthwhile to briefly examine some of the eighteenth century disciplinary assemblages (i.e. apparatuses or *dispositifs*) that were so thoroughly analyzed by Foucault. His account of eighteenth century prisons (and schools, factories, barracks, and hospitals) is not directly applicable to my analysis of contemporary Hope Assemblages, but engaging with his work will serve more than an exemplificatory function; Foucault's analysis of concrete disciplinary assemblages opens up the synthetic and productive capacities of assemblages, and in doing so: (1) makes explicit the political nature of assemblage theory's relational ontology, and (2) offers an excellent comparative springboard for the analysis of hope's model of power that is developed later on in this chapter.

In *Discipline and Punish*, concrete disciplinary assemblages are actualized as both a form of content (formed matter) and a form of expression (formalized function). The prison assemblage, for example, is actualized as a non-discursive environmental formation, *a form of the visible* (i.e. the 'prison' environment – with its architecture, practices of regimentation, and distribution of light and darkness – displays the content that it has rendered visible: crime and the bodies of singular prisoners), which refers back to a formation of statements, *a form of the articulable* (i.e. delinquency or the penal law expresses a new way of articulating infractions, sentences and their subjects, and overcodes the entire prison system with a punishment function). To be sure, the contents of a disciplinary assemblage are not equivalent to 'signifieds' that are linguistically dependent upon a 'signifiers,' nor are they objects in a relation of causality with the

subject.[166] There is no symbolic correspondence, essential conformity or common form between the form of content and expression; they are irreducible to one another. There is, however, a reciprocal presupposition or 'positive feedback loops' between the two forms: "penal law still leads back to prison and provides prisoners, while prison continues to reproduce delinquency, make it an 'object', and realize the aims which penal law had conceived differently,"[167] but such interchange is a contingent effect of specific, variable assemblages.[168] There is always a real distinction and independence between them. As Foucault noted, "we must not forget that the prison, that concentrated and austere figure of all the disciplines, is not an endogenous element in the penal system as defined at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."[169]

At this point, Foucault's account of disciplinary assemblages appears incomplete. If the content of disciplinary assemblages emerged independently of its expressive features (and there is no correspondence between its mutually presupposed, yet independent and irreducible forms), it is difficult to understand how these dual forms come to cohere in a variable way in each particular assemblage, let alone why Foucault ascribed a singular notion of the 'disciplinary assemblage' with the ability to account for some of the most prominent social institutions of the

[166] The prison-form is reducible not to a 'thing' but to a non-discursive multiplicity: a complex organization of matter or a *formation of power*; equally, the delinquency-form is reducible not to 'words' but to a discursive multiplicity: a set of statements that enunciate the functions and real usages of language or a *regime of signs*. Deleuze and Guattari, 67, 140.

[167] Deleuze, *Foucault*, 29.

[168] It is not necessary for the present purposes to delve into the ontological intricacies of disciplinary assemblages, but it is worth mentioning that the distinction between the two forms is much more complex than the simplified explication that I have presented. In fact, it is more accurate to regard every assemblage as a double-headed composition of multiple assemblages. As Deleuze and Guattari note, "the prison as a form of content has a relative expression all of its own; there are all kinds of statements specific to it that do not necessarily coincide with the statements of delinquency. Conversely, delinquency as a form of expression has an autonomous content all its own, since delinquency expresses not only a new way of evaluating crimes but a new way of committing them." Deleuze and Guattari, 67.

[169] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 255.

eighteenth century (e.g. prisons, schools, factories, barracks, and hospitals). Here, again, Deleuze will prove a useful resource. He was keenly aware of the need to "arrive at something in the assemblage itself that is more profound than these sides and can account for both of the forms in presupposition" and pointed to an element in Foucault's analysis as this 'something': the Panopticon, the diagram of disciplinary power.

Understood as "a generalizable model of functioning … a diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form,"[170] the Panopticon is defined as a way of imposing a particular form of conduct on a multiplicity of particular individuals with a certain "architectural and optical system."[171] The carceral architecture of the Panopticon, which confines prisoners to enclosed, partitioned and coded cells that are constantly visible to an observer in a central tower (that is itself left opaque) realizes disciplinary power's program of conduct. Its strict, vertical spatial enclosures and strategic distribution of light and darkness renders it impossible to escape the observer's field of visibility and impossible to know when one is being watched. As every pathology or deviancy is always (potentially) subjected to the observer's normalizing gaze, the *imposition of a particular form of conduct* is assured, and the gaze of the observer is (ideally) internalized as a state of continuous surveillance, rendering each individual the guardian of his or her own actions and the presence of an external authority unnecessary. Put otherwise, disciplinary power functions to "transform bodies and their relations to one another into a generalized productive machinery" through a set of corrective and regulatory techniques (hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, examination) by coordinating the relations

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[170] Foucault, 205.

