

■ From Death to Cosmic Life: On Lessing's *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8*

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Abstract

Doris Lessing's *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8*, published in 1982, is the fourth work of science fiction in her series *Canopus in Argos: Archives*. This novel depicts vividly how the residents of Planet 8 face death collectively. Reading death in the light of Lessing's oeuvre, we are led to one important question: if, in Lessing's early novels, she places emphasis on personal fate and death, one is left questioning why she depicts not only personal but also collective death in her later novels, such as *The Making*, even associating them with colonizing policy.

This article investigates Lessing's purpose in portraying death in *The Making*. I first explore how the Representatives encounter personal death and transform it into impersonal death, which crystallizes them into a new life-form, a cosmic life-form that connects them with other beings. Deleuze's extension of Blanchot's concept of impersonal death into that of "a life" as impersonal can help us understand how death serves as the conduit to impersonal life, forcing the Representatives to think anew and making possible a mystic vision of in-

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terconnected life.¹ Next, I explore why Lessing envisions a cosmic life after death. What can this cosmic afterlife teach us? If impersonal death implies the erasure of all the residents' individualities while making them into one collective life-form, will it become another dystopian unity, where differences are eliminated for the benefit of the whole? How can all the dying beings retain their differences while converging into one unity? Deleuze's concept of "duration" helps us understand the paradoxical relationship between a collective life-form (one) and individualities (differences) as well as how different beings are interconnected in the virtual one and how, in this virtual field, differences are maximized rather than minimized or erased.

Keywords: Lessing, Deleuze, impersonal death, duration, difference

¹ In *Theology after Deleuze*, Kristien Justaert explains that Deleuze appropriates Charles Dickens's description of an impersonal life and develops his concept of a life (25).

Doris Lessing is a chameleon writer whose works deal with numerous issues. She personally involves herself with colonial, political, social, and psychological tumults and faces multiple drastic changes in her own life, which are reflected in her works. In early works such as *The Grass Is Singing*, she devotes herself to describing the conflict between the individual and the collective, especially in the context of colonialism. In her second period, she turns to the inner space and the fragmentation of subjectivity so as to ponder the fragmentation of the individual and the collective. The products of this period are “inner space” novels such as *The Golden Notebook*, *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, and *The Memoirs of a Survivor*. After exploring the inner state of madness via theorists such as C. G. Jung and R. D. Laing, Lessing digs deeper into human existence and moves on to her third period, now greatly influenced by Sufism. This turn towards mystic vision changes her portraiture of the world in the novels, which is expanded to a galactic scale. She creates a utopian cosmos in her series *Canopus in Argos: Archives*, where Canopus serves as a benign colonizer, controlling the colonized according to Cosmic Necessity and the well-being of the whole cosmos.²

The Making of the Representative for Planet 8, published in 1982, is the fourth work in the *Canopus* series. This novel depicts vividly how the residents of Planet 8 face death collectively. Reading death in the light of Lessing's earlier works, we are led to one important question: if, in Lessing's early novels, she places emphasis on personal fate and death, why does she depict not only personal but also collective death in the later novels such as *The Making*, even associating it with colonizing policy? To understand this, it is necessary to consider Lessing's long-term concern over the conflict between the collective and the individual. At first, she inspires her followers in her firm stand on resisting colonialism and any kind of injustice; however, in her later space-fiction *Canopus* series, she depicts a galactic empire, Canopus, which exists within a galactic colonial system where “the petty fates of planets, let alone individuals, are only aspects of cosmic evolution” (Lessing, *Shikasta* 8). In other words, her early novels focus on individuals' heroic anticolonial stands, while her later space fiction series portray a galactic empire's colonial cosmic plan and the inefficacy of individual acts. It is this transition that triggers lots of criticisms. The critics consider this transition as Lessing seriously betraying her anti-colonial beliefs. It seems that her portrayal of Canopus endorses the colonizing mission. Lorna Sage contends that, while Lessing brands Canopeans

² *Canopus in Argos: Archives* is a sequence of five science fiction novels by Lessing. They are *Re: Colonised Planet 5*, *Shikasta* (1979), *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four and Five* (1980), *The Sirian Experiments* (1980), *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8* (1982), and *The Sentimental Agents in the Volyen Empire* (1983).

“good” colonizers, ruling compassionately and pursuing “silent symbiosis,” the inner imperative to follow willingly the route of the collective still signifies a colonizing pattern (164-65). Indeed, critics seem to be concerned with why Lessing portrays a cosmos that casts individuals away as insignificant, to the extent that Lessing began treating individualism as a “degenerative disease.” Except for the individual, she also grapples with the issue of the collective through a cosmic lens. She struggles to escape being trapped into entropic collectivism and anarchic individualism, endeavoring to reconcile collective and individual. When one reads her work in this light, one can begin to understand why she portrays not only personal but also collective death in *The Making*, even associating it with colonizing policy.

Many critics have tried to explore the meaning of death in the novel. Claire Sprague and Virginia Tiger consider this novel “a fable about learning to die” (16-7). Ruth Whittaker points out that “[t]he unmaking, the destruction of the planet, is, in fact, the making of the Representative” (112). Josna E. Rege explains the Representatives’ transformation after death: “No individual will survive, but through an accelerated process of self-development that ends in transformation, a number of individuals give up their individuality to become a composite individual” (130-31). However, I wonder if the individuals “give up their individuality to become a composite individual” via death, how can the Representatives possess a certain degree of individuality at the end of the novel? For example, “the teacher of children was there; and the guardian of the waters” (Lessing, *Making* 159); all individual functions seem to be kept intact in the collective life. This paper attempts to explore what other reviews of the work have failed to analyze: how individuals can become one collective life-form via death and still retain their individuality, though transformed.³ In other words, it asks how individuals can retain their differences while converging and unifying into a single entity. Decoding this will shed light on where Lessing’s ingenuity lies, and how she strives to reconcile the conflict between the collective and the individual in Planet 8 via death that renders possible the coexistence of one and many.

Deleuze’s extension of Blanchot’s concept of impersonal death into that of “a life” as impersonal and his concept of duration allow one to perceive Lessing’s ingenuity in creating a dynamic cosmic web where the collective—whether galactic empire or the Representative—and the individual (differences) can coexist and even cross-fertilize. Before looking directly at the question mentioned above, a look at Deleuze’s con-

³ When I refer to “individuality,” it is, according to Deleuze, not subjectivity or self: “Individuality is not a characteristic of the Self but, on the contrary, forms and sustains the system of the dissolved Self” (*Difference* 254). Deleuze also relates it to the important concept of difference: “All individuality is intensive, and therefore serial, stepped and communicating, comprising and affirming in itself the difference in intensities by which it is constituted” (246).

cepts of impersonal death and life, whereby death serves as a channel to universal life, may shed some light on Lessing's work, namely that death can serve as a conduit to impersonal death and to the crystallizing of a cosmic life, a collective life-form, enabling individuals to live and think anew. This is illustrated in the first section.

