

CHAPTER 4

'MAÑANA'¹: BECOMING-ACTIVE AND THE UNPLEASANT

4.1 INTRODUCTION: THE PASSIVE ENCOUNTER WITH THE UNPLEASANT AND THE AFFIRMATION OF LIFE

For Deleuze, the previous chapters have shown, passivity is the superior mode of living the present. It allows the present to open up to the realm of lived temporalities. This chapter will show in sympathy with Deleuze how passivity is also the superior mode of living the present in the encounter with the unpleasant. The theme of the unpleasant is taken up by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*² as part of a critique of the Freudian concept of the death-drive.³ The theme of the death-drive, as the chapter will show, provides a further example for the convertibility of lived time and desire. Deleuze offers his reading of the Freudian death-drive as a bringing to work of the three passive syntheses of time that he had introduced before. From 1911 onwards, Freud identified the pleasure principle as the main regulating instance within conscious and unconscious psychic life. The pleasure principle can be lived actively, through the search for pleasure, or reactively, through keeping unpleasure away. 1920, in '*Jenseits des Lustprinzips*'⁴, Freud revised his view when he postulated that there is a compulsion for repetition in psychic life that is more basic and more pri-

1 Engl.: 'Tomorrow'. This is a common expression for delaying something that shall not be given space in one's present into a seemingly precise point in the future. In practice, however, *mañana* is a release into an open future. In Guatemala, this is a common source for unpleasure. See below.

2 See Deleuze 1968a, pp. 96-128.

3 For a general introduction to the Freudian argument see Laplanche/Pontalis (ed.) 1967: *The Language of Psychoanalysis*; Mertens/Waldvogel (ed.) 2000: *Handbuch psychoanalytischer Grundbegriffe*; Wright (ed.) 1992: *Feminism and Psychoanalysis. A Critical Dictionary*.

4 English: 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'. Freud 1920g: 'Jenseits des Lustprinzips'. GWXIII, pp. 1-69.

mordial than the pleasure principle. According to Freud, a common feature among all phenomena of repetition is that above all, they bring the subject unpleasure. Therefore they could not be explained solely through the pleasure principle. Freud interpreted the compulsion for repetition as visible expression of a death-drive. He introduced the concept of the death-drive in this context.

Freud set up an opposition between the life-drive (Eros) and the death-drive (Thanatos). The energy of the life-drive was for Freud a binding energy. The energy of the death-drive was a destructing energy. The death-drive in Freud is a force that strives towards an earlier state, namely towards the stasis of inorganic matter (Nirvana-principle). Freud thought that life and death work together as dualism of forces in every living entity, from the single cell upward. For him this meant that besides the tendency towards life, development and reproduction, every living being also strives towards death. From the philosophical side, the theoretical explanation for the proposed dualism of drives has been severely criticised.⁵ By theorists of the so-called object-relation school within psychoanalysis, however, the dualism between life- and death-drive has been used to understand aversive affects in the relation between a self and an object.⁶ In Freud, the compulsion for repetition is motivated by the attempt of the repressed to return from the unconscious, to where it was expelled, into consciousness. The compulsion for repetition aims to master the repressed in order to dissolve the energetic fixation between the Ego and the repressed and thereby to release the past present into the past. The repressed past present got expelled into the unconscious part of memory because at some point in the past it overwhelmed the Ego. The return of what once overwhelmed it poses a threat to the Ego. On the level of experience, the level of lived time, the return of the repressed is reminiscent of death in that it threatens the Ego with annihilation. The representation of death causes reaction. Going on from this, but in a more Nietzschean way, the present chapter wants to define the unpleasant as something that threatened the well-being of the Ego.

In line with object-relation theory in psychoanalysis, in this chapter the unpleasant shall not be something from the unconscious, but something grounded in the relation to objects in the actual present. Object-relation theorists such as Otto Kernberg⁷ have made use of the concept of the death-drive as destructive force in order to problematise the encounter with the unpleasant. According to Kernberg, the en-

5 See for example Keith Ansell Pearsson 1997: *Viroid Life*, chapter 3.

6 Mertens/Waldvogel (ed., 2000) is a contemporary handbook on psychoanalysis for practitioners. It has a strong emphasis on object-relation theory.

7 See Kernberg 1992: *Aggression in Personality Disorders and Perversion*.

counter with the unpleasant is a challenge because it sets free a reactive potential aimed at the destruction of life. Deleuze⁸, by contrast, wants to show in a Nietzschean argument how death and life are *not* opposite drives. Deleuze argues that death is not a reactive, but an active force.

‘Becoming-active’ is the essence of Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche.⁹ This chapter wants to contribute to an understanding of becoming-active, which is a technique for encountering the unpleasant through the affirmation of life. Becoming-active highlights the power of passive time. On the level of consciousness, everything is reactive force. Everything is seen from the perspective of a person. The level of consciousness is the level of active time where action takes place. On the level of the unconscious, by contrast, everything is active force, because there is no representation. There is only intensity. The level of the unconscious is the level of lived time where a passive encounter with the given takes place. Becoming-active shows how action in-midst of the unpleasant can be active, rather than reactive, when it emerges out of lived time.

An unpleasant affect is a reactive force. A self perceives something as unpleasant and, in accordance with the pleasure principle, rejects it. The reactive intensity underlying an unpleasant affect can be transformed into an active intensity through its contemplation by a self in passive time. When contemplation becomes action, a selection takes place on the part of the will. In Deleuze’s Nietzsche, the will grounds action in the active affirmation of pleasure, rather than in the reactive defence against displeasure.

“Becoming-active, [...], presupposes the affinity of action and affirmation; in order to become active it is not sufficient for a force to go to the limit of what it can do, it must make what it can do an object of affirmation. Becoming-active is affirming and affirmative, just as becoming-reactive is negating and nihilistic.”¹⁰

4.1.1 The Affect: Unpleasure as reactive Force

In Freud, Deleuze argues, death is a reactive concept because death appears as representation.¹¹ Any affect, however, involves representation. According to Kernberg, who translated drive theory into affect theory, on the level of the self, an affect links a perceived intensity with a mental representation. On the level of representation, an affect

8 Deleuze 1968a, pp. 96-128.

9 Deleuze 1962.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

11 See Deleuze 1968a, p. 104.

links an object representation to a self-representation.¹² Deleuze circumvents representation. He gives a fascinating and detailed account of affect, but he focuses on the level of intensity. He describes how a repetition of a former present (the Freudian repressed) is not an automatic repetition of the same in the actual present, but a complex inter-relational dynamic in the realm of intensity, based on the resonance of a passive self to an object in the actual present. In his account of affect, Deleuze does not differentiate between pleasant and unpleasant affects or between pleasant and unpleasant objects. All this belongs for him to the level of representation, which is not what he is interested in.

Kernberg's account of affect goes beyond that of Deleuze in that he takes representation as the upper level of affect back into view. On the level of representation, the affect expresses itself in concrete fantasies and desires. Kernberg gives an account of aversive fantasies and desires that take place in-between a self and an object that the self has represented as unpleasant. He does this through an account of the dynamics that take place in the realm of intensities. Deleuze, in unfolding these dynamics in general, without specifying the affect, brings to work three passive synthesis of time that for him are constitutive of the unconscious: contraction, resonance and differentiation determine what happens with a bound intensity within lived time.¹³ The Deleuzian account serves to understand the production of an affect of displeasure as a reactive intensity. It then serves to understand how to transform the reactive intensity into an active intensity.

"It is these three syntheses which must be understood as constitutive of the unconscious. [...] The repetition-binding, the repetition-stain, the repetition-eraser: the three beyonds of the pleasure-principle. The first synthesis expresses the foundation of time upon the basis of a living present, a foundation which endows pleasure with its value as a general empirical principle to which is subject the content of the psychic life in the Id.¹⁴ The second synthesis expresses the manner in which time is grounded in a pure past, a ground which conditions the application of the pleasure principle to the contents of the Ego. The third synthesis, however, refers to the absence of ground into which we are precipitated by the ground itself: Thanatos appears in third place as this groundlessness, beyond the ground of Eros and the foundation of *Habitus*."¹⁵

12 See Kernberg 1992, pp. 8-10.

13 See theoretical introduction to chapter 2.

14 [Read: the unconscious, J.M.]

15 Deleuze 1968a, p. 114.

For Deleuze, as for Kernberg, a drive is bound intensity. Binding is a passive synthesis in which a self contracts an intensity from the present. At the level of each binding, a little ego is formed in the Id. The contracting passive self fills itself with an image of itself in contemplating the excitation that it binds. Binding, or the passive synthesis of contraction-contemplation, thus forms little egos in the unconscious. A little ego is a narcissistic local image of the self that works in the enveloping logic of the unconscious.

“Investments, bindings or integrations are passive syntheses or contemplation-contractions in the second degree. Drives are nothing more than bound excitations. At the level of each binding, an ego is formed in the Id; a passive, partial, larval, contemplative and contracting ego. The Id is populated by local egos which constitute the time peculiar to the Id, the time of the living present there where the binding integrations are carried out. The fact that these egos should be immediately narcissistic is readily explained if we consider narcissism to be not a contemplation of oneself but the fulfilment of a self-image through the contemplation of oneself by the fulfilment of a self-image through the contemplation of something else: the eye or the seeing ego is filled with an image of itself in contemplating the excitation that it binds. It produces itself or ‘draws itself’ from what it contemplates (and from what it contracts and invests by contemplation). This is why the satisfaction which flows from binding is necessarily a ‘hallucinatory’ satisfaction of the ego itself, even though hallucination here in no way contradicts the effectivity of the binding.”¹⁶

After the binding, a twofold development appears. In one direction, the bound intensity integrates through an active synthesis onto the level of the actual. The actual works according to a ‘reality principle’.¹⁷ On the level of the reality principle, which is the level of active time, scattered intensities unify into representations of whole objects. A bound intensity unifies into a whole object. The whole object now is the goal of the self’s affect. The whole object, not just the bound intensity, appears as unpleasant. At the same time all the composing and contemplating little egos integrate into a global Ego. The global Ego is the active part of the self. It works in the logic of representation and strives for integrity of the self. The test of reality mobilises all the activity characteristic of the Ego. The Ego, or the active part of the self, lives the pleasure principle in that it judges the perceived representation as satisfying or menacing. An unpleasant affect activates self-preservative drives and thus an urge to negate the object.

16 Ibid, p. 97.

17 See *ibid*, pp. 98-99.

"Active synthesis is defined by the test of reality in an 'objectal' relation, and it is precisely according to the reality principle that the Ego tends to be 'activated', to be actively unified, to unite all its small composing and contemplative passive egos, and to be topologically distinguished from the Id. The passive egos were already integrations, but only local integrations, as mathematicians say: whereas the active self is an attempt at global integration."¹⁸

At the same time, in another direction, the bound intensity extends on the level of passive syntheses.¹⁹ On this level, the bound intensity of the little ego becomes a virtual centre. The virtual centre is the part within the actual object that arouses displeasement²⁰. Unpleasement starts in the actual object, but extends through the resonance of the bound intensity in a passive self. The virtual object connects to the past. The unpleasant object opens up through the resonance of a passive self into the realm of the full time modus of the past. The pure past qualifies the virtual object. Every little ego that gets produced from a bound intensity envelops some instance from the past of the self that relates in some way to the present affect of unpleasure.²¹ All the dimensions of resonance are part of the unpleasant affect. However, the virtual centre and all its dimensions of resonance lack something in themselves. The virtual object is defined through absence.