[171] Ibid.; and Deleuze, *Foucault*, 29.

between an unformed matter and unformalized function that is embodied in concrete disciplinary assemblages. [172]

The prominence that Foucault gives to the Panoptic *penal* institution should not obscure the fact that the Panoptic diagram is understood as a 'generalizable model of functioning' that cuts transversally across all disciplinary institutions, as a way of defiguring, composing, and realigning their relations to form productive, docile objects. In Foucault's words,

> [The Panopticon] is polyvalent in its applications; it serves to reform prisoners, but also to treat patients, to instruct schoolchildren, to confine the insane, to supervise workers, to put beggars and idlers to work. It is a type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons. Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behaviour must be imposed, the panoptic schema may be used.[173]

The diagram of disciplinary power is always independent of "the concrete forms it assumes, the aims it serves and the means it employs" (education, medical treatment, production, etc.) and "the formed substances, qualified objects or being which it enters" (students, the sick, workers, etc.).[174] The schema of a generalizable function, abstracted from any concrete manifestation, simply operates to coordinate the relations between the two poles of a concrete disciplinary assemblage. Moreover, the *architectural* form that Foucault presents his *cartography* of the disciplinary diagram in should not obscure the fact that the Panopticon is never a simple "hinge" or "point of exchange" between the exercise of disciplinary power and a particular function, "it is a way of making power relations function in a function, and of making a function function

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[172] William Bogard, "Discipline and Deterrence: Rethinking Foucault on the Question of Power in Contemporary Society," *The Social Science Journal* 28, no. 3: 327.
[173] Foucault, 205.
[174] Deleuze, *Foucault*, 60.

through these power relations."[175] In Foucault's words: "it arranges things in such a way that the

exercise of power is not added on from the outside, like a rigid, heavy constraint, to the functions

it invests, but is so subtly present in them as to increase their efficiency by itself increasing its

own points of contact."[176] The Panoptic diagram is embedded in the very relations it executes, as

an immanent cause of the formation and reformation of spaces and human multiplicities – it is

"*the form of a changing amalgam of localized events and processes.*"[177]

Diagrams are in many ways similar to abstract machines. Indeed, at times Deleuze does

appear to equate the two.[178] For our purposes, however, the two will be separated. Following

(one of) Deleuze's definitions of a diagram: "a display of the relations between forces which

constitute power in [particular] conditions"[179] and Foucault's definition of the diagram: "a

generalizable *model* of *functioning*,"[180] abstract machines will be considered as though they are

subsumed under Foucault's conception of diagrams, which offers us both a *cartographic*

representation of the relations between forces in disciplinary assemblages (the architectural form

of the Panopticon; a visual map), and an *abstract formula* of the "disciplinary" function that

obtains in those relations (imposing order on a human multiplicity; an abstract machine).[181]

3.2   The Cartography of Hope (or Kant's Regulatory Lodestars)

It behoves anyone writing on the topic of hope to remind the readers that *what may I*

hope? was one of the three fundamental questions of philosophy that Kant posed in the *Critique*

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[175] Foucault, 206-7.
[176] Ibid., 206.
[177] Bogard, "Discipline and Deterrence," 328.
[178] Deleuze, *Foucault*, 29-30.
[179] Ibid., 31.
[180] Foucault, 205.
[181] Roughly, this distinction between abstract machines and cartographic representations follows the two levels of abstraction that Hardt and Negri distinguish in Foucault's theories of the *dispositive* and the diagram. See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 329-330.

of Pure Reason and reasserted, with the addition of a fourth question, in the *Logic*.[182] Kantian endorsement is, after all, an excellent springboard for those wishing to advocate for the significance of hope or to engage with hope in a context outside of its traditional domains in literature, popular politics, psychology, and theology. But my interest in Kant's work on hope extends beyond a desire to invoke the authority that his name commands. Insofar as Kant answers the question *what may I hope?* by positing a particular end-state or *telos* as a desirable and attainable future *and* by meticulously outlining the conditions under which we will be permitted to hope for the realization of such a future, his engagement with a moral and (more explicitly) political hope for mankind offers a powerful articulation of how hope works as *an authoritative and regulatory claim about a vehicle and trajectory in the present that will usher in a better future.*

Kant interpolates a desirable future or 'end goal' into his account of why one is to cultivate virtue and strive towards the attainment of a cosmopolitan political order as the authoritative ground on which these accounts rest. For all the extolling of reason, Kant ends up discovering that reason *needs* hope in order to authorize its own authority. Hope – the deceptively succinct term for what I have regarded as an *affective expression of a particular discursive-cum-material assemblage that is itself generated through the construction of a spatio-temporal pathway that promises to take the 'here and now' subject to a better 'there and then'* – is the (groundless) ground on which universal reason is authorized to make claims about moral and political necessity and the possibility of moral and political autonomy. Indeed, hope for the attainment of something in the future always *acts as a regulatory lodestar in the present* by articulating the conditions under which we can achieve a desirable object.