The second section investigates why Lessing creates a paradoxical cosmos where individuals, on the one hand, seem to be swept into collective death and life, and, on the other hand, still retain a certain degree of individuality. To further explicate this cosmic life, we may refer to Deleuze's elaboration of Bergson's concept of "duration" to explain how multiple beings, as fluxes, coexist in a single duration/life/time and how virtual differences among them are retained and transformed in the single duration. Reading in the light of this concept of duration seems to promise a way of understanding the paradoxical relationship between a collective life-form (the one) and the individualities (the many). Such an understanding may enable us to see how different beings are interconnected in a virtual whole in such a way as to form a virtual field where differences are maximized rather than minimized or erased for the benefit of the whole in Lessing's *The Making*.

The Two Kinds of Death

Before proceeding, we must investigate the two kinds of death in *The Making*, to pave the ground for a detailed analysis. Lessing endows death with a new meaning. Death may not only be the absence of life but also the foundation of or the entrance to a new life. In *The Making*, Johor, a galactic messenger, is sent by the colonizing planet, Canopus, to guide its colonized planet, Planet 8, to face a galactic catastrophe that will trigger the extinction of all inhabitants on the planet. Because Canopus cannot space lift the residents on Planet 8 to another planet for fear of endangering galactic harmony, the residents are ordered by Canopus to accept death willingly for the benefit of the whole cosmos. Lessing's subtle delineation of death shows us different ways of coping with mortality in a catastrophic cosmos. Facing the upcoming catastrophe, the residents are divided into the represented and the Representatives and react in two ways. The represented fall into a state of living-death while the Representatives strive to survive and help. In the end, the represented encounter personal death while the Representatives transcend personal death and achieve impersonal death, making possible their transition from death to cosmic life.⁴ Here, the Representatives are initiated into a virtual

⁴ When I use the word "transcend" here, I do it in the same way as when Deleuze says that "[t]he problem is therefore one of knowing how the individual would be able to transcend his form and his

realm, Deleuzian transcendental field, where their atoms are redistributed and reassembled so that it is a world where death is impersonal.⁵ In this world, the dying individuals are transformed into an impersonal and yet singular life, “a life” (28). The process of their dying, the crystallizing process, renders possible the return of difference. One dies so as to free differences and live without being conditioned by the I or the ego. Via death, the dying individuals can be connected with the world of events, freed from his physicality and Chronos (chronological time), and led to the realm of the impersonality of dying.⁶ It is when they are initiated into the state of impersonal death (the impersonality of dying) that they are rid of the strictures of representation and attain difference-in-itself.

In contrast to the represented, Doeg and the other Representatives stand up to their death in the Ice Age. When they die collectively, Doeg, the Memory Recorder and spokesman of the Representatives, describes his and their death. He witnesses not only his own death but the demise of the whole planet. As an individual, he surely cannot describe his own death. What kind of death and ensuing cosmic life, then, can endow him with the ability to describe death itself? One possible answer is to appeal to spiritual transcendence in a mystical vision of extraterrestrial life. For example, Wei-Yun Yang describes how, in the novel, “the story does not end in their death but continuously unfolds to another dimension of the world visible only to the spiritual eyes. The spirits still live on traveling up to the pole and the vision is perpetually changing and expanded” (287).

To look for a more materialist or immanent variation of this reading, we may refer to Deleuze’s explication of the relationship between death and life. Deleuze appropriates Blanchot’s concept of death and goes on to develop his concept of death. He envisions the possibility of breaking through the limitations of personal life and death and of exploring impersonal death and life directly. Following Blanchot, he distinguishes two kinds of death: “One is personal, con-

syntactical link with a world, in order to attain to the universal communication of events” (*Logic* 178). This usage should be understood in the context of what Deleuze proposes as the “transcendental field” (102). See the next note.

⁵ Deleuze proposes an “impersonal and pre-individual” transcendental field, “which does not resemble the corresponding empirical fields, and which nevertheless is not confused with an undifferentiated depth” (*Logic* 102). It is neither the empirical fields nor chaos; rather, it is a virtual realm teaming with differences, later called the field of “a life.” Deleuze claims, for example, that “It is to the degree that he goes beyond the aporias of the subject and the object that Johann Fichte, in his last philosophy, presents the transcendental field as a life . . .” (*Immanence* 27). Therefore, when the dying individuals enter the virtual realm of transcendental field, they are transformed into an impersonal and yet singular life, “a life” (28).

⁶ In *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze considers “[d]eath as event” (156). Just as the event has two sides (actualization and counter-actualization), death possesses two aspects: “It is in this way that death and its wound are not simply events among other events. Every event is like death, double and impersonal in its double” (152).

cerning the I or the ego The other is strangely impersonal, with no relation to 'me,' neither present nor past but always coming" (Deleuze, *Difference* 112). It is the second kind of death that turns out to provide an entrance to a new cosmic life. It leads to the repudiation of repetition and the affirmation of difference. Deleuze goes on to explain: "Every death is double, and represents the cancellation of large differences in extension as well as the liberation and swarming of little differences in intensity" (259). The Deleuzian concept of impersonal death illuminates how the Representatives in *The Making* proceed from personal death to impersonal death and to impersonal life and how this process envisions the liberation of differences rather than the conditioning of self-same identity.

For Deleuze, death "remains irreducible to bio-physical death. For there are two deaths: one, external and extensive; the other, internal and intensive" (Brassier 185). Death signifies not only "the personal disappearance of the person, the annihilation of this difference represented by the I or the ego" but also a singular life. The second death is never "mine" but anonymous (Deleuze, *Difference* 113). This echoes his concept of the infinitive verb "to die" and Blanchot's concept of "One dies" (Brassier 185). Deleuze refuses to see life as the absolute end of life after the dissolving of physicality. Rather, for him, impersonal death connects the individual with the cosmos, with infinitude. In this cosmic field, beings are endless manifestations of differences rather than representations of repetitions without differences. Death initiates the individual away from his subjectivity to the affirmation of (impersonal) life. Deleuze's appropriation of Blanchot's notion of impersonal death does shed some light on how the Representatives in *The Making* are crystallized into a cosmic life via impersonal death.

In *The Making*, we can see how death divides the residents into two groups and leaves an unbridgeable gap there. The Representatives struggle to stay alive and earn the chance to proceed from personal death to impersonal death that promises cosmic life, while those who are reluctant to face the reality (the represented) are encountering personal death that offers no redemption. It echoes what James Williams adds that, for Deleuze, "a personal death is an end" while an impersonal death signifies a universal event, "a living on through participation in a cycle of dying" (173).

Thus, one group, the represented, suffer from personal death and degenerate into the state of living death, losing any will to survive. The extreme conditions of the Ice Age rob them of their humanity, dignity, and identity. Without any anchor in humanity, they are forced to linger like living corpses, like animals that eat, act, and react only from the most basic desires. In *The Remnants of Auschwitz*, Agamben evokes the figure of the Muselmann, a human being who loses subjectivity but continues to function biologically in the concentration camp. The state of living death problematizes the boundary between life and death. It is hard to decide

whether Muselmann is alive or not (53-64). The same dire situation is depicted in *The Making*. Without food and harbor, the represented degenerate into the state of woeful animals: "Far away, deep in the snow-filled lands, where our friends lay in dark holes piled with hides, was the lethargy of grief, of despair" (Lessing, *Making* 104). The represented gradually lose the will to survive. One by one, they step out of the wall of protection and go into the center of the Ice World, never to return. What they encounter is personal death that promises no redemption. This kind of death echoes Deleuze's concept of personal death, "the personal disappearance of the person, the annihilation of this difference represented by the I or the ego" (Deleuze, *Difference* 113).