"Virtual objects belong essentially to the past [...] the pure past [...] does qualify the virtual object; that is, the past as contemporaneous with its own present, as pre-existing the passing present and as that which causes the present to pass. Virtual objects are shreds of pure past. It is from the height of my contemplation of virtual centres that I am present at and preside over my passing present, along with the succession of real objects in which

18 Ibid, p. 98.

19 See *ibid*, pp. 99ff.

20 In relation to the reality principle, Deleuze uses the term 'real object'. In order to integrate the present argument in the overall thesis, I use instead the term 'actual object'.

21 Kernberg uses the term 'peak-affect-states'. (Kernberg 1992, pp. 13-14). Similar to the concept of the little egos bound from the virtual object, the concept of peak-affect-states offers a conception of the virtual object beyond the restriction to erogenous zones (Melanie Klein: breast, vagina, penis). In both peak-affect-states and little egos, any sensation that is involved in producing a virtual centre can be bound. These can be contracted from both actual objects and actual movements. Both the concept of the peak-affect-state and the concept of the little ego enable one to take the object into view not only as a source for libido, but also as a source for aggression. The concept of peak-affect-states stresses the past of the self, while the concept of the bound little ego puts emphasis on the present object.

those centres are incorporated [...]. Although it is deducted from the present real object, the virtual object differs from it in kind: not only does it lack something in relation to the real object from which it is subtracted, it lacks something in itself, since it is always half of itself, the other half being different as well as absent. This absence, as we shall see, it is the opposite of a negative.²²

The missing part constantly circulates in the field between the actual object and the virtual object. The missing link is the reason underlying an unpleasant affect. The actual object disguises the missing link and the virtual resonances displace it. Disguises and displacements mask what is really at stake in an unpleasant affect. The missing part of the virtual object conducts the entire dynamic of disguises and displacements from its unknown position. The missing part of the virtual object is what holds the entire intensive field between actual object and actual self together.

4.1.2 Differentiation: Unpleasure as active Force

Deleuze distinguishes between a reactive and an active conception of death.²³ The reactive conception of death refers to death as an object of representation. The affect of unpleasure that has been described in the first part of the chapter, worked on this level. First, the reactive conception represents the annihilation of the person, similar to the representation of the unpleasant in the first part of the chapter. Second, death as representation comes from without. Again, there is an analogy to the description of the affect of unpleasure given in the first part of the chapter, in that the threat is represented through an object in the actual present. Third, the representation of death also comes from the past. This sounds familiar as well: past representations envelop themselves to the actual representation of the unpleasant through the resonance of a passive self.

(Death has two aspects) “The first signifies the personal disappearance of the person, the annihilation of this difference represented by the I or the ego. This is a difference which existed only in order to die, and the disappearance of which can be objectively represented by a return to inanimate matter, as though calculated by a kind of entropy. Despite appearances, this death always comes from without, even at the moment when it constitutes the most personal possibility, and from the past, even at the moment when it is most present. The other death, however, the other face or aspect of death, refers to the state of free differences when they are no longer sub-

22 Deleuze 1968a, pp. 101-2.

23 See *ibid.*, p. 113.

ject to the form imposed upon them by an I or an ego, when they assume a shape which excludes my own coherence no less than that of any identity whatsoever [...]. The Freudian conception refers to this first aspect, and for that reason fails to discover the death instinct, along with the corresponding experience and prototype.²⁴

Deleuze, in contrast to Freud and Kernberg, is interested in a conception of death as pure intensity. Death, again, is destruction. It can again be equated with the destructive energy of unpleasure. Unpleasure is bound from the virtual object. The unpleasuredness that the self bound from the unpleasant object produced a narcissistic image of the Ego mediated by the object (a little ego). The narcissistic libido brings the little ego back from the object into the self. At that moment the narcissistic libido loses all binding dimensions. This theoretical explanation makes sense in that with Freud, a drive is always a mix of binding and destructive forces. A destructive drive is a drive with fewer libido. Libido is the binding energy that lets itself be attracted by the world. When the drive loses its libidinal dimensions, all that remains is a neutralised, displaceable energy. All content gets lost. The drive, through losing its libido, transforms itself into Thanatos, the death-drive. Thanatos is the prolongation of Eros. It is time 'empty and out of joint'.²⁵ It is a straight and destructive force. It is a neutral, dead body of time.

Through the transformation of Eros into Thanatos, the space in-between self and object transforms itself into a recording surface. This dynamic constitutes the core of Deleuze's philosophy. Somehow there emerges a dragging tension. It forces to the surface something from in-between the intensities involved in the encounter. Thanatos destroys from below the double libidinal bond to the actual and the virtual line of intensity in-between self and object. Thanatos sucks into its whirl nuances from all the intensities involved into the intensive field in-between self and object. The whirl is a movement of differentiation. Something emerges in-between self and object that was not there before and that expresses exactly the intensive relation between the forces involved in the encounter. Everything remains on the level of that what is (intensities), rather than on the level of that what shall be (fantasies). Yet, what emerges goes beyond the different forces involved in the given. There is creation. The encounter between the forces involved is like a question to which the emerging material is like a response.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid, p. 111.

"[...] Thanatos is completely indistinguishable from the desexualisation of Eros, with the resultant formation of that neutral or displaceable energy of that Freud speaks. This energy does not serve Thanatos, it constitutes him: there is no analytic difference between Eros and Thanatos, no already given difference such that the two would be combined or made to alternate within the same 'synthesis'. [...] It is all in the same movement that there is a reflux of Eros onto the ego, that the ego takes upon itself the disguises and displacements which characterize the objects in order to construct its own fatal affection, that the libido loses all mnemonic content and Time loses its circular shape in order to assume a merciless and straight form, and that the death instinct appears, indistinguishable from that pure form, the desexualised energy of that narcissistic libido."²⁶

Why does the neutralisation of Eros take place? There must be a repulsion by the self. On the level of the real series, there was repulsion in that the self-preservative drive rejected the unpleasant representation. The 'No' to the unpleasant object expresses itself as reactive force. On the level of the virtual series, there is only attraction. However, attraction can disappear and then there remains an energy that is neutral. The 'No' on the level of intensities is a neutral, empty, but active force. It is Thanatos. The transformation of Eros into Thanatos on the level of the virtual does not require unpleasure as condition for neutralisation. Any difference that meets difference sets free a movement of differentiation. The only condition is that there is some kind of intensity that brings different forces together.

The world of intensities is, with Deleuze's Nietzsche, the world of the will to power.²⁷ This world is different from the world of affect in any Kernbergian sense in that there is only intensity. The leap into 'passive time' constitutes the entry and binding constitutes the exit from the world of intensities. The world of intensities consists of active forces. Active forces are forces that are driven by an inner will to power. Every active force strives to unfold its inner will to power. The will to power is a 'Yes' to life. The will to power consists of the own urge for life and, simultaneously, of the capacity for letting oneself be affected by the life inherent in other forces. With Deleuze's Nietzsche, every force is driven by a power in itself that emerges in contact with other forces, but that follows its own, inherent directions. In the world of the will to power, every force is something in itself independent from the contact with other forces, but at the same time a force would not exist without interaction with other forces.

26 Ibid, p. 113.

27 See Deleuze 1962, chapter 2.

Deleuze's reading of Bergson's concept of life as movement of internal differentiation²⁸ comes to mind here. Repulsion, in this conception, takes place because the self affirms its own difference in the encounter with the difference of the virtual other. The 'No' is effect of a 'Yes'. The 'Yes' is the self's affirmation of its own will to power which is its own will for life or, one could also say, its own will for pleasure. The affirmation of the own will for pleasure and simultaneously the capacity to let oneself be affected by the other makes the encounter with the difference of the other productive.

"To affirm is still to evaluate, but to evaluate from the perspective of a will which enjoys its own difference in life instead of suffering the pains of the opposition to this life that it has itself inspired. To affirm is not to take responsibility for, to take on the burden of what is, but to release, to set free what lives."²⁹

Death as an active movement of differentiation emerges where both unpleasant and unpleasance remain active forces that touch each other, but that, albeit in hierarchical relation, do not negate each other. Unpleasure can become an active force where it does not negate neither the other nor the self. The destructive energy inherent in the movement of differentiation is not directed against the other nor against the self, but against the status quo. The movement of differentiation breaks up the given constellation within the intensive field in-between a self and an object.

"[...] 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."³⁰

Deleuze calls this dynamic with Nietzsche the 'first aspect of the eternal return'³¹: Differentiation in-between different forces makes return to the surface all those intensities from the abyss of time that are involved in a given tension between the forces that encounter each other. This first aspect of the eternal return is a physical principle. Differentiation naturally produces a virtual picture of all the intensities that are involved in an intensive field in-between a self and an object. However, it takes a 'second aspect of the eternal return'³² to affirm life

28 See chapter 1 of this book.

29 Deleuze 1962, p. 185.

30 Deleuze 1968a, pp. 118-9.

31 Deleuze 1962, p. 47.

32 Ibid, p. 68.

in-midst of the unpleasant. The realm of the will to power is the realm of passive time. Action requires the binding of intensities. Through binding, scattered intensities from the realm of passive time get integrated into the goal-orientated, structured movements of active time. The will to power acts at the passage from passive time to active time as an ethical principle. The ethical principle is the second aspect of the eternal return. It will be shown in what follows how on the basis of this principle, ‘active forgetting’³³ can induce the selection of pleasure from displeasure.

4.1.3 Binding: The active Forgetting of Unpleasure

The principle of active forgetting is grounded in the assumption that only a selection of those intensities that are given will be bound. The active self can decide that its own will to power shall select what gets bound. When the will to power as the urge for unfolding one’s own life selects what gets bound, unpleasant intensities will not be attracted.³⁴ Unpleasant intensities at this stage would be forces that negate the life of oneself or an other. Unpleasant intensities at this stage would be forces that suffer from life. Again, there is a ‘No’ to unpleasure grounded in a ‘Yes’ to life. The ‘Yes’ to life is a ‘Yes’ to pleasure.

This second ‘No’ is ethically driven by the will to power through the eternal return. Behind this thought is the demand to live the present in a way that there should be so much joy that it would be Ok if any given moment would repeat itself eternally. The present shall be lived with regard to a future that affirms life in that it affirms whole-hearted engagement and pleasure. When a self lives this conviction, the unpleasant can be actively forgotten. The urge for life then determines action, rather than the attempt to resolve a perceived unpleasure. Through concentration on what the own will wants in the binding of the own next movement, the self can do active rather than reactive movements. Then, action can be not only active but also expression of an affirmation of life despite the affirmation of the given as unpleasant.

“Nietzsche’s argument can be summarised as follows: the yes which does not know how to say no (the yes of the ass) is a caricature of affirmation. This is precisely because it says yes to everything which is no, [...] The Dionysian yes, on the contrary, knows how to say no: it is pure affirmation, it has conquered nihilism and divested negation of all autonomous power. But it has done this because it has placed the negative at the service of the

33 See *ibid.*, pp. 68-71.

34 *Ibid.*

powers of affirming. To affirm is to create, not to bear, put up with or accept.³⁵

4.2 EMPIRICAL EXPLORATIONS

The second chapter of this book has shown dimensions of passive time within the Guatemalan home. Time seemed to stand still, full-time. This also means full-time encounters with the unpleasant. The unpleasant is something that contains in some disguised form a threat to the active self and that therefore urges for change. However, for the people I stayed with in Guatemala, everything tends to happen in the same living space. There are no walls that protect from the full-time encounter with the unpleasant. Nor do people avoid the unpleasant through planning. For the majority of the population, there is no money and no social infrastructure for preventing the encounter with emergencies through insurances or other forms of security. There are no structural shock absorbers against the unpleasant. The active self's desire for self-preservation against the unpleasant cannot be actualised. Therefore, people have to encounter the unpleasant passively.

With Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, there is an unconditional 'Yes' to a life without shock absorbers. Only when the realm of structure is left behind, there opens up the realm of passive time, with its implied connection to the power of life. Only through an unconditional orientation by passive time, the will to power as the urge for life can be perceived. Life becomes the way to encounter the unpleasant. The way people cope with the unpleasant seems to be to affirm the given and just to set their own action as one more movement into this. The way to live within a given of that there is no expectation that everything is pleasure seems to be to concentrate on the own action and to make sure that this affirms life and to actively forget the unpleasant rest – to become-active. Vitalism has been explored here as going with a double affirmation of life beyond negativity.

The first part of the empirical explorations in this chapter wants to give some examples of the field of active forces underlying an unpleasant feeling in passive time. The virtual field underlying an unpleasant feeling includes forces from the actual present and forces from the past of the self. The material suggests that the missing virtual link is a threat to the Ego. It circulates in all dimensions of the unpleasant affect. The second part of the empirical explorations in this chapter wants to give some examples of solutions produced through a movement of differentiation between the active forces at work in an object that has been perceived as unpleasant and the active forces un-

35 *Ibid.*, pp. 185-6.

derlying the unpleasdedness of a self. The solutions, it will be shown, respond exactly to the affirmed dynamic of forces underlying it. The third part of the empirical explorations in this chapter wants to explore the concept of active forgetting through some empirical examples. Evaluation, differentiation and active forgetting are all part of an active engagement with the unpleasant, based in passive time and in the affirmation of life. The chapter concludes with a line of flight on what looks like attempts by people in Guatemala to find means for orientation that are more secure, more predictable and more reliable than the orientation by the flickering movement of the own urge for life. With Deleuze's Nietzsche, such desires would be expression of a 'becoming-reactive'.

"Everything that separates a force from what it can do he [Callicles] calls law. Law, in this sense, expresses the triumph of the weak over the strong. Nietzsche adds: the triumph of reaction over action. Indeed, everything which separates a force is reactive as is the state of a force separated from what it can do. Every force which goes to the limit of its power is, on the contrary, active."³⁶

4.2.1 The Affect: Unpleasure as reactive Force

Every unpleasant affect involves an object from the actual present and an aspect of the self.³⁷ On the actual level, the self reacts with a 'No' towards this object. The Ego represents the unpleasant object as a danger for the self. The Ego's 'No' defends the self in a movement of destruction directed against the object. The unpleasant object gets negated.³⁸ A leap into lived time allows evaluating what is really at issue in an unpleasant feeling. On the plane of lived time, there is no representation. There are only intensities. The self is intensity and so is the unpleasant object. On the plane of intensity, the self can affirm the unpleasant object in all its complexity.³⁹ Through evaluation, the unpleasant object gets affirmed, but not accepted. It gets affirmed as a

36 Ibid, p. 59.

37 See Kernberg 1992, chapter 1.

38 See Kernberg 1992, chapter 2.

39 See Deleuze 1968a, p. 114. Deleuze contrasts the abstract *representation* of death as destruction to the lived *experience* of death as destruction. Only as abstract representation, death poses a threat to the Ego. In *Difference and Repetition*, however, it appears as if destruction shows itself only as intensive force, i.e. as lived experience, in the unconscious. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze (1962) gives a more convincing account. There, both consciousness and the unconscious are about lived experience. Consciousness is about reactive forces, while the unconscious is about active forces. The challenge is to live active, rather than reactive forces.

plurality of active forces. Letting oneself be touched by an unpleasant affect allows interpreting it. Evaluation interprets the field of conditions of an unpleasant feeling.

4.2.1.1 Locating the Affect of Unpleasure: The actual Present

The following material suggests that death is not something unpleasant in essence. The value of death depends on the concrete play of forces underlying it in a concrete encounter. Only if the play of forces produces a threat to the Ego, an actual object will be perceived as unpleasant.⁴⁰ Evaluation allows one to perceive the play of forces underlying the perception of an object. On the level of representation, the Ego perceives a whole object as unpleasant. On the unconscious level of intensities, however, the whole object disperses into a constellation of forces that underlies the object. It is this constellation of forces that produces the impression of unpleasure.

Killing Chickens

Around the time when I arrived, mid of June 2002, two new chickens arrived at the house where I stayed during the fieldwork. The chickens, as the two dogs, the cat and the duck, use pretty much the same living space as human beings. (Only the squirrel is in a cage.) They walk into all rooms in the house. The chickens, as the other animals in the house, even eat the same food as human beings, basically *tamalitos* or *tortilla*. (Only the squirrel lives on banana.) Though the animals do not have names, in various ways they are treated like members of the household.

On Saturday afternoon, when we return from the market, *Doña Toria* and *Don Arsenio* kill one of the two chickens for cooking *Estofado*⁴¹ on Sunday (15th of September, Liberation Day⁴²). They bind the feet together and hang it by the feet, head down, over the *pila*. *Don Arsenio* holds the chicken, *Doña Toria* holds a sharp knife – and then she cuts through the throat of the chicken. The head and the body are moving for some moments, although they are separated, and then the chicken is dead. They put a tin container in the *pila* under the chicken body, so that the blood can run out. Then they put the chicken in a bucket of boiling water to loosen the feathers. Then *Doña Maria* plucks the chicken body.⁴³ Later she cuts the rest of the throat off and

40 See Deleuze 1968a, pp. 109-110. Deleuze describes the co-existence of 'No' and 'Yes' in the passive self towards the unpleasant object.

41 Local indigenous meal. *Estofado* consist of chicken meat, a spicy gravy and rice.

42 On September 15, 1821 Guatemala gained its independence from Spain.

43 See photo 5 in appendix.

parts the thorax of the animal to take the inner organs out – kidney, liver, guts, lungs and heart. The next morning the animal will be cooked with onions to accompany the gravy for the traditional meal. During the killing, the other animals in the house are around. I wonder that the cat, the dogs, the duck, even the other chicken come so close as if there is no chance that they might be the next one to hang up there, head down. It seems that to them, the one who had just died was completely different from those who are still alive.

I am so fascinated by the materiality of the process. It is not brutal. It is just nature. I do not feel sorry for the animal, it is OK. That is food, and this is the way things are going and things have to go like this. It is a very serious act. Everyone seems to know what he or she has to do. People are working hand in hand. This is preparing a party the Guatemalan way. The chicken has grown for three months, and now it is ripe for being eaten. It is not such a bad smell and it is not that loud. The chicken does not cheep, nor the other one that is still alive. It is a very concentrated, silent and intense act. *'Ya le enseñamos como se mata'* (now we've taught you already how to kill), says *Doña Toria* after cutting the throat of the chicken. The whole process takes maybe two hours. It is raining constantly.

In what does my fascination consist? Coming as chick or as chicken to the house becomes for a moment in my perception the difference that decides about being or not being killed by these wonderful people whom I like and trust so much. The difference between them and me becomes uncannily small through signs as diverse as the time of arrival (in both cases three months ago), the food (*tamalito*), the living space (kitchen, bedroom and *patio*) and the noun used to describe the respective living being (chick and chicken). For no one but me the chicken seems to envelop a link to the own Ego. The chicken's temporality implies being killed. Even for such peaceful people like *Don Arsenio* with his strong Catholic faith, killing the chicken is part of life, of eating.

In San Martín⁴⁴, the normality of a chicken's death in traditional life is repeated. There, I once saw how three chickens in a row were

44 A village in the coastal area, close to Retalhuleu (see map in appendix). There, I spent a week in a community of refugees from the recent civil war in San Martín. The community was associated with the NGO where I conducted interviews and participated in trips to the countryside. I stayed with Francisca, her husband Alfonso and their teenage twins Andrés and Antonio. The people in the community came originally from the area around Huehuetenango in the northern highlands of Guatemala (see map in appendix). They fled after a massacre occurred in their village. The massacre took place, because the army suspected people from the community to collaborate with the guerrilla. Francisca had joined the *guerrilla* when she was twelve years old, together with two of her elder siblings. She has spent 15 years in exile in Chiapas,

killed in the way described above. It was Sunday afternoon and the various brothers and sisters of Francisca and their families met for a family reunion. The men were sitting in the shadow, drinking beer and talking. The women were in the kitchen hut in the *patio*. Through the open door one could observe how one chicken after the other was slaughtered, blood running out of the hole from the cut off throat, etc. All the guests were watching. Then the women cooked, everyone ate the chickens and we all seemed to have a pleasant time.

Guerrilla Warfare

Writing about the chickens reminds me of Francisca telling me about her time in the *guerrilla*. There was such a huge difference between the way she described how people from her group died and the way she described how some of the Guatemalan soldiers died. The latter sounded like killing flies. The former sounded like the passing away of human beings. Francisca was twelve when she joined the *guerrilla*, who were sometimes coming to the village at night, visiting the houses of recruits to guide them into the mountains to fight for their justice with arms against the own government. The soldiers, she told me, came to the villages and sometimes spilled gasoline over the houses and then set fire to them, so that the ‘innocent people’ inside would die in their sleep. People had to gather together in a house (sometimes everyone, including women, the elderly and children; sometimes all men in one house and all women in another; sometimes only the men) and then the house was lit. For Francisca this was outrageous. For me as well. Rios Montt’s ‘politics of the burnt earth’⁴⁵ where so many ‘innocent’ people died, without being able to defend themselves.

15 minutes later, I ask Francisca about everyday life in the *guerrilla*. She tells me about an attack on a farm where about 400 soldiers were stationed. *Campesinos*⁴⁶ would come to the farm in order to ask for work. The soldiers, Francisca explains, were waiting for the *campesinos* in order to kill them. The soldiers wanted to kill ‘innocent people’, willing to work for a living. Francisca’s *guerrilla* group, about 23 people, came to the farm in the early morning. One of them went inside where the 400 soldiers were sleeping. He positioned a

southern Mexico. When she and her community wanted to return to their village near Huehuetenango after the official end of the war, another community was living there. The Guatemalan government then assigned Francisca’s community their current place in the coastal area. Francisca earns money with weaving.

45 Ephraín Rios Montt was president of Guatemala from 1981-2. During his presidency, the worst massacres of the entire civil war took place under the name of the ‘politics of the burnt earth’. See chapter 1, p. 41.

46 English: ‘Peasants’.

bomb in the middle of the sleeping people, lit the fuse, and ran off as fast as he could. He ran back to the group that had been waiting at some distance. The bomb exploded and about 200 of the soldiers were killed in one blow. The surviving soldiers started to fire on Francisca's group. Francisca is enacting the scene. But, she proudly finishes, they didn't get anyone of her group.

There is a lot of emotion in the way that Francisca recounts the event. However, in contrast to all the compassion for the death of *campesinos*, and the threat to life that her own group was exposed to, killing the soldiers sounded like a successful strategic game. Through Francisca's words, the soldiers had become inhuman. There seemed to be just hate for the other. The other's killing activities seemed to be evil; the own killing activities seemed to be innocent. On the actualised level of words, the difference between the evil other and the innocent self seemed to have been raised to such a degree that the death of the other allowed for no link to the own Ego. There seemed to be nothing unpleasant about the death of 200 soldiers. Killing the soldiers, like killing the chickens, had to be done. And it seemed to be not without its own peculiar pleasure.