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[182] The other questions being, of course, *what can I know? what should I do?* and *what is man?*

To begin, we must distinguish between two related, yet distinct types of hope in Kant's work: (1) a transcendent hope for the 'highest good' – an otherworldly and proportional synthesis of virtue and happiness;[183] and (2) a political hope for the 'highest good in history' – the worldly perfection of mankind's natural capacities in a cosmopolitan order.[184] The former belongs to individual subjects, most explicitly at least, and the latter belongs to sovereign states within a system of sovereign states; both, however, are intimately tied to Kant's grand ambition for autonomy: the human capacity to self-govern, under the necessity of universal reason and the sovereign state. Each of Kant's 'hopes' will be addressed in turn.

3.2.1   Kant's Transcendent Hope

Kant takes up the topic of transcendent hope as part of an elucidation on his moral theory, and in doing so, explains both why 'virtue and a proportionate happiness' should be the object of our otherworldly hope, and why we are entitled to hope for this 'highest good' in the first place. Before delving into the details of his work, it is worthwhile to address the following questions: why did Kant enjoin us to hope for the attainment of an otherworldly synthesis of happiness and virtue? Why did he not content himself with a presentation of the moral law, the categorical imperative that is derived from it, and the realization of autonomy/virtue that is promised to all those that obey the commands of universal reason? These questions are not meant to be rhetorical. They raise *prima facie* suspicions about the deontological characterization of Kant's moral theory, its consistency (Kant also claims that "*one's own happiness … contributes*

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[183] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 681 (A814/B842); and Immanuel Kant, "Critique of Practical Reason" in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 228-239 (5:111-5:124).

[184] Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," in *Kant: Political Writings,* ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 50.

nothings at all to the establishment of morality, since making someone happy is quite different from making him good"),[185] and the insistence that rational agents act in accordance with maxims that have a "universally lawgiving" form, not because such adherence might satisfy an object of desire, but because the moral law obliges it.[186] Even more significantly for the present purposes, these questions hint at what is at stake in treating hope as an authoritative claim insofar as the answer to both questions – to anticipate the main conclusion of this subsection – is that hope for an otherworldly realization of happiness and virtue *enables* Kant's account of worldly morality to work as the condition of possibility for happiness, and as a regulative principle that shapes what an autonomous moral subject must be and what the progressive cultivation of virtue must look like.

In the introduction of the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, the foundation for all of Kant's subsequent work on moral philosophy, Kant claims "nothing more than the search for and establishment of the *supreme principle of morality*"[187] as the aim of the book. And the *Groundwork* certainly delivers on that ambition: Kant derives several formulas of the categorical imperative (the supreme practical principle of morality) from the *a priori* moral law, which are reduced to the maxim: "*act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law*," and goes on to demonstrate how one can identify their moral duties from this principle, and why adherence to it will serve the universally valid, yet merely formal (as it does not provide determinate objectives for particular actions) and negative (as it is only a limiting condition that must not be acted against) end with unconditional value, *humanity itself*, which is conceived of as a characteristic of persons: the capacity to freely

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[185] Immanuel Kant, "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals" in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 90 (4:442).
[186] Kant, "Critique of Practical Reason," 227 (5:109).
[187] Kant, "Groundwork," 47 (4:392).

set ends for oneself.[188] In its initial formulation then, Kant's moral philosophy is decidedly

deontological. It is concerned with the categorical nature of the moral law, and with formulating

moral maxims and testing their universality against some formula of the categorical imperative;

the only teleological aspect is posited as a deontological duty to conform one's actions to an end

that already exists as the intelligible cause of the will, thus involving no positive requirement to

cause or promote its existence.[189] In its final form in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, however, Kant's

moral theory takes on a striking teleological character.[190] His Doctrine of Virtue remains

grounded in *a priori* principles and duties, but the focus is no longer on binding moral rules *per*

se; it is on the duty to *cultivate virtue* – the moral capacity or "inner freedom" to do one's duty

from duty (i.e. to internalize the moral law as both the rule and incentive for action) by

overcoming natural inclinations– which is the "highest, unconditional end of pure practical

reason." [191] In fact, Kant even introduces a new formulation of the categorical imperative: "act in

accordance with a maxim of *ends* that it can be a universal law for everyone to have."[192]

       The deontology-cum-teleology evolution in Kant's moral thought was the result of his

attempt to address *the grounds on which the moral law became "necessarily" binding.* The

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[188] Kant, "Groundwork," 73-80 (4:421-4:429), 86 (4:437); Immanuel Kant, "The Metaphysics of Morals," in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 522 (6:392); and Paul Guyer, "Ends of Reason and Ends of Nature: The Place of Teleology in Kant's Ethics," *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 36, no. 2-3 (2002): 164-165.