In contrast, the second group, the Representatives, face death nobly and thus earn their way to rebirth, echoing Deleuze's depiction of impersonal death that transforms this life into impersonal life. But how? For Deleuze, "[i]mpersonal death is a living on through participation in a cycle of dying Our death reverberates in later deaths; it survives in them The more 'noble' the life facing death, the better it participates in the eternal side of death" (Williams 173). Facing death nobly redeems the Representatives from meaningless death, from falling into existential finitude. It propels them to the eternal side of the impersonality of "to die." To redeem themselves, Doeg and the other Representatives, fully aware of their upcoming demise, choose to survive with self-esteem. Alert to the downfall of the represented, the Representatives reject the bare life of lethargic lower beings. Facing up to death, they are initiated into a universal event and evolve during the process of encountering death. They are thus crystallized as a cosmic life, a collective life-form. Doeg, while asking who they are, claims that "[A]ll our functions and the capacities of our work were in the substance of these new beings, this Being" (Lessing, *Making* 159).

Lessing's poetic, poignant portraiture of the death scene, the melding of the Representatives with the other beings, is rendered possible because of the transformed and transforming "new eyes." Doeg, a part of the evolving collective life-form, observes that he can witness and testify to their collective transformation from personal death to impersonal death to a new cosmic life-form because of the evolution of his capacities: "our eyes changing with every moment so that we were continually part of a new scene, or time" (Lessing, *Making* 158). Lessing's contribution and ingenuity lie in crystallizing a new form of cosmic life from death, which is gifted with new eyes, and in demonstrating how their new eyes enable the Representatives to develop a new way of thinking and living. The new collective life-form now sees its connectedness with other beings, including their awareness of how the heretofore antagonistic relationship between the Representatives and other natural elements, such as snowflakes, can be modified. What Lessing conveys

to us via her design is how death is not the end of life but a catalyst transforming the Representatives from personal death to impersonal death to cosmic life.

Deleuze's depiction of the transformation from personal death to impersonal death to impersonal or singular life helps us perceive how death in Lessing's *The Making* frees the individual from his material confinement and initiates him into a cosmic life.

For Deleuze, impersonal death can be considered a process of transmutation. He uses the analogy of philosophical alchemy to describe how it functions:

It is at this mobile and precise point, where all events gather together in one that transmutation happens: this is the point at which death turns against death; where dying is the negation of death, and the impersonality of dying no longer indicates only the moment when I disappear outside of myself, but rather the moment when death loses itself in itself, and also the figure which the most *singular life* takes on in order to substitute itself for me. (*Logic* 153, emphasis mine)

The "transmutation" implies two levels of death. Without transmutation, personal death signifies just the end of life. With transmutation, death can turn against itself and transfigure itself into singular life. How can death turn against itself? In *The Making*, we witness how the Representatives' material configuration is eliminated and then how they are transformed as they meld with one another into the collective life-form. The reassembling process of the atomic structure reveals how personal death can turn against itself and trigger a new form of life. The Representatives perceive how death reveals the potentiality of being as what Lorelei Cederstrom observes: "They find death to be only the conclusion of a confining set of circumstances and a release into the limitless potentiality of being" (202). The first stage of awakening occurs when Doeg describes how the Representatives encounter personal death. They "slid away from that scene," the dead scene, and "saw how those old bodies of ours inside their loads of hide were losing their shapes, how the atoms and the molecules were losing their associations with each other" (Lessing, *Making* 156-157). Through newly-developed eyes, they witness the decomposition of their corporeal existence and become aware of the concomitant disintegration of the assemblage of atoms and molecules. After the dissolving of physical forms, they encounter the second stage of awakening, discovering that they "were melding with the substance of the mountain. Yes, what we were seeing now with our 'new eyes' was that all the planet had become a fine frail web or lattice, with the spaces held there between the patterns of the atoms" (157). At this moment, death enables the Representatives to see that all beings, including themselves, are composed of atoms dancing in the cosmic web or matrix. In this way, death is eliminated because it signifies not the dissolving of specific corporal forms (personal death) but the possibility of reassembling of different atomic elements. Thus, we encounter a world

where “death turns against death; where dying is the negation of death” (Deleuze, *Logic* 153), where personal death is replaced by impersonal death and transformed into life. This life is not based on material configuration but rather on deterritorialization of matter and reassembling of atoms.

This new concept of death illustrates how death steps beyond personal death and turns against itself, not only destroying bodily forms but also creating a new assemblage of life. When death is enfolded more and more into the matter, until there is nothing left for life, interestingly, it unfolds, evolves, and becomes one with other elements. It is not the demise of an individual but the death of (personal) death itself because one is reborn through one’s link with elements such as the mountain. When “death loses itself in itself,” paradoxically, the double loss or death triggers a new impersonal life. In *The Making*, the Representatives’ melding with the mountain and the ensuing transformation illustrate this process of becoming, of the impersonality of “dying.”

Williams uses the term “philosophical alchemy” to indicate the passage from personal death to impersonal death:

Philosophical alchemy, where death is made to consume itself and turn into a new kind of life: transmutation is a passage from one of death’s doubles, the actual end of an individual thing, to the other, to the eternal, “to die,” a unique event all other deaths participate, “collect,” or become lost in. In transmutation, the person, defined in terms of personal identity and the self, effectively dies, but in dying it also lives on in a communal struggle against death. (173)

Williams uses the analogy of alchemy to explore the transmutation from personal death to impersonal death and thus impersonal life. The concept of “to die” promises a new way of dying. That is, the dying allows the individual to be initiated into a collective life, “a communal struggle against death.” This is close to what Johor indicates in *The Making*: “There is more than one way of dying” because Canopus knows that impersonal death will transform the Representatives into “a new kind of life,” a way for the Representatives to struggle against death collectively.

In this case, the Representatives are connected with “the substance of the mountain” and gifted with “new eyes” so they can perceive the atomic structure of different things. The world is no longer about the physical manifestation of different things but about the vibrating and reverberating dances among different elements. With new eyes, they are aware that they are interconnected with other beings. Their death transforms corporeal forms into “patterns of atoms” and connects them with elements such as the mountain. Assimilation into other elements reveals an entrance into impersonal death. Brassier proposes, “This death is never ‘my’ death but the anonymous experience of dying in which ‘one dies’; it is the death which is no-one’s since it coincides with the surfacing of pre-individual sin-

gularities" (185).⁷ When they are reintegrated into elements such as the mountain, pre-individual singularities are released and enable them to connect with other beings. They are transformed from different "I"s into a collective life-form, "We." The new Being is shown in Lessing's final depiction of this "We"—"We, the Representative, many and one, came here" (Lessing, *Making* 161). Via death, the mundane, limited life of the Representative(s) is connected with the substance of the mountain. Not only do the Representatives give up their subjectivities and connect with the mountain via their pre-individual singularities but they also link with other beings such as the other dead Representatives, the represented, Johor, and the snow. Their collective death helps them become one impersonal force, impersonal life. "[I]mpersonality of the to die" becomes "singular life."

This echoes Deleuze's concept of "a life" depicted in his *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*. His reading of Dicken's *Our Mutual Friend* in "Immanence: a Life" helps him to explore the indiscernible zone of a life, between the rogue's life and death.