4.2.1.2 Opening up the Affect of Unpleasure: Envelopment

An unpleasant object always extends beyond the spatial and temporal boundaries of the actual given. The complex play of envelopment opens up an object in the actual present towards the resonance with the full-time of a passive self.

Excreta

Here in Guatemala the urine from others is strikingly present in everyday life. The open *patio* makes people use chamber pots at night. The chamber pot is brought in the morning to the *pila* and emptied out through a hole in the ground that leads to the drainpipe. Then it is cleaned with fresh water. Throughout the day the pot stays there in the open, visible for anyone in the *patio* next to the *pila*. The pot is perfectly clean as it stays there throughout the day. However, the imagined urine makes the difference between it being something pleasant and something unpleasant. The texture, the form and the position of the clean chamber pot become enveloped in the impression of unpleasantness. When the dishes get cleaned there are plastic mugs in the *pila* above the chamber pot. When the washing gets soaked there are plastic buckets on the ground to the right hand side from the chamber pot. The plastic links the pot that is used for urine with the pots that are used for drinking and the pots that are used for washing. Urine comes into an uncanny closeness with drinking and washing. The immanence of the excremental (that the Ego wants to get rid of)

with the nurturing (that it feels attracted by) must have threatened the Ego.

The pot's bright blue shines in the morning sun. However, the bright blue envelops a contrasting sign of urine that stays. The illusion of urine that stays, rather than being flushed away immediately, adds to the unpleasantness of the chamber pot. The imagination of its sound while flowing into the chamber pot and its smell while staying in the open pot the whole night through, makes urine, in my imagination, uncannily exposure the one who urinates to the other people in the family bedroom. The exposure of the unclean must have posed a threat to the Ego.

Old newspaper is used as toilet paper. The sense of the newspaper is completely different when it is placed on the lid of the water-box in the toilet from when the paper lies on the kitchen table. Just the place makes the difference that makes the latter one unpleasant. The newspaper located in the toilet envelopes in its sight the anticipated roughness from wiping one's bottom with it. Further, there is enveloped a certain uneasiness concerning the used toilet paper. Right beside the toilet there is an iron bucket. Here in Guatemala, one must not flush the used toilet paper away as the pipes are not wide enough. So everywhere there are waste bins in the toilets, usually open ones. The used toilet paper is there in the bin and one can see exactly the wet shape of the female vagina or the brown stripes from shit on it. That is a very intimate and personal affair. One can position a clean paper square over the used paper square, just to hide the signs of one's toilet visit. The seemingly chance position of the paper bits in the used paper bucket can make all the difference between pleasantness and unpleasantness.

The paper is torn into pieces before using it. In torn form, it is one step closer to toilet paper than when it is just lying there on the water box. The bits are about the size of an adult's hand. They can still be read. An interesting envelopment of shit and news arises when the toilet paper is read before wiping oneself with it. You read: ah, Bush wants to start a war against Iraq, ok (and wipe your bottom with it). Ah, margarine is going to cost at the '*Despensa Familiar*'⁴⁷ only one *Quetzal* fifty-nine, and I have paid recently two *Quetzales*, well, never mind (wipe your bottom with it). Ah, this was the bus accident in Huehuetenango from beginning of September where 50 people died and the bus went down the hill into the river, that was so horrible (wipe your bottom with it). The written letters transmitting news envelop in their sight the anticipated stripes of shit smeared onto it a moment later. The envelopment produces a co-existence between the new and the de-used that seems to neutralise the new(s).

47 A local supermarket.

Every morning *Don Arsenio* carries the iron bucket into the *patio*, sets fire to the used paper and puts a sheet of metal as lid over it, in order to keep the smoke down. With an iron stick he moves the burning paper. Then the bucket is carried back to the toilet and the new day can start. When the toilet paper gets burnt, smoke disperses in the air above the bucket. In the imagination, residues of shit or urine vapour dispersed through the air of *patio* and kitchen. The unpleasant finds its way in invisible form into every corner of everyday life. The smoke can be seen and smelt. The shit can't be. Envelopment is a question of imagination. However, it can make all the difference between pleasantness and unpleasantness. In discovering the threat to the Ego behind an unpleasant object, the real image of smoke has principally the same power to act as an image from fantasy.

Trash

In San Martín in the family of Francisca, I encounter the most impressive gesture characterising waste disposal in the old style: you go outside the house, in front of the veranda. Then you reach back as wide as you can with one arm. Then you throw the mandarin skin, the eggshells, the potato skin or whatever as wide as you can over the *patio* into the rich vegetation of banana plants, cotton shrub, palm trees. '*Se pudre*' (it decays). Basically the same happens with trash and plastic waste. This is collected in a bag and carried to a slope at the margin of the community. There it gets thrown over the border down hill – just out of sight. Hm. With Fredy from the NGO I was working with, I talk about this in an interview. Young people leave the rural communities and go for work or fun to the towns. Then they bring cans and things one can buy in shops back for their families to try. For example sugar gets now sold in plastic bags, in earlier times things were wrapped in leaves. The homemade *atol* is served in glasses; Coca-Cola comes in cans. Potatoes are now more popular when fried in oil, before they were cooked in the steam from the water where chicken gets cooked. Oil comes in plastic bottles from the towns. In earlier times, people could subsist on their own terms, with what they produced themselves. There was only organic waste that seized away by itself. By contrast, the tin and plastic containers stay. Slopes and rivers show just too explicitly that things are changing. The slopes of riverbeds are often full of rubbish and the water is contaminated. Only slowly the displeasure that the artificial wrapping implies becomes apparent. People have to learn that the trash in the long run poses a threat to their health because it stays.

Recycling

In town, certain items of trash can be exchanged for branded presents or money. This becomes the decisive moment that alters the play of forces underlying the item of trash from something unpleasant into something pleasant. On certain days, 'Anchor', a milk powder brand, makes announcements on '*Estereo Cien*' that you get presents if you come to the radio station with two tin containers of 'Anchor' milk. *Doña* Toria only has an empty bag from 'Anchor' milk. But she and her husband rush to the other end of town to the market at the Terminal bus station (incl. waiting this journey takes one hour by bus). There they buy two empty tin containers of 'Anchor' milk (for three *Quetzales* or so). These are sold there especially for the '*Estereo Cien*'-advertising campaign for 'Anchor' milk in the radio. They hurry with the empty containers to the radio station (located towards the centre of town, incl. waiting about 45 minutes by bus away from the market). There the people from 'Anchor' milk check that there is not already a hole stamped with a nail into the bottom of the tins. Such a stamp would be a sign that the same tin has been brought to the radio station and awarded with a present already before. If there is none, the people from the radio station mark the tins with such a hole.

Then *Doña* Toria can select her presents: plastic products in the colours of the brand from 'Anchor' milk. She receives six containers in different shapes in which rests of food can be kept fresh or in which sugar or some other powder can be stocked. The way home from the radio station is about 15 minutes foot-walk. When she comes home, *Doña* Toria shows me the objects that she has received. She seems to be so happy. She and her mum, *Doña* Maria, explore the plastic containers in an incredibly respectful way. All the useful features of the largest container are touched with hands and with words. One can open the whole upper part. One can open one part of this upper part, in case the content is fluid. One can carry the container on a little plastic handle at the side. The container would not break into bids, even if it would hit the floor. In the same way, *Doña* Toria is collecting empty plastic bags from '*Natura*'-tomato-sauces and margarine packages from '*Mirasol*'. There are periods of usually some day's time in the year when a particular one of these interactive rubbish-games is on. At other times, with other products, someone knocks at the door and when you open you win some 'present', if you can come up with the required number of empty packages or with the required slogan. Television advertisement in Guatemala is full of these forms of interactive games.

Eggshells can also be pleasant; *Doña* Toria is collecting eggshells. She has different sources where to get them. One bakery that is situated beyond the cemetery, maybe one kilometre away, is selling her the eggshells that they use for their cakes. From time to time she car-

ries them home in a big tub on her head. Apart from that, her aunts in the neighbour house, Manuel and me are collecting eggshells for her as well. *Doña Toria* is painting them in bright colours (one colour per egg), with stripes or points.⁴⁸ Then she fills them with confetti that another woman from the neighbourhood, *Doña Julia*, is producing. Finally she closes the hole through which she filled in the confetti with a colourful bit of china paper. Manuel's cousin, Carmencita, packs the prepared confetti-eggs in packages of hundred. These are then stored in the family's bedroom. There are meanwhile about 7000, she tells me. In mid February, at carnival time, the bags of hundred get sold in the nearby park 'El Calvario', and at the front door of the place we live, for eight *Quetzales* a bag. The whole year through *Doña Toria* and *Doña Maria* are working on this.

Isn't there a threat to the Ego implied in making a living from rubbish? For *Doña Toria*, as she assures me, this is the fascinating part: nothing gets wasted. Not even rubbish. For *Doña Toria*, the relative lack of money must have posed a bigger threat to the Ego than to give her time to rubbish. It doesn't matter that the effect has more to do with virtual than with actual reality. The presents from 'Anchor' milk do not respond to an actual necessity. At the place where we live, an entire storage room is filled already up to the roof with plastic products. Even the eggshell project is not necessary in any material terms. Manuel explains that it is more the feeling of adding to the family's income than an actual increase in income that keeps the eggshell project going.

4.2.1.3 Understanding the Affect of Unpleasure: The disguised Threat

*Every one of the forces enveloped in the encounter with an unpleasant object entails in disguised form that which triggered the 'No' of the Ego towards the unpleasant object.*⁴⁹ *There are two levels. On a more concrete level, forces express repulsion towards an unpleasant object. Behind all these forces, however, there is the threat to the Ego as a kind of motor or general principle that brought the various more concrete instances together. The motor is disguised. Once encountered, however, it can be retrospectively found in all of the concrete repulsions.*

48 See photo 6 in appendix.

49 See Deleuze 1968a, p. 102. The virtual object expresses the absence of what is really at issue.

Night at Francisca's

During the night, the door to the bedroom is closed. Francisca tells me to wake her if I want to go out to use the toilet. I feel uneasy with this. What does this uneasiness envelop⁵⁰? If I call out her name, for sure the twins and Alfonso will awake as well. I am reminded of when I was a little girl of around three years old and at night I would go to my mother's bed and wake her to sleep next to her. An alternative would be to touch Francisca's arm, moving it softly until she awakes. Would that not be too close? Everything is dark. I do not want to use the flashlight for that might equally awake everyone else in the bedroom. Alfonso lies next to Francisca. Isn't there a chance that his arm would be around her arm? No, I will not do the touch-thing. Instead, despite the heat, I will not drink too much in the evening so that the night might pass without my bladder demanding immediate action. The unpleasant object is not the door, but the movement of Francisca locking it. If I had asked her to position the key in a place where I could access it and to show me the mechanism of the lock, the act of her locking the door would not have become unpleasant. Then the locking of the door would not have posed a threat to my ability to go to the toilet.

I lie on the floor. Rustling from Alfonso and Francisca. It is a soft sound, but apart from that there are only mosquitoes buzzing. So it appears loud. Somehow it appears louder than a rustling from the direction of the bed of the twins. Probably this is so because I expect less intimacy among the twins than among the couple. The rustling attracts attention because I don't want to feel like an intruder. Then there is another rustle. This one comes from right behind my head. There must be a mouse, probably a mouse hole, for the sound stays. This time my 'No' is stronger. Something has to change. I touch for the stinky mosquito lotion and pour a thick line at the wall in the head-area of my raffia mat to mark my territory. It seems to work. For a while the rustling stops. The second rustling must have been a more unpleasant object than the first, because it signals that spatially and in my options to defend myself, I am on the same level as mice. The Ego seems to feel more threatened.