[189] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 673 (A798/B826); and J. David Velleman, *Self to Self: Selected Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 91; and Thomas E. Hill, Jr., "Humanity as an End in Itself," *Ethics* 91, no. 1 (1980): 87-90.

[190] It is worth noting that this shift in orientation is anticipated, but undeveloped in many of Kant's prior work on ethics. See, especially, "Transcendental Doctrine of Method" in the *Critique of Pure Reason*; "Methodology of the Teleological Judgment" in the *Critique of Judgment*; and *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*.

[191] Kant, "Metaphysics," 522-526 (6:392-6:396).

[192] Allen Wood, "General Introduction," in *Practical Philosophy*, by Immanuel Kant, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xxxii-xxxiii; and Kant, "Metaphysics," 517 (6:386), 522-25 (6:392-5).

moral law did not offer rational agents with a compelling *prima facie* reason for submitting

themselves to its authority and orienting their actions towards moral maturation – it was

necessary for Kant to "take a step into the field of *practical philosophy*" and locate the source of

its authority.[193] In particular, Kant recognized the need to reconcile two interrelated 'practical'

problems: (1) the self-sufficient and autonomous nature of virtuous determinations of the will,

and the all-too-human need to ascribe an ultimate end to every particular volition and action; and

(2) the moral resolve to act out of duty and cultivate virtue, and the natural inclination to pursue

happiness, which acts as a "powerful counterweight to all the commands of duty."[194]

    With regards to the first antinomy, Kant was adamant in maintaining that the categorical

demands of morality require "no end, either in order to recognize what duty is or to impel its

performance."[195] Morality is independent from any object of inclination and is sufficient to give

rise to virtuous determinations of the will by virtue of pure practical reason, which only sets

'humanity *qua* free choice' as an already achieved, formal and negative end that must not be

acted against.[196] However, he also maintained (somewhat inconsistently) that reason requires the

ascription of a positive and particular end to every volition and action, if only retroactively,

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[193] Kant, "Groundwork," 60 (4:405).

[194] Ibid., 59 (4:405). Kant's reasons for positioning 'happiness' in opposition to 'virtue' are not pertinent to the current argument, but it is worth noting that he advances at least two primary reasons for his position: (1) happiness is derived from empirical principles (i.e. physical or moral feeling) and is a continually fluctuating and contingent concept, while morality must always be universal and necessary; and (2) conflating happiness and morality would incentivize virtuous behaviour and destroy morality's sublimity. According to Kant, our ability to act solely out of duty "shows virtue the honor of ascribing to her *immediately* the delight and esteem we have for her and does not, as it were, tell her to her face that it is not her beauty but only our advantage that attaches us to her." Kant, "Groundwork," 89-91 (4:440-4:443).

[195] Immanuel Kant, "Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason," in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason And Other Writings*, trans. and ed. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 33-34 (6:3-4).

[196] Kant, "Groundwork," 86 (4:437).

> For in the absence of all reference to an end no determination of the will can take place in human beings at all, since no such determination can occur without an effect, and its representation, though not as the determining ground of the power of choice nor as an end that comes first in intention … without this end, a power of choice which does not [thus] add to a contemplated action the thought of either an objectively or subjectively determined object (which it has or should have), instructed indeed as to *how* to operate but not as to the *whither*, can itself obtain no satisfaction.[197]

So while virtuous determinations of the will (i.e. answers to the question: *what should I do?*) are constituted through the moral law alone, and are not founded on an antecedent end, they cannot actually occur without generating a consequent *telos* – the object of "an immediate desire to possess a thing by means of one's action" – which, ultimately, has the effect of providing reason with an answer to the question: *if I do what I should, what may I then hope?*[198] It is as though the absence of this *effect* would retroactively prevent the determination of the will from being *caused* by the moral law.[199] With regards to the second antimony, Kant was, of course, concerned with the cultivation of virtue. His moral theory calls human beings to overcome impulses and inclinations by adhering to the demands of the moral law, as the achievement of such is humanity's *supreme good*.[200] However, he also believed that the *natural end* of 'humanity *qua* sensible beings' is to be happy – to satisfy all subjective inclinations.[201] Every freely chosen empirical end assumes happiness as its object or 'matter.'[202] This pursuit is the practical

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[197] Kant, "Religion," 34 (6:4).