Between his life and his death, there is a moment that is only that of a life playing with death. The life of the individual gives way to an impersonal and yet singular life that releases a pure event freed from the accidents of internal and external life, The life of such individuality fades away in favor of the singular life immanent to a man who no longer has a name, though he can be mistaken for no other. A singular essence, a life (28-9)

Like the rogue in the above example, the Representatives also approach the stage of "a life" via death.⁸ Since they are stripped of their physical forms and become the dancing patterns of atoms, their death becomes impersonal. Thus, the ensuing collective life is impersonal, releasing a pure event and escaping from the confinement of representation. Their life is continued after they become parts of the world. Death becomes a channel that leads them to a new cosmic life. Most importantly, the process of encountering death not only brings about a cosmic life but also enables the genesis of thought. To use Brassier's reading of Deleuze, "The 'one' who dies in the scission between the fractured I and the passive self is the *thinker* as universal individual" (185, emphasis mine). For Deleuze, dying points to "individuation, a protest by the individual who has never recognized itself within the

⁷ Singularities are important elements in the process of individuation. They are not outward or inner qualities, but rather indicate the potential dimension of matter. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze writes that "[s]ingularities are turning points and points of inflection; bottlenecks, knots, foyers, and centers; points of fusion and condensation, and boiling; points of tears and joy, sickness and health, hope and anxiety, 'sensitive' points" (63). Singularities are full of potential energy that guides actualization.

⁸ However, we should be aware of the subtle difference between the two kinds of "a life." In Deleuze's example of the rogue mentioned above, "a life" is "between his life and his death." On the other hand, Lessing's collective life-form as "a life" goes beyond personal life and death.

limits of the Self and the I” (*Difference* 259). Dying or impersonal death triggers the individual to get rid of the confinement of the Self and the I and thereby to become the thinker.

How Might One Die So As To Live and Think Anew?

In *The Making*, approaching death, which annihilates the residents and other beings on Planet 8, offers the Representatives an opportunity to change and think anew. I argue that their transformation, seen in the framework of Deleuze’s life philosophy, can be expressed by the question “How might one live?” transformed into the question “How might one die so as to live and think anew?”⁹ Death can be the channel for a new vision. While facing the Representatives, Johor says, “Stay alive for as long as you can” (Lessing, *Making* 88). Alsi wonders what the use of staying alive is if they are going to die soon anyway, so she says to Johor in a doubtful voice, “Although we shall all die very soon” (88). Johor responds with a significant sentence: “There is more than one way of dying” (88). In the dying process, Johor spurs Doeg, the Memory Recorder, to realize that this new kind of death, while it robs them of their corporeal lives, enables them to evolve into a collective life-form, a cosmic life. Most importantly, death forces them to ponder who they are, forcing them to think anew. The depiction of death in the novel is so significant because it triggers not only cosmic afterlife but also cosmic thought engendered by transcending death’s limitations.

How and when does death trigger the genesis of thought? Facing death, the Representatives recognize how they live in a state of self-complacency and how they never stop to rethink who they are and what their functions are in the cosmos: “The ease of our old sensuous life had not needed from us a certain kind of self-awareness” (Lessing, *Making* 81). It is only after they encounter the catastrophe that threatens the life of the whole planet do they begin to think. Valentine Moulard-Leonard explains clearly how the activity of thinking is triggered:

What is it that has to happen in order that the activity of thinking be born? One very general answer could be death. As Maurice Blanchot saw, it is not only life, which ultimately holds the key to the event of thought, but also *death*—it is the confrontation with death from within a life, . . . —which sparks the activity of *thinking* within thought. (128, emphasis mine)

According to Blanchot, it is not only life but also death that inspires the activity of

⁹ This sentence is extrapolated from Valentine Moulard-Leonard’s question: “How might death be put to work?” in *Bergson-Deleuze Encounters: Transcendental Experience and the Thought of the Virtual*.

thinking. The Representatives are transformed by the poignant process of encountering the death of their people and even their own death. Death disorients them just as what Sufi teaching stories do. Muge Galin relates Lessing's strategic disorientation of her audience to such Sufi stories: "The Sufi teaching story aims to shake the audience's existing worldview to such a point that one stops looking at the world through any single lens. The story allows for no fixed points of reference, daring its audience to transcend rational boundaries" (103). Likewise, the poignant process of death in *Planet 8* forces the Representatives to ponder who they are, who they represent, what may become of them, and what the function and purpose of their lives are. All their sufferings force them to think anew, reevaluating what they take for granted: "Thoughts—but where were they, in the empty spaces of our beings?—that once we had regarded tolerantly, or with approval, as necessary, were now being rejected by what we had become" (Lessing, *Making* 136). Their newly-developed consciousness can no longer accept the old thoughts. Their "new eyes" change their perspectives, and they can no longer think as blindly as they did.

The conversation between Johor and Doeg shows how Johor triggers Doeg to transcend his limitation and think beyond the dogmatic image of thought.¹⁰ When Doeg wonders why Canopus abandons *Planet 8* and asks the residents to die willingly for the well-being of the whole cosmos, Johor, the galactic messenger, says, "Is death something new to you? Is it only now that you begin to *contemplate* death—what it means?" (Lessing, *Making* 78). Here, Doeg cannot accept Johor's cold-blooded matter-of-fact tone about the death of a whole species and retorts, "You cannot be saying to me that it does not matter if the populations of a whole planet have to die—a species?" (78). Johor poignantly explains that they also suffer the fate of *Planet 8* and have no resources to space lift the residents to Rohanda because of the unexpected galactic misalignment. It finally dawns on Doeg that Canopus is also as limited as they are. Canopus is not the omnipotent Creator but one of the creatures of some higher Being like the residents on *Planet 8*: "You are the creation and creatures of something, some Being, to whom you stand in the same relation as we stand to you? . . . But I have not *thought* on those lines before And you cannot transcend your boundaries, as we may not transcend ours" (79, emphasis mine). This is an epiphany earned after long suffering. Knowing that Canopus is also limited, they can finally face the reality that they should be

¹⁰ In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze proposes that we should put into question the traditional image of thought. "By this I mean not only that we think according to a given method, but also that there is a more or less implicit, tacit or presupposed image of thought which determines our goals when we try to think. For example, we suppose that thought possesses a good nature, and the thinker a good will (naturally to 'want' the true); we take as a model the process of recognition—in other words, a common sense or employment of all the faculties on a supposed same object" (xvi).

on their own instead of depending on Canopus' protection. Their death teaches them the lesson that they as well as Canopus are subject to the galactic changes so that they have to reevaluate who they are and their position in the cosmos. They can no longer think as molar beings but have to face their molecular becoming, recognizing that their life-form is different and newly significant:

But when there was a change, and it was when you, Canopus, brought the instrument that made small things visible—yes, Canopus, that was when a certain kind of naturalness and pleasantness ended. [. . .] We saw the substances of our bodies, and found that it vanished as we looked, and knew that we were a dance and a dazzle and a continual vibrating movement, a flowing. Knew that we were mostly space, and that when we touched our hands to our faces and felt flesh there, it was an illusion . . . (123-4)

The instrument that shocks the Representatives out of their lethargy is a microscope, which helps them observe things in a microscopic way and ends their pompous way of looking at life from a “natural” perspective. Not until they witness how the substance of their bodies vanishes do they perceive their lives to be, not the spatiotemporal actualizations they presumed, but a ceaseless atomic dance in the cosmic matrix. Although this event is retrospectively reminisced because it occurs before they die, it serves as a significant event for the Representatives to ponder their identity while facing death. It endows them with a chance to re-evaluate their being. Death ends their corporeal life but starts their collective, impersonal life.

