



# Who's Afraid of Deleuze and Guattari?



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## Preface and Acknowledgements

In *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, my focus was primarily on Deleuze's writings from the mid 1980s, especially on the 'baroque' philosophy of Leibniz (*The Fold*), cinema (*The Movement Image* and *The Time-Image*), and literature (*Essays Critical and Clinical*). More recently, I have been interested in revisiting Deleuze and Guattari's 'Capitalism and Schizophrenia' project (*Anti-Oedipus; A Thousand Plateaus*), which on the one hand has suffered from being underappreciated and too hastily dismissed (by Badiou and Žižek, for example) and, on the other, too quickly assimilated to the objectives of other desires such as multi-culturalism, identity politics, even the politics of 'the multitude'. *Who's Afraid of Deleuze and Guattari?* is written in the style of an 'intervention' – not without a sense of humour – and is intended to be of interest to diverse academic and even popular audiences: philosophical, literary and cultural scholars of Deleuze and Guattari to be sure, but also general and academic audiences who are merely curious about what all the hubbub has been about. It is especially intended for those who are/have been already predisposed 'to be afraid' of Deleuze and Guattari's influence and are not even likely to be readers of their works in the past. It is intended, therefore, as a re-evaluation of the dominant legacy of the 'Capitalism and Schizophrenia' project in philosophy, literary criticism and cultural studies since the early 1980s, which is discussed in terms of its reception and interpretation by major figures (Jameson, Žižek, Hardt and Negri, and Agamben). The intention of my argument – in some cases, my polemic – is to open their project to a fresh evaluation in the light of the limitations of this reception-history, as well as to introduce some of the often ignored pragmatic elements of their work in the regions of expression (language), politics and culture.

In keeping with the more overt pedagogical style, the book is divided into sections on expression, psychoanalysis, politics and, lastly, power. Each section contains a reading of the work of a major figure associated with the reception-history of Deleuze and Guattari's work from the early 1980s to the contemporary moment. The section on expression contains a long treatment of Jameson's early reception of Deleuze and Guattari from *The Political Unconscious* (1981) as well as his most recent arguments against Deleuze from *A Singular Modernity* (2002). The section on psychoanalysis addresses Žižek's

recent *Organs without Bodies* (2004); the section on politics treats the question of Deleuze's supposed distance from (or proximity to) Marx, and concludes with an evaluation of Hardt and Negri's appropriation of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'geophilosophy' and nomadic politics in *Empire* (2000); finally, the last section returns to Deleuze's own writings from the mid 1980s, which I continue to privilege as the most crucial period in the philosopher's work, and contains an extensive discussion of the critical importance of Foucault's influence on Deleuze's later conception of power and desire in *Foucault* (1988).

First of all, I wish to acknowledge and to thank the editors and collaborators of journals and edited collections in which previous versions of some of the following sections have appeared: Charles Stivale (ed.), *Deleuze: Key Concepts* (London: Acumen, 2005); Ian Buchanan, co-editor of *Deleuze and Space* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005); John Cash and Gabriele Schwab (eds), *Critical Horizons*, Fall 2003; Bradley McDonald (ed.), *Strategies*, 15.1 (2002). I am also grateful to the students and colleagues who have graciously supported, encouraged and participated in my ruminations on Deleuze and Guattari over the past four years; the graduate students and faculty who participated or made materially possible the seminars I gave on 'The Analytics of Power' at Emory University (fall 2004); the University of Tasmania (summer 2005); and Syracuse University (fall 2005), especially Cathy Caruth, Jill Robbins, Claire Nouvet, Brent Young, Brian Smith, Robyn Ferrell, Jack Reynolds, Jo Reynolds and the faculty, staff and graduate students of the English department of Syracuse University, who allowed me to play hooky from my administrative duties as chair of the department to finish the manuscript in March 2006. In addition, I would like to thank Branka Arsic, Ronald Bogue, Constantine Boundas, Rosi Braidotti, Ian Buchanan, Peter Canning, Tom Conley, William Egginton, Gregory Flaxman, Dorothea Olkowski, Jeffrey T. Nealon, Paul Patton, Jean-Michel Rabate, Daniel W. Smith, Victor E. Taylor, Mihza Lee and David Wills – all of whom have supported this work at some stage and have been a source of friendship and inspiration. Finally, I would like to thank Sarah Douglas and the Continuum editorial staff for their continuing support and their patience.

Gregg Lambert, Syracuse, New York, April 2006

## Foreword: Why the Revolution (of Desire) Did Not Take Place

The origins of this study can be found in a question that has preoccupied Marxism for some time as well: ‘Why did the revolution not take place?’ That is, in its classical formulation, why did it not take place in the countries like England or Germany where conditions were forecast that would seem to make it favourable, if not inevitable, rather than in Russia or China where the economic conditions were less than ideal? Likewise, in approaching the question of revolution proposed by Deleuze and Guattari in what they called their ‘Capitalism and Schizophrenia’ project, I will ask why this revolution did not take place, particularly in the United States, which was first of all its inspiration.

This question has preoccupied me for many years and constitutes the bulk of my writings and lectures on the reception of the ‘Capitalism and Schizophrenia’ project since my first book on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, which concerned itself mostly with Deleuze’s solely authored writings from the period of the mid 1980s, and his writings on Leibniz in particular. In this earlier work, I had mostly ignored the works that comprised the Capitalism and Schizophrenia project written in collaboration with Félix Guattari, although I didn’t realize this until later on when it was pointed out by a puzzled reviewer.

This book is offered not as a corrective to my earlier oversight as much as it represents the realization of finally having something interesting to say on the subject of this oeuvre. Nevertheless, it is also not offered as a commentary on the volumes that comprise the Capitalism and Schizophrenia project – there are already many of these commentaries out already and they are mostly excellent – but rather for the most part is an attempt to engage with the initial reception and interpretation of these works by critics and scholars in the United States. It is an interesting piece of intrigue that the translation of the first volume of this project, *Anti-Oedipus*, in many ways preceded a larger familiarity with Deleuze’s individual writings by English-speaking audiences in the United States, Great Britain and Australia. The appearance of the Kafka book in 1986 was quickly followed by the second volume, *A Thousand Plateaus*, which

was soon to be provided with a 'user's guide' composed by the English translator Brian Massumi. Deleuze's great philosophical work *Difference and Repetition* did not appear in translation until 1994, and owed much to the diligence of two Deleuzian scholars: Canadian philosopher Constantine Boundas and Australian philosopher Paul Patton. By this time, however, the reception of Deleuze's philosophy had already firmly gelled around the major themes and slogans expounded by the Capitalism and Schizophrenia project, with its scare quotes around the terms 'schizo-analysis', 'desiring machines', 'becoming-woman', and 'minor literature'. Of course, here I am mainly referring to a reception history that was primarily fermented in literature departments, where Deleuze and Guattari's works were widely read, given that their programme of 'anti-interpretation' had a definite use-value and could be placed in creative confrontation with the authority of psychoanalytic interpretation and with the already waning authority of deconstruction.

As I will recount in the following sections, the revolutionary desires that may have marked Deleuze and Guattari's entry into the courts of interpretation were short-lived, albeit lively. Here, I might make several initial speculative remarks to explain why:

- Deleuze and Guattari's work was originally imported under the polemic announced in the first volume of *Anti-Oedipus* against psychoanalytic interpretation of desire. This is the first of many of the cultural mistranslations that shapes their early reception for American academic audiences, in particular, since psychoanalytic interpretation had established itself in American English departments since the 1950s as one of the cardinal hermeneutic paradigms (formalism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, phenomenology), and Deleuze and Guattari's 'anti-psychoanalytic theory of interpretation' was quickly absorbed by the conflict with Lacanian master-theorists. The irony of this cultural translation was that this particular polemic was not referred to, nor even that well known, by the authors of *Anti-Oedipus*, since their polemic had nothing to do with the reigning orthodoxy in the interpretation of literary works in the university, but rather with a strictly Parisian phenomena: the growing orthodoxy of the Lacanian school and the 'return to Freud'. In other words, it was a polemic against the 'couch' and not against the 'text'. In fact, the text itself was a vehicle that they enlisted to demonstrate their theory of 'schizoid desire' against the 'despotism of the signifier'; hence the famous and often cited statement that appears at the beginning of *Anti-Oedipus*, that the schizophrenic out for a walk is a better representation of the unconscious than the neurotic lying on a couch. However, the schizophrenic that they were referring to here was a strictly literary type and is in reference to the portrait of Lenz in Georg Buchner's short account of the same name; it could also be associated with the figure of Jack Kerouac 'on the road', even though it is true to my knowledge there was no evidence that Jack Kerouac was ever diagnosed as schizophrenic. This leads me to the reason why Deleuze and Guattari's theory of 'schizoid desire'

(against the desire of the neurotic) never really constituted a hermeneutic gauntlet, simply because proponents constantly ran against the rocks of the clinical reality of schizophrenia as such. Many thought that what Deleuze and Guattari were recommending as a key to 'liberation' was that we should all become schizophrenics out on the open road. In addition, there was the standard moral objection that proved too difficult to overcome, which is that they were romanticizing the real suffering of the clinical schizophrenic and using it for a purely cultural vehicle of free-wheeling expression. In the period of the 1980s, this became another charge of employing pain as a metaphor. After the reception of *Anti-Oedipus*, it is true that their later works employed the figure of the schizophrenic less frequently, as if reacting to their critics; although this would be consistent with their own view of concept creation. A concept traces a line of flight, or process of becoming, which can easily become blocked or interrupted. At that point, rather than entering into an interminable battle over the proper 'meaning' of the concept itself, one can simply move on.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, their next concept of desire took on the image of grass (the rhizome), and no one seemed too offended by this metaphor.

- The second reason I will point to concerns the critical debates surrounding the concept of 'becoming-woman' and, in particular, the dialectic between 'molar identity' and 'molecular desubjectification' that comprises one of the major themes of *A Thousand Plateaus*. This dialectic quickly became subsumed by debates concerning the status of 'agency' (particularly political agency assumed by feminists and underrepresented groups), and a certain suspicion and later rejection of a certain 'anti-humanist' and 'anti-subjective' claim by theories that emerged from France during the period of postmodernism. Probably the most authoritative pronouncement against Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'becoming-woman' occurs in an early article written by a Harvard literary critic and feminist, Alice Jardine, in which she accuses Deleuze and Guattari of more covert, misogynistic motives.<sup>2</sup> Feminists have been worried about giving up too precipitously the 'molar identity' of woman (if, I might add, this loss was politically, socially, even economically possible), in the prospect of engaging whole-heartedly in the creative process of 'becoming-woman', which as we know from Deleuze and Guattari's description, also entails other *becomings* – (i.e., 'becoming-molecular', 'invisible' or 'imperceptible'). Like Jardine, some even speculated that this could only lead to the worst of consequences; maybe this is the ultimate trick that by introducing the notion of 'becoming-woman' feminists would unwittingly do themselves in and cause the social identity of woman to vanish through the looking-glass just like so many Alices! In some ways, this concern runs parallel to the position of Fredric Jameson, which I will discuss in the first chapter, that Deleuze and Guattari's molecular revolution is an alien ideology that might threaten the aspirations of alliance politics in the United States. The question of feminist strategy, therefore, is one of

the most acute and critical questions that feminists such as Rosi Braidotti, Elizabeth Grosz and Dorothea Olkowski later take up in terms of proposing a uniquely Deleuzian-feminist pragmatics, though not simply in terms of whether the theoretical work of Deleuze and Guattari is in any way useful or dangerous to feminist social identity (which is how the problem had been posed thus far). For these writers, the real question is how to occupy, or rather move, between what Deleuze and Guattari provisionally describe as the molar and the molecular. In other words, how to multiply or even to disperse 'the feminine' without destroying or annihilating the possibility for the social and political cause of historical feminism?

- The final obstacle on my brief list of themes and concepts drawn from Deleuze and Guattari's work is the concept of 'becoming-minor' from their volume on Kafka. This book appeared between the two major volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and, in some ways, can be understood as either the final chapter of *Anti-Oedipus*, or as the first plateau of *A Thousand Plateaus* that followed. In the atmosphere of the early 1980s, when the social idea of 'multiculturalism' was more optimistic and naïve, before the spectre of racism returned again to haunt it, the concept was immediately appealing to literary critics as a platform for reconfiguring minority expression in relation to a 'major or dominant language'. However, problems quickly emerged in its wider application to other minority traditions, in that there was no clear relationship between what Deleuze and Guattari called the process of 'becoming-minor' and the ethnic or minority subject; in fact, this linkage was dismissed in favour of the process itself, which could not be situated in a logic of representation because, first and foremost, it was anti-representational. This brought charges of 'formalism', which has been a staple of Marxist critiques of experimental modernist and abstract postmodern styles, as well as the persistent label of Deleuze as simply a 'high-modernist' who produced merely another magical cloak for the late-modernist 'ideology of the writerly text'. (This is Jameson's charge, which I will comment upon in detail in the first section.) Another apparently insurmountable difficulty was yet again Deleuze and Guattari's choice of writers to emulate 'minor literature'. Kafka? A European modernist writer who was already bloated by too much interpretation to be of any use, and who has already been burned too many times at the stake of realistic political objectives, having been found guilty of producing too much ambiguity, escapism and middle-class guilt.

The above points of impasse are obvious to anyone who is familiar with the debates that have surrounded the early reception of the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* volumes. It will not come as any great surprise to learn that part of my answer to the question will be because these works were misunderstood or so badly represented. Even though this sounds like the occasion for offering a fresh commentary as a corrective to previous interpretations of these works, interpretations that were badly botched or misplaced in their major conclusions, in fact, I feel just the opposite: that most interpretations so far have been

right on the money and their conclusions have been sound. Perhaps, where they have led us astray – and this is partly the responsibility of a certain marketing rationale that dominates academic publishing these days with a preference for commentaries on ‘major figures’ and classroom textbooks – is that they remain at the level of interpretation, if not *explication de texte*. They don’t seem to take into their account that Deleuze and Guattari didn’t write ‘books’ together, but rather attempted to trace intensities in the process of ‘becoming revolutionary’. The former is a fairly static process, and already poses that the end of the process occurs when the object of interpretation is explained and fairly well understood; however, ‘understanding’ has never been a goal of Deleuze and Guattari’s writings, but rather something that they have called by different names, all of which amounts to an active process of ‘becoming-x’ and is involved with the fundamental issue of desire. But what is desire? Here we begin the process of real learning that their writings aim to address.

After all, Deleuze and Guattari say that a book isn’t produced in order to be understood, but is rather a machine for producing desires. (I will argue that Jameson was alone in understanding this, even better than most ‘Deleuzians’, and, therefore, also knew what kind of threat this book might pose for his own programme of ‘political interpretation’.) We can find all kinds of desires expressed around and in response to their works – revolutionary and reactionary alike – but the real question doesn’t concern the interpretation of these books but what kind of desires they are associated with and what they can be plugged into. As Deleuze himself once remarked concerning the status of *Anti-Oedipus* as a book:

It’s not as a book that it could respond to desire, but only in relation to what surrounds it. A book is not worth much on its own. It’s always a question of flow: there are many people doing work in similar fields. I doubt they will buy the current type of discourse, at once epistemological, psychoanalytic, ideological, which is beginning to wear thin with everyone . . . In any case, a book responds to a desire only because there are many people fed up with the current type of discourse. So, it’s only because a book participates in a larger re-shuffling, a resonance between research and desire. A book can respond to desire only in a political way, outside the book. (Deleuze and Guattari [hereafter DG] 2004: 220)

The context that Deleuze is describing in the above statement, made in 1972, concerns the different desires associated with the dominant discourses of Marxism and psychoanalysis. Here, Deleuze is saying that *Anti-Oedipus* addresses an audience that is fed up with these first-world discourses, which are solemn in their politics, almost humourless, still addressing the virtuality of political emancipation from the position of class guilt and/or sadness. (I will return to address Deleuze and Guattari’s lesser-known response to Marxist interpretation in the first section; as far as psychoanalysis is concerned, Deleuze and Guattari’s self-proclaimed war against ‘the signifier’ and ‘castration’ is very familiar to most readers.) However, I believe in English-speaking countries the

same conditions exist today and the situation is ripe again to address a book directly to desires and to those who are fed up with the same tired refrains. In other words, I would say that the two dominant discourses continue to be some version of Marxian interpretation (that of Jameson, in particular) and some version of psychoanalytic interpretation (for example, that of Žižek). So, in part, this book is written as a repetition of the same intention that Deleuze and Guattari wrote their own first volume; it is written in the hope of a larger reshuffling of research and desire and is addressed to those readers who are getting a little fed up with both of these discourses in their contemporary institutions.