[198] Ibid., 33-35 (6:3-6:7); and Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 677 (A805/B833).

[199] For an extended discussion on how the Kantian morality requires not only a form (i.e. the categorical imperative) and negative end (i.e. humanity), but also a particular and positive end (i.e. the realization of happiness) to make adherence to the moral law rational, see Paul Guyer, "The Form and Matter of the Categorical Imperative" in *Kant's System of Nature and Freedom: Selected Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 146-168.

[200] Kant, "Critique of Practical Reason," 234-236 (5:117-5:119).

[201] Kant, "Groundwork," 50 (4:394), 81 (4:430); and Kant, "Metaphysics," 522 (6:391).

[202] Guyer, "The Form and Matter of the Categorical Imperative," 158-159.

manifestation of reason's commission to attend to its interests and inclinations, and as a result, the unavoidable determining ground of every rational human being's faculty of desire.[203]

Both antinomies posed a significant problem for Kant. In order to enable the 'cultivation of virtue' to work within his particular account of the moral life, Kant would have to deploy an ontologically prior claim that reconciles: reason's moral demand for an autonomous will, one that has not incentivized virtuous behaviour and is only motivated by a *pure determining ground* – the moral law (i.e. "I ought to act in such or such a way even though I have not willed anything else"),[204] with a heterogeneous requirement that might hinder moral resolve if left unsatisfied: reason's sensible demand for a will that is motivated by an *empirical determining ground* – an end that is commensurable with happiness (i.e. "I ought to do something *because I will something else*").[205] Ultimately, it was with this 'duality of demands' in mind that Kant developed his moral teleology and advanced a claim about the highest good for human beings.

Kant begins with a presumed present: the potentially autonomous modern subject, under particular conditions of necessity and possibility. He laid his bets on the singular authority of reason and, as a result, had to presume reason's capacity to work within individuals to progressively cultivate virtuous, self-ruling subjects that abide by the moral law and overcome inclination. Human beings might appear to be torn between choosing to ground their 'freely determined will' on the expectation of happiness (the highest natural good) or the moral law itself (the supreme moral good), but we already know that reason places nature in a subordinate, yet harmonious position to morality: the moral law is *necessary and universally binding* – rational agents *must* freely choose to act out of moral duty instead of natural inclination, and

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[203] Kant, "Critique of Practical Reason," 159 (5:26), 167 (5:34), and 189 (5:61).
[204] Kant, "Groundwork," 89-90 (4:440-441).
[205] Kant, "Religion," 34 (6:5), 36 (6:7).

insofar as: (1) "a reason giving universal laws (for nature as well as for free will) would harmonize with all the ends of [a] person;"[206] and (2) adherence to the moral law preserves the (formal and negative) end of 'humanity *qua* the capacity to freely choose one's ends,' the realization of happiness *must be possible* – all freely chosen ends are reducible to happiness, which *must* be attainable because its impossibility would fundamentally conflict with the exercise of humanity. It would be incoherent to adhere to the moral law, which preserves human beings' capacity to freely choose their ends, if such adherence rendered the very ends that are freely chosen impossible. Unfortunately for Kant, he was already committed to an account of happiness that rendered its 'necessary possibility,' under obedience to the moral law, an empirical impossibility; virtue and happiness are mutually exclusive concepts.

To resolve this issue – to provide a compelling account of what must be the case if individual subjects are to be (and become) the virtuous subjects that he *a priori* knows them to be – Kant borrows from Thomas Hobbes' playbook in the *Leviathan*, but flips his infamous inside/outside dualisms on their head. Whereas Hobbes employs a constitutive discrimination between the past and the present to authorize his account of sovereign authority, Kant makes recourse to a constitutive division between the present and the future to enable his respective account. To elaborate, Hobbes negates his *present* universalist political ontology and projects it backwards into a temporo-spatial (i.e. the state of nature) and spatio-temporal (i.e. the peoples of America) *past* as the point of origin from which the present *must* have developed, and then proceeds to specify the route back towards the here/now (i.e. the impossible and instantaneous decision to enter into a social contract to escape what can only be known through logic as the

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[206] Immanuel Kant, "On the Common Saying: That May be Correct in Theory," in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 281 (8:278).

absolute negation of the present) as the ground on which the sovereign authority of the modern man and state rests.[207] Kant, however, negates his *present* universalist moral ontology and projects it forward into a temporo-spatial future (i.e. the Kingdom of God, where the simultaneous attainment of happiness and virtue is possible) as the point of arrival to which the present *must* lead, and then proceeds to specify the route towards that better future (i.e. the progressive cultivation of virtue) as the ground on which the authority of the moral law rests.