The collective Representative first encounters one of the dead Representatives, Nonni, and realizes that they are no longer a fixed subject: “Nor were we something already fixed, with an entity that could not be changed, for we came upon a ghost or a feeling or a flavour that we named *Nonni*: a faintly glittering creature or shape or dance that had been, we knew, Nonni, the dead boy, Alsi's companion” (Lessing, *Making* 158-9, emphasis mine). Nonni is also one of the Representatives, Alsi's companion. He couldn't survive the exploration. Encountering Nonni triggers them to ponder their identity after death and helps them realize that they are not “something already fixed” but are a new substance, inclusive of various kinds of beings. The Representatives find that “this entity or being [Nonni] came to us, and married with us, with our new substance, and we all went on *as one*” (159, emphasis mine). The victims who fail to survive the ice storm are not abandoned by the collective life form. Instead, they are incorporated into the collective life-form in the evolving process.

Next, the dying Representatives' horizon is expanded after incorporating Nonni, and they proceed to connect with the dead represented, who give up surviving. While the Representatives evolve and encounter the dead represented, they are propelled to reconceptualize their relationship with the represented.

Before death, the Representatives consider themselves different from the represented, who live in a state of living-death and refuse to live like them. However, death crystallizes the Representatives and provides them with a new way to see their indiscernible relationship with the represented. They encounter two stages of interaction with the dead represented. First, Doeg reminisces: "As we swept on there, ghosts among the ghostly worlds, we felt beside us, and in us, and with us, the frozen and dead populations that lay buried under the snows" (Lessing, *Making* 161). The Representatives witness how the represented become frozen carcasses strewn around caves, huts, and mounds of ice and consider that they are different from the lethargic represented in every possible way. Second, like the Representatives, the represented must change "to something else—a swirl of gases perhaps, or seas of leaping soil, or fire that had to burn" (161). When the Representatives perceive how the carcasses of the dead represented, like themselves, are transformed into different elements such as gases, soil, or fire, they finally realize that they are composed of the same elements. They realize that "what these had been, our peoples, our *selves*—were with us then, were us, had become us—could not be anything but us, their representatives" (161). They are vibrations and fluxes that connect with each other molecularly. The Representatives discover that the represented are indeed entwined with them.

Death eradicates their corporeal forms and initiates them into an impersonal zone of anonymous death, where the differences represented by the I and the self are eliminated. The impersonal death and life eliminate their complacent attitude toward life, triggering them to think anew. With their new "eyes," the Representatives witness their melding with the other Representatives, the represented, Johor, and other beings such as mountains and snow.

The Durations of Different Beings

After death, the Representatives are transformed into a new life-form. This cosmic life is a development from "I" to a new life-form, "We" (Lessing, *Making* 161). Doeg, the Memory Maker, records how collective death propels each Representative to become impersonal and initiates him into a cosmic life, connecting with all other Representatives, the represented, Johor, and other beings. Paradoxically, the Representatives' new way of dying, impersonal death, points to a new way of living, impersonal life.

What can this cosmic afterlife teach us? If impersonal death implies the erasure of all the residents' individualities while making them into one cosmic life, one collective life-form, will it become another dystopian unity, where differences

are eliminated for the benefit of the whole? How can all the dying beings retain their differences while converging into one unity? I argue that Lessing's design of collective cosmic life after death is not simply an alluring rhapsody but, rather, a profound challenge for us to contemplate the possible coexistence of unity and difference.¹¹ I argue that what Lessing attempts to demonstrate is how the collective life-form evolves into unity without sacrificing difference.

To gauge the possible coexistence of unity and difference, the one and the many, we must understand that, in *The Making*, there are two levels of difference: difference before death and difference after death. At the beginning of the novel, the Representatives and the snowflakes are different spatial configurations, and their relationship is antagonistic. At the end of the novel, when they die, they converge into one collective life-form, and the Representatives' eyes evolve with the transformations of snowflakes. In the transforming process, different elements such as the dead represented and the mountains are melding with them, too. What is significant is that the multiple elements of the collective life-form remain different even though they converge into one entity. For example, Doeg still possesses a certain degree of individuality and writes down, as if he is an individual, the story for us to pass on. Katherine Fishburn proposes that "even as part of the Representatives, Doeg retains at the very least a memory of himself as an individual" (133). Margaret Moan Rowe claims that "Lessing offers her most sustained and effective presentation of an evolutionary collective and still cannot abandon the individual" (90). Even though Doeg is incorporated into the collective life-form, with inorganic vibrations, including the snowflakes, the mountain, and the other organic elements, he seems to keep a certain degree of individuality. Here, interesting questions arise: how can Doeg be incorporated into the collective life-form without losing his difference, demonstrated here as his individuality? If he can retain his individuality, is it the same individuality as before his death? If the Representatives and the snowflakes are incorporated into a unity, a closed system, how can they coexist without being trapped in an antagonistic relationship?

To help resolve such issues, I resort to Deleuze's concept of duration in *Bergsonism*, the hypothesis of a simultaneity of fluxes within "a single, universal and impersonal Time" (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 80). In terms of what duration is, Deleuze claims, "Not only do virtual multiplicities imply a single time, but duration as virtual multiplicity is this single and same Time" (83). Duration is simultaneously single time and virtual multiplicity. He further claims, "The idea of a virtual co-

¹¹ In *Doris Lessing: Sufi Equilibrium and the Form of the Novel*, Shadia S. Fahim proposes that, in *The Making*, "we perceive the reconciliation between the individual and the collective consciousness—the 'many and one'" (152). She uses the Sufi concept of descent and ascent to demonstrate the reconciliation.

existence of all the levels of the past, of all the levels of tension, is thus extended to the whole of the universe Everything happens as if the universe were a tremendous Memory" (77). Further, Deleuze compares memory to life: in Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, we see that "life itself is compared to a memory" (77). This life includes not only organic but inorganic elements: "There is only a single time, a single duration, in which everything would participate, including our consciousnesses, including living beings, including the whole material world" (78). All the durations constitute a cosmos.

Since duration can be interpreted in terms of life, it serves as a good metaphor for the different beings in *The Making*, especially when it is related to their virtual and actual level. Deleuze's elaboration of Bergson's concepts of "duration," the difference in kind and the difference in degree, explains how various beings, as fluxes, coexist in a single duration/life/time and how virtual differences among them are retained in the single duration. With this in mind, we can see in a new light the paradoxical relationship between a collective life-form (the one) and the individualities (the many) in *The Making*. Lessing's new collective life-form can be considered a dynamic whole of different "fluxes" or "durations" coexisting in the cosmos. Hence are retained the virtual differences within the dynamic whole.