Returning to the three dominant misinterpretations outlined above, one fundamental trait that underlies all three is a certain critical tenet that quickly becomes too problematic and too unwieldy as a weapon to take up in an academic quarrel. In other words, the concepts of 'schizoid desire', 'becoming-woman' and 'becoming-minor' – to choose just three of the many concepts and terms announced in Deleuze and Guattari's programme – proved to be too problematic and, eventually, unusable by critics engaged in the art of polemic. One of the earliest definitions of their concepts was offered by their English translator, Brian Massumi, who defined them as tools in a tool-box. For many reasons I was never happy with this analogy, and it could even be listed as the fourth major mistranslation of their work, which led to many misunderstandings as many people simply thought that they could read Deleuze and Guattari and then apply their concepts to an entire panoply of cultural, economic, political and social processes. The secondary works written to interpret Deleuze and Guattari's project could be characterized as a series of 'How to' manuals, which begin by explaining a given concept and then illustrate its uses to explain various phenomena; however, this style of commentary led to a certain 'allegoresis' that has become the trademark of the term 'Deleuzian'. What few people noticed, or rather only gradually realized, was that their concepts never really worked all that well in different interpretative contexts, at least, not without producing anomalies and unruly exceptions that overturned the very definition of the concept as 'tool'. And I have often been amused at how in the earliest academic treatments of their work, critics spent an inordinate amount of their time trying 'to fix' their concept-machines so that they could get them to work under the normal protocols of hermeneutic activity, only to find, in the end, that they kept on breaking down and had the odd tendency of undermining the framework of interpretation itself.

In the pages that follow, I will recount several of these episodes and argue that this was, in part, by design and was an aspect of Deleuze and Guattari's engagement with the idea and the institutions of 'normal science'. Inevitably, the fact of that a certain concept didn't work in application was partly a testimony of its success; hence, the idea of the tool-concept must be submitted to its own auto-deconstruction. In place of building a conceptual practice that would be part of a stable framework (of a paradigm, or a theory), the conceptual art, and indeed the entire project, of the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project could be much better pictured as the fabrication of one of those schizophrenic utensils that are featured in the opening pages of the first volume – a

table with no writing surface, a chair piled with flesh and hair, a mouth with no larynx to swallow or speak, but which emits a low humming sound or a muffled scream. This befits their love of such writers as Artaud and Jarry, or painters like Bacon. However, these must be understood, strategically, as the conceptual machines that are fitted into the framework and the institutions of normal science and philosophy (the procedures of criticism, aesthetics, moral philosophy, history of ideas, sociology, linguistics, etc.). Thus, if there is a strategic and critical understanding of Deleuze and Guattari's practice of building concepts that don't quite work within the framework and the objectives of the institutions of knowledge, it is not they themselves that were responsible for all the misunderstandings of their work that followed. Rather, I would argue that this is primarily owed to the readers and devotees of their work who tried to fit their ideas and concepts into this framework in order to get them to work.

Here, I will return again to the major problematic that will guide my exposition of the reception of the Capitalism and Schizophrenia project: why the revolution of desire did not take place. But then this begs a more preliminary question: a revolution of desire? Would this not take the form of a farce? To assume the image of a revolutionary desire is already to situate the concept of revolution itself into another order of repetition, one that is quite different from the historical Marxist problematic concerning the repetitions and the failures of political revolutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I would argue that this repetition and this difference, enunciated in the idea of a revolutionary desire that would not take the form of the previous series, is properly comic in its historical significance. To say that it is comic, however, is not to remove it from its historical precedent, but rather to claim that it belongs to the movement of history itself. How so?

In a remarkable and very telling note that appears in *Difference and Repetition*, midway through the chapter 'Repetition for Itself', Deleuze comments on Marx's theory of historical repetition from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. First, according to Deleuze, historical action must be understood from the basis of repetition; thus, according to Rosenberg, 'historical actors or creators can create only under the condition that they identify themselves with figures from the past. It is in this sense that history is theatre . . .' (Deleuze 1994: 91). 'It is also in this sense that Marx introduces the possibility of comic repetition, when an action, rather than leading to metamorphosis and the production of something new, forms a kind of involution, the opposite of authentic creation' (Deleuze 1994: 91).

The idea of a 'revolution of desire' already presupposes the failure of a metamorphosis of the first order – the outward and historical transformation of social and political institutions – and in this sense it is properly a comic repetition because the historical agent has already confronted that the act required for the first kind of metamorphosis is 'too big' and thus chooses another manner of metamorphosis or repetition of the act itself. Clearly, I am writing according to the law of the second repetition, a comic repetition. Correctly grasped, a comic repetition of the act must be understood from the perspective of a defect in the original historical actor or in a profound caesura in time between the failed

action and the present metamorphosis which appears as its comic double. We might understand this, for example, in the sense that the identification with an original historical figure ('the proletariat') today has achieved the dimension of comic repetition, of theatre, in which so many actors have emerged upon the stage to claim this identification as the basis of their own identity (women, minorities, the oppressed, etc.). As a result, however, history has become mythic in form if not also in content: 'their action becomes the spontaneous repetition of an old role; it is the revolutionary striving for "something entirely new" that causes history to become veiled in myth' (Deleuze 1994: 91). And yet, this does not make this form of identification any less profound, or historical, any more than it demotes the nature of the desires that are the new expressions of 'revolutionary striving'. In fact, in the number of repetitions of the original figure, an even more profound metamorphosis occurs that belongs to the present and to the present alone: by which the 'identity' of this actor dissolves, becoming 'no one', a modern Oedipus 'who searches for the scattered members of the great victim' (Deleuze 1994: 91).

It is important to understand that the relationship between these two moments, or between these two repetitions, is not dialectical. In one of the most beautiful statements that occurs in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze writes, 'the negative is the image of difference, but a flattened and inverted image, like the candle in the eye of an ox – the eye of the dialectician dreaming of a futile combat?' (Deleuze 1994: 51). The negative is only the product of a genetic affirmation. It is not, as many of Deleuze and Guattari's most severe critics would have it, that desire is simply displacement of the authentic act, or its disguised ideological representative, but rather the repetition of the act itself in the present, and the manner in which both the agent and the action must undergo a more profound metamorphosis in order to achieve a third synthesis, in which the defective agent and the tragic image of the failed action dissolve in favour of a future that presupposes that such a metamorphosis of the agent and the act is already completed. Here, Deleuze reverses Marx's original sequence: comic repetition actually precedes truly tragic (or dramatic) metamorphosis; the contemporary historical agent, finding the magnitude of the original act 'too big', enters into a becoming that produces a state of being equal to the action. He writes:

In effect, there is always a time when the imagined act is supposed 'too big for me'. This defines *a priori* the past or before. It matters little whether or not the event itself occurs, or whether the act has been performed or not: past, present and future are not distributed according to these empirical criteria. Oedipus has already carried out the act, Hamlet has not yet done so, but in either case the first part of the symbol is lived in the past, they are in the past and live themselves as such so long as they experience the image of the act that is too big for them. The second time, which relates to the caesura itself, is thus the present of metamorphosis, a becoming-equal to the act and a doubling of the self, and the projection of an ideal self in the image of the act. (Deleuze 1994: 89)

Returning to the original actor, the one who failed to live up to the act due to some fundamental defect or 'tragic flaw': is not the nature of this defect or tragic flaw desire itself? This constitutes the standard complaint of all great revolutionary failures: the workers were a little too fascist in their desires; they were dupes who were tricked into desiring their own oppression. Consequently, from the second or comic repetition, in identifying with the original historical actor as the basis for the present action, it would make sense that this action would be situated on the plane of desire itself. However, this second repetition aims at the total metamorphosis of the ground (desire) and, each time, the figure that belongs to this moment is only a figure that appears against this ground, causing the ground to appear as a multiplicity of desires that take it up and attempt to transform it. Thus, the revolution of desire would be defined as a present of metamorphosis, a becoming-equal of the actor as well as projection of an ideal self in the image of the act itself, which no longer appears, from the perspective of a past that is already finished, and in the image that remains 'too big for me'.

Are not all the ideal figures that Deleuze and Guattari create to represent this metamorphosis of the present those figures whose identities dissolve in favour of the process or the act itself – 'becoming-woman', becoming-animal', becoming-molecular, lastly, 'becoming-imperceptible'? Moreover, does not the image of the act that belongs to the process of 'becoming' take place purely in a present that has no clearly definable relation to a past or to a future, a present defined only in terms of an indefinite time or duration of the act itself? And yet, this time only belongs to the image of the action itself, to the process of 'becoming'. Yet, very few readers have linked this image of becoming to Deleuze's earlier writings on the three repetitions, or have discerned the identity of figure of 'becoming-x' as the projection of an ideal actor in the image of the act itself.

Some will immediately object that the social identity of this ideal actor, as well as the image of the action itself, remains fuzzy and too abstract. To whom does this image belong? Who is capable of this action? What does it mean 'to become'? In fact, Deleuze and Guattari define the process of becoming very simply:

Starting from the forms one has, the subject one is, the organs one has, or the functions that one fulfils, becoming is to extract particles between which one extracts relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are *closest* to what one is becoming, and through which one becomes. This is the sense in which becoming is the process of desire. (DG 1987: 273)

Is it really the displacement of disguising of a true image of action, or rather is it the apprehension of the act that belongs to a new series and a new form of subjectivity that continues to resonate with the first series, causing it to become transformed, with new elements added that might allow us to apprehend the manner in which the desire associated with transformation continues to insist and become socially creative? Returning to the traditional explanations of the

defect that is made to account for great historical failures, and to desire as the ground where this defect remains as a wound that cannot be healed by the work of memory or by renewed action. 'The workers desire their own repression'. All of the great ideology-critiques of the twentieth century begin with this fundamental premise. From very early on, Deleuze and Guattari were never satisfied with these answers and even went so far as to reject the concept of ideology itself as a causal factor (about which I will say more later on). No one 'wants' to be repressed; therefore, if the workers desired repression and became fascist as a result of this positive desire, the answers must be sought at another level than in the organization of collective interests. As Deleuze and Guattari write:

Only microfascism provides an answer to a global question: why does desire desire its own repression, how can it desire its own repression? The masses certainly do not passively submit to power; nor do they 'want' to be repressed, in a kind of masochistic hysteria; nor are they tricked by an ideological lure. Desire is never separable from complex assemblages that necessarily tie into molecular levels, from microformations already shaping postures, attitudes, perceptions, expectations, semiotic systems, etc. Desire is never an undifferentiated instinctual energy, but itself results from a highly developed, engineered setup rich in interactions: a whole supple segmentarity that processes molecular energies and potential gives desire a fascist determination. Leftist organizations will not be the last to secrete microfascisms. It's too easy to be antifascist on a molar level, and not even see the fascist inside you, the fascist you yourself sustain and nourish and cherish with molecules both personal and collective. (DG 1987: 215)

The above passage, which is repeated in many different variations throughout the volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, constitutes the significance of Deleuze and Guattari's intervention into the field of this historical debate, as well as what could be called their positive discovery. This concerns the positive discovery of desire itself which does not exist merely at the level of its representations, nor even at the level of the subject who feels, perceives, believes, acts. It also exists at a molecular level composed of an entirely different multiplicity, made up from all the little perceptions, feelings, habits and the little actions like an organic body. Therefore, what Deleuze and Guattari name as the molar and molecular can be seen as another variation of the two repetitions above, this time located within the two levels of what they call the *socius*.

Early on in Deleuze's career he edited a collection called *Instincts and Institutions* (1952), in which he wrote a preface under the same title. I will come back to this work often, since I consider it to be a blueprint for some of the ideas that appear in the later work by Deleuze and Guattari. Institutions are only the sedimentation of the instincts that populate and compose them, down to the desires, the habits, the dreary and mundane routines. This is what Deleuze defines as the first synthesis that constitutes the present in time, and yet it is a passive synthesis. It is made up of 'all our rhythms, our reserves, our

reaction times, the thousand intertwinings, the presents and the fatigues of which we are composed . . .' (Deleuze 1994: 77). But, as Deleuze writes in a passage that immediately follows, *'there must be another time in which the first synthesis can occur'*. This refers us to a second synthesis, which is the passive synthesis of memory, more profound than the passive repetition of habit. There can be no revolution of the level of institutions without a concomitant revolution of on the level of instincts: a molecular revolution!

In part, it is my thesis that Deleuze and Guattari's works were never intended for the institution, or to become institutionalized. Taking this last statement to heart, if what follows can be understood in any way as a commentary on this or that book written by Deleuze and Guattari, then its aim is to comment on what has taken place and what continues to take place 'outside the book'. Of course, outside the book, inevitably, one first finds other books that have been written on or which take up the first book in their 'line of flight'. But this is where desire enters in as well, which will be the true object of the following observations. It is clear that politics does not take place in books but in spaces that are exterior to the book's volume. It seems, however, that many have forgotten this simple notion, and this has led to many books being written lately that attempt to grasp the political as a theory of a yet-unknown practice or event. Politics begins in those places that Deleuze and Guattari speak of in terms of their concept of a 'minor literature': in heated conversations and exchanges, in quarrels between lovers and friends, or between parents and children, etc. These are places that are less formalized than a discourse one finds in a book, in which the political is already annulled by the principle of communication. As a form of expression, politics is closer to a scream than to an academic presentation.

In what follows, since I am writing on other desires that have taken place outside the books produced by Deleuze and Guattari, many of the things I will say may first of all appear to be polemical, but this is not the real issue and thus can't be helped. The real issue is pragmatically 'political', the question of 'political pragmatics', and this must be redefined from its current usage to refer to the manner in which a book can respond to the question of desire by pointing to a space outside the book where one can continue to find reasons to believe in the world *as it is*. The only question really worth asking is whether a book can produce a resonance with such a space outside the book, and this, in my view, is the only thing that makes academic commentaries worthwhile, and certainly some commentaries are more worthwhile than others. The place outside a book can be defined as a '*foyer*', a place used for incendiary purposes like smoking. Foucault first employed this term to refer to the assemblage or establishment of places outside any social order from which the forces of social change first take shape as a primitive *socius* that later on can elongate across political and institutional segments. Normally, the function of most books, it must be said, is precisely to close down such a space, to make what the book attempts to think unliveable, to remove any oxygen from its atmosphere so one can no longer breathe. Sooner or later, perhaps naïvely, one quickly abandons the space of the book in order to go outside and get a little breath of air, not realizing that the air outside is not much better, and these days is becoming more

asphyxiating. There are too few spaces that one can find to breathe these days, especially in societies like ours, which Deleuze diagnosed shortly before his death as in the process of becoming a 'control society'.

I will conclude this brief foreword by underlining three central propositions that I have found at the basis of all of Deleuze and Guattari's works, which will be major themes in the sections that follow. First, politics is not creative; it creates nothing. Only desire is creative. Second, desire is thoroughly, one might say primitively, 'social'. Third, only the social is creative of new desires and of the many possible politics that can belong to a given society. This is the same principle that Spinoza foresaw, in his treatment of 'common ideas' (including the idea of absolute democracy), and it is this very intuition that Deleuze and Guattari build upon in their various descriptions of the multiplicity of desires (social ideas) that populate our contemporary societies. Therefore, the last word of caution that I would give to my reader who wants to enter the space of this book is to bring your incendiary matters, because smoking and even the talk of the coming revolution (of desire) is still allowed!

## I EXPRESSION

### Chapter 1

# Once More for a ‘Minor Literature’ – This Time with Feeling!

Is it really necessary to burn Kafka – again?

In 1975 Deleuze and Guattari came out with the French edition of *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineur*, three years after the embers of their first volume of what they called their ‘Capitalism and Schizophrenia’ project, *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), were still smoking on the pyre of psychoanalytic authority that they wanted to ignite in Paris. The French were already well known for burning things they didn’t like, including Kafka himself (Marxist critics asked just 30 years before whether one should forgo reading him and just burn him instead).<sup>3</sup> Of course, Deleuze and Guattari’s choice of authors to champion from a ‘revolutionary’ point of view should be understood as another provocation, in the same genre that they performed three years before against the clinical creation of the schizophrenic as the borderline subject of Freudian psychoanalysis; even though Deleuze and Guattari’s portrait of the ‘schizo’ was based on such famous lunatics as Dr Schreber, the ‘little schizophrenic machine boy’, Buchner’s Lenz and Samuel Beckett’s fictional characters Molloy and Malone.