A fart. I am not completely sure from which direction it came, whether more from straight ahead where Alfonso and Francisca are sleeping or whether more from my right side where the twins have their bed. Somehow I'm sure that this won't have been Francisca. Nor the twins, probably. Why am I irritated by the fart? This is so macho. Making one's rude noises the present of other people seems to come close to ignoring others altogether. In my perception, the fart signals a lack of recognition⁵¹. The perceived threat envelops a sudden aware-

50 For a definition of envelopment see above chapter 2, p. 56.

51 A notion of recognition will be unfolded below in chapter 6.

ness of my vulnerable position as a stranger in the bedroom of Francisca's family. The Ego responds.

Francisca is the first to get up in the morning, at about 4.30 a.m. She goes out in darkness, probably in order not to awake the others. About an hour later, Alfonso follows. He switches on the electric light and leaves it on. I feel myself getting annoyed. There would have been less annoyance if the unpleasant action had come from Francisca. Since I had attributed the fart last night to Alfonso, the lack of recognition signalled already from his direction increases through light being left on. The bright neon light makes it difficult to fall asleep again. Now there is less privacy than in darkness. The unpleasantness of the light envelops being exposed more directly to the presence of the others. I keep my eyes closed when someone goes by. This circumvents the necessity to say anything at this early hour. It re-installs privacy. I could have stood up, go to the light-switch and switch the light off again. However, I am the stranger here, despite all the kindness of Francisca and the others. The twins are still in the room. I don't know how things usually are here. I don't want to offend or irritate anyone.

With closed eyes, listening and tacit bodily perception become more important. The loudness of the footsteps indicates whether these are near my mosquito net or further towards the door. If the sound of steps comes to a hold, I imagine someone changing T-shirts, shorts or underwear. The standstill of steps produces some tension. I don't feel that comfortable with the idea of one of these men undressing here next to me. The real issue seems to be the proximity of unknown men undressing next to me. The twins are OK. They seem so shy. With Alfonso, I always feel a bit uneasy. He seems a bit rude and unpredictable. Underneath the perceived tension seems to be a threat to my security.

Judging by the steps that have passed by, one of the twins must still be under the mosquito-curtain to my right. I concentrate on finding my shoes when coming out under my mosquito-curtain into the neon light. There is no exchange of looks and no exchange of words. I try to remain passive, in the sense of inactive. Passivity allows for orientation by concrete intensities, rather than giving in to the general position that I want to be on good terms with these people. Generally, I don't want to ignore them. However, although there is some pressure to connect, I avoid letting them become part of my present. When the shoes are on, I concentrate on the next step, going through the *patio* to the *pila* to brush my teeth. Thereafter in the kitchen, where Francisca has prepared *tortilla* for breakfast, both twins are there and we talk. It was just too early and too intimate to connect when getting up. Only now in the kitchen, does the threat to the Ego make itself retrospec-

tively known. Now it becomes clear how all my former movements have been expressions of it.⁵²

People are sleeping in their clothes. In the morning one's T-shirt gets straightened with the hands and the new day can start. However, the temperature change from night to day is extreme. At nine o'clock in the evening when we usually go to bed, it is too hot to cover oneself with a bed linen. In the middle of the night, it is so freezing cold that the bed linen is hardly enough. Usually I take off brassier and socks before sleeping and in the middle of the night I wake up from the cold and pull over a sweater, tracksuit trousers and socks. Due to the presence of the others, I try to avoid noise and flashlight when feeling for the sweater in the darkness. The unpredictability of how signals of possible intimacy might be interpreted by the three men makes me take off the brassier in a hidden way under the bed linen. The unpleasure of coldness enveloped the presence of the other people, as the found solution shows.

One evening, Francisca and I are chatting while we are sitting on the edges of our sleeping-places. When it seems that the communication expires, I turn the mosquito net over my head and lie down on the *petate*⁵³. The woven curtain now establishes some kind of visual distance. Francisca remains sitting on her sleeping-place. A bit later, she starts talking again. First I remain lying on my *petate*, talking to her from that position. Then this distance seems inappropriate to me, no longer fitting to the level of intensity re-emerging between us. I sit up and turn the mosquito-curtain again over my head. Somehow the correlation between visual distance and felt intensity receives my constant attention. I feel that the tension could become unpleasant if it was ignored. The tension envelops on the one hand the possibility to offend Francisca and on the other hand my general sleepiness after a busy day.

4.2.2 Differentiation: Unpleasure as active Force

Living spaces, promises and insects imply dimensions of unpleasure for the people involved in an encounter with them. The way the unpleasant is encountered is through affirming it as the given. It is lived with. The unpleasant remains a constant plurality of active forces. One's own perspective is inserted as one more active force into the dynamic. In the encounter of active forces, differentiation takes place. In Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, differentiation is a forced movement that emerges through the tension in-between the unpleasant as active force (the actual object) and unpleasance as active force (the

52 See Deleuze 1968a, p. 102.

53 English: 'Raffia mat'.

virtual object). Where displeasement emerges directly from the encounter with an unpleasant, in the realm of active time, the realm of representations, it is a reactive force. With Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, however, in the realm of lived time before the affirmation of displeasement there comes the affirmation of the own will to power. Lived time when adopting the perspective of Deleuze's Nietzsche, is the realm of active forces. Active forces in Deleuze's Nietzsche are forces that strive to expand their inner will to power. This is something like their inner urge for life. The affirmation of the own will to power makes displeasement emerge secondarily, as effect of the own 'Yes' towards life.

Then, displeasement is an active, not a reactive movement. It is the effect of the affirmation of the own activity and the activity of the other. The movement of differentiation is expression of the intensity of the involved will to power. Forces involved in differentiation are always active or reactive in relation to other forces. The force with the most intense will is the most active force. It makes other forces obey its will. By the same token, forces that are obeying in relation to the movement of differentiation with other forces are reactive although taken in themselves, they are active. The balance between activity and reactivity in a given movement of differentiation builds on all context conditions available, though it is never the case that all possible conditions are taken up.

4.2.2.1 The Degree of Differentiation

The will to power is the capacity to let oneself be affected by the given.⁵⁴ It determines to what degree the movement of differentiation becomes an active force. A movement of differentiation is as active as there is will to power. The will to power, the capacity to let oneself be affected by the given, envelops experiences and expectations. If one is used to that things are as they are (as in the following example of the weather in the patio), a table or a room full of obsolete things will not affect one as something that has to be changed (as in the following examples of Francisca's kitchen-table and Manuel's room). Differentiation in the following examples suggests that people are used to affirm the given. People seem little used to affirm the own will to power as a force that displaces the given. The degree of differentiation just covers the most functional basics.

54 Deleuze 1962, p. 63.

The *Patio*

The *patio* at the house of the family where I stay for the time of the fieldwork makes the different rooms appear like little huts. When one goes from one room to the other, one goes through the open air. The *patio* exposes the people very directly to the temporalities of the weather. Throughout the entire year, during morning and midday the centre of the house seems to be the open space with bright, warm sunshine. Everything appears incredibly open and light. One is constantly outside. The fig tree in the *patio* becomes the centre of the house. However, in the rainy season from April to October, from about three o'clock in the afternoon there is continuous rain. When one goes to the toilet or to another room one becomes wet. When it starts raining, every other activity is dropped for a moment and rapidly the not-yet dried clothes are gathered up and taken inside. In the room the clothing is distributed over chairs and tables so that it won't get mouldy. Until the next morning, when the sun will shine again and the washing can be transferred back onto the line, everything is messy and humid. The rain is affirmed as a given condition of existence. People live with the unpleasant. They do not constantly complain. There seems to be no point in trying to remove the unpleasant altogether. It is there. People just introduce small differences that enable their subsistence in-between the given.

Due to the height of Quetzaltenango (2300 metres above sea level) and the tropical location, there is a huge change of temperature within the day-circle. The sun in the *patio* warms up the living space every morning. When there is no sun, all that remains for warming up are the wood-fire, woollen ponchos, blankets and hot drinks. These solutions to the problem of coldness entail a fare amount of shivering. People seem to arrange themselves within the unpleasant. Their displacement of the given seems to me to concern just the basics of subsistence. As well, the light in the home comes mainly from the *patio*. *Doña Toria* and *Doña Maria* hardly ever use electric light in the kitchen during the daytime. The kitchen, like many rooms in traditionally built houses in Guatemala, does not have windows. Although there is electricity, Manuel's mother and grandmother do not use the lamp if only the two of them are there (both being women!). Until it gets completely dark, they often sit in the cold and dark, looking into the fireside. The upper part of the door is open and it is raining outside. In the countryside there is often no electricity provision at all; one has candles and goes to bed at about 7 p.m. when the daylight disappears. At the house where I live during the time of the fieldwork, the electricity supply would allow for a 'No' to the impact of the coldness and darkness of a rainy afternoon. However, the will to power also envelops the gender of the two women and the limited availability of money. In practice, darkness and coldness get accepted.

Francisca's Kitchen

The table in the kitchen of Francisca is always packed with all kinds of things. In the middle there is a big grinding stone, covering half of the table. Then there is a *tortilla* machine. Then there is a big plastic pot with dishes. If there are bags or a killed chicken around, it is likely that these are left on the table as well. When Francisca and Alfonso are eating, everything remains on the table. The two just clear enough space for a plate and a cup beside all the mess. Their will to power relates to the functional. Displacement of the given does not express an effort for style.

The table is an expression of the kitchen as a whole. A naked bulb is hanging from the ceiling. Light also comes from two windows. These are square holes in the wall. A wooden shutter can close them off. The shutters are bolted by turning a bit of wood around on a nail. The floor is paved. The stove is a knee-high stone construction with a fire-hole and a chimney. The biggest thing in the room is a one metre wide and two metre high iron silo for the storage of sweetcorn. Various chairs are scattered around. They are of various kinds, randomly collected together. Huge slats of lath wood are leaning in one corner. Some raffia baskets filled with dried sweetcorn or black beans are left somewhere on the floor.

The silo is a very modern arrangement. The oven is more modern than the one at the house where I stay for the time of the fieldwork. Windows and chairs are far from self-evident in the Guatemalan countryside. Francisca is very attached to the kitchen, above all because she compares the way she is equipped now with the unsettled way she lived in Mexico during refugee-times. There, she tells me, the local government had installed a law according to which Guatemalan refugees had to change houses every two weeks. Guatemalans would not get longer contracts. This was meant to prevent the refugees from settling down. In short, in Francisca's kitchen, everything could be much more basic. However, the atmosphere is dominated by functionality rather than style. Things appear like raw materials. There is no colour on stone, wood or iron, no curtain, no lampshade. Displacement of nature is limited to the functional.

Manuel's Room

In the room where Manuel and I live, there is an atmosphere of comfortable decay when I come. Many things within the given refer to contexts that Manuel has little to do with. Manuel has left things as they are. He just transformed various things provisionally into a table. On the left side of the room, as one enters, there is a broken stove with oven. The oven hole is transformed into a storage space for old packages of tomato sauce etc. The stove is used provisionally as a table for freshly washed clothes and various other things. Then there is an old,

broken blue plastic sofa and two armchairs in the same style. The armchairs are stored away onto the sofa, with their legs towards the ceiling of the room. The underside of the seat is provisionally used as a table. Onto it there is placed a plastic case with spices and herbs for cooking. Then there is a black bookshelf popped between the blue plastic furniture and the oven. It is not in use, just stored away. Its top is used provisionally as a table. It carries cases of various things. On the right side of the room next to the entrance door there is an old *marimba*. The instrument is out of tune; it cannot be used anymore properly for playing melodies. It is provisionally used as a table. On it there are located clothes, jackets and backpacks. There is one proper table. However, on top of it is located a broken radio-cassette recorder. The cassette cannot be used; the door for the cassette deck is broken off.