To explain how Doeg can be incorporated into the collective life-form without losing his difference, demonstrated here as his individuality, we are led to the question or issue of difference. Is his difference after death equal to that before death? From the novel, we gain a negative answer. Then, how are they different? To explore the question, we can investigate the issue of how the world functions differently in the actual and the virtual levels. Bergson divides the world into duration and space and uses the example of a lump of sugar to demonstrate how things can be approached via two kinds of difference, the actual and the virtual or difference in degree and difference in kind. Bergson points out that a lump of sugar can be seen as a "spatial configuration" or duration simultaneously (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 31):

if we approach it from that [spatial] angle, all we will ever grasp are differences in degree between that sugar and any other thing. But it also has a duration, a rhythm of duration, a way of being in time that is at least partially revealed in the process of its dissolving, and that shows how this sugar differs in kind not only from other things, but first and foremost from itself. (31-2)

When we observe the sugar in terms of its spatial configuration, what we perceive is the actual difference, the difference in degree. On the contrary, when we conceive of things in terms of duration, we see the virtual difference, demonstrated by the alteration of the sugar or how it differs in kind from other things:

In this respect, Bergson's famous formulation, "I must wait until the sugar dissolves" has a still broader meaning than is given to it by its context. It signifies that my own duration, such as I live it in the impatience of waiting, for example, serves to reveal other durations that beat to other rhythms, that differ in kind from mine. Duration is always the location and the environment of differences in kind; it is even their totality and multiplicity. There are no differences in kind except in duration—while space is nothing other than the location, the environment, the totality of differences in degree. (32)

On the one hand, space refers to the actual, "the location, the environment, the totality of differences in degree." On the other hand, duration points to the virtual, not only "the location and the environment of differences in kind" but also "their totality and multiplicity" (32), such as the different kinds of duration demonstrated by the sugar in this case: the duration of the sugar, my duration (the impatience of waiting), and other durations that my duration reveals. If you consider different elements in terms of the actual, the spatial configuration, you will see different material objects in a closed system. But once you are willing to delve into the virtual level of different durations, you will be initiated into an open cosmos where infinite ways of assemblages and compositions are promised.

Bergson's concept of the actual and virtual difference provides a clue to the reading of *The Making* in regard to how the relationship between the Representatives and the inhuman elements can be modified. For instance, in *The Making*, the snowflakes and the Representatives are seen, in terms of the actual (difference in degree), as two different objects competing in a closed system, a catastrophic planet, for survival. On the other hand, if we consider them in terms of the virtual (difference in kind), we witness the coexistence of durations participating in the creation of an open cosmos, where cross-fertilization between different durations is rendered possible. The Representatives encompass and are encompassed by other durations such as the mountain, the represented, and Johor. In this open system, the dying, via their transformation, can find lines of escape from the closed system. Doeg, part of the collective life-form, observes its transformation: "But now one pattern had already sunk back into the physical substance of Planet 8, and another went forward, our eyes changing with every moment so that we were continually part of a new scene, or time" (Lessing, *Making* 158). With the newly-developed eyes, Doeg records how the collective life-form's size, shape, and composition changes in accordance with its encounter with different elements or durations. While different durations converge into a new collective life-form, the newly-developed eyes of the Representatives help them grasp and adapt to their new milieu. This new life-form is transformed along with its different durations/lives virtually and incessantly.

They are transformed from different "I"s into a collective life-form, "We." But if this "We, the Representative," is simultaneously many and one duration(s), how can it function? Will the single time/duration/life erase the multiplicity of durations (fluxes) within itself? According to Deleuze, Bergson develops his concept of time/duration/life from a radical plurality of durations to a limited pluralism but seems to change his view when he points out later that "there is only a single time, a single duration" (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 78). This prompts Deleuze to ask: "Is duration one or many, and in what sense?" (76).¹²

Deleuze asks why Bergson changes his position dramatically. He wonders whether Bergson forgot that he defined duration in terms of a multiplicity in *Time and Free Will*. Bergson's confrontation with the theory of relativity certainly had something to do with the changes of his hypothesis and propels him to see the world in terms of "expansion, contraction, tension and dilation in relation to space and time" (79). The concept that the world can be seen in terms of expansion and contraction aids us in understanding duration as simultaneously both one and multiplicity. Deleuze/Bergson proposes how they see "the fluxes each time with their differences in kind, with their differences of contraction and expansion (detente), communicating in a single and identical Time" (82). The different fluxes are but manifestations of different intensities, contracting and expanding in accordance with their milieu. It reconciles the two hypotheses: a radical multiplicity of time and the monism of contraction-relaxation. There can be millions of durations since they are different manifestations of the same single, impersonal Time/Life.

Bergson employs the example of three durations (the flowing of the water, the flight of the bird, and the murmur of my life) to illustrate his hypothesis of a simultaneity of fluxes within "a single, universal and impersonal Time" (80). In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze mentions,

"When we are sitting on the bank of a river, the flowing of the water, the gliding of a boat or the flight of a bird, the uninterrupted murmur of our deep life, are for us three different things or *a single one*, at will . . ." Here Bergson endows attention with the power of "apportioning without dividing," "*of being one and several*"; but more profoundly, he endows duration with the power to encompass itself. The flowing of the water, the flight of the bird, the murmur of my life-form three fluxes; but only be-

¹² In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze delineates three stages of Bergson's development from *Matter and Memory* to *Creative Evolution* to *Duration and Simultaneity*. First, Bergson proposes a plurality of durations in *Matter and Memory*. Second, in *Creative Evolution*, Bergson claims that the material universe is conditioned by our duration: "Material things outside us would not be distinguished by absolutely different durations but by a certain relative way of participating in our duration and of giving it emphasis" (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 78). Finally, in *Duration and Simultaneity*, he proposes his third hypothesis: there is only a single time/duration/life. In this single, impersonal time, "everything would participate, including our consciousnesses, including living beings, including the whole material world" (78).

cause my duration is one of them, and also the element that contains the two others.
(80, emphasis mine)

Deleuze points out how each duration encompasses and is encompassed by the other two durations: “The flight of the bird and my own duration are only simultaneous insofar as my own duration divides in two and is reflected in another that contains it at the same time as it contains the flight of the bird. There is, therefore, a fundamental triplicity of fluxes” (80). Here, one important question arises: why not just two durations? If there are only human duration and the duration of the bird, it will easily fall into the trap of a dichotomy: the subject and the object. The human duration will represent the duration of the bird, confine them in the spatiotemporal field, and not see it as a partner in a durational whole. It is only when the third duration—let’s say the duration of the water in this case—appears that the human duration and the duration of the bird can coexist in the duration of the water. The impersonal perspective of the water encompasses the human duration and changes its constitution. Here, the human duration is transformed into impersonal life/duration. Moreover, this impersonal life/duration is divided into two parts, with one part being encompassed continually and the other part encompassing the duration of the bird and that of the water. Thus, my duration can disclose or encompass other durations, which simultaneously encompass my duration. In this way, while I encompass other durations that contain my duration, I also encompass myself. Moreover, since the reflections take place infinitely, I transform with my reflections incessantly. Via the principle of the triplicity of the fluxes, I am open to the durations beyond and below me. I am no longer limited in my own duration but initiated into an open cosmos. Deleuze claims that “it is not the whole that closes like an organism, it is the organism that opens onto a whole” (105). Since the whole is virtual, the individuals can transcend their physicality and evolve with other beings symbiotically.