It is not by accident that Kafka is a writer who has been psychoanalysed more than any other author, perhaps with the notable exception of Shakespeare; their diatribe against psychoanalytic interpretation (baptized as a ‘war against the signifier’) is still there, especially in the famous third chapter on ‘*un Oedipe trop gros*’ (a bloated Oedipus), and in their redefinition of the unconscious mechanisms of law and desire in the later chapter on ‘Immanence and Desire’. But, I will argue that in this little manifesto for what they call ‘a minor literature’, their real opponent is so-called Marxist interpretation of literature, or the dominant method of ‘political reading’ *tout court*. This can be read as the true meaning of their strongest gesture, that of turning Kafka into a revolutionary writer, and in the many proclamations such as the following: ‘We aren’t trying to interpret, to say that this means that . . . We believe only in a Kafka politics which is neither imaginary nor symbolic’ (DG 1986: 7). Some who know this book might find this statement odd, since the critique of Marxist interpretation is not really explicitly announced; moreover, the main antagonist continues to be the early treatments of psychoanalytic interpretation of Kafka’s work, like the one by Marthe Robert, which they

seem to go out of their way to lampoon.<sup>4</sup> And yet, as in Kafka's own work, the real sense of their argument resides at the level of its 'performativity', and the strongest gesture that Deleuze and Guattari perform in their little treatise is to 'pick up' and 'steal away with' (in the sense of 'stealing the baby from the crib') the two major problematics that define the goals of classical Marxist interpretation from Lukács onward. These problems are: (1) 'how to determine the collective status of enunciation that defines the socially symbolic role accorded to the act of writing, or to the subject of modern literature?' and; (2) 'how to give (back) the work of literature its true political vocation', which has been obscured by the ideological determination of the work and personality of the author, and which they accuse of being overtly theological in form.

The first definition of a textual practice indicates a problem that determines the goals of this practice, and attempts to offer a method or process of solving this problem on a pragmatic level. Consequently, the problem that Deleuze and Guattari propose to solve is 'how can we enter into Kafka's work?' Note that they do not ask, what does this work mean? This route is already laid out in advance by what they define as the regime of interpretation, and interpretation is a route that clearly they want to avoid! But we must ask why. In response, the very fact that we scrutinize the literary work to find a political and moral sense already determines the expression of the work itself beforehand, in the sense of what the work truly expresses (for example, the seeds of collective consciousness, resistance to forms of domination, or new possible forms of subjectivity). Perhaps the nature of the work is that it provides a privileged means of access to the presence of a historical time and place bound up with the idea of the unity between a present that is found to be uniquely resistant to the dispersion caused by later economic and political forces. Both determinations of the essence of the work subscribe to the existence of an eternal element of expression that remains 'mysterious', but can be understood partly as a transposition of the moral, allegorical and analogical levels of meaning that were first ascribed to the gospels by earlier theological hermeneutic models. Here, in response to our earlier question, we see why Deleuze and Guattari reject interpretation as a possible route they take in entering Kafka's works. The answer would be that interpretation operates from a model of transcendence, ultimately a theological model, that is historically applied to secular works of 'literature' in the modern period. (We know from Foucault and Derrida that this category is of recent invention, and the taxonomy of classifying certain written texts as literary did not function as an historical constant.)<sup>5</sup> Interpretation is a method that always constructs a major form of content and expression; in simplest terms, the work does not itself speak, but something always speaks through it – a ghost, a genius, a national consciousness, a people, a class, or an entire race (all of these are merely variants of the same 'mysterious' form of expression). And it is primarily for this reason that, from the very start, Deleuze and Guattari eschew any model of interpretation as their 'method' of entering the work, but rather seek to construct another way into it. In the case of Kafka, they seek what they will define as a minor route that is opposed to the major route of interpretation. As they proclaim: 'Only expression gives us the method' (DG 1987: 16).

Accordingly, dominant psychoanalytic and Marxist traditions of interpretation remain essentially 'theological' in form. That is to say, they still believe in the mystery of transcendence – either in the transcendence of the signifier (the law) or of the signified (totality). Moreover, these methods express the strange habit of constantly turning literature into a portrait, whether it is that of the family, or of the bent head of the individual suffering under political oppression. They trap the work in their rigid formalization and make it represent something structural, or express a false or unconscious imaginary ('the political unconscious') of individuals and groups. With regard to Kafka, especially, these two regimes of interpretation have been responsible for introducing the three worst themes that have occupied and determined Kafka's work: the transcendence of the law, the interiority of guilt and the subjectivity of enunciation. Deleuze and Guattari will argue that these are the themes that can rightly be understood as responsible for 'domesticating' Kafka's figure, turning him into a pitiful and sick animal that one should consider 'putting down' in an act of mercy – echoing the last scene of *The Trial* when Joseph K. is put out of his misery by his wards with the benevolent and polite gesture of neatly folding his coat before plunging a knife into his breast.

It is around the last two themes, the interiority of guilt and the subjectivity of enunciation, that earlier Marxist interpretations have been especially pronounced concerning Kafka's obscurantism, his class-guilt, his a-political tendencies, and accusations of a certain individualism that refuses overt or explicit connection with real political struggles of his day.<sup>6</sup> This characterization became an archetype that galvanized Jeremy Irons' portrayal of Kafka as a nervous, fidgety and repressed civil servant in the film-montage of the same name by Steven Soderbergh (1991). In compensation, the film version provides the romantic fantasy or wish-fulfilment of Kafka as a revolutionary figure in the final scenes of the film that show Kafka entering the castle through a secret back-door, the entrance of which is the old Jewish cemetery in Prague, and exploding a terrorist bomb that destroys all the legal documents in the castle-keep. (A contemporary analogy to this act would be something like blowing up the local DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles), something we have all probably wanted to do at one time or another, and which happened during the Los Angeles rebellion in 1991 following the Rodney King trial.) In addition to the above dominant judgements, Kafka's work has often been viewed as implicitly dangerous because it obscures or betrays its true political meaning, and instead obscures the sense of its own ideology within a parabolic (or symbolic) and nihilistic form of bourgeois individualism (i.e., existentialism). Perhaps we can understand why 30 years before Deleuze and Guattari wrote their Kafka book, the question occurred to some critics whether one should read him, or just burn him.

I believe I have developed my evidence for reading Deleuze and Guattari's treatise partly as a response to the dominant judgements that determined the interpretations of Kafka's works. Therefore, it is crucial to see that the four classifications that they argue Kafka's writing process tries to 'evade' (political allegory, folk or ethnic expression, religious or symbolic meaning and, finally,

'high' modernist form) are precisely the regimes of interpretation that have dominated how Kafka's works have been read by twentieth-century critics. In terms of their critique of Marxist interpretation, Deleuze and Guattari's manifesto for the concept of 'minor literature' turns the question of politicizing literary expression on its head by explicitly appropriating all the staples of Marxist analysis and condemning dominant practices of interpretation for not being 'immanent' enough to the real sense of the political in the literary work, and for failing to live up to its own categorical imperative to 'always politicize'. And yet, if I mentioned above that this was the strongest gesture that defined Deleuze and Guattari's treatise on Kafka as an argument with Marxist hermeneutics, it is interesting to note that this is an argument that was never perceived by French Marxists to any great degree; certainly not to the degree that the Lacanians perceived the attack on psychoanalytic interpretation several years earlier and took up arms against it. Perhaps it was too subtle? Or perhaps they didn't read it – because it was on Kafka, after all and they probably burned their only copies long ago! – or maybe they just dismissed it as being typical of a couple of bourgeois philosophers to pick an author so corrupted in his politics as to be of absolutely no use for the cause of revolution. However, I will argue below that this gesture was not missed altogether.

In point of fact, Deleuze and Guattari's attack on interpretation as a political act *was* perceived and responded to just six years later by a professor of French literature who was just emerging as a Marxist critic of some reputation in the United States. In 1981 Fredric Jameson published his now classic treatise of Marxian hermeneutics, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, where he first outlines a method of recovering the 'Utopian meaning of cultural artefacts', but more importantly, proposes a method in which 'a Marxist cultural study can hope to play its part in political praxis, which remains, of course, what Marxism is all about' (Jameson 1981: 299). These statements are from the last two sentences of his book, and are stylized in the final flourishes of a true manifesto. Of course, it is important to notice that both these goals will still be achieved by outlining a new method of 'interpretation' (in the classical style first proposed by Aristotle in *peri hermeneias*); consequently, in the introduction of the book Jameson outlines a method of interpretation that clearly has its origins in the writings of the Christian tradition and, thus, does not break with this tradition of hermeneutics but rather revises the traditions of Aristotle and Aquinas (as well as Northrop Frye) in order to encompass a Marxian objective of 'political interpretation'.

Along with the earlier *The Prison-House of Language* (1975) and *Marxism and Form* (1974), in this book one can also find the first salvo in what was to become later on a cultural war against what Jameson would baptize as 'Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late-Capitalism'.<sup>7</sup> In this earlier book, however, one immediately finds Deleuze and Guattari listed among the principle advocates of what Jameson will label as the dominant 'ideology of the text', under which he will also group together, in an infamous example of a 'straw-man argument', such diverse and mutually exclusive figures as Roland Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Baudrillard, Sollers, and last but not least, Louis Althusser.

The only characteristic that unites all these philosophies, in the final analysis, is their national identity. *Frenchmen all!* With the exception of the last name – Althusser was later removed from this list, though still not exactly assimilated to Jameson's brand of ideological late Marxism – this list should be easily recognizable for anyone in a literature department in the United States today, since it constitutes the proof positive of Jameson's early gesture to corral and 'to inoculate' what he determined then to be the principal 'rival hermeneutic' to the ascendancy of Marxian interpretation in the United States.

Here, I am reading Jameson's categorization of this grouping as a purely political gesture, and it is important to underline that I am not faulting him for being a 'bad reader'. In fact, I would argue that Jameson's reading represents the most intuitive interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy among all the early commentaries on their works, many of which were much too 'francophile' to register the differences between the French and American social and cultural contexts. The question of truth and falsehood in reading must be situated on a different level, in a more strategic determination of representation, since Jameson clearly announces that the ultimate horizon of his objective was not the meaning of particular works of literature, but rather to establish a new model of hermeneutic activity that would be political, Marxian in the final analysis, and would thus be triumphant over its rival 'ideologies of the text', particularly in the context of 'American cultural and ideological life', which is very different from what he understands as a 'still politicized France' (Jameson 1981: 222). What Jameson is hinting at here (as well as in a famous footnote that I will return to below) is that his use of the category of the 'post-modern' is political, rather than epistemological, and that the real issue under contention was which 'ideology of the text' would be dominant in American cultural and ideological life for the next twenty years and up to the present. This question will be particularly critical within the institutional context of the modern university where this ideology is installed within the position of the subject of knowledge and is accompanied by new libidinal mechanisms that guarantee its reproduction, echoing what Althusser first defined as the primary function of the institution of the 'school' as an ISA (Ideological State Apparatus) in capitalist societies.

As an aside, I could say that it is unfortunate that the true sense of Jameson's political gesture has been lost on some critics; many took his category as epistemologically descriptive instead of as a form of political strategy. Yet, I would be speaking only as a historian at this moment by saying that Jameson won the ensuing cultural war of interpretation in the United States, but for all the wrong reasons, and that these reasons themselves have become so muddled these days that it might not even be worth going back over this same old ground to try to rescue the true meaning of 'the postmodern'. Nevertheless, in the following passages I will take up Jameson's early attempt to 'corral' Deleuze and Guattari's work as a point of historical contention, since my response comes over twenty years later. If I said above that Deleuze and Guattari take aim at psychoanalysis in their Kafka book when their true aim is Marxist interpretation, then it is crucial to notice that Jameson in turn seems

to take aim at 'deconstruction and post-structural advocates of a certain notion of textual *écriture*', when in fact his true aim is against Deleuze and Guattari's 'anti-interpretative' framework of politicizing literature. I would argue, however, that I am not going over old ground here, but rather covering a certain historical ground that was immediately distorted and lost in the hubbub of the cultural war that ensued over the name of 'postmodernism'. In fact, I am even following the first maxim of Jameson's own method of political interpretation, which is the imperative to 'historicize'.

### Against interpretation – 'always politicize!'

From its early origins, the science of interpretation, after Aristotle, or 'the art of interpretation' after Ast and Schleiermacher, gradually came to be applied to secular texts in the modern period following the Reformation. However, even through this process of secularization, certain spiritual and moral properties are transferred on to the selection of written texts that come to demarcate that special region of discourse that comes under the modern name of 'literature'. The fact that we attribute a special essential quality to 'literary expression' that is not present in other types of discourse may in fact be nothing more than the effect of the transference of the 'mysterious properties' of these spiritual and even transcendental qualities onto the secularized text, in large part due to the application of principles of interpretation and definitions of the elements of the textual work that were first developed by the Christian Fathers such as Augustine and Aquinas. We might recall that in the earlier post-structuralist writings of Barthes and Foucault, it is primarily this theological determination of the form of writing classified as literature in the West that becomes the object of intense criticism, especially concerning the binding of discourse to the quasi-theological personality of the author. Early texts like Barthes' 'Death of an Author' and Foucault's 'What is an Author?' for example, can more accurately be understood as intense theological debates that sought to wrest the authority of the text from its theological image and to liberate interpretative activity from its early Christian origins. In fact, Foucault's notion of the 'author function' is explicitly based on the recent discoveries of New Testament scholars that the notion of an 'author' functioned very differently during the time and in the cultural context in which the gospels originated. 'Mark', 'Matthew', 'Luke' and 'John' were not authors, in the modern sense, but rather distinctive leaders of early Christian communities, and the gospels themselves were compiled by many different hands, by unknown scribes and copyists who actually performed the task of writing. It is partly from this discovery that we can also locate Barthes' division of the 'scripter' from the function and personality of the author: a term which serves to identify the proper closure (or singular property) of a certain discourse during its circulation and reproduction.

With regard to the early models that governed the interpretation of written works (literatures), let us refer back to the famous set of propositions that

define and limit the range of possible meanings to four levels; it is this grid, set forth in Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*, which will play an important part in Jameson's programme of Marxian hermeneutics. In Part I, Question 1, Article 10, Aquinas responds to the famous problem of 'Whether in Holy Scripture a word may have several senses?' This problem can be understood, in some ways, as the origin of literary criticism in the Western tradition, since it is the basic proposition that every hermeneutic theory must respond to and must develop a systematic understanding of the parameters for multiple meanings in the interpretation of the literary work. In Aquinas's famous reply to the objection that a word in scripture cannot have more than one sense, he first cites a passage from Gregory of Nyssa that 'Holy Writ by the manner of its speech transcends every science, while it describes a fact, it reveals a mystery'. This is perhaps one of the most crucial passages for defining the special property or attribute that is assigned first to holy works but later to the nature of literature itself, in that its expression 'reveals a mystery' that must be deciphered and is not bound up with its literal sense of description alone. It is a mystery that, to quote Gregory, 'transcends every science' and thus raises the question of its revelation and the particular nature of its mystery to subsequent hermeneutic traditions to define all the way to Heidegger.

After defining what could be called the 'expressive causality' that belongs to the particular manner of speech found in Holy Writ and by extension to modern notions of literature, Aquinas responds to the question of multiple senses by dividing the sense of the word from its levels of signification, prefiguring the separation of *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* (sense and signification) in phenomenological and narrative traditions of the twentieth century. However, Aquinas restricts these significations to two levels: on the first level, signification belongs to the word's historical or literal sense (which, following Augustine, is subdivided to include history, aetiology and analogy); on the second level, signification belongs to the spiritual sense (which has three subdivisions: allegorical, moral and anagogical). The last subdivision, the anagogical, is then further subdivided in the reply to the second objection, under the heading of allegory, which 'alone stands for the three spiritual senses'.

Now, this second division has confounded literary scholars from Dante onward and there have been many subsequent reproductions of this schema, many of which are arranged hierarchically in the form of a diagram which places the literal sense at the base and the anagogical sense at the top. (Interestingly enough, a hierarchical arrangement is not present in Aquinas's original description of the two senses of the word of scripture.) For the purposes of the present discussion, we can turn to the most recent reproduction of this diagram, which occurs in Jameson's first chapter 'On Interpretation':

- **Anagogical** = political reading (collective 'meaning' of history)
- **Moral** = psychological reading (individual subject)
- **Allegorical** = allegorical key or interpretive code
- **Literal** = historical or textual referent

Here, we can see a very interesting transformation of the early Scholastic model that Jameson adopts from the Schools.<sup>8</sup> Although Jameson continues to employ a theological model he has inherited from the Church Fathers, in the top position of the fourfold division he replaces the definition of the third spiritual sense, the **anagogical**, which Aquinas further defines as sense that relates to the future (or 'eternal glory') of the Christian *parousia*, with a new Marxist definition of the future, expressed by political reading which determines the 'collective 'meaning' of history'. This determines what Jameson will later on define as the 'utopian' sense of the literary or cultural work, which, as he argues in the system outlined in *The Political Unconscious*, will constitute the 'absolute horizon of all reading and interpretation' henceforth defined as Marxian. Of course, one might already guess that as a Marxist Jameson could not adopt a Christian hermeneutic model without some alteration of the future destination of mankind, but I note this as interesting for the reason that although he substitutes a materialist reading of the anagogical sense for the Christian or theological one, this new meaning functions allegorically for the earlier meaning and does not transform, in a rigorous or dialectical manner, the earlier image of the 'spiritual' meaning of narrative. Thus, Jameson's theory of a Marxist hermeneutic remains essentially theological – and I would also say, Protestant, for reasons that I will return to discuss below – in that it represents the meaning of the work as having a 'sense' that transcends positive science and its realistic or literal meaning but remains bound to the 'inner essence' or 'kernel' of the work, defined as the historical 'mystery' that is the task of the 'political reading' to reveal. In other words, the absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation is the revelation of the mystery of the 'collective' meaning of history, or the mystery of 'totality'.