3.2.2   Kant's Worldly Hope

In Kant's political writings, hope is no longer oriented towards an individual, otherworldly achievement of virtue and happiness – the 'highest good' is rearticulated with a 'worldly' qualifier to become "a universal republic based on the laws of virtue," akin to a "Kingdom of God on earth" within which all the moral and intellectual capacities of humankind may develop[208] – but the logic of this hope remains the same. Kant is able to quickly reconcile two seemingly incompatible facts: (1) a presumed present: human nature hinders the development of natural predispositions. On an individual and state level, humankind's inclination to act selfishly and lust for property and power leads to antagonism and war, environments that are less than hospitable to the pursuit of 'enlightenment;' and (2) that which is known *a priori*: all the natural (moral and intellectual) capacities of human beings are destined to be fully developed in conformity with their end: the achievement of individual autonomy (the capacity to freely set ends for oneself)[209] with the same manoeuvres he employed in his moral work. A necessary future – where all antagonisms have given way to a state of peace where humankind is free to develop into the virtuous, self-ruling species that it was always destined to

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[207] R.B.J. Walker, *After the Globe, Before the World* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 136-140.
[208] Kant, *Religion*, 6:98; Kant, "Universal History," 51.
[209] Kant, "Universal History," 42.

become – is placed on the horizon of a destructive pathway of conflict and war that will be taken by sovereign states and a federation of states.[210] Put simply: Kant evoked a particular conception of a desirable destination to authorize a very specific organization of the political field. Hope for a cosmopolitan political order was used to ground claims about the necessity of violence and the authority of the sovereign state and system of sovereign states. Obversely, the potentially autonomous subject learned that it needs the sovereign state and system of states, and the violence enacted under their authority, as the necessary condition under which it may hope to achieve its potential.

3.3   The Obama Hope Assemblage

In this section I will attempt to further develop the ontology of hope by examining how its spatio-temporal claim manifests in practice as an *organizing principle* for what I have labelled as Hope Assemblages: ad hoc, non-totalizing entities that are composed of heterogeneous and disparate elements, but that nonetheless function coherently to produce a deficient present and a better future, and to order bodily movement along a temporo-spatial trajectory (towards the latter) by first *attracting* subjects towards a 'vehicle of hope.' In order to ground my theorization on hope in an empirical example, the analysis will be framed around one particular Hope Assemblage: Barack Obama's 2008 American presidential election.

During the 2008 American presidential election campaigns, a multitudinous grouping of diverse and disparate forces articulated, constituted, and legitimized an authoritative and particular claim about the American here/now, a better American there/then, and a vehicle on a temporo-spatial trajectory connecting the former two (Barack Obama himself). There was a circumstantial and ad hoc reorganization of energies, bodies, forces, and entities into one

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[210] Kant, "Universal History," 52.

coherent and functioning 'vote for Obama' system – the memory of slavery and its abolition reverberated in the figure of Obama and his promissory qualities of a post-racial America; the unpopularity of the incumbent Republican President drifted over into the figure of John McCain; the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Gaza and Darfur continued to threaten America's (self-proclaimed) identity as an international force of peace and democracy; the iconic Shepard Fairey Barack Obama 'Hope' poster went viral through social media; marginalized and minority groups, grassroots movements, and Democrat-leaning interest groups all proclaimed Obama as their messiah; the sub-prime mortgage debacle and ailing economy threatened the 'American way of life' as it continued to claim more and more homes and jobs; young voters took note of Obama's socially progressive campaign points and laughed when Tina Fey said: "I can see Russia from my house" in the 'Nonpartisan Message from Governor Sarah Palin & Senator Hillary Clinton' skit on Saturday Night Live; the sneaking suspicion that American exceptionalism was declining and that the American dream would not materialize for all too many Americans suppurated into the mind of Uncle Sam himself; *and suddenly, there was an Obama Hope Assemblage.*

All of the aforementioned heterogeneous elements (and many more) were deteritorialized, gathered together, and reterritorialized into a functional aggregate that was organized around a claim that America was sick, but Obama's America would be better, the electorate needed only to vote him into power, the power to attain that better future depended on it. And, of course, those who jumped on-board the Obamamania machine in 2008 showed no sign of awareness or concern over their sedentary position within a political system marked by institutional 'checks and balances' that severely limit presidential power and preserve the status quo absent widespread consensus, trillion-dollar deficits, and an era of partisan and ideological

gridlocks that have rendered American Congress grossly dysfunctional. Instead, those stationed

in the Democratic vehicle of hope announced their empowerment with a newly amplified voice,

and giddily struggled to articulate a vision of the American Dream that promised to manifest

itself with every '*Yes we can!*' refrain.