This simultaneity of fluxes functions as a characteristic of real duration. That is, the duration is “virtual or continuous multiplicity” (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 81). If it is a multiplicity, how can it be one single time? Bergson proposes in his revolutionary third hypothesis that it is one single time or life because all the different durations such as my durations, the duration of the bird, and that of the water form a virtual, impersonal whole. They cross-fertilize one another, and the relays of reflections form an indiscernible complex of relationships among them. Most importantly, the different fluxes are only manifestations of different intensities of the single life/duration, contracting and expanding in accordance with their milieu.

If it is possible to be one and multiplicity at the same time, the problem I raise regarding the collective life-form in *The Making* can be solved in terms of

reconciliation: the collective life-form evolves into unity without sacrificing all the (virtual) differences. After the Representatives crystallize into a collective life-form and become one with other elements, each element still retains its difference. They are no longer different elements, in terms of the actual aspect, competing for survival in a closed cosmos. Instead, they coexist harmoniously in a virtually open cosmos. In the virtual field, their differences can be maximized because they become one with other elements freely and incessantly without being confined by their material configurations. The transformations are rendered possible by the fact that all the elements are composed of atoms or molecules, cross-fertilizing one another. What we observe is a becoming life-form, evolving into unity without sacrificing differences.

Now, let us explore this becoming life-form. Originally, the Representatives, the represented, Johor, the snowflakes, and the mountain are separate, actual beings. It is not until the death of the Representatives that the becoming process starts to break the boundaries between different elements. Claire Sprague observes that the Representatives “become one with the cosmos. Doeg, Alsi, Marl, Masson, Klin, Bratch, Pedug, Rivalin—even Johor, the Canopean agent who has remained to share their suffering—break into molecular matter” (122). Their material configurations dissolve, and gradually they are broken into the molecular matter. They realize that they are just “a dance and a dazzle and a continual vibrating movement, a flowing” (Lessing, *Making* 124). The Representatives’ bodies gradually decay and meld with other beings. What we witness, at the end of the novel, is the dynamic movement of different durations or lives converging as the collective life-form. The difference between various beings is but the different intensities of the things involved. We see how, via death, the Representatives are connected with other organic beings, such as one of the dead Representatives, Nonni, and the represented. Then, they are initiated into higher zones and develop new functions and capacities in accordance with their new beings: “We were feelings, and thought and will. These were the web and the woof and the warp of our new being . . . [A]ll our functions and the capacities of our work were in the substance of these new beings, this Being, we now were—Johor with and of us, Johor mingled with us, the Representative of Canopus part of the Representative of Planet 8” (158-9). The new collective life-form melds with Johor the galactic messenger, and this life-form transforms and develops its capacities such as its new “eyes.” Here, Lessing points out that they not only evolve as one single impersonal life but also are separate. They are one and many because they are just “different intensities or degrees in a virtual coexistence, in a single Time, in a simple Totality. (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 94). They not only meld with human beings but also are connected with natural beings:

If we had lost our old shapes, which had already disintegrated and gone into the substance of mountain and snow and wind and rock, lost those faint webs or veils or templates that had been more space than substance—if we had lost what we had been, then we were still something, and moved on together, *a group of individuals, yet a unity*, and had to be, *must* be, patterns of matter, matter of a kind, since everything is—webs of matter or substance or something tangible, though sliding and intermingling and always becoming smaller and smaller. (Lessing, *Making* 158, emphasis mine)

Here, the Representatives connect with the natural substance of mountain, snow, wind, and rock. The relationship is not hierarchical but rhizomatic. The dying residents lose their corporeal form but form a collective life-form, composed of patterns of molecular matter. They form “a unity” that incorporates different elements.

Reading in the light of Deleuze’s theory of duration, we are made aware of how all the different durations, such as the Representatives, the represented, or the snow, are simultaneously coexisting and cross-fertilizing within the virtual, impersonal whole. No duration is isolated; instead, each duration is imprinted with the events of the whole via its incessant interchanges with other beings: “A single duration will pick up along its route the events of the totality of the material world” (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 82). In the case of *The Making*, the single duration, human consciousness, does not disappear but is transfigured in its encounter with the material world. This encounter provides a thirdness preventing any single duration from falling into sterile dichotomies, not by imposing a static whole but by giving support to an infinite source of third parties ready to enter into triangularizing relations with simple interactions. For example, at the end of the novel, were it not for the third duration, the duration of the mountain in this case, Doeg would naturally represent the duration of the snowflakes as the spatiotemporal object without recognizing it as the partner in the durational whole. When Doeg, along with the other Representatives, is atop the mountain and thus able to see clearly, he realizes that snowflakes are no longer enemies. Bergson’s concept of duration helps us problematize the superiority of psychological flux or duration: “Psychological duration, our duration, is now only one case among others, among an infinity of others” (76). Humans no longer stand as the center of the cosmos but become one of the infinite fluxes coexisting with other elements. The impersonal perspective of the mountain, for example, encompasses and thus changes the human duration in its encounter with the snowflakes, leading them into impersonal life/duration. Thus, we are shown how the three fluxes “are for us three different things or a single one, at will . . .” (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 80). They are a single one, one collective life-form, because the simultaneity of two durations (Doeg and the snowflakes) within a third duration (the mountain) and the relays of reflections turn all the durations into an impersonal time/duration/life.

Moreover, life/duration is always divided into two parts. In the human duration, for example, one part encompasses the snowflakes and the mountain while the other part is encompassed continually by the two inhuman elements. In this relay of thoughts and reflections, Doeg encounters the inhuman elements and thus becomes transformed with them incessantly. When Doeg encompasses other durations that contain him, he encompasses himself in return. In this way, he encounters the process of self-differentiating. Doeg can keep a certain degree of individuality (difference), but this difference is not the same actual difference that we observe before he dies. Instead, it is transfigured along with his becoming with other elements/durations. Thus, after the Representatives die, they seem to lose their individualities when they are converging into one collective life-form; however, their capacities are kept and transformed so that, for instance, Doeg can still record their evolving process and seemingly retain a certain degree of individuality or difference. The Representatives' functions are still kept, but transformed, within the collective life-form:

The teacher of children was there; and the guardian of the waters; the maker and creator of grains and fruits and plants; the keeper and breeder of animals; the storyteller who continually makes and re-makes the memories of populations; the tender of the very small and vulnerable; the healer—the discoverer of medicines and remedies; the traveller who visits planets so that knowledge may not be imprisoned and unshared—all these were there, among us and of us. (Lessing, *Making* 159)

Doeg depicts how, despite their death, their differences such as their social functions and capacities are retained. But we ought to bear in mind that their differences are by no means the actual differences that are demonstrated in the spatiotemporal field. Moreover, it does not easily fall prey to the principle of representation and self-same Identity. According to Deleuze, a difference no longer depends on the contradiction that will easily be turned into self-same identity but the “operation of self-differentiation” (Grosz 4). The difference here points to a self-differentiating force that evolves in its encounters with the matter.

The Representatives' consciousness or individuality cross-fertilizes with other durations as in the case of Deleuze's triplicity of duration (my duration and the durations of the river and that of the bird). The Representatives evolve beyond a human's limited perspective because their eyes change along with their transformations with the other material/inhuman elements. The becoming relationship between the human and the inhuman blurs the boundary between the two and helps to enrich each with elements outside of their fields. The Representatives' encounter and melding with other beings propel them to the act of self-differentiating and open them to the cosmos.