The fact that Jameson's understanding of interpretation is ultimately based on its earlier Christian hermeneutic model and is theological at its core can be readily demonstrated in the following passage:

My position here is that only Marxism offers philosophically coherent and ideologically compelling resolution to the dilemma of historicism [which, can be defined in analogy to the hermeneutic problem, as concerning the multiple interpretations ascribed to the word 'history']. Only Marxism can give us an adequate account of the mystery of the cultural past, which, like Tiresias drinking the blood, is momentarily returned to life and warmth and allowed once more to speak and to deliver its long-forgotten message in surroundings utterly alien to it. This mystery can only be reenacted if the human adventure is one; only thus – and not through the hobbies of anti-quarianism or the projections of the modernists – can we glimpse the vital claims upon us of such long-dead issues as the seasonal alteration of the economy of the primitive tribe, the passionate disputes about the nature of the Trinity, the conflicting models of the polis or universal Empire, or, apparently closer to us in time, the dusty parliamentary and journalistic polemics of the nineteenth-century nation-states. These matter can recover their urgency for us only if they are re-told within the unity of a single great

collective story; only, if however disguised and symbolic in form, they are seen as sharing a single fundamental theme – for Marxism, the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity; only if they are grasped as vital episodes in a single vast unfinished plot. (Jameson 1981: 19–20)

In reading this passage, it is important to emphasize that although Jameson defines the ‘ideological mission’ of the Christian interpretive schema ‘as a strategy for rewriting the Jewish textual and cultural heritage in a form that is usable for the Gentiles [Christians]’, he does not abandon this allegorical strategy at all, but rather adapts it for a Marxian usage. After all, what would be the strategy and the ideological mission of a Marxist critic if not to rewrite bourgeois textual and cultural history in a form that is usable for Marxism? This underscores the persistent argument that Jameson has with Althusser’s critique of ‘expressive causality’, which would threaten any identification of history with either narrative closure or *telos* (the *parousia* or ‘eternal glory’ foretold as the ‘end of capitalism’), or with the epic figure of the subject of universal history (the proletariat), or the modern representative of the Leninist party (the Marxist cultural critic). Althusser’s authoritative statement, which Jameson revises for his own purposes later in his argument, that ‘history is a system without *telos* or subject’ would, in effect, explicitly reject a narrative form of analysis which provides no access to the truth of historical processes or subjects. In other words, this would threaten the ‘ideological mission’ of the narrative itself – that is to say, it would exclude the interpretation of this form from having any usable political value for a Marxist materialist analysis – which Jameson ardently wants to salvage from Althusser’s overt scientism. Thus, according to Jameson’s rebuttal, the function of interpretation is not to provide access to the truth of history and the critic’s function is not scientific in the sense of closing off the text from ideology and the aberrant readings of false consciousness; rather, the task of interpretation is specifically ‘a mechanism for preparing the text for further ideological investment’ (Jameson 1981: 22–3). In other words, the real political task of Marxist literary interpretation is to transform the textual apparatus into a ‘libidinal apparatus’, as the machinery for subsequent ideological investment by a community of readers and critics.

It is precisely through the last two levels of the revised schema adopted from the Scholastics, the moral and the anagogical, that Jameson outlines the manner in which the individual reader can ‘insert’ himself or herself into the text and ‘invest’ libidinally in a drama that allows the reader to become conscious as a subject of ideology. According to the revision of Althusser’s formula that Jameson adapts here to describe the political transformation of interpretation, by this process the reader ‘is able to conceive or to imagine his lived relationship to transpersonal realities such as social structure or the collective logic of history’ (Jameson 1981: 30). This leads to Jameson’s famous reformulation, that although history is not a text, meaning that in his or lived experience, which is atomized into discrete fragments and alienated, there is no place where the subject’s actual relation to History can be unified in the form of

collective experience; however, the form of a text offers a special field of experience that is unified and symbolically closed in its meaning, where the subject can have access to the meaning of his or her collective experience by allowing him or her to briefly glimpse the imaginary conditions of his lived experience. Therefore, it is only through its prior textualization in 'the political unconscious' that the real passes into the experience of the reader; simultaneously, it is by means of its retextualization that the real emerges as the condition of collective totalization (politics), that is, by temporarily reunifying the subject to the field of political struggle for totality. By working over this prior textualization and retextualizing it in a new narrative form, it is the analyst-reader who temporarily reunifies the political, ideological, economic and practical ramifications in 'the occasion of a particular analysis'.

Jameson writes: 'Such momentary reunification would remain purely symbolic, a mere methodological fiction, were it not understood that social life is in its fundamental reality one and indivisible, a seamless web, a single inconceivable and trans-individual process'. (Jameson 1981: 40). Here we have Jameson's most overt political and ideological assertion; in other words, the interpretation of narrative would remain purely allegorical (symbolic) in relation to real social life were it not for the belief that it is not separate and is itself a socially symbolic act with its own political efficacy. It is only through its ideological determination that it 'appears' separate to begin with; whereas, in reality, it belongs to the seamless web of causes and effects. Interpretation is not merely 'symbolic action', but real action that appears through an ideological distortion as inverted and separated from its effects. The act of interpretation and the political act, seemingly separated into different realms (or so it appears for us), in reality, are not identical (in homology), but dialectical (in mediation). One does not lead to the other as from cause to effect, since this still affirms their separation, but rather one *is* the other, dialectically, a momentary and local reunification. Utopia (the analogical meaning of the interpretive activity) is thus 'compensation' for alienated political reality.

At this point, I will halt my commentary and ask why Jameson continually insists on the univocity of the real, on a singular reality, on a seamless web and on the re-unification that takes place in the act of mediation. This is the basis of his argument against Althusser's critique of 'expressive causality', but especially against the Althusserian conception of the field of ideology as comprised of semi-autonomous spheres (or apparatuses) that can be subjected to no narrative of closure by teleology or reunification through the perspective of a single historical subject (such as the epic subject of the Marxist proletariat, or the Leninist subject of the party). It is this critique of the Althusserian ('French') Marxist position that will also help to explain his attack on post-structuralist theories that either seek to give the text itself a semi-autonomous sphere of activity ('the ideology of the text') or to break it into discrete and semi-autonomous functions (the 'postmodern', with its emphasis on pastiche and citationality). The answer to this question represents Jameson's fundamental intuition into the particular situation of American political field and is primarily a political decision on his part to stress the 'Utopian' impulse of the

Marxist analyst as a 'compensation for the increasing dehumanization on the level of everyday life'.

In other words, far from revolting against this fragmentation, any analysis that bases its programme on the potentiality of further fragmentation only intensifies its alienating effects, which leads to a complete loss of the individual's ability to conceive or even to imagine a relation to a collective totality as anything real (leading to cynicism, or worse, to nihilism). From there, one is led straight back into the bosom of capitalist ideology which is based on the competition of individualistic interest and on the sacrifice of collective responsibility on a political level, that is, to a disinvestment from the collective good and a hyper-investment in the multiple senses of the individual good determined by the commodity culture of late capitalism, which are offered in compensation or exchange for the loss of political sovereignty and dehumanization. This becomes the basis of Jameson's later critique of Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari and various other 'postmodernists' in the cultural and political context of the United States.

Perhaps the most important and telling description of his political antagonism to any politics of multiplicities occurs in a footnote that appears halfway through the argument on interpretation, which outlines the basis for his dismissal of Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on multiplicity and molecularization of the political field. In this footnote, Jameson basically argues that these critiques are situated in the political context from which they issue, and so the transplantation of a critique of 'totalization' that is carried on by French Leftists in their political environment would be devastating when translated into American social reality, because there are 'the distinctly different situations faced by the Left in structurally different national contexts of France and the United States' (Jameson 1981: 54n). According to this argument that occurs in the context of the first discussion of post-structuralists, Jameson writes:

The critique of totalization in France goes hand in hand with a call for 'molecular', or local, non-global, non-party politics; and this repudiation of traditional forms of class and party action evidently reflects the historic weight of French centralization (at work both in institutions and in the forces that oppose them), as well as the belated emergence of what could very loosely be called the 'countercultural movement', with the break up of the old cellular apparatus of the family and a proliferation of sub-groups and alternate 'lifestyles'. In the United States, on the other hand, it is precisely the intensity of social fragmentation of this latter kind that has made it historically difficult to unify the Left or any 'anti-systemic' forces in any durable and effective organizational way . . . *The privileged form in which the American Left can develop today must therefore necessarily be that of an alliance politics; and such a politics is the strict practical equivalent of the concept of totalization on a theoretical level.* (Jameson 1981: 54n – my emphasis)

Contained in the passage, I would argue, is the blueprint of both Jameson's interpretation of the early phenomenon of Deleuze and Guattari, as well as

the outline of the strategy that he will devise to overcome and contain their ideological position from spreading to the United States – that is, without ‘mediation’ or without the proper ‘strategy of containment’. In France, according to Jameson, it is the traditional forms of the centralized leftist and class party politics, including the predominance of Marxist and socialist parties, that pose the greatest repressive force against the emergence of new identities and forms of collective forms of interest based on what Jameson identifies as regional and ‘lifestyle’ movements (feminist groups and neighbourhood coalitions, which in urban areas are the backbone of grass-roots political activity). In its original social and political context, Deleuze and Guattari’s emphasis on the molecular and on the liberation of multiplicities must be situated as an ideology that grows out of, and must remain contextualized by, the institutional history of the Left in France. In the United States, however, political interests and classes are already ‘molecularized’ in a manner that poses the problem of centralization as certainly *the* political problematic of the Left in this society; therefore, any ideological representation of culture and subjectivity that privileges such formations of ‘collective interest’, desire and action can only serve to fragment any possible hopes of unification in the form of an alliance politics.<sup>9</sup>

Postmodernism is not *in itself* such a bad thing after all; *for us* (Americans), however, its ‘ideology of the text’ (that is, its cultural formation of the Imaginary, as well as its ‘libidinal machinery’ for producing identification) threatens to distort the subject’s cultural relation to the real conditions of social and political existence. Thus, it must be regarded as an alien ideology, or an alien imaginary, a false consciousness that belongs to a very different national and political context between French intellectuals and their political class interests. For example, Jameson argues that there is indeed an implicit class interest in Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of transcendence, Oedipus, and their war against the ‘signifier’; these terms belong to a real set of political interests that define them as ‘objective correlates’ of the problem of leftist politics in France and not merely ‘symbolic representatives’ of real political struggles. Imported into the United States, however, these same terms threaten to generate a false ideology that no longer represents the material interests of the class of the leftist intellectuals in the United States. Specifically, they would serve as ‘form of containment’ and as a new language of mystification that belongs to the cultural logic of late capitalism in American society.

Interestingly – or rather strategically – it is important to point out that Jameson completely conflates Deleuze and Guattari with Derridean style deconstruction as a purely negative and critical relation to totality, and even distorts or ignores the form of ‘totality’ in Deleuze and Guattari’s own work, that is, what they define as the ‘plane of immanence’ which has a Utopian function as well. Instead, he describes Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of totality as ‘a rival hermeneutic model’ that represents an alien ideology. Moreover, Jameson’s rivalry with the political hermeneutic of Deleuze and Guattari continues up to the present day, as can be easily demonstrated in several passages that occur in *A Singular Modernity*, which I will return to later. As I

have already demonstrated in my reading of several key passages from *The Political Unconscious*, Jameson's tactical response early on can be defined as a 'strategy of containment', and Jameson himself describes this as an intentional strategy in his treatment of other non-Marxist forms of analysis. What is odd is that Marx, and later on Lukács, define this strategy negatively, that is, as a manner of distorting the truth of political economy and repressing the reality of real contradictions (Hegel's ideal of 'spirit', for example). However, Jameson inverts this notion and gives it a strategic and positive usage in the hands of a skilful Marxist analyst, as a manner of incorporating a potentially hostile or rival ideological mechanism into his own ideological system. As an historical aside, I would say that Jameson employs this same strategy in many instances in the cultural war with postmodernism. This is true in the case of his reading Althusser's critique of 'expressive causality' mentioned above, but particularly true of his 'Introduction' or 'Foreword' to Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, where Lyotard's analysis of the postmodern is already framed by a Marxian perspective and revealed for its structural limitations even before the reader comes into contact with Lyotard's own text. Consequently, the success of this manoeuvre can be measured by the fact that subsequent readings – or, at least, most – have been guided by the terms of Jameson's reading which turns Lyotard's concept of postmodernism into an exemplar of Jameson's own thesis in *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late-Capitalism*.

Here, one might think that I am accusing Jameson of knavery and this might be true if not for the realization that it is not a question of 'correct interpretation' as the logical deduction truth of the other system that is at issue, but rather the political usefulness of this system in the national and cultural situation of the United States. Above all, we must not forget the maxim that Jameson clearly announces in the conclusion of the footnote cited earlier that 'alliance politics is the strict practical equivalent of the concept of totalization on a theoretical level', which means that any attack on the concept of 'totality' in the American framework poses the serious threat of undermining the only realistic prospect that a genuine Left could come into being in this country. In other words, for Jameson, *theory is equal ('the strict equivalent') to practice* – again, it is only in the ideological field of consciousness that they 'appear' to belong to separate spheres – and for this reason any attack on 'totality' as a theoretical notion is to be treated on a practical level as an attempt to forestall or to repress the formation of an alliance politics that would reunite the already molecular collective forms of social and political interests that define the situation in the United States. Therefore, all attacks on 'totality' must either be theoretically contained or must be adjusted to fit within a systematic political strategy that serves the practical goals of alliance and reunification of the Left in the United States.<sup>10</sup>

It is obvious from the narrative I have just recounted of what I would consider to be the first dominant reception of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy in the United States that I do not, on face value, accept Jameson's interpretation, which I have determined as belonging to a 'strategy of containment' (or

to employ Barthes' term, a strategy of 'inoculation'). Nevertheless, I find this reading highly intriguing and even remarkable in its effectiveness, somewhat like the plot of a spy novel by John Le Carré. (Perhaps a better comparison would be in reference to the famous story by Poe, concerning the clever device of a certain minister who steals a letter and hides out in plain sight.) Of course, I cannot help but to disagree strongly with its characterization of Deleuze and Guattari's 'anti-hermeneutic programme', which already prefigures the misreading of their proposal 'for a minor literature'. Even if I wanted to agree, I could not, since as Jameson clearly announces, the basis for any agreement would be political (or rather, ideological), and since I do not profess to being a Marxist, I already find myself cast in the role of occupying the position of a 'rival hermeneutic'. This does not imply that I would choose to occupy the category of the 'postmodern' either, however, since this category has already been pre-manufactured and politically contrived from the very beginning, and I'm not sure it was made to accurately describe anything whatsoever, except to function as a nomenclature for locating any 'ideology of the text' that does not serve the objectives of 'political interpretation' *tout court*. In this sense, I completely agree with Jameson's definition of the text as a 'libinal apparatus' for future investment – what Deleuze and Guattari themselves called a 'desiring machine' – and it is at this level of understanding of what the 'text' is and what its cultural function might be, that I wish to challenge Jameson's image of political pragmatics on theoretical grounds, that is, to stand their image of 'anti-interpretation' back on its feet! As my precedent, again I must recall the maxim that Jameson offers as the condition for understanding his own theoretical position: that the privileged form of alliance politics is the strict practical equivalent to the concept of 'totalization' on a theoretical level.

### Interpreting vs mediating – the literary (social-symbolic) act

At this point, I must return to the question that I have raised many times but which I still need to address in more depth, particularly with regard to the question of interpretation. What is it in Deleuze and Guattari's early collaborative work in *Anti-Oedipus* that appeared so threatening to Jameson's ideological and political agenda, that he immediately identified it as a rival hermeneutic and just as immediately took steps either to forestall or at least to contain its authority in the United States? On one level, I answered this question; that, from Jameson's point of view, it represented a 'libidinal apparatus' and a form of the collective imaginary that was not related to the real social conditions of the Left as he saw them. Thus, the theoretical imperative 'always totalize!' becomes the condition of 'political interpretation', in keeping with the ultimate practical goals of alliance politics in unifying the Left. In some ways, this can be understood as an extremely orthodox Marxist reaction to the phenomenon of 'autogestion' that was becoming a transformative principle of socialist and communist philosophies in France after May 1968, the time when Jameson is writing. Inspired by the spontaneity of student revolts in 1968, the

primary themes of autogestion can be summarized as intense anti-authoritarianism and an emphasis on social diversity and experimentation (interestingly enough, the same themes that are found in the works of Deleuze and Guattari). This resemblance is even more apparent in the following passage by Michel Rocard, one of the principle architects of the theory of autogestion, which could just as well be written by Deleuze and Guattari themselves:

It is decentralizing, regionalist; it rejects the arbitrary domination of bosses and the state. It is liberating, whether it is a question of dependent minorities like women, or of minorities not well integrated into society – young people, immigrants, the handicapped. It is suspicious of regulations and administration; it prefers autonomy of collectivities and experimentation.<sup>11</sup>

Employing Jameson's own maxim, one could argue that Deleuze and Guattari's 'molecular revolution' was the strict theoretical equivalent to the political position of autogestion – at least, it would be my argument that this is exactly how Jameson understood its real meaning in the mid 1970s. In fact, recalling Jameson's description of the politics of molecularization in the footnote cited above, with its emphasis on what he terms 'lifestyle movements' over the centrality of the party apparatus, this is a fairly good description of the phenomenon of autogestion at that historical moment.