The room is kept rather dark. Darkness gets affirmed, although there are two windows towards the *patio*. The windows have curtains in front of them. The curtains are of light textile with flowers on it, two different kinds of patterns for the two different windows. The windows, however, are permanently closed and the curtains as well. There is another window in the ceiling. It is stained dark brown from dirt. There is no ceiling-light in the room, just an empty holder for a neon-tube. Light comes from an old desk lamp. It has a homemade lampshade in dark purple that Manuel made in primary school when he was a kid. The lampshade is left beside the lamp. Manuel was surprised when we later thought about installing more light in our room and I insisted on a lampshade. He considers this to be a waste of light. 'Why? First we install light and then we take off half of it again?' Affirmation of the own will to change something within the given is left with the most functional. No effort for style. No effort for comfort. No effort for beauty. Just functionality. The lamp is located on the *marimba*. In order to switch on the light, one has to kneel down below the instrument, grope in the dark for the plug and connect it.

Manuel's presence hardly appears within the given. In the left side corner from the entrance, there are about four sacks that originally carried sweetcorn. They are full of sorrow doll-packages. These belong to *Doña Toria* and *Doña Maria*. The old, broken blue plastic sofa is a present from a distant relative of the family. When he migrated to the United States for work, he no longer had a use for it. The old *marimba* belongs to *Don Arsenio*. He can play on it. Manuel, *Don Arsenio* and I re-furnished it some five years ago in a two-day effort. On the wall, there are three calendars, hanging one over the other. Each one has a picture on it and some advertisements. This is a type of calendar that one gets for free at the end of the year in the shops and cafés where one is known as a good client. People here use these calendars like posters. Once I had seen eight of them hanging side by side in the

same room. As in Manuel's room, they were both from present and past years. Below the calendars, there is a clock in form of a plastic teapot. I associate the calendars and the clock with Manuel's mother.

Manuel has only cleared one corner of the room for actual use, just covering the basics: a double size bed and in front of this a table with a TV on it. This is where he has been living for the last four years or so. His will to power has affirmed his own basic needs. However, it has engaged in differentiation with the various things in the room only far enough for Manuel to subsist in co-existence with it.

4.2.2.2 Differentiation and the Hierarchy of Forces

Promises are made. But everyone knows that there is no reliability and no predictability involved in making a promise. People are used to that promises are not kept. There seems to be no expectation that people are able to abstract that far from the diverse and ever-changing momentary context-conditions that there could be taken for granted something like responsibility for keeping a word that has been given. The common way to cope with this is to interpret the promise according to the will that it expresses. Promises operate within the realm of lived time, on the plane of the will to power. Differentiation expresses the relation of the different will to power to each other. Every force that is driven by its own will to power is an active force. Nevertheless, active forces are in a relation of hierarchy to each other. The force with the biggest will to power is the most active force. The force with the lowest will to power is the most reactive force. Forces that make other forces obey their own will to power are active. Forces that obey the will to power of other forces are reactive. Usually, among the people I lived with, especially the more traditional ones, the unreliable force made the responding force reactive (see the following examples under the heading 'The Affirmation of the Given') Some people, however, found ways to affirm their own will in a way that unpleasure triggered a movement of differentiation that relatively displaces the given hierarchy of forces (see the following examples under the heading 'The Affirmation of Unpleasure').

The Affirmation of the Given

Both on the personal level and on the level of institutions, the way people cope with unreliability is to affirm it as given. Concerning the other, a given promise is interpreted according to the desires, subjective perceptions and other contextual influences enveloped in it. Concerning the self, it seems more important to do what one actually does with good intention and conviction, than to do what one said one would do. An appointment takes place not when it is meant to take

place, but when the conditions are given that give sense⁵⁵ to the appointment. Orientation by the will makes an encounter the negotiation of a hierarchy among forces. In the following examples, unreliability is the active force while the waiting, trusting or otherwise responding force is left reactive.

‘Very few people in our culture are punctual. Most people are 15 to 30 minutes late. Last Saturday I was invited to the birthday of a girl. The party was to start at three o’clock, but the people were there at five o’clock. And only then there were the cake and the *piñata*. Let me give another example. At university there is a time of inscription. And after that there is a period of ‘extraordinary inscription’, so being late is already planned in.’ (Mynor)

‘You know that I’m representative of our school in the association of Spanish schools here in Xela? The meetings there start at nine o’clock in the morning. The first two times I was there at nine o’clock exactly and no one else was there. Not even the president or the people who come by car. Now I am coming at half past nine as everyone else. Being late is normal here.’ (Mario)

‘Many people in this culture, including me, leave the house when they should be in the compromise. Some people then bring a book for such times of waiting, but most of us just sit there and occasionally start a conversation with someone else who is there. About anything – the weather, the family...’ (Mynor)

It is five o’clock in the morning. Manuel and I are trying to catch a bus to the Mexican border⁵⁶. I ask one of the few men standing around when the first bus is going to come. ‘5.20,’ is the precise answer. The bus does not come at that time, nor an hour later. Manuel explains: ‘The man probably did not have a clue when the bus was meant to leave. He just wanted to give you an answer. He wanted to be polite. So he just said anything.’

Manuel had promised me to copy a cassette with music. Some months later I remind him of this and he replies that he is going to do it ‘tomorrow’. A year and a half later I finally receive the cassette. ‘We are human beings, not machines,’ was his reply when I occasionally complained. Empirically, this seemed to express a passive form of time

55 This term will be unfolded as a Deleuzian concept below in chapter 5, see pp. 179-92.

56 We went to Tecún Umán, a border town called after the Mayan emperor who fought and lost against the Spanish conquistadors. See map in appendix.

management. He kept a list with the things to do. When there was time, he started with what he perceived as the most important point and gave to this all the time it took to accomplish. He ticked the task off the list. Then he looked for the next most important point and concentrated on this. Since there was usually more to do than he could accomplish, what remained undone in the evening, got released into an open future. Either the point made it onto the next list, or it got forgotten as not that important at the moment.

We are invited for three o'clock in the afternoon to the birthday of Papa Meme, Manuel's grandfather. I will go with grandma. At three o'clock she is sitting there in the kitchen, cooking *nixtamal*. When I ask her 'what about leaving?' she replies 'four o'clock, just quickly finishing off the cooking of the *nixtamal*'. At half past four we are ready to go. When we arrive, no one seems surprised or irritated about the delay.

The Affirmation of Unpleasure

Where there is not only the affirmation of the given, but also the affirmation of the own will to power, unpleasuredness can become an active force. The differentiation of unpleasuredness as active force can relatively displace the unpleasant. The unpleasant then becomes a reactive force in relation to unpleasuredness.

'Here in Guatemalan culture, it is very badly seen by the people when the girlfriend comes earlier to a meeting than the boyfriend. This is the way it goes in this culture. The woman must not come on time. The woman always has to be a bit after. That is due to stereotypes in this society. For example, when Mynor and Miriam⁵⁷ have an appointment in a café at half past five in the afternoon, and she comes at half past five on time, and Mynor comes as well at half past five, but she, because she is German and Germans are very punctual, is a bit before him...other people in the café would think very badly of that. It isn't appropriate. But when I got to know my wife, we said we are going to meet at half past five and she came at seven o'clock! I gave her a phone-call to ask where she is, and she said: 'I'm coming already' – and me waiting here. Afterwards I realised that it wasn't an accident, but part of her normal conduct. We sorted that out. Because it is not good. I don't like that. Once I was waiting for five hours for her!' (Mario)

57 A Guatemalan-German couple, close friends with people at the Spanish school.

‘There are lots of people in my community who don’t plan their time. Foreigners are punctual; by contrast we use to say ‘*de plano mañana*’ (so it will be tomorrow), ‘*va a esperar*’ (he will wait). Me personally, I am waiting only 15 minutes. When the person isn’t there, I am off. One hour is already a lot.’ (Julia)

It is the morning of 24 December. Manuel and I are in his Spanish school. I am waiting for Fredy from the NGO with which I could collaborate for the research. Fredy does not come. Manuel asks me: ‘Did you confirm the meeting yesterday?’ No, I didn’t. He explains: ‘Then don’t expect too much. It’s your fault. If you are interested in the meeting taking place, you have to confirm a meeting the day before. This is how it goes in this culture. That increases the chance the appointment will be taken seriously.’

‘I had a professor at university and she asked the class: “This class is going to start at five o’clock in the afternoon. When are you likely to come?” One student said, “5.20,” another one said “5.45”. “Ok,” she continued. “What will be the latest that you can arrive? Who will be that?” “Me,” someone said. “I can’t make it before 6.30.” “Very well,” the professor decided. “The class is going to start at 6.30 exactly. But at point 6.30 I am going to close the door and *no one* will be allowed in anymore.” And this was what she did and everyone was there on time, or even before that!’ (Mario)

‘The culture is being late. The ‘*Chapin-hour*’⁵⁸ (Laughing). Because everyone accepts it. If one doesn’t accept it and says something in contra, this is seen by the others as very square-headed. Therefore, one better keeps quite, because one doesn’t want to be criticised.’ (Mario)

4.2.2.3 The Creativity of Differentiation

‘A problem always finds the solution it merits, according to the conditions which determine it as a problem.’⁵⁹ Insects become a problem for people in the home I lived with. They become unpleasant in various ways. In order to affirm their own way of life against the insects’ ways of life, people in the following examples make use of clear water, bare hands or woven cloths. Chemicals would kill the unpleasant. In Guatemalan agriculture, so many chemicals are used that in some cases export of some kind of vegetable has been forbidden. Due to tradition and scarcity of money, the power of people’s will at home

58 ‘*Chapin*’ is a local term for Guatemalan people. It expresses *cariño* (affection).

59 Deleuze 1969, p. 54.

does not involve the use of chemicals. The unpleasant is lived with. It remains a constant active force. The 'No' is an active movement of differentiation. A movement of differentiation takes place in the realm of intensity. The peculiarity of intensity is that it envelops other intensities. All conditions that determine a field of forces underlying a perceived problem⁶⁰ get enveloped, exactly in their respective degree of involvement. This is the creativity of the movement of differentiation. It produces exact solutions for any given encounter of forces.

Flies

For the people in the home, flies are unpleasant. They are potential carriers of disease. The way, people encounter flies implies a 'No'. The 'No' does not destroy the other. For example, flies are not killed by chemicals. Rather, both flies and people affirm their respective will to power. The 'No' consists in an on-going differentiation between the flies' way to make use of the home-space and the people's way to make use of the home-space. Differentiation builds on given context conditions.

Everything is tapped with extensive woven cloths. In the kitchen the buckets with the used dishes waiting to be washed or with the cleaned dishes waiting to dry by air are always covered with woven cloths. This shall prevent flies as potential carriers of illnesses from coming into contact with people's food. Moreover, while eating or drinking, people constantly move one hand over the plate or cup. This prevents flies landing on food or drink. The movement of shooing is part of the atmosphere during mealtimes as characteristic as reaching into the raffia basket for new tamales. The fly is hardly shooed for long before it comes back.