The territory that was drawn together on the vertical axis of the Obama Hope Assemblage

is not easily rendered intelligible. It may very well be possible to discern localizable blocks of

space-time (the Iowa Caucaus Victory Speech, the "A More Perfect Union" Speech, etc.), but the

territory that is marshalled together in a Hope Assemblage always evades such a simple

recognition: it is never rendered visible through a spatio-temporal anchor because it is never

localized – it is diffuse and spans a multitude of localities. But we can rest assured that it exists

nonetheless. In early 2007, when Obama announced his candidacy for the President of the United

States, it was far from certain that the first-term United States Senator for Illinois would win the

Democratic nomination and go on to become the 44th President of the United States. But we

already know how the campaign ended: voter turnout reached an all-time high, and Obama won

the election with 52.93 percent of the popular vote.[211] That result was the final effect of a

singular, yet heterogeneous co-functioning unity. The figure of Obama was successfully installed

as a catalyst of a new order, as an attractor amidst a sea of disparate forces that produced a

territory and held it together. The new relations that obtained rendered the deficiency of the

present state of America visible and illuminated the pathway to a better America, and within this

new regime of visibility, it was possible to speak about change, hope, and a different tomorrow –

but only if Obama was elected. Because with every '*Yes we can!*' refrain, there was an act of

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[211] Federal Election Commission, *Federal Elections 2008: Election Results for the U.S. President, the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives*, eds. Eileen J. Canavan and Jason Bucelato (Washington, D.C.: Federal Election Commission, 2009), 5.

deterritorialization and reterritorialization – a gathering and regrouping of forces into a new form of content and expression – that consolidated and reinforced an emergent "vote Obama" function.

3.4   The Abstract Machine of Hope

Having examined the temporo-spatial logic of hope and how it is actualized as a principle of organization in Hope Assemblages, we are finally in a position to comment on the abstract machine of hope. What is the power of hope? What is the effect of a conglomerate of forces that is drawn together to render the achievement of a desirable future attainable under certain conditions of possibility? These questions have already been indirectly addressed throughout this thesis. In chapter 2, hope's productive power was addressed on the individual subjective level; we saw that it constitutes a 'hopeful' form of subjectivity, an individual-vehicular symbiosis that is empowered with the ability to pursue an object of desire. In section 3.2, the operation of hope was mapped out through a visual lens: the image of a body whose movement is facilitated and confined by a vehicle that is, in itself, laterally and longitudinally bounded by the smooth space of a lighted road. And in the preceding section, we saw the logic of this 'vehicular landscape' play out in practice: once a relatively stable Hope Assemblage was formed, individuals oriented their action towards the 'vehicle of hope' (as they were drawn towards the *capacity* to hope). In this final section, I will argue that one generalizable function runs through all of the preceding ventures into the nature of hope: *control*. In its most abstract formulation, hope can be reduced to the ability to channel human behaviour.

It should be immediately apparent that disciplinary panoptic power – *imposing a particular form of conduct on a multiplicity of individuals with a certain architectural and optical system* – is not sufficient to account for the function or 'general strategy' that is deployed

in Hope Assemblages. We are no longer living in a disciplinary society. The barriers between the enclosed spaces of civil society – work, school, home, hospital, prison – have broken down and now run together. These panoptic institutions are no longer crucial sites of normalization – the boundaries of the effectivity of disciplinary power have fallen. Today, "one could conceivably be at home, telecommuting into work, taking a telecourse, be on prison leave–attached to an ankle monitoring device–and be in the hospital–attached to monitoring devices that dial in to your doctor with you current vitals–all at the same time."[212] Individuals are no longer moulded within the confines of disciplinary enclosures and then let loose only to start all over again by moving into another panoptic organization. The rigid segmentary lines of the societies before us (school–army–factory–retirement) have lost their ability to capture and shape bodies into a fixed and final form in the same manner that they used to: "we are in a generalized crisis in relation to all environments of enclosure."[213]

In his short essay, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," Deleuze diagnosed the rationale of power that has surpassed that of the modern disciplinary societies. For Deleuze, *control power* is the new abstract machine that is reverberating in late-modern societies. Power is no longer concerned with fixing bodies in enclosed spaces and *moulding* them in rigid containers. Whereas disciplinary power was premised on the vertical order of enclosed space, control power operates through a combination of oblique and horizontal planes. The space of the body has become mobile. The building has given way to the bridging structure; the making of the *journey* has superseded the architectural object.[214] Control power operates by speeding up

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[212] J. McGregor Wise, "Mapping the Culture of Control: Seeing through the Truman Show," *Television New Media* 3, no. 1 (2002): 31.
[213] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October* 59 (1992): 3-4.
[214] Paul Virilio, Architecture Principle, in *The Paul Virilio Reader*, ed. Steve Redhead (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 21-22.

and slowing down bodies that are in constant mobility, flowing from one place to another; it is constantly *modulating* bodily activities in a decentralized, open channel to produce *moving figures*, not just fixed objects.