In order to historicize my argument in terms of Jameson's reception of Deleuze and Guattari's work in the American university, as I already indicated, Jameson published *The Political Unconscious* six years after *Anti-Oedipus* first appeared in English translation from Viking-Penguin, which is not primarily an academic press. In the university, at that time, Deleuze and Guattari enjoyed a small and very cliquish reputation (mostly in French literature departments), but certainly not to the degree of a philosopher such as Derrida, whose influence was already firmly established by the beginning of the 1980s and especially with the publication of secondary textbooks such as Jonathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics* (1975) and the later *On Deconstruction* (1983).<sup>12</sup> Thus, just as Lacanian psychoanalysis functions as the 'straw-man' in Deleuze and Guattari's polemic in *Anti-Oedipus*, Derrida and other 'post-structuralists' become the 'hollow men' in Jameson's *Political Unconscious*, even though deconstruction does not seem to pose that much danger for Jameson. In my view, the reason that Deleuze and Guattari appear so foregrounded in Jameson's attack is because they propose a narrative that grasps the energies and the aspirations of many 'counter-cultural' movements in the United States after the 1970s and thus threaten to capture the imagination of resisting social elements in US society with concepts such as 'nomadic deterritorialization' and the hatred of all 'molar formations' and the fascisms that dwell within institutions. (It is interesting to note that Deleuze and Guattari themselves confess in an earlier interview that the primary audience they imagined for *Anti-Oedipus* was around the age of 17.) In other words, they appear to offer a powerful and compelling alternative leftist narrative of the popular front: one that would, however, be neither Marxist in its goals nor its interpretation of

the collective 'meaning' of history and definitely not Marxist in its language or its major concepts. From Jameson's perspective, what is really troubling is that Deleuze and Guattari – even more than Derrida and his adherents – actually produce a *text* that would no longer serve to reproduce the libidinal investment in Marxism for younger generations and which would threaten this ideology with further marginalization. In the early period of the Reagan era, Marxism as an ideology was already suffering a precarious political existence; its strongest influence and only remaining cultural institution in the United States was neither a social institution (even a grass-roots organization or community), nor even a political institution (a political party), but rather an 'institution of interpretation' in the American ISA, 'the university'.

Finally, it is at this point that we can begin to understand why Deleuze and Guattari's position of 'anti-interpretation' is so troubling for Jameson in 1981, who derives his own cultural authority only from within a dominant institution of interpretation, *where the authority of one's interpretation is very much dependent on the power of one's libidinal apparatus for producing and reproducing critical investment among younger generations*. This is particularly relevant in the period of the early 1980s in literature programmes in the American university, where in the wake of reader-response theories and emergence of feminist and minority interpretations of the canon, the truth of the *text* was often made contingent upon the 'cult of experience', the forerunner of identity politics. With the 'death of the author' (then already ten years old) and the principles of Derridean deconstruction already under suspicion for its hyper-relativism and its political double-speak, it seemed that the only remaining ground for interpretation was very much dependent upon the ability to institute a coherent hermeneutic programme for political reading, in short, a 'theory' whose social form would be that of a 'school', a 'position', or an 'identity', all of which imply a shared belief-system and unified technical language among adherents. Most importantly, any political theory of interpretation needed a common and easily identifiable antagonist (e.g., Marxian political interpretation vs postmodernism).

In *Kafka*, on the other hand, Deleuze and Guattari's programme of 'anti-interpretation' must be understood as a 'position' that precisely takes aim against this kind of institution-building, against any 'institutional form of literature', against the 'authority of the cultural critic' and finally, against the concept of 'Literature' in terms of how this expression exists and is reproduced in the university as a 'major or dominant form'. Instead, they evoke a gesture of literature as a popular force, as 'a concern of the people' (quoting Kafka), as a 'minor form' that escapes or disentangles its relationship with the institutional determination of literature as a dominant form of cultural expression and all major forms of 'collective enunciation' (the nation, the culture, the race, etc.). *In fact, the first question they raise is whether literature even belongs in an institution?* What happens when literature is institutionalized? When its expression is constantly silenced or turned against itself, only to sing the glories of the official state culture, or the nation, or the subject of identity? Perhaps this can be understood as the strongest parallel between the underlying theme of *Kafka*, which they define as their second volume in the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*

project: that the position of the subject of schizophrenia in the clinic is the 'strict practical equivalent' to the subject of the writer in the university. Therefore, the clinical subject of schizophrenia is structurally identical to the critical subject of literature. After all, just look at 'poor Kafka' and perhaps this is fundamentally the rationale for understanding their choice of writers to champion as a case-study of what they identify as what can happen when literature is turned into a 'major form' of expression. Kafka has been identified as certainly one of the 'major writers' of the twentieth century; moreover, he is a writer whose works have achieved international recognition and are taught in translation in most departments of literature worldwide. In fact, if one were to ask the question, in any language today, 'What is modern literature?', Kafka would be a universal exemplar without regard to the perspectives of the culture, religion or the politics of the respondent.

Why Kafka? After all, is Kafka not the first case of the globalized writer-man? Is he not also a writer who has been institutionalized to a degree more than any other modern writer? Has he not been – perhaps only exceeded by the criticism of Shakespeare – existentialized, psychoanalysed, theologized, parabolized, deconstructionized, Buddhaized, popularized, politicized, Marxianized, nationalized, feminized, nihilized, Judaicized, Christianized and finally, post-humanized? All of these forms of interpreting Kafka can be understood as dominant or institutional forms that exemplify what happens when expression becomes institutionalized. Is it any wonder, therefore, that the first question that Deleuze and Guattari raise is actually 'how to enter into Kafka's work?' So many paths and avenues are already readily available that the work itself has become '*trop gros*', bloated and obese, to the point where Kafka himself is described as an animal living in a burrow, in a vast and labyrinthine construction of tunnels, passages and networks. This is the counter-image that Deleuze and Guattari immediately give in order to represent what is distinctive in their approach that 'only expression gives us the method'. Thus, their image of Kafka's work is that of 'a rhizome, a burrow'. It has many entrances and exits, all of which have been fashioned for just one purpose – *Escape!* – as if to call our attention to the fact that Kafka himself fashioned a literature that has historically managed, so far, to escape every interpretation, 'to steal, head over heels, away!' This is, above all, what interests Deleuze and Guattari most: the principle of resistance of expression, a principle that they will identify with the true political sense of Kafka's writing process, and which is a power that they will find to be typical of the kind of expression that they identify with the concept of a 'minor literature'.

In response to a potential interlocutor, concerning the question 'What is a minor literature?' Deleuze and Guattari define it by three characteristic attributes, the first of which is most crucial. They write: 'A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs in a major language' (DG 1987: 16). This statement immediately determines what they mean by the term 'minor': 'the first characteristic of minor literature in any case is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization'. Their use of the phrase 'in any case' makes of this characteristic some-

thing that is categorical, that can be found in all expressions of what can be called a 'minor literature'. Nevertheless, the introduction of the concept of 'deterritorialization' makes us wonder what exactly we would be looking for if we sought to hunt through all literary works in order to create a canon of 'minor literature', for example – if this would indeed be possible?

Kafka, moreover, is a particularly apparent case of a writer for whom all the forms of language available to him are either closed off or over-determined by the particular political and cultural situation that defines Prague at the turn of the twentieth century. He has no choice except to invent another way, to escape the choices that have been given to him, because none of the languages are adequate to the task. In accordance with the criticisms that have been levelled against Deleuze and Guattari for a certain 'romantic' notion of the writer, they do ascribe to the position of the writer a certain populist vocation as 'the voice of the people', particularly in those situations where a popular consciousness only exists by means of its literature. This corresponds to a major thesis that has been ascribed to many different colonial situations, from Ireland to Algeria, a thesis that actually has its origin in the causes that have been ascribed to the birth of German romanticism and can be paraphrased as follows: in the absence of political and civil institutions to house the function of national or collective consciousness, and its political and juridical language, it is the popular form of culture, and of a people's literature, in particular, that assumes this institutional function in the experience of diaspora. With regard to the temporality of national consciousness, since it is absent in the present moment, it exists only in the form of memory and anticipation of a 'coming community' in the future. Thus, the expression of a people's literature is defined as one of most intensive experiences of exile, memory and hope in a future; its function is both curative and protective (it preserves collective memory and traditions from extinction under the brutal forces of repression and oppression) and properly 'utopian' (as the repository of collective aspirations and hope in a future that is liberated to its own present). This is why the concept of minor literature must not be understood as a genre that naturally belongs to minorities, since these groups can often assume an expression of a 'major' or 'dominant' form of literature as well (particularly in its critical representation).

Here one can easily see a political vocation that has come to define the notion of literature in the modern period, basically from the nineteenth century onward: one that has been ascribed in particular to the literatures of ethnic minorities and politically oppressed groups. This 'utopian' vocation of the institution of literature is primarily religious and millennial in form. But why is it that literature assumes such a special importance? As can be seen in the writings of Frantz Fanon, especially, the function of this institution of 'self-representation' is both curative and propedeutic. This is particularly true when the function of 'self-representation' that is stripped from its legislative and juridical outward appearance (the forms of language that function in the normative political and civil institutions), literary enunciation preserves a form of 'self-representation' from extinction when the language of a people is

removed from these outward institutions. It is also fundamentally propedeudic in the sense that it 'teaches the people to speak their own language again' (it preserves the seeds of collective enunciation); it prepares the language of self-representation for its properly political and civil vocations and, thus, becomes the soil in which the germ of sovereign representation is allowed to grow and nurture itself.<sup>13</sup>

According to this understanding of the political vocation of literature in a time of exile or in the experience of colonization, the vocation of the writer becomes particularly acute as an allegory of the story of the people's own stages of exile and the loss of an original language, followed by a passage through a language of the colonizer and finally, the achievement of a form of representation that symbolizes a new language of sovereignty, a properly utopian dimension of expression. This is the allegory of the modernist writer, to be certain, but one that was deployed by Fanon in his description of the dialectical stages and the pitfalls of nationalist consciousness in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), but also by Kafka himself in the text of his lecture on a 'Small Literature', the text from which Deleuze and Guattari draw their principal descriptions of 'A Minor Literature', including the famous statement that 'Literature is less of a concern of literary history than of the people'. The difference between Fanon's view and that of Kafka concerns the status of the 'nation' as the form of collective enunciation in a small people's literature; Kafka's own ambivalence toward the aspirations of Czech nationalism, as well as Zionism, is well known. This, according to Deleuze and Guattari, would appear to block this particular path toward a national literature. Instead, they emphasize a trait that Kafka, as a writer, shares with many minorities today: that of living in a language that is not their own. Consequently, this is why they underline the characteristic of 'deterritorialization' in their first definition of a minor literature; a minor form of expression is indicated by a high coefficient of deterritorialization introduced into a major language.<sup>14</sup>

If an earlier romantic conception of literature still remains in their treatment of the vocation of the writer, does this conception still have relevance today? The notion of a literature as a form of collective representation in exile, a resistance against extinction of personal and collective memory, even of language, is still a prominent way of understanding its function in relation to certain groups, minorities and peoples who face cultural and linguistic extinction in the face of globalization. As the Native American poet Simon Ortiz has spoken of this function:

It's a form of resistance. If there was not a body of literature, then Native people would be invisible. Sometimes the term 'Indian' is an abstract idea. But when we express ideas in literature, then we have a valid body of expression that's totally ours.<sup>15</sup>

Can these sentiments Ortiz expresses be accused of romanticism or of a certain modernist ideology, according to Jameson? Certainly, but does this accusation impeach the function of 'minor literature' that Ortiz appeals to in his

description of literature as a form of resistance. No. In fact, the major distinction and hallmark of what Deleuze and Guattari define as a minor literature perfectly corresponds to the manner in which literature functions in many Native American communities, where literature is created and circulated – far outside the enclosures of major institutions such as the university and the publishing houses – in community newsletters, local readings and small press publications that number only a few hundred copies. Again, I must stress that the institutional question of literature is critical to its form of expression.<sup>16</sup>

But here we might compare the description of the political vocation of literature that one can find in many of the above assertions and those one can find in Jameson's description of political reading in *The Political Unconscious*. Couldn't the propedeutic and curative vocations of writing also be found in the assertions of the latter text as well? How would we otherwise understand the political vocation of Marxist interpretation to reveal the collective meaning of history, or the 'utopian' function of narrative form itself that Jameson often describes, which both preserves and contains the possibility of forms of collective representation that have not been fully subsumed by the institutions of late capitalism? How else can political meaning become the 'absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation' of literary texts, unless literary texts already contain the nascent form of political representation that is actualized through political reading? In other words, if Jameson's own definition of the 'utopian' potential of literature is essentially modernist, in a sense that I must clarify below, how can he come to reject the social poetics of Deleuze and Guattari's version of minor literature? It is at this point we must again discern the strategic and political vicissitudes behind Jameson's argument and his argument against Deleuze in particular which comes to the fore in his latest book *A Singular Modernity* (2004).

On one level, Jameson's rejection of the political vocation of the modernist writer is easy to explain, and lies at this basis of his categorical distinction between early modernist writers (including Kafka) and the writers of what he defines as 'late-modernism' (including Nabokov, Beckett, Gombrowicz and others). The distinction concerns what Jameson defines as a difference in reflexivity, or the conditions of repetition; for while the early-modernist had no vocation or role in which their work would be acknowledged by 'a people', but had to invent or forge the role of the writer as the image of a popular voice in exile, the late-modernists already inherited the social role of the writer from their predecessors, and merely repeated it as a fetishized and autonomous self-designation of their own pseudo-social activity. Here we see the same critique of 'the autonomous sphere of culture, that we noted earlier in *The Political Unconscious*. In other words, while the classical modernists came into a world without models, the postmodernists are already assured of the identity of their role by the ideology of the cult of late-modernism. This leads to Jameson's most damning impeachment of the group of late-modernists as a bunch of apartment-dwellers, poseurs and false prophets:

Their freedoms are ultimately blind and groping; they know no identifiable public ('I write for myself and for strangers,' Gertrude Stein famously said).

And in the absence of any determinate social status or function – they are neither artists in the conventional sense nor intellectuals – they borrow all kinds of windy notions of genius and inspiration from the Romantic era and surround themselves as much as possible with disciples who endorse these private languages and offer a simulacrum of the new Utopian community. (Jameson 2004: 199)

In this passage, and elsewhere in his writings, Jameson's choice of exemplars for the figure of the late-modernist writer is extremely significant; Beckett and Nabokov are offered as the two primary examples, for reasons that these writers actualize the symbolic and political vocation of exile as literal secession and migration from the original society to install themselves as privileged 'guest-workers' in another, and by the retreat into the space of 'the autonomous work', described as the pure repetitive loop in which content is gradually and decisively excluded by an obsessively formalist concern over the purity of the work itself.

It is in this last description that we might understand Jameson's attack on Deleuze, who is addressed in the passages that immediately follow the descriptions of Nabokov and Beckett. In fact, it is Deleuze himself who emerges as yet another late-modernist, but even more, it is the conception of 'minor literature' that becomes, for Jameson, the highest philosophical expression of the ideology of the late-modernist text, by a philosopher who cannot even any longer be called a 'closet modernist', but who has decidedly 'come out' and who lives a purely bourgeois life in his Paris apartment, and dreams of a purely philosophical vocation of literature as a kind of Mallarméan absolute of creating a language truly purified from the language of the tribe (i.e., 'the creation of a foreign language within language'). Of course, unlike Nabokov and Beckett, Deleuze did not choose real migration; nevertheless, one can still see the theme of migration in his philosophy in his attraction for American writers, as in the case of his famous declaration of 'The Superiority of Anglo-American literature'. It is through his identification with the American situation that Deleuze introduces variables of the poetics of a foreign language within the sedentary and apartment-consciousness of French bourgeois philosophy. Hence, there is a strange symmetry between Jameson's position and that of Deleuze, albeit a symmetry of opposition; if Jameson can be accused of xenophobia in his fear of the French, Deleuze might be accused of xenophilia, that is, of loving all things American a little too much. However, this must be understood as a difference in strategy, since while Jameson wanted to inoculate the influence of the French post-structuralists, Deleuze wants to infuse his own ideological context with new social and political elements drawn from American cultural life.