In the *patio*, there is a wide plastic bowl full of water where the duck takes its bath. In front of the bowl, the duck gets its *tamalito*-food, crumbled. There is always a mess of *tamalito*-crumbles meshed with water in front of the bowl. Flies stay in the air above the food-bits like a dark cloud. When someone passes by, the pack scatters apart, just to come together again a moment later. At times, doors to rooms are closed just to keep the flies outside in the *patio*. The other day after lunch, we had a rest. The sun was shining outside. I wanted to open the door in order to let some sun in. Manuel intervened: 'why do you open the door? Then the flies come in!'

Lice

Every morning, *Don Arsenio* pours water over the leaves of the geraniums. This is an effect of his 'No' to the lice that live under the leaves. Again, the 'No' does not destroy the other. There are chemi-

60 See Deleuze 1969, pp. 52-7.

cals available. But *Don Arsenio* does not use them. They are too expensive. Rather, he affirms his interest in the plants. Between the difference of the other and the difference of the own will to power there emerges a spatio-temporal dynamic that sets free an upward movement of differentiation. It involves the presence of the lice, *Don Arsenio's* displeasement about the lice, as well as his interest in the plant and the limited availability of money. Differentiation ungrounds and passively synthesises them into a solution. *Don Arsenio* uses clear water. It works, though only for a day. The solution implies that the lice have kept him busy every morning for years and years already.

Fleas

Fleas are so obviously only a nuisance for people. I want to scratch myself constantly. Fleas tend to keep people even more occupied than flies or lice, scratching the fleabites. Again there is the risk of illness. When Manuel had fleas, like his father with the lice, he did not use chemicals to eradicate them. Instead, every morning, he collected the little black eggs that one can see on the linen, into a plastic bag and threw them outside into the dustbin. The solution consisted in an ongoing affirmation of his way to make use of the bed against the fleas' ongoing affirmation of their way to make use of the bed. The eggs of fleas are tiny and increase in number incredibly quickly. Picking them up with bare fingers is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

Manuel affirmed his will to power against the fleas. Nevertheless, the unpleasant remained a constant active force. It was obvious where the fleas came from. The dogs and the cat have fleas as well. They bite themselves constantly. The duck picks fleas out of the fleece of the Pekinese-dog. Before this duck, there was another duck, maybe three years ago. That duck even died because it picked fleas out of the fleece of one of the dogs and the dog did not like it and killed the duck. Fleas are hardly visible for human eyes. They are so mobile in their high and wide jumps.

4.2.3 Binding: The active Forgetting of Unpleasure

Evaluation allows the description of an unpleasant affect in all its dimensions of reactivity. Differentiation allows reactive forces to turn into active forces. Active forgetting, however, allows the selection among active forces of those that affirm life. Forces, according to Deleuze's Nietzsche, are either active or reactive and they are driven by a will that is either a will to power or a 'will to nothingness'⁶¹. Active forgetting takes place at the moment of binding. Binding is the passage from contemplation to action. Scattered intensities from the

61 Deleuze 1962, p. 54.

realm of lived time have to be integrated into larger, goal-orientated movements in order to become action. In becoming-active, the active self decides that every action that it will bind shall be an active, not a reactive movement. Forces that consist only in a negation of other forces shall not be bound. Only forces shall be bound that affirm life. Through an active decision, the unpleasant shall be actively forgotten in the realm of unbound intensity.

Binding is a passive synthesis. How can the active self make sure that the passive self will select only intensities that affirm life? An active force is one that goes to the limit of what it wants to do. The ethical principle that every action shall be an active movement implies that orientation will take place through the will to power. Binding selects intensities that respond to the will. If the highest values that a will is capable of bringing up are lived, the present will acquire its maximal weight. An eternal repetition of any present moment would be the maximal deflection of the lived present into the future. The thought of the eternal return assures that the will is given its maximal power in flashing up in an encounter so that the present is lived with its full weight.

The global Ego represents unbound displeasure as threat. It defends itself with reactive movements. Becoming-active as ethical principle enables the circumvention of the global Ego. In 'becoming-active' the focus is on the singular movement, not on the self. If the active self concentrates on its own actions being active rather than reactive, it can work against the global Ego's natural tendency towards reactivity. The 'No' of the global Ego does not then refer to unbound displeasure, but to the effect of this, the reactive defence of the self. There is no expectation that there possibly can be a present without displeasure. The aim is not to detect and disarm every source of displeasure. Rather, the aim is to let oneself not be driven into defence by the unpleasant. For Deleuze's Nietzsche, active forgetting in this sense is a mode of critique of the unpleasant given.

4.2.3.1 Active Forgetting and Selection

The affirmation of life, in Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, is an ethical decision that is grounded in the thought of the eternal return and expression of the will to power.⁶² It concerns the moment of selection in binding intensities from passive time into active time. The philosophical concept of the eternal return links to lived temporalities in Guatemala in that it is expression of a determination to live life to the full. To will has to do with joy⁶³, with an affirmation of pleasure. It is

62 Deleuze 1962, pp. 68-9.

63 Ibid, p. 84.

based in the detection and selection of life-energies. The following material shows how once a selection in the name of life has been done, the rest can (as in the following examples on herbs and pills) or must (as in the following example on contacts) be actively forgotten. There are forces that are determined by a will to power and there are forces that are determined by a will to nothingness. In Nietzsche, active forgetting shall prevent the latter from actualisation. The bad witch in the following example, by contrast, chooses the will to nothingness explicitly as her means of selection.

Traditional Medicine

Knowledge about healing with herbs or witchcraft is still alive in Guatemala. Even in a town like Xela, and much more in the countryside, everyone knows some kind of tea or symbolism that helps or harms against something. Action is led by intuition. One goes into contact with the other on the plane of lived time. The selection from the given is led by the will to power. If there are life-energies such as interest, trust or attraction flashing up in an encounter, the given option can be actualised. At the market, one gets leaves of the rose of Jamaica. Luisa says that they are good against cold. The herb-seller at the market says that they are good against kidney problems. When I talk to *Doña* Maria about these contrasting information, she comments that she does not care. She is going to try them out anyway. For sure they will be good against something. There is trust because there is will. *Doña* Maria has expressed the urge to do something for her health. She has complained about various problems concerning her heart, her eyes and her feet. She feels attracted by the possibility to do something for her health with the leaves of the rose of Jamaica. The will seems to outweigh the unpleasant. Apparently it does not matter that no one seems to know for sure in what way the remedy will affect *Doña* Maria's body nor whether the remedy will respond at all to her actual problems.

Witchcraft is a profession of perceiving and sending out intensities. There is good witchcraft and there is bad witchcraft. The action of good witches is grounded in a selection of life-energies by the will to power. The will to power binds energies that bring life. According to Francisca, life-energies are perceived through feeling one's blood move in the right arm. This is intuition done the professional way. When Francisca found out that she could perceive the movement of her blood in the encounter with illness, she knew she was a good witch. A three-fold movement of the blood in the right arm meant that there was a potential to increase and expand life. Once a potential has been detected, the rest of the given can be actively forgotten. Action will be determined by this one selection. The action of bad witches, by contrast, is grounded in the selection of death-energies. In this case,

not the will to power binds energies, but a will to nothingness. The will to nothingness attracts and binds energies that bring death or destruction. Equally, action is based on one selection of a perceived energetic potential. After selection, the intensive rest can be actively forgotten. This one selection will be brought to actualisation. Francisca gives me an example for both good and for bad witchcraft.

On good witchcraft: There was an old woman in Francisca's community who was so ill that her son from Mexico-City had already been called back to join the funeral of his mum. There seemed to be no hope anymore. The woman had given up. She said: 'Why spending more money on curing me, I better die.' She decided not to talk, not to eat and not to move anymore until she would die. Francisca was called for help. Francisca paid attention to the blood in her right arm in the encounter with the old woman. She felt the blood moving up from her elbow to her shoulder and down again, several times. This was a sign for that there was still life in the ill woman despite her high age. It looked as if death was immanent, but Francisca felt that the woman could be cured. Led by this intuition, Francisca cooked some tea together. She gave it to the patient. And really, after a little while, the patient asked for a glass of water. Later she asked for tortilla, so everyone could see that she was on her way to be cured. The next day, Francisca gave more of the medical tea she mixed. When the son came by plane from Mexico City to Guatemala City and then by bus to the community, he was crying, because he thought he would find his mother dead. He thought he would never again be able to talk to her. But people told him, 'Why are you crying? Go in, your mother is there, talk to her. She already is eating tortilla again.' He couldn't believe it and asked, 'so why did you call me down from Mexico City all the way if it isn't that bad with her?' But, Francisca comments, a few days before it had looked as if there was no way back into life for the old woman.

On bad witchcraft: Once an indigenous woman from another refugee community around San Martín came to Francisca and asked her whether she would teach her how to weave. The two met, but the woman did not learn much. She got so confused and felt so incapable that after the week, she had not finished the work they had started. She left the work with Francisca and refused to pay for the material and for the tuition, because it did not help her. The woman went off and Francisca was left alone, having no income for the time spent with this apprentice. Little later, Francisca got an eye disease. The eye swelled and she could hardly see anymore. She was concerned she would go blind. It was a very existential threat, since she could not see her weaving work anymore that gave her an income and a possibility to finance her sons' formal education. Moreover, her husband told her that he was not interested in a blind wife. He threatened to throw her

down the slope where the non-organic rubbish was disposed, in order to get rid of her. A blind wife seemed to have no more value than rubbish for him. Francisca got very scared. Creams and pills did not help. Finally Francisca went to a 'good witch'. The good witch found out that the eye disease was initiated through the work of a bad witch. Francisca's explanation was: The woman who had not learned weaving had gone to a bad witch. Weaving is the main possibility of women in these communities to earn money. Maybe the woman had set all her hope on the ability to weave. In any case she must have felt very much rage about the defeat in the weaving-tuition. She had ordered to destroy Francisca where she would be most vulnerable: in her capacity to work. The bad witch had sent out an illness to Francisca's eyes, because this was the most effective way to stop Francisca working. After detecting the source of the illness, Francisca's eyes could be healed. Today, the right eye is just a little bit smaller than the other one.

Modern Medicine

The knowledge about natural and supernatural medicine is on the decrease. More popular is Western medicine. Western medicine is thought to be superior because its legitimacy is grounded in rationality, rather than in intuition. However, the way it is used seems to be driven by attraction and by active forgetting. In the local pharmacies, one can buy nearly everything just so over the counter, without prescription, and without blurb, just the single pill. This is one effect of a culture of poverty, where people cannot afford to buy a whole package of medicine. You have this little pill on your hand – orange, green, yellow, white, blue – but colour, form or flavour do not mean anything. You trust what you are offered on the basis of attraction more than information. On the plane of attraction invisible signs such as a belief in professional power intermesh with visible signs such as colour. During the last weeks, after the rainy season had stopped, cold was slowly setting in. Everyone in the house, one after the other, got flu. Manuel took pills that were recommended by Mario, whose sister is a doctor. Manuel's family took the pills that Manuel was giving them. They trusted in what he gave them, because Manuel had a friend who had a sister who was doctor. They also said they liked the colour. Due to the perceived attraction, the risk involved in taking by chance something that could harm rather than heal, got actively forgotten.