Elizabeth Grosz points out, “Duration is difference, the inevitable force of dif-

ferentiation and elaboration, which is also another name for becoming” (4). Duration propels the individuals to an open future, to “what is virtual in them” (4). The theory of duration offers a new perspective on the relationship between Doeg and other beings. Although they are different in the actual world, they are all interconnected in the virtual world, each a part of the Universe. Human and inhuman elements interact symbiotically. Grosz claims that this is what Deleuze and Guattari term “co-evolution,” “a symbiosis between the living and the non-living” (11).

At the end of the novel, the relationship between the snowflakes and the collective life-form, represented by Doeg, shows how the Representative(s) shares the same atomic structures with the snowflakes. Since the collective life-form zooms in and out of different realms, it “change[s] shape and size constantly,” and, for it, “sometimes these crystals seemed enormous, as large as we were, and sometimes small” (Lessing, *Making* 157). They are composed of the same elements, the molecular ones. The Representatives or the collective life-form can be “disintegrated and gone into the substance of mountain and snow” (158). We are made aware of the fact that Doeg and the inhuman elements are just the manifestations of different intensities in a virtual coexistence, in a single Time:

All the levels of expansion (*detente*) and contraction coexist in a single Time and form a totality; but this Whole, this One, are pure virtuality. This Whole has parts, this One has a number—but only potentially. This is why Bergson is not contradicting himself when he speaks of different intensities or degrees in a virtual coexistence, in a single Time, in a simple Totality. (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 93-94)

Within a single time, the difference between matter and duration/life/memory or diverse elements is demonstrated via the various levels of expansion and contraction. “Duration is only the most contracted degree of matter, matter the most expanded (*detendu*) degree of duration” (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 93). Matter and duration/life/memory are just the two extremes of the spectrum and, in between, we can see things of different intensities. We have to keep in mind that “matter, in spite of its scientific reduction to closed systems operating according to predictable laws, also carries, as it were in secret, duration, flux” (Grosz 6). In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson proposes, “Thus, between brute matter and the mind most capable of reflection there are all possible intensities of memory or, what comes to the same thing, all the degrees of freedom” (222). The clear boundary between matter and duration/life/memory, between human and inhuman, between organic and inorganic, no longer exists.

In *The Making*, too, the Representatives are “losing their shapes” and melding with other elements such as the snowflakes (Lessing, *Making* 157). Death helps them perceive how the glittering crystals “surrounded us, all different, each

a marvel of subtlety and balance" (156). The snowflakes are "the multitudes of infinitely various shapes," which cross-fertilize with and transform the Representatives. The Representatives observe their own transformations: "Floating through them, feeling ourselves to change shape and size constantly" (157). What we observe after the becoming is the hard-won epiphany earned by the Representatives: via their encounter with the snowflakes and other elements, they realize that they are "a group of individuals, yet a unity" (158). The boundaries between snowflakes as matter and the Representatives as duration are traversed since they are both durations. Matter and duration are, in fact, the two extremes of the spectrum and, in between, we are able to see things of different intensities. They are simultaneously one and many. This concept sheds some light on how the collective life-form in *The Making* can be one and many and how it is rendered dynamic, metastable, ever-becoming, without pre-established teleology.

While most critics focus on the spiritual heritage that passes on to the future generation, I emphasize two issues in my study of *The Making*. First, I explore how death serves as the limit and membrane that makes possible the Representatives' encounter with impersonal death/life. They are thus propelled to reevaluate their existential state. Deleuze's extension of Blanchot's concept of impersonal death into that of "a life" as impersonal makes possible the mystic vision of interconnected life, the cosmic life or life-form, and helps enable our understanding of how death forces them to think anew. Second, to further explore this cosmic life, we may turn to Deleuze's elaboration of Bergson's concept of "duration" to comprehend how multiple beings, as fluxes, coexist in a single duration/life/time and how virtual differences among them are preserved in the single duration. I explore how the Representatives in *The Making*, while encountering and going beyond death, see the interconnectedness between different durations in a single time/duration/life, a collective life-form, which paradoxically leads to an open cosmos. Deleuze's concept of "duration" helps us investigate the paradoxical relationship between a collective life-form (the one) and individuals (the many) and enlightens us on how different beings are interconnected in the virtual one and how differences are amplified in this virtual field instead of being reduced or erased for the well-being of the whole in *The Making*.

Reading in the light of Deleuze's extension of Blanchot's concept of impersonal death into that of "a life" as impersonal and his concept of duration, we are made to understand Lessing's contribution in creating *The Making*: it is through impersonal death and life that we are forced to think and live anew, and it is "through open-ended attunement with the multiple forces of our life that we can unfold" (Lorraine 1) and evolve into a new life-form without being conditioned by the limitation of our physicality and the pressure from the collective. Deleuze's

thoughts on death and life provide us with a philosophical perspective on Lessing's beautiful, poignant allegory of death and life, but Lessing's literary portraiture itself offers a canvas for seeing how these philosophical concepts unfold on it. Using Deleuze's accounts of similar issues, I organize my own ideas as well as explicate the scope and depth of Lessing's attempt by associating it with ongoing important debates in contemporary continental philosophy. Once having made this expansion of cultural significance, Lessing's ingenuity becomes more apparent. Deleuzian theory and Lessing's thoughts are dialogic instead of one imposing on the other.

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從死亡到宇宙生命： 論萊辛《第八號行星代表的產生》

摘要

從萊辛外太空五部曲當中的第四部曲《第八號行星代表的產生》一書中，我們可以看見一種新的倖存者模式，他們不再是分離的個體，而是集體的、結晶化的、穿越死亡界線的代表們。筆者認為小說處理的是有關生命新樣態如何超越死亡域外並與其它物種生成的問題。在小說裡，當代表們/倖存者面對冰風暴的死亡威脅，他們無處可逃，瀕臨滅絕。面對死亡的絕對命令，星球的人們分化成兩種，一種在冰風暴的死亡威脅下成為非人，另一種則是帶領星球生命邁向結晶化之宇宙生命的代表們。代表們在死亡的那一刻與山川、冰雪和死去的族人（非人）融合，更與高等智慧生命體—加諾波斯星球的使者喬荷—結合，所有的物種真正打破疆界，融為一體。令人好奇的是，萊辛為何從早期偏向探討個體轉向刻劃集體？在《第八號行星》中，她為何不僅探討個體死亡，也擴及集體的死亡？更特別的是她竟背棄反殖民的原則，描繪宇宙殖民政策下，個體放棄生命求取整體存續的必要性。本文將由此提問出發，企圖找出萊辛創造此涵納差異的宇宙新生命樣態的意圖所在。

論文第一部分利用德勒茲的死亡與生命的相關理論處理無人稱死亡如何帶領代表們進入一無人稱生命形式。第二部分則探討萊辛描繪一個死後的宇宙生命之用意。當集體新生命樣態成形，死去的個體如何保有其個體性？我主張萊辛所創生的宇宙新生命樣態能提供我們一個檢視整體與差異共存的可能性。而德勒茲的綿延理論幫助我們檢驗《第八號行星》中集體生命體與個體差異間的弔詭關係，使我們得以探見不同的生命型態如何在潛態的世界中相互交纏，互相生成，使差異不再因整體的利益而被抹除，反而被交纏的生命型態極大化。

關鍵字：萊辛、德勒茲、無人稱死亡、綿延、差異