Recalling the earlier definition of literature as an institution of the people in exile, or diaspora, which is found to be authentic when it leads outside itself to a political horizon as the work's true destination, Jameson's primary criticism of the late-modernist ideology is the complete abdication of this political inspiration. Instead, the socially symbolic function of the narrative act withdraws into the autonomous enclosure of the work itself, in the cult of the so-called

'writerly text'. Excluding any content in pursuit of its purely formal and technical process, the text becomes a site where the social meaning of the work is further alienated and lost altogether. (In a nutshell, this is Jameson's critique of the 'aestheticist framework' of the late-modernist ideology.) Therefore, if an excessive formalism and attention to the technical matters of form over content are the hallmarks of this ideology of the text, then we should pay particularly close attention to the treatment of technique and form in Deleuze and Guattari's definition of Kafka's 'literary process', which I will return to discuss in detail in the conclusion to this section.

The major distinction between Jameson's and Deleuze and Guattari's visions of the political potential of literature really comes down to the understanding of the subject of agency that actualizes this potential at the level of language. In other words, here we come back to the early pages of *The Political Unconscious* and to what Jameson defines as a 'the authority of Nietzsche' in France which has generated a 'Nietzschean and anti-interpretive current', which can also be detected in Althusser's critique of 'expressive causality' (influenced by Nietzsche's writings on antiquarian history and philology). Ultimately, this distinction can be phrased as follows: for Deleuze and Guattari, the notion of agency is divorced from the position of critical interpretive activity and realigned with the position of the writer as representing what could be called the 'point of emission' of the collective meaning of this activity ('collective enunciation'). The 'Nietzschean' influence of this kind of approach is that it locates the analytic of creation from the point of view of the artist as creator, recalling Nietzsche's famous objections to the formation of aesthetics as a 'feminine science', always defining the work of creation from the perspective of a passive or receptive point of view, rather than from the perspective of the nature of one who actually creates the work of art and, thus, whose perspective would include a technical knowledge of 'making' that is often divorced from a spectator's position. Although this reasoning flirts with a modernist fetishism of the writer, Deleuze and Guattari also develop a notion of literary creation as one that approaches an almost subjectless process; this approach would be anti-interpretive, in the sense, that it would no longer assign the position of agency and in this case the enunciation of the meaning of the narrative activity of the writer as producer, to the authority of the critic. It is here that we find the true issue of contention between these two positions.

In Jameson's understanding, on the other hand, the position of 'theoretical consciousness' can only emerge or crystallize within the perspective and the social role of the political reader or critic, whose specific labour is to produce a determinate meaning to the writer's activity as having an assigned role in the struggle between freedom and necessity. Actually, there is an old Hegelian logic of the slave and the master underlying this definition of roles assigned to each 'social actor', since it is only from the consciousness of the slave that the master's freedom (to create) finds its necessity as an instance of total labour. Thus, it is the critic's specific and determinate social role that is famously defined as one of 'mediation' and, in particular, as effectuating the mediating link between the specific and isolated sense of the work and its political or collective 'meaning' (of universal history).

Above all, the position of 'mediation' can never be assigned to the first instance occupied by the position of the writer, but can only appear from the perspective of its final instance, in the historical meaning assigned to the first instance and performed by the elaboration of the critic. The first axiomatic of Marxist interpretation is that the author is unconscious, or worse a dupe of the class interest he or she serves (unless, that is, the writer is also a critic, as in the famous example of Brecht). The critic labours over the text and restores (or 'recovers') its true meaning as a socially symbolic act, in part, preparing it for further ideological and libidinal identification through the moral and psychological effects that occur in the reproduction of its political meaning at the overt level of interpretation by a critical-social function of a 'reader' who actualizes its collective 'meaning'. By contrast, in the critical function of literature that Deleuze and Guattari outline, the position of the critic is not there to operate the critical lever of 'mediation', but rather this becomes the sole pre-occupation of the literary process itself. The question becomes, at this point, which view of literary activity is justified, that is, which has the potential for political application? Can literature really and effectively work without interpretation? What is the effectiveness of its labour? Will it not, as Jameson asserts, become merely idle, workless, or worse; will it remain a purely formal and lifeless activity, a purely technical and formal game divorced from any social meaning or application? As we can see, we return once again to the question of expression and to the old Marxist question, does literature work and if not, what use is it anyway for the cause of the revolution?

And yet, one wonders if Jameson's own charge concerning the ideology of the late-modernist writer might also be applied to the social role of the Marxian political reader? Is not the function of the Marxian cultural critic in this context merely an allegorical transposition of the epic role of the proletariat subject in class struggle? Like the slave who overcomes the master by gaining an advantage through a 'knowledge' of the total process of labour (i.e. science), the critic also occupies a position of knowledge that dialectically compensates for the ideological consciousness of the writer in the process of production. However, today, this social function is no less inherited ('traditional'), and no more authentic ('organic') than the role of the late-modernist writer who inherits a ready-made social role for his or her activity as a writer. For this reason, it is no less subject to fetishism and to windy notions such as all the talk about 'necessity' and 'the collective meaning of history'. In fact, despite all of Jameson's contestations regarding the ideological fragmentation of the social field into discrete autonomous segments (*à la* Althusser), the relative autonomy of the political reader's authority and knowledge is guaranteed only through the isolation of his or her sphere of activity in the university. Thus, Jameson's own authority is completely dependent on this fragmentation, since the utopian meaning of critical consciousness can only appear in the context of fragmentation, as a form of what Jameson calls 'compensation', which maintains a critical relation to the unconscious position of 'totality' in political culture. Therefore, is not the Marxian political reader the strict equivalent, theoretically speaking, of the late-modernist writer? The only difference,

I would suggest, is that the Marxian critic is more of a 'department modernist' and no longer a modernist of the apartment variety.

### 'Literature – a concern of the people'

Jameson's charge is that Deleuze and Guattari have turned Kafka, an 'organic modernist writer', into a mouthpiece of late-modernist ideology. They have managed to do this by isolating the political and collective enunciation within the semi-autonomous region of the text, and have effected its withdrawal from the historical sphere so as to mystify the relationship with real political and historical causes. Secondly, they have reduced the content of the work to a purely formal method within an essentially anaesthetized framework. Consequently, in response to these charges, we must take a closer look at how Deleuze and Guattari define what they call 'Kafka's process' to see how it functions and whether this function is purely formal.

Here, we come back to one of the major statements that Deleuze and Guattari announce against interpretation:

We believe only in a Kafka *politics* that is neither imaginary nor symbolic. We believe only in one or more Kafka *machines* that are neither structure nor fantasm. We believe only in a Kafka *experimentation* that is without significance or interpretation and rests only on the tests of experience. (DG 1987: 7)

In this passage, three words are emphasized as features of Kafka's expression that Deleuze and Guattari seek to discover – politics, machines, experimentation. This is followed by their redefinition of the subject of the writer, perhaps the most ideologically overdetermined notion of interpretation, by the famous declaration that 'the writer is not a writer-man; he is a machine-man, an experimental man (who ceases to be a man in order to become an ape or a beetle', etc.). In fact, this represents of their gesture to liberate Kafka, the modernist writer-man *par excellence*, from the apparatus of interpretation that has reduced him to an individualized notion of guilt and psychological interiority and has distorted the meaning of his activity, the meaning of the activity 'to write'. They allude to Kafka's own story 'Report to the Academy', in which an ape named 'Red Peter' addresses a university audience of learned men concerning the method by which he escaped his previous capture and imprisonment by losing his ape nature and 'becoming-man'. Of course, within his academic address concerning the results of his successful experiment, he defines the subject of man by three fundamental attributes: spitting, drinking beer and humiliated laughter. These are the three essential qualities that define a human being, apart from other animals, and it is important to note that Kafka radically redefines the Aristotelian figure of *politikon zōon*: accordingly, spitting is more primary than speech and forms its implicit condition; drinking beer is the condition of internalization of noxious substances that define the psychotic interiority of the human animal; finally, in the third quality, humiliated

laughter, we find the fundamental characteristic that defines human gregariousness and sociality, the ability to share our humiliation with others of our kind as a moment of sociality (and here Kafka is perhaps making a comment on the political origins of Jewish humour or wit). As an aside, in addition to the three essential attributes defined above, I would follow Kojève and Bataille, in adding one more attribute to the list: snobbery.

Like Kafka's 'Red Peter', if Deleuze and Guattari's image of the writer-man is not that of an individualized substance, then what is a writer-machine or an experimental man? Previous to this question, however, is another more fundamental question: 'Why write?' or 'Why does one write?' (Note that I do not ask why does an individual write?) Just as in the case of Red Peter, the answer could not be 'freedom'. Freedom is a bad concept, since in writing one certainly does not obtain a state called 'freedom from', although writers in our society certainly manage to obtain freedom from other kinds of labour by means of the vocation of writing, (just as professors do by 'reading'). Rather than a means of freedom, therefore, the act of writing must be understood as a means of escape and this entails entering into a state of becoming. Following Deleuze and Guattari's image of writing as an impersonal activity, a writer is 'constituted by contents and expressions that have been formalized to diverse degrees by unformed materials that enter into it, and leave by passing through all possible states' (DG 1987: 7). It is in this sense that a writer is a machine made up of these components, these passages, these materials that enter into this machine. In writing, individuated attributes and identity are dissolved in favour of new contents and expressions; individual and private experience is changed by new blocs of experience that are drawn from elsewhere and no longer belong to individuated experience as such. Here, in this description of the writer-machine, we see the possibility of collective enunciation, according to the proposition of a 'minor literature', since a people enters into their literature in order:

1. to escape the manner in which they are defined as subjects by some other order of language (such as the linguistic regimes that belong to politics, law and culture) and
2. to enter into a state of becoming that defines the experience of intensities that the literary machine produces.

To enter into becoming is not to enjoy a sense of freedom that they have been denied 'in real life', since the experience that defines their passage into literature is also effectively real in the sense that it gives them a condition of collective existence. Again, this sounds uncannily similar to Jameson's own proposition that through textual narrative, individual subjects have access to the imaginary conditions of their own real experience. Where would we place the difference?

The difference would have to be between the activity defined by experimentation and that of interpretation, again. Let us say that a writer enters into a state of writing or into a writing-machine – and we must admit the act of writing

and reading a text are fundamentally machinic! – in order to experiment with becoming and to allow other possible experiences to enter into this process in order to achieve another state. ‘A people’ do not enter into a literary machine as much as allow a writing-machine to enter in relation to a plane of immanence that defines them as subjects, and to cause this plane to be mixed with new materials and new contents and expressions that define experience in the off-chance that the writing-machine might cause a new arrangement of these contents and these expressions. It is even possible to perceive the addition of new qualities and attributes that were not possible before this strange amalgamation of the machinic procedure of reading and the sudden jerks and starts of association and memory, when the machine trembles, breaks down or explodes. This is what Deleuze and Guattari, following Kafka’s procedures, define as a ‘process’. It also describes, in a completely empirical procedure, based on ‘tests of experience’, the manner in which this process opens itself to qualities and desires that make of literature a concern of the people.

Through the image of this activity provided by interpretation, however, this experience appears differently, if not I would say, upside down. This is because, first of all, the critic assumes the position of the writer-machine, who passes through the contents and expressions and arranges them into a secondary elaboration, or a secondary symbolic order, that ultimately assigns a ‘meaning’ (or worse, significance) to the experience that the people will have in their own process. The critic says: ‘*Look! What I am telling you is the collective meaning of your experience, do you understand?*’ But, as we can see in this description, any possibility of an experience that the people might have for themselves is already blocked by the critic’s order and dictate that it must mean *this or that!* That is to say, the conditions of any real experience that belong to literature are mediated by the critic’s interpretation of this experience, replaced by an imaginary or symbolic form, a snapshot of the experience that they never had to begin with. This is why I said that the experience of the process is returned to them in an inverted form, like the image that appears inverted when projected through the lens of a camera. We might even imagine that the position of the imagination of the people would be the membrane onto which this image of their experience is projected, along with the message that determines its meaning like a caption underneath a photograph.

In describing the picture of interpretation, I refer to the first conceptual binary that Deleuze and Guattari invent in their reading of Kafka, and to the two equations that will directly correspond to their opposition between interpretation and experimentation. The experience of interpretation corresponds to the following equation:

*Bent head*

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*Portrait-photo*

= a blocked, oppressed and oppressing, neutralized desire, with a minimum of connection, childhood memory, territoriality or reterritorialization.

It is not by accident that the figures of the writer and the reader occupy the pose of ‘the bent head’, which is the first part of this equation. This is the physical posture of both activities; we can picture the writer, the critic and the reader in an endless series of bent-head postures. Likewise, the image of meaning that I have described above takes the form of the second part of the equation, ‘the portrait-photo’ in the image of interpretation. The writer is turned into a ‘portrait’ of an author, like the reader into a portrait of the individual. The real experience of both the writer and the reader are reduced to a photo which impresses the meaning of this experience into mental representation – the snapshot of a blocked, oppressed or oppressive, neutralized desire with a minimum of connection. How many experiences of literature of this kind can one remember? A million photos and portraits that always seem to represent the same kind of blocked and negative desire: a Hamlet who is blocked and unable to act, a Richard crying for a horse, a Gregor who is guilty and whose desire is neutralized by the family, an Oedipus already blinded, an Antigone who already has one foot in her grave and her own desire neutralized by Creon, and so on and so forth. There are countless other portraits and photos that constitute the representation of experiences of literature. Is it by chance, Deleuze and Guattari ask, that these photos always seem to resemble the portrait of the same experience and always have the same meaning, of a frustrated and failed becoming, of a humiliated desire that is blocked or stopped up by some oppressive force of law? Is this not the pernicious and ideological function of the regime of interpretation, which turns literature always into a major form, that is itself not neutral with regard to desire?

By contrast, Deleuze and Guattari offer another diagram that will correspond to the experience they describe as experimentation:

*Straightened head*

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*Musical sound*

*= a desire that straightens up or moves forward, and opens to new connections, childhood block or animal block, deterritorialization.*

These qualities seem to describe the experience of experimentation, an experience where a literary machine enters into another state of experience and causes movement or becoming. This process might be pictured in phase space, or in the manner that a ‘minor’ chord causes the dominant to enter into variation. Thus, the image of the writer and of the reader are no longer bent over and crippled, but have straightened their heads, and experience itself no longer assumes the form of a mental image or photo, but of a musical sound that deterritorializes all images and photographs, that replaces childhood memory with intensive blocks and emotional states that amplify new connections and associations.

But why the reference to music here and how does experience enter into a movement of deterritorialization? Perhaps a key analogy that Deleuze and Guattari offer in trying to grasp the nature of intensive experience that belongs

to experimentation is a reference to John Cage, which could be understood as the music-image of their own experience of reading Kafka. It is not a portrait or a photo of what this experience might mean for another reader, but rather a glimpse into the relation of the components of expression in Kafka's machine. Thus, it is important to note that the camera, which is the privileged component of the machine of interpretation, has been replaced by another machine, by a musical machine like a toy piano. The image of the experience is thus sonorous, and no longer visual, likened to the image of mental representation. Rather, it approximates a feeling I have of music, of a different kind of music, and the intensities it creates as its own aural image, or what Deleuze will define in the cinema books as an 'affect-image'. What is the 'affect-image' specific to the feeling that corresponds to Kafka's writing-machine, which one needs to learn how to play rather than to interpret. Interpretation, by contrast, produces a bad music. As they qualify their opposition further on, they do not propose a strict opposition of both components of the binary, since 'in the realm of expression, sound is not opposed to the portrait, as the straightened head is opposed to the bent head in the realm of content'. Rather, the musical image is offered as the form of expressive matter that is taken up in the literary machine and which is set in variation to the form of expression of the portrait. The musical image, in fact, deterritorializes the portrait so that the image of the experience is affective and not one of mental representation.

In their description of the system they are trying to construct in place of interpretation for entering into Kafka's work, and for understanding how Kafka's work functions, the real question is not at the level of oppositions, but rather 'where the system is coming from and going to, how it becomes, and what element is going to play the role of heterogeneity, a saturating body that makes the whole assembly flow away and that breaks with symbolic structure, no less than it breaks with hermeneutic interpretation, the ordinary association of ideas, the Imaginary archetype' (DG 1987: 7). In their description of this process, the question of 'what element will play the role of heterogeneity' is nothing less than the question of difference itself, of an element that will effect difference in the experience of the reading, causing connections that break with the ordinary association of ideas. Here, what they are trying to describe is a 'mechanics' – perhaps even a 'quantum mechanics' – of the so-called experience of reading Kafka, or generally, of any literature: one that breaks with the normal association of ideas and the imaginary archetype that determines the experience of literature itself as a certain second-order experience that is either imaginary or symbolic in its relation to the real. What is defined as 'real' is actually the 'heterogenous element' that breaks with both symbolic order (or structure) and ordinary association of ideas. It is an intensive and differentiating factor, before it refers to a place that is outside or beyond these other orders; it is the very cause of their differentiation and play.