In traditional life, concrete contacts function as insurance in case of illness. Family and friends are supposed to help you out. Western medicine stands for abstraction from concrete contexts. In practice, Western medicine builds on contacts as well. The maintenance of good relations is essential. Only those contacts can be built on that are dominated by life-energies. If contacts are actualised in the case of an

emergency, conflicts in the relation have to be actively forgotten. Mario told me: ‘The brother of my wife is doctor. He is working in the IGSS⁶⁴ in Guatemala City and he has lots of contacts. My sister is also a doctor, so usually we don’t have problems with that. My mother was very ill two years ago. She lost her memory. We had to bring her to the Capital. It would have been very expensive to hospitalise her. But for us it didn’t cost that much. We had to pay only the costs of the medicine, but not the salary of the doctor. There is a contract among doctors about the close family of other doctors. We have an internist and a surgeon in the family. These are what you usually need. When you are a relative of a doctor, they usually do the necessary operations and they do them soon. For example if I would have to go to the hospital here, I would have to go to the public hospital. And when they would check my name and find out that I’m the brother of my sister who is doctor, they would give me the operation now rather than in three months, or never. Many people die because of lack of contacts. Although they have money, they are attended late or not attended well.’

4.2.3.2 Active Forgetting and Higher Values

Deleuze discusses through Nietzsche how nihilism, the depreciation of the given, can be disarmed.⁶⁵ If one approaches the given with values that go beyond the given from the outset, the given will appear as negative or not appear at all (as in the following quotation from Fredey). In this sense, higher values are a fiction. The effect of pre-given higher values is the negation of the given. If one gets rid of all values (the de-valuation of higher values themselves) and sticks with the given, one depreciates the given as soon as this is unpleasant (as in the following quotations from Mario and Luis⁶⁶). Rather, negation has to be a quality of the will to power (as in the following quotation from Luisa). First there has to be the affirmation of the given. But then, there has to be the affirmation of the will to power. The will to power negates the unpleasant given. The perspective found through the flashing up of the will to power allows to actively forget the unpleasant given. Active forgetting works as long as one believes in the perspective that has been found.

64 The Guatemalan Institute for Social Security, IGSS, is the social insurance for those, employed by the government and better off private enterprises.

65 Deleuze 1962, pp. 147-8.

66 A teacher at the Spanish school.

‘When someone is so old that he cannot work anymore to earn his own money, there sets in the responsibility of one’s kids.’ (Fredy)

‘I don’t think that my children are going to maintain me when I am old. Since about 30 years ago this has changed here in Guatemala. Many children are going to the United States. Many people don’t want the grandfather in the house. Before, it wasn’t like this. It is good to have a business that produces money for one. But we haven’t thought much about this. Our jobs are not elitist enough for this. Jubilation is only for the people who are employed by the government. My father (who was professor at the University) now gets a pension of 2000 *Quetzales* a month, for two people. That is quite a lot. I live with five people on less.’ (Mario)

‘People in the countryside do not plan for the future. Because of illiteracy and lack of orientation. People think, ‘How can I give food to my kids?’ They just come through the present. Seven-year-old children go to the field with their *machete*. And the school? Children aged three to six go to school, no older. Father himself became malnourished, because he had been working on the *finca* all life long.’ (Luis)

‘I don’t have children. So I have to buy me a kid, which means to adopt one. The only thing is that you have to raise it for about ten years before it will work for you. Then in return you give the kid the land or house you have when you pass away. Here in Guatemala we don’t have a place for the elderly. What you do is you adopt a baby, because an older kid won’t want to be adopted. Sometimes they give a lot of children away at the hospitals. It doesn’t cost anything, as far as I have heard. Because there are many single mothers, or mothers of poor families.’ (Luisa)

4.2.3.3 Active Forgetting and Critique

Active forgetting is a mode of critique. Critique, for Deleuze in his reading of Nietzsche, is active forgetting. Active forgetting, with Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche, means to be aware of the negative, but then to ignore it. Negative judgement then results in exclusion. The given unpleasant gets actively prevented from dominating, determining or limiting one’s activity. This is possible through orientating oneself by the principle of the will to power. For Deleuze’s Nietzsche, critique is ‘a thought that would go to the limit of what life can do, a thought that would lead life to the limit of what it can do’. It is a thought that would affirm life instead of a knowledge that is opposed

to life.⁶⁷ Deleuze's concept of critique can be broadened from thinking to action. Acting in the face of the negative in the following example of Janet⁶⁸'s car is an active, affirmative and aggressive force. It means to go for what one wants from life and to actively forget the risks implied in this. The thought of the eternal return comes to mind: Have as much fun in the present moment that it would be Ok if this moment would repeat itself eternally.⁶⁹

Pick-Ups

A common way of movement by people over the countryside is hitch-hiking on the transportation areas of small vans. By this way, there is a direct exposure to every kind of disturbance. People travelling this way are highly vulnerable in case of accident. Often one takes the risk because the will to come somewhere lets one forget the risk implied.

Janet's Car

Janet, Edwin, their two year old daughter Christina, Manuel and I want to make a day-trip to a swimming pool in the coastal area. We are going there with Janet's car. The car was built in 1986 and Janet became the fifth owner when she bought it from another teacher at the school where she is working. Several things are out of order. Among the things I have noticed: there is no wing-mirror on the driver's side nor on the other side. On the other side there was never one originally and it is less important. On the driver's side it would have been important and there is still the bracket for it, just the glass is missing. One of the backside windows is smashed. The glass is still in place, but only just. It looks as if a stone has hit the window. The windscreen wiper on the passenger side is still there, but it is not working – it has to be pulled away from the glass so it does not damage it. The indicators seem to be out of order as well; when we have to turn around a corner, Janet rolls down the window and gives a signal by hand the way cyclists do. First it is less obvious, when the weather is sunny and the window is down anyway. But later, when the rain starts and fog and later darkness set in, it seems increasingly dangerous. Janet always has to roll down the window. Then both her and I on the back seat behind her get wet.

More dangerous is that only the driver's seat has a seat belt. However, Janet, the driver, does not use it. All sit unrestrained like people do in buses. Edwin, who sits on the passenger side, has the two-year-old daughter sitting on his knees. The girl often has one hand on the gear-knob, trying to move it for fun. Then Janet or Edwin push her

67 Ibid, p. 101.

68 The wife of Edwin, a teacher at the Spanish school.

69 See *ibid*, p. 68.

hand away, but soon it is there again. On the passenger-side, there is still a plastic bracket for the seat belt, but nothing is tied into it. Twice I had the experience that local people start laughing when one uses a seat belt. Most of all, the car has no functioning shock absorbers. At the irregularities built into the street to make cars drive slower (the *tumulos*), we have to go down with the speed nearly to zero, for otherwise there is such a hard hit that the car seems to be damaged by it, leave alone us. All this does not seem to bother anyone but me. We want to go to the coast, and we go to the coast. Thanks to this car. In case of an accident, not only the small child in the front would probably die. If Janet would take account of the high risk of death to all of us in her action, she would not be able to offer to take us to the coast in this car. For all of us action is possible and it is fun, as long as we actively forget the unpleasant possibilities involved. It is possible to forget the unpleasant through concentration on what we want.

By the time we come back to Xela, Janet has drunk five beers. I ask her what her limit would be for drinking when driving car. She replies that she is not sure if there is one. She goes on, if it were for the police, Ok. Then she would not drink, of course. But in Guatemala this would not be the case. The police would not care. They would do the blood tests from time to time; they would have the equipment. But just by the by, for fun. There would be no consequences. The police themselves would be drinking beer for example while being on duty for security reasons at the *Fuentes Georginas*⁷⁰. So what? The police would also be driving their men around on the back of pick-ups from A to B. How could they say anything convincing against the non-existence of seat belts or them not-being-used? If Janet had bound the possibility of causing an accident into her actions, where reaction-time can decide about life and death, it might have become an urge perceived from within herself not to drink while driving. However, she drunk. The risk got actively forgotten. The possibility of unpleasure was obviously there, but it did not affect her action. The unpleasant remained unbound. We wanted to have fun, and we had fun. So what?

I ask Janet if she had insurance for the car or for herself in case of accidents. She replies: 'this is not how things are going in Guatemala. No one has an insurance against accidents, not even rich people. If something happens, it happens - and you pay yourself!' Half a year ago, she continues, Janet and Edwin had had bad luck with their electricity supply. They were in their home, watching TV in the evening. Suddenly all the lights became much brighter and then went off. There was a sudden, loud noise. All the electrical appliances were sparking and then stopped working – the refrigerator, the TV and the stereo. It was clear that this collapse was due to an irregularity in the electricity

70 A local steam bath.

supply. Presumably, the electricity company would have to pay for the damage, but this was not so. Edwin just laughed when I told him what I thought. ‘This is just not how things are going here in Guatemala,’ he replied. ‘No one will pay. We have to find our own ways to repair the damage – through friends or acquaintances who have learned to repair TV’s or stereos. Or through buying new apparatuses, such as a refrigerator. Organisations deny their responsibility.’ Instead of constant worries about the possibility of losing all electric equipment in one blow, Janet and Edwin’s attitude was, ‘when it happens it happens.’ They trusted their ability to cope with the unpleasant when it actually arose. Until then, they actively forgot the risk and instead concentrated on what they wanted.

4.3 CONCLUSION AND LINE OF FLIGHT

This chapter has focused on areas of existence where the unpleasant is immanent part of everyday life. There are no shock absorbers. On an actual level, defence against the unpleasant is not possible. By adopting a perspective of Deleuze’s Nietzsche, it was possible to explicitly affirm a life without shock absorbers. If there are no structural defences available, the self will encounter the unpleasant within the realm of lived time, the Nietzschean world of the will to power. An encounter with the unpleasant on the plane of lived time allows one to generate active and singular responses to a perceived unpleasant, driven by the force of life. People in Guatemala, however, seem not to live without such shock-absorbers because they are convinced, as is Deleuze with Nietzsche, that this is the better mode of living the present, but because there are no means to set these up. In the following example of Don Arsenio’s employment experience, there seems to be a strong line of flight towards a life with shock absorbers. With Deleuze’s Nietzsche, such a desire for security and structural hold would be expression of a becoming-reactive⁷¹. Deleuze fears that then, there is no more orientation by life. Rather, reactive forces take over and the aim is ‘to secure mechanical means and final ends’.⁷²

Don Arsenio on Industrial Work-Time

‘In a factory you can stop at 6 p.m, and you can start at 2 p.m, and you will be paid for this time. You can rely on the income; it is regular. And then you go home and you can forget your work until the next day. By contrast, now that I am self-employed, I have to finish my work. And if this is not possible during the day, then I have to do it at

71 See Deleuze 1962, p. 40.

72 Ibid.

night. Often, there is no work. I don't know in advance. If someone asks for a jacket, then there is work. If no one is asking, there is no work and no money. For about two years, I was working in a factory here in Xela that was producing jackets. I was doing bags the whole day, just cutting the material for that. Not just for one jacket, for many. There were the cuttings for the jacket, the arms, the buttons and the collar. And not all the same, but one jacket cutting in size 38, then another in 40 and in 42, so that no fabric would be wasted. The vans with the roles of fabric came along and then we were cutting, all with machines. Then one went to another machine, connected it to the fabric and just pressed a button and yet it was sewing in all colours. It looked like a cake, not like a jacket.' I summarise, 'that sounds economical.' 'Yes.' 'Was the atmosphere good, among the workers?' I ask. 'Yes,' *Don Arsenio* goes on to recall. 'There were about 40 people working, everyone at his machine. We were all working together. The only thing was that there were a lot of games.' 'Games?' I ask. 'Yes, at the sewing machines there were little container for the oil that kept the machine going. But when there was no oil, these containers remained empty. People filled them with water and put them on the seat of your chair. And when you sat down, your whole butt would be wet. That happened a lot.' The money in the factory wasn't much, it was Q2.50 a day, but this money was secure.' (*Don Arsenio*)