Hope Assemblages are, of course, a demonstrative example of how control power is exercised. Tell people the *way* and *how* they can attain a desirable object or event, and your job is nearly done: they will be drawn to the vehicle and happily contain their movement to the bounds of the road that has been lit for them. Tell people that one particular politician will be paving the way for a 'road to riches' that is built on deregulation, privatization, and anti-trade union legislation, and you will find a multiplicity of people redirecting their energy toward this accelerated mode of travel. Tell people that the road to emancipation is reserved for white bodies and you will find a multiplicity of people reproducing this 'figure of man' in order to gain access to the road. Tell people that the sovereign state will drive them towards perpetual peace and enlightenment, and they will close their eyes as violent horrors flash by outside their window. With hope, there is never a need to forcibly confine the subject in a space to exert a modifying influence. The hopeful subject will continue on the lighted road, just as long as their destination remains visible on the horizon.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that hope is the name of an orchestrating principle that gathers together, arranges, and reterritorializes a cluster of heterogeneous elements in a functional assemblage, which connects the present to the future throughout a 'means' and 'way,' and has the effect of exerting a magnetic pull that channels movement along this 'way' as bodies are attracted towards this 'means.' I have argued, in other words, that hope is a practice of control. It works to channel movement and to constitute hoping subjects (body-vehicle couplings) by staging an affective encounter that limits movement to the confines of a vehicle and pathway.

I began this thesis by divorcing my analysis from the traditional emotionalist and normative accounts of hope. I argued that hope cannot be reduced to a interior emotion, the optimistic anticipation for a desirable event or object, or to that futural event or object precisely because hope works in the present, as the distinctive efficacy of a machinic assemblage that produces hoping subjects as it reshapes their present, future, and trajectory of movement. I also argued that the praise of hope as an 'ethical orientation that triggers positive change' is misguided. Hope does increase agency and it does incite and justify action – but these affects are far from the zero-point of action. To engage with an 'increase in agency' is always to engage with intervening forces and bodies that have reconstituted the subject and increased its capacity to act. To engage with an 'incitement to action' is always to engage with a particular account of the necessity and direction of movement. And to engage with 'justification for action' is always to engage with the inscription of normative ends and a spatio-temporal pathway progressing towards it.

In chapter 2, I explored the empowering and pleasurable experience of hope. I argued that hope should be understood as an affective encounter: as the feeling of augmented power that occurs when a reservoir of agency ensuing from an encounter with another body is internalized as the ability to act. I suggested that this feeling of empowerment is responsible for the close ties between hope and 'good' significations and is the reason why people are so prone to upholding hope as a transformative and progressive disposition. I also suggested that, insofar as the event of hope (the constitution of the hoping body) is the differential effect of an encounter, much more attention needs to be paid to the relations of forces that condition and characterize the encounter. When we approach hope *qua* affect, individual/collective human subject is radically displaced from the locus of agency: the hoping subject is never an isolated, self-contained body, it is a re-constituted body-vehicle hybrid that has emerged as one facet of the agency proper to a much broader assemblage.

In chapter 3, I argued that hope works as a claim about a pathway and vehicle that will usher in a better future. Through an engagement with Kant's moral and political work, I developed a cartography of the relations of power in hope and argued that the regulatory authority of hope's claim about the present necessity of the pathway and vehicle is grounded on the possibility of it leading to a desirable event or object in the future. Then, by scrutinizing the assemblage of hope that formed in Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, I argued that hope works as an organizing principle of composition in ad hoc, aggregates of heterogeneous forces that channel movement along a pathway and towards a vehicle. Finally, I concluded the chapter by reflecting on some of the assemblages of hope that were explored in this thesis and arguing that their generalizable function can be reduced to the abstract formula of control power: the *ability to channel human behaviour.*

Ultimately, the purpose of this thesis has been to suggest that hope deserves to be taken seriously as a strategy and exercise of power, rather than as just a pleasurable emotion or emancipatory force that deserves our reverence. It is true that hope is always born as a symbiotic augmentation and vitalization – hope heralds the new ability of a body to act otherwise. And from the vantage point of the subject, hope is always experienced as a pleasurable sense of mobility, as an acceleration catalyzed by the production of new capacities. However, it is also the case that the affective encounter afforded to the hoping subject is always conditioned on submission to a vehicle that is laterally and longitudinally bound by a road. Indeed, in the celerity and comfort of motorized travel, it is far too easy for the passenger to forget that they are in a sedentary position. Hope is just as much an agent of capture and immobility as it is an agent of escape and mobility.

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