Everything that I have just presented helps to explain how Deleuze and Guattari's *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* outlines a programme of 'anti-interpretation', the objective of which is to restore to literature the conditions of real experience, and potentially conditions of real collective experience,

and not just the mental representations of this experience as either imaginary or symbolic representations, that is, the manner in which the actual experience of writing and reading is represented by 'interpretation'. However, because interpretation is always institutional, even when it assumes the form of a 'machine', the first question posed by an 'anti-interpretative programme' concerns the role of all of the subjects that are defined as the working parts of its particular machine (the writer, the reader, the critic), all of which have been institutionalized in the United States to an extreme degree. Creative writers, critics and professors of literature, students and apprentices, all inhabit institutions and their social roles are first determined as institutional forms of subjectivity. Even the contents of expression today are selected for the interpretive and institutional values they represent, before they are actually grasped as the expression of real experience. This is especially true of the literature of minorities, women or postcolonial writers. In reading a novel by a Native American writer, for example, the writing is already determined by a form of significance that transforms expression into a symbolic value that serves an institutional function of representation. What was true for earlier national categories, such as American or British literature, is no less a problem for new forms of expression today written by social and ethnic minorities. This is obvious, but often the unspoken assumption of criticism today, and even takes the form of blackmail – it is better to risk eclipsing the expression of the work than to sacrifice turning the work into yet another exemplar of a 'major form'. For this reason, literature departments today are full of portraits. *In fact, one wonders if anyone actually reads at all these days.*

Because their work takes up the same 'anti-institutional' form as their first volume *Anti-Oedipus*, it goes without saying that Deleuze and Guattari's solution would be to deterritorialize literature from this institution in order to create the conditions where its expression can once again become a popular form, or a concern of the people. Perhaps this marks what is perhaps the most supreme irony of the inclusion of Deleuze and Guattari's anti-hermeneutic programme precisely in the universities of the United States and even the canonization of a chapter on 'minor literature' in every theory collection since the 1980s. As I noted earlier on, even in view of this incorporation it occupies an extremely ambiguous place, since most critics have been completely stumped as to how to use their programme to make new interpretations of literary works. It is not an accident that there are no Deleuzian schools of criticism, no method that they outline to apply to literary works, no Deleuzian interpretations of Shakespeare or Joyce, no expensive 'buy-outs' for Deleuzian literary critics to occupy positions of professors of literature at Yale or Harvard. Of course, it is true that some of the components of their text on minor literature have been applied to literatures by minority writers and by postcolonial writers. But even here, things don't quite work and their components do not function to produce new interpretations, nor seem to clarify the matter of interpretation at all, sooner or later critics who have attempted to apply the concept of minor literature to subaltern writers abandon their efforts and end up declaring that there's something wrong with Deleuze and Guattari's theory

because it doesn't produce a stable and systematic apparatus of political reading. In other words, even its 'anti-systematic' impulse cannot be applied all that systematically and, sooner or later, it causes everything to crash. The question becomes whether in causing every interpretive apparatus to crash, like a Kafka virus released into the mainframe of the 'major forms' promoted by professional critics in the university, the literary machine that they invent actually works precisely how they intended. Is this, in the end, a Kafka-politics? Ironically, is it not the equal to the desire of the revolutionary portrait of Kafka in Soderberg's film, in which he steals in through the Jewish cemetery in Prague and blows up all the archives of records held in the castle?

At this point I come back to Jameson's earlier complaints against Deleuze and Guattari and their 'anti-interpretive' hermeneutic programme, since this impulse draws its inspiration from the same source as the Marxist activity of returning to the people what is already theirs, of creating the conditions of a truly popular literature. Nevertheless, because this revelry is coloured by romanticism and by a fundamentally anti-institutional attitude, it threatens the only organized and systematic 'institution of the Left' in the United States today, which is to say, the institution of Marxist interpretation in the US departments of English and foreign languages. For this reason it must be opposed, as I have already argued, even before Derridean deconstruction which assumed a thoroughly institutional form, and it is also for this reason that I have been arguing that as early as 1981 Jameson chooses Deleuze and Guattari as his principle antagonists, since their 'anti-interpretive' form, should it be successful, would only cause the disintegration and the fragmentation of this institution into a very different method of political pragmatics, that is, a practice of politicizing literature that would no longer be subsumed under the name of Marx. I wonder, can we even imagine a political reading of literature without the name of Marx? Is it worth the experiment? Even the risk? What would we really lose? The possibility of politics, or merely the name of Marx?

In conclusion, because I think this is worth the risk, I would like once again to raise a call for the 'minor literature' first announced by Deleuze and Guattari in 1974, although I will revise their call by translating it into the political context of the conflict of interpretation in the United States today. *That is, how many styles or genres of interpretation, even very small ones, have only one single dream: to assume a major function in language, to offer themselves as a sort of state language, an official or institutional language? Is there hope for interpretation, which for a long time has been an institutional, theological and referential genre? Let us create the opposite dream: know how to create a becoming-minor. Let us profit, once again, from a moment when 'anti-interpretation' might become a possible language of politics as well! Are we ready to say, once more for a minor literature, this time with feeling?*

## Chapter 2

# A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Language

### The concept of expression

The concept of expression, or ‘expressionism in philosophy’, first appears and is fully developed in Deleuze’s longer treatise on Spinoza which is published in 1968, the same year as the publication of his systematic study *Difference and Repetition*. Both major works can be understood together as two different approaches to the idea of difference in the history of philosophy. The problem of expression in Spinoza’s philosophy concerns, first of all, the interplay between the internal thought and external bodies, and how ideas come to express this relation between inside and outside as being internal to the power expressed in thought. The problem that Deleuze first sets out to resolve through his reading of Spinoza is precisely what is present in a true idea that makes it adequate to or ‘expressive’ of the thing’s nature ‘as it is in itself’ (Deleuze 1990: 15).

The solution to the problem is found in Spinoza’s radical principle of parallelism, in which the idea’s expressive character is said to be immanent in things themselves, and it is the character of truth to express this immanence fully or perfectly. Although often ascribed to Spinoza’s philosophy of parallelism, Deleuze derives a crucial part of his logic of expression from Stoic philosophy, and in particular, from the theory concerning the incorporeal nature of sense. However, the problem of expression is not restricted to Deleuze’s commentaries on classical philosophers such as Spinoza, Leibniz or Descartes, but also underlies his works with Guattari on the nature of language understood as a set of ‘order-words’ and ‘collective assemblages of enunciation’. It is also present in his later meditations on the epistemological nature of power in the work of Michel Foucault, which is the subject of the seminar that concludes this study.

What does it mean to express an idea? According to Spinoza’s expressionist philosophy, it means nothing less than the power of the faculty of understanding to express itself. The emphasis is on the power that is expressed by the act of understanding, on expression itself, and not upon the particular attribute of the idea that is expressed; as Deleuze puts it, ‘the material of the idea is not sought in a representative content but in an expressive content . . . through which the idea refers to other ideas or to the idea of God’ (Deleuze 1970: 75).

Here, it is not the case, as it is with Descartes, that the property of an idea is 'clear and distinct', but rather it is the capacity of the understanding to express its own substance adequately or inadequately. The famous subject-object dualism is subtracted from this exposition of the act of understanding, since the idea of understanding, its object, and the power of the act are in fact identical. As Deleuze writes, 'the traditional distinction between the sense expressed and the object designated (and expressing itself in this sense), thus finds in Spinozism direct application' (Deleuze 1990: 105). Therefore, understanding understands itself and this expresses its essential property, which Spinoza calls its substance. 'What' the understanding understands is defined as a mode, which is necessarily infinite. 'The attributes turn about in their modes' is a phrase that Deleuze often employs to describe this new determination. 'The attribute [of understanding] is expressed "in a certain and determinate way", or rather in an infinity of ways which amount to finite existing modes' (Deleuze 1990: 105). Therefore, to have an adequate idea does not mean a correspondence between an object and the idea that represents it, but rather refers to the power of the idea to 'explicate' fully the essence of something, and for this to occur the idea must 'involve' a knowledge of the cause and must 'express' it (Deleuze 1990: 133).

If I have an idea of the illness that devastates my body, for this idea to be adequate it must fully express the cause of this illness, by the same manner in which a physician links or connects effects (symptoms) to one another in a chain with one idea becoming a complete cause of another. Deleuze argues that 'only adequate ideas, as expressive, give us knowledge through causes, or through a thing's essence' (Deleuze 1990: 134). In a philosophy of expression the emphasis is placed on the creation of concepts that are fully expressive, and which completely explicate causes. 'Real knowledge is discovered to be a kind of expression: which is to say that the representative content of ideas is left behind for an immanent one, which is truly expressive, and the form of psychological consciousness is left behind for an "explicative" logical formalism' (Deleuze 1990: 326). Consequently, for Spinoza as well as for Leibniz, a philosophy of expression first of all concerns itself with a Being determined as God, in so far as God expresses himself in the world; secondly, the philosophy of expression is concerned with ideas determined as true, in so far as only true ideas express both God and the world. As Deleuze shows, the concept of expression in this philosophy has two possible sources and areas of direct application: ontology, relating to the expression of God and the world; and logic, relating to 'what is expressed by propositions' (Deleuze 1990: 323).

In Spinoza's logic, however, attributes are names, but they are verbs rather than adjectives. Later in Deleuze's thought, this logic of expression explicitly informs the concept of 'becoming' in such expressions as 'becoming-woman', 'becoming-animal', 'becoming-molecular'. In each case, the name does not function as a noun, or proper name, but rather as a verb, or to a process of modification. As Deleuze shows, it was the Stoics who first showed the two different planes of sense by separating the sense that belongs to states of bodies from the sense of statements. They are independent of one another. For

example, 'When the scalpel cuts through the flesh', or when food or poison spreads through the body, there is an intermingling of two bodies, but the sense is different from the statement 'the knife is cutting the flesh', which refers to an incorporeal transformation both on the level of the bodies and the level of the sense of the statement (DG 1987: 86). This third sense that lies between the two different senses, between the depth of the body and the surface of the proposition, is what Deleuze defines, following the Stoic theory of the incorporeal, as the event of sense itself. As Deleuze remarks,

The question is as follows: is there something, *aliquid*, which merges neither with the proposition or the terms of the proposition, nor with the object or with the states of affairs that the proposition denotes, neither with the 'lived', or representation or with the mental activity of the person who expresses herself in the proposition, nor even with concepts or signified essences?

Sense would be irreducible to all these determinations, signalling an extra-being that belongs neither to the order of words nor to the order of things. It is this dimension that precisely concerns expression.

On the one hand, we can say that sense does not exist outside the proposition that expresses it. 'The expressed does not exist outside its expression'. On the other hand, sense cannot be completely reduced to the content of the proposition, since there is an 'objectivity' (*objectivité*) that is distinct and does not resemble its expression. As an example of this paradox, in *The Logic of Sense* Deleuze employs the phrase 'the tree greens'. What this phrase expresses is the sense of the 'greening' of the tree, the sense of colour that is the pure event of its 'arbification'. But here, the attribute of the thing (the tree) is the verb, 'to green', or moreover the event that is expressed by this verb. But this attribute is not to be confused with the state of physical things, nor with a quality or property of things. As Deleuze argues, 'the attribute is not a being, but an extra-being that is expressed by the proposition and this sense of 'greening' does not exist outside the proposition that expresses it (Deleuze 1990b: 21).

Here we can refer again to the two planes that are brought together in the expression, but which continue to remain distinct from one another, as two faces which coexist without becoming identical in their sense. Yet, as Deleuze remarks, this does not produce a circular reasoning or tautology, but rather an idea of difference that subsists or insists in the proposition and on the surface of things. 'The sense is the expressible or the expressed of the proposition, and the attribute of the state of affairs', but what this sense expresses is the event of sense itself as a frontier that runs between propositions and things, statements and bodies, as the extra-being that first expresses their relation, a relation that does not exist outside the genesis of the expression. However, although the event of sense (or the 'sense-event') is bound up with language, one must not conclude from this that its nature is purely linguistic in such a manner that language would function as its cause. (This differentiates Deleuze's approach to the phenomenon of the 'sign' from other post-structuralist approaches, as well as from traditional phenomenology.) The frontier does not pass between lan-

guage and the event on one side, and the world or state of things on the other, but occurs on both sides at once, and at the same time, distinguishes itself from the sense that occurs or manifests itself within each order, as if sense each time distinguishes itself from the sense of the proposition and the sense that belongs to the world of objects, causing a paradoxical difference to appear (Zourabichvili 2003: 36). For Deleuze, this difference would be the sense of sense itself.

### The statement: 'Like a foreign language in language' (on poetry)

In a statement that appears in an early essay on the French writer Alfred Jarry, Deleuze defines 'the phenomenon as that which shows itself in itself' ('*se montre soi-même en soi-même*') (Deleuze 1997: 91). According to this formulation, the phenomenon would neither relate to consciousness, nor would it strictly be reduced to an apparition, but rather would be related directly to the being of that which 'shows itself in itself', or to what Deleuze remarks elsewhere as 'the being of sensation'. But, one may ask, how can we speak of the being of the phenomenon without consciousness, without consciousness providing first a surface on which this being glimmers and bursts forth? In other words, how would this being appear otherwise than for consciousness or with appearance?

In one sense, to which I will restrict my discussion, it is only through the sign that a being shows itself in itself. This is the phenomenon of language that occurs in poetry, and Deleuze describes its process or procedure as follows.

We could say that a linguistic element (A) affects element (B) in such a way as it turn it into element (C). The affect (A) produces in the current language (B) a kind of foot-stomping, a stammering, an obsessional tom-tom, like a repetition that never ceases to create something new (C). (Deleuze 1997: 98)

Thus, in this manner, the being of language shows itself in itself. 'When a language<sup>1</sup> acts within a language<sup>2</sup> so as to produce in it a language<sup>3</sup>, an unheard of and almost foreign language' (Deleuze 1997: 98). The examples Deleuze offers at this point are limited to his own cultural, linguistic, and intellectual patois: Heidegger's etymological procedure, Jarry's pataphysics, Wolfson's formula, or analogous procedures by Roussel, Breton, Brisset. But we could add others to this repertoire, most of which have frequented Deleuze's writings from the earlier *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* to the essays assembled in *Essays Critical and Clinical*: Artaud, Beckett, Carroll, Cummings, Kafka of course, and even the procedure invented by Melville, which Deleuze calls 'the Bartelby formula'.

But what is this strange procedure, and why call it poetry? Of course, poetry (*poiesis*) in its original sense, purportedly, is the name of an event when the being of language shows itself in itself. As Heidegger writes, 'the arising of some-

thing out of itself, is a bringing forth, *poiesis*' (Heidegger 1977: 10). But, according to the procedure described above, poetry is language<sup>3</sup>, that is, when a language-event becomes a sign of its own self-showing. Here, Deleuze describes this event in a remarkably uncharacteristic Heideggerian syntax, 'when a language is hollowed out by its turning within language, it finally completes its mission: the sign shows the thing, and effectuates the *n*th power of language, for 'where the word breaks off no thing may be'' (Deleuze 1997: 98).<sup>17</sup>

Here, allow me to rephrase the above statement: it is only when language completes all three steps and arrives at language<sup>3</sup> – that it is successful in its purported mission of showing the thing. Only language<sup>3</sup> is **language** that shows itself in itself; thus, only language<sup>3</sup> can be understood as a phenomenon, and not even simply as a linguistic event of signification but a phenomenon that characterizes the 'being of language'. Of course, poetry would simply be the long-misunderstood name for this phenomenon of **language**, but this does not mean that all poems achieve the status of 'the sign', or complete the mission of language itself (and, in fact, this might be a new criterion for judging all occasions of bad poetry). Granted, these passages might sound strange coming from Deleuze, and we could rename the essay I have quoted 'Deleuze, the unexpected reader of Heidegger'. Moreover, given the resonance we find between these formulations and the ones in later passages concerning the mission of a minor literature 'to create a strange sort of foreign language within language', we might be tempted to find here the basis of a new poetics, namely, a specifically Deleuzian poetics. But what would this look like? In response, rather than go back to Proust, I will concentrate on the above formula of the phenomena of poetic language with regard to Deleuze's later debates with the phenomenological tradition.

As Deleuze constantly emphasizes, the fundamental trait of what he calls a procedure names a certain kind of repetition. The poetic event would be singular only in its repetition, and in the different repetitions that are remarked by a repeated affect, the trait of the procedure itself. This affect is not restricted to poetry understood as generic procedure of language, or even as a form of discourse. For example, Bartelby's formula, 'I would prefer not to . . .' is open to an infinite number of permutations and variations; however, the formula lends a character of repetition to each variation and makes of all subsequent variations a singular language-event, what is called a 'sign'. Bartelby's 'I would prefer not to' is a sign that shows, in some way, Bartelby in himself. It is a singular sign that expresses Bartelby alone, makes Bartelby's word seem almost foreign, a word that becomes contagious and which begins to cause vibrations and deformations of the normal language spoken in the office where Bartelby prefers not to work. As the lawyer exclaims, 'Somehow, of late, I had involuntarily gotten into the way of using this word "prefer" upon all sorts of not exactly suitable occasions' (Melville 1969: 58).

A 'sign' is more than a gesture, even on a linguistic level of enunciation, since not all linguistic gestures achieve the point where language turns about in itself and shows something new or unheard of previously. Normal language is already composed of a finite number of linguistic gestures and clichés that

do not rise to the level of signs, that is, they do not directly show the thing. They do not become a phenomenon of showing, or become identical with the act of showing, or in terms of Heidegger's language, with Saying (*sagen*). 'The essential being of language is Saying as Showing' (Heidegger 1971: 123). In Heideggerian terms, this is not to be confused with language determined in its representational function, but with a very special and particular event. In a certain sense, already announced in the above passage I have quoted from the essay on Jarry, Deleuze agrees with Heidegger that the event of showing or saying in language is to be identified with an event (or an act) that occurs at the limits of language, since 'where the word breaks off no thing may be'. Thus, Stephan George's phrase cited from Heidegger's meditation on the same poem also describes the limit of language as silence. As Deleuze writes, 'When language is strained (to the limit, to the point where it stutters), language is submitted to a pressure that makes it fall silent' (Deleuze 1997: 113). Deleuze describes this moment when language confronts silence as a moment of disequilibrium, which phenomenally appears as a series of inarticulate words, a bloc of inarticulate expression, like 'a foreign language that surges forth in language'.

But would this mean that the silence that we can hear Deleuze speaking of here is the same silence that Heidegger speaks of in relation to George's poetic statement 'where the word breaks off no thing may be'. I am not sure, but in both cases, silence must be understood as a phenomenon, silence becomes a sign that 'points to' the limits of language. Heidegger calls this event 'Renunciation', which is 'not just a rejection of saying, not a mere lapse into silence'.

As self-denial, renunciation remains Saying. It thus preserves a relation to the Word. But because the Word is shown in a different, higher rule, the relation to the Word must undergo a transformation. Saying attains to a different articulation, a different *melos*, a different tone. (Heidegger 1971: 147)

Of course, for Heidegger, this accounts for the phenomenon of the 'poem in language', which appears as a sign that points to the limits of what is sayable, to silence, as some thing that appears at the limits of language. Hence, 'Renunciation commits itself to a higher rule of the word which first lets a thing be as thing. The word makes the thing into a thing – it be-things the thing' (Heidegger 1971: 151). Is this not the same as Deleuze's statement concerning the moment when language fulfils its mission and 'shows the thing', since 'The Thing is the limit of language, as the sign is the language of the Thing' (Deleuze 1997: 98). In short, the thing speaks, but in a language that is like a foreign language within language.

The above statement would seem to indicate that the phrase 'like a foreign language within language', which appears frequently in Deleuze's later discussion of the power of literature, can be understood as a recasting of the earlier statement by Heidegger. It signals the event when language becomes phenomenon and the process when language shows itself within itself, to become a

'sign' that causes language itself to swoon. What is particular about Deleuze's description of this event, however, can be characterized by a physical sensation of dizziness or disequilibrium, when language no longer appears as a system in a state of equilibrium (the state in which it appears in its normal state, when language itself is reduced to a system of signification), but rather appears as the limit of this state, as variation and disequilibrium, since when language becomes a 'sign' that shows itself like 'like a foreign language in language'. This indicates it has entered into another state, far from equilibrium, for 'where the word breaks off no thing may be'.

Such a state might be described as what occurs, sometimes, when a person is speaking a foreign language near me, or better still, directly to me. This happens at certain unusual moments, as at a table in the *Jardins du Luxembourg*, before the waiter comes to detect my bad accent and immediately starts to take my order in English. Perhaps this is not the best example, and a better one might be from a few years ago in China when I encountered a language I do not speak, much less understand, and yet I was fully aware that it exists as a language. The question is the following: would this empirical experience of a foreign language be a better vision of language as such, in a state of disequilibrium and full of heterogeneous elements and intensities and blocs of inarticulate expression, than the normal representation of language as a completely homogenous and peaceful system? We could recall the opening pages of *What is Philosophy?* and remind ourselves that the element of language, 'real language or actualized speech', is a fundamental component of the concept of the other (*Autrui*). For example, 'China is a possible world, but it takes on a reality as soon as Chinese is spoken or China is spoken about within a given field of experience' (DG 1994: 37).

Perhaps this might explain Deleuze's preference for writers who (such as Beckett) come to inhabit a foreign language, or who might speak their own native language badly (Artaud, Carroll, Cummings, Kerouac, etc.); or even those who made the language they inhabited into a strange kind of foreign language (Kafka, Proust, Jarry). However, to digress to an earlier problem I raised in the previous section: does this imply that Deleuze can simply be classified as expressing an ideology of late-modernism for his taste in these writers, as preferring the writer as émigré and 'guest-worker' of another national and linguistic community, even as a linguistic and class traitor? It is true, that the writer who becomes a foreigner in his or her own language participates in a well-travelled theme of high-modernism (as a culture essentially created by strangers and foreigners). Yet, the notion of the 'foreign language' that Deleuze employs from very early on cannot be completely reduced to this stereotype, and thus so easily dismissed. All the same, there is no question that Deleuze wanted to find the means to escape his own linguistic and cultural situation through an overt identification with writers who were able to accomplish a similar means of 'escape', particularly in his identification with Kafka's situation – a means of escaping while, at the same time, staying in place! And yet, does this constitute grounds for completely reducing this desire, which is shared by many today, to a form of bad faith? Once again, this desire partially explains Deleuze's preference for the

story of Red Peter, the ape in 'Report to the Academy', who must learn the means of escaping his captivity given that all external means of flight have been barred *a priori*. Deleuze's own situation would be not unlike that faced by many first-world intellectuals today, even by Jameson himself – is 'the third world' a better means of escaping one's class and national location than the illocutions of 'becoming-animal', or 'becoming-imperceptible'? – and accusations of 'cowardice' do not really do justice to the set of strategic, highly personal and intellectual formulations that Deleuze discovers as a remedy for his own impossible situation of being (unfortunately) a typical member of the French intelligentsia. However, in Deleuze's championing of the impersonal and the prelinguistic, one can easily detect the visceral signs of a vital need to escape this particular situation, signs which perhaps bear the resonance with so-called modernist aspirations. I have addressed this already, but I would suggest that there is something else at work which could easily be missed by such too simplistic and reductive a dismissal of Deleuze's poetics. In fact, I would argue that the status of the 'foreign language within language' needs first to be understood on a phenomenological and poetic level before it can be viewed as a critical representation of the so-called late-modernist impulse.

For Deleuze, as for the later Heidegger, it is only in poetic speech that one can achieve this state of disequilibrium in one's own language. Of course, children know all too well that language is in a constant state of disequilibrium and chock full of heterogeneous elements, and I think Deleuze and Guattari's interest in the phenomenon of schizophrenic expression is a similar understanding of language as full of flows, cuts, violent blows, noxious particles and poisons, partial organs and unarticulated blocks of expressive noises. In other words, children and schizophrenics are beings in touch with language as a phenomenon, as what 'shows itself in itself'; on the other hand, normally the phenomenon of language appears as something without phenomena, reduced to pure abstraction, or to 'communication', something that gives us no access to the things in themselves. The evocation of things in themselves is an important one, since it introduces a relation to things that is outside the relation governed by normal language, but not outside experience. Perhaps this is another manner of reintroducing the term of 'immanence' in Deleuze's philosophy, the sense of which I think has been lost in a far too theoretical discussion of the concept, where it is always opposed or in relation to the concept of 'transcendence'. In fact, real immanence has no relation to transcendence, or at least, this relation cannot be grasped in terms of opposition.

What is the essence of poetic saying? Let us listen to the following reply by Deleuze from the later essay, '*Begaya-t-il...*', particularly for its uncanny (*unheimliche*) resonance with Heidegger's earlier treatment of poetic language: 'If language emerges with speaking, its is only with a very particular kind of speaking, a poetic speech that actualizes these powers of bifurcation and variation, of heterogeneity and modulation, that are proper to language' (Deleuze 1997: 108). The poem is a phenomenon that happens when language achieves its function and shows the thing, for 'the sign is the language of thing'. Here Deleuze does not speak of the poem, but rather of certain

kinds of poetic speech not necessarily encompassed by the domain of poetry as a genre. I know I am inflecting Deleuze's own manner of speaking about this linguistic event by calling it 'a poem', in the manner of Heidegger's diction, but I am doing so intentionally and as an experiment of sorts to see what this inflection produces.

For those readers who have always held to the assumption that Deleuze has nothing to do with Heidegger, you should not, at this point, become unduly upset, since this should be understood as an experiment, and so you are consoled by the fact that you don't suddenly have to start taking Heidegger seriously again. And yet we cannot deny that there is an uncanny repetition of Heidegger in this earlier essay by Deleuze; this uncanniness is already announced in the title – it is the uncanny presence of Jarry, who is precursor to Heidegger, in a manner, I imagine, Pierre Menard is precursor to Cervantes. In fact, Deleuze revisits his own early discussion of the uncanny repetition between Jarry and Heidegger much later in *Foucault*: 'We must not refuse to take Heidegger seriously, but rather we must rediscover the imperturbably serious side to Roussel (or Jarry). The serious ontological aspect needs a diabolical or phenomenological sense of humour' (Deleuze 1988: 110).

But, the question remains: how does the poem, the event of language as 'sign', show the thing? That is, what is the nature of this showing without resorting either to appearance or to consciousness? Deleuze's reply is that the medium of showing is *vision*. Thus, vision names the 'epiphenomenon' of the particular, or one might even say in more traditional phenomenological language, the quality of the thing's self-showing presentation. The thing does not appear in language any more than it appears in consciousness, and this implies that consciousness is not the principle of the thing's self-showing. In other words, neither language nor consciousness functions as the cause of the thing's self-showing in the poem. The thing: it-shows itself/is shown = vision. But this raises the question, in the poem, do 'I' have a vision of the thing? Does the poem envision the thing? Does the thing envision itself as the aspect of its own self-showing? All these questions disorient the subject-verb-predicate formation.

Taking up the last observation, let me offer an actual poem to use as the occasion for our experiment:

so much depends  
upon  
a red wheel  
barrow  
glazed with rain  
water  
beside the white  
chickens.<sup>18</sup>

Here, we see that the thing (a red wheelbarrow) shows itself as the thing (a red wheelbarrow) on which 'so much depends'. But the last phrase introduces a

quality that does not belong to a being of wheelbarrows, nor even to a class of red wheelbarrows; in other words, so much does not depend on a red wheelbarrow because it is 'red'. But, in turn, this does not mean that it could just as easily be 'blue' without destroying the relation established in the 'sign' (a red wheelbarrow) that the poem expresses. I suppose that so much could depend on a 'blue wheelbarrow' as well, but this would not be the same wheelbarrow, strictly speaking, and not just because it is a wheelbarrow of a different colour.

This raises the question of whether 'the sign' refers in fact to a 'red wheelbarrow' 'upon which so much depends?' Is there something in 'a red wheelbarrow' as such, or is it a matter of this particular red wheelbarrow, or might it even have more to do with something not strictly related to the wheelbarrowness of a red wheelbarrow at all, such as the fact that it is 'glazed with rain water' or it is 'beside the white chickens'. The prepositional phrases 'with' and 'beside', moreover, seem to position the red wheelbarrow as something definite, no longer in relation to the noun, producing a variation with the indefinite article, a variable that causes the determination of a singularity to emerge more strikingly.

This introduces the status of a singularity, or what Deleuze early on referred to as an 'incorporeal' in *The Logic of Sense*, which is taken from Emile Brehier's theory of the incorporeals in the logic of ancient Stoicism. Akin to a 'haecceity', the incorporeal refers to a language-event of singularity, which is another name for 'the sign'. Thus, 'a red wheelbarrow' can be termed a haecceity, and not just because it is next to the 'white chickens', but because 'a red wheelbarrow, glazed with rain water besides the white chickens' expresses a singular and incorporeal event. We could continue to analyse the elements of the phrase, to parse out all the predicates, pretending that they are homogenous, but what must be subtracted, and is really at issue, is the intensity, which is an incorporeal expression that is articulated by all the elements of the poem. In other words, this red wheelbarrow is what Deleuze calls a *vision*. It cannot be mistaken for the red wheelbarrow that appears in the statement 'the red wheelbarrow is in the backyard beside the white chickens'. Of course, a Marxist would probably tell you that the entire mode of production is hinged on this little red wheelbarrow, in interpreting the phrase 'so much depends', but this does not exhaust the phrase, nor even come close to subtracting the intensity of the possible universe it expresses.

There is a phrase from Kant's first critique that Deleuze often returns to in expressing the incorporeal, the 'being of sensation': 'If cinnabar were sometimes red, sometimes black, sometimes light, sometimes heavy . . . my empirical imagination would never find the opportunity when representing the red colour of bringing to mind the heaviness of cinnabar'. As Deleuze clarifies this statement,

At the meeting point of things and thought, sensation must recur as an agreement already established with our sensory organs, which are like the sensible habits that compose the plane of perception (or as Kant would say, 'my empirical imagination'). Thus, it is interesting to note that Deleuze defines the act of the artist as introducing varieties into these sensible clichés, by 'setting up a being of the sensory, the being of sensation, on an anorganic (or artificial) plane of composition that is able to restore the infinite'. (DG 1994: 202–3)

The poem is precisely such an anorganic plane where a sensory being appears, and it cannot be said that in the poem cited above 'a red wheelbarrow' appears as an agreement between our sensory organs and the thing. We do not 'see' 'a red wheelbarrow beside the white chickens'; nevertheless, the poem manages to bring forth a vision of the thing as the effect of the poem's total composition.

Language here is not defined by a constant relation of each term (a red wheelbarrow, white chickens), but rather as

a series of differential positions or points of view on a specifiable dynamism: the indefinite article [a red wheelbarrow] covers the entire zone of variation included in a movement of particularization, and the definite article [the white chickens] covers the entire zone generated by the movement of generalization (Deleuze 1997: 109).

The poem illustrates this perfectly, and here we have a vision of the power of language in its entirety, like a universe composed only of these elements that occupy different perspectives that are 'beside' and 'with' one another, but are not static, rather constituted by these two movements, which expand and contract at the same time to meet somewhere on the plane that is created by the poem. In other words, the more particular a red wheelbarrow becomes, the more general the white chickens. This is what Deleuze defines as the 'paradoxical existence' of the being of the sensible. Even more, this movement of generalization is not quantitative, and would it make sense to ask how many white chickens you see in the poem? It does not seem to make the difference; there could be two or even a thousand, since the variation is general but not quantitative. (And here, in a certain sense, we are back to the argument between Hegel and Kant on the concept of 'intensive magnitudes'.) However, contrary to Hegel (or maybe this could come down to a simple change in emphasis), as Deleuze writes in *Difference and Repetition*, 'Difference is not phenomenon but the noumenon closest to the phenomenon' (Deleuze 1994: 222).

We could wonder what would be the specific difference if the poet hadn't written 'a red wheelbarrow', and had instead employed the definite article. But this might have destroyed the specified dynamic I have described above on which so much depends. To illustrate this:

so much depends  
upon  
the red wheel  
barrow  
glazed with rain  
water  
beside a few white  
chickens.

Here, the difference is obvious, even though it may not be empirical or quantifiable. Everything depends on the singularity of the *vision*. In other words,

where would we locate the difference except in the plane of composition that produces the poem's total effect? A plane, I would argue, is not drawn from an empirical experience but exists like a universe that is composed only of these elements in differential variation – all the way to infinity! This difference, or noumenon, can be defined as the paradoxical quality of the being of the sensible, which is that strange something that cannot be sensed (from the point of view of the empirical faculty) and can only be sensed 'from the point of view of a transcendent exercise' (Deleuze 1994: 222). The poem is a sign, a phenomenon, or epiphenomenon, but it is truly a fragment, which is also demonstrated in the statement once made by Cleanth Brooks that reading this poem is like peering at an ordinary object through a pin-prick in a piece of cardboard. *It is like a slit or hole through which the entire universe seeps through.* Is this not a perfect description of *vision*, for the emergence of a singular point of view, which is set in variation to an open totality, since its relation to the other points of view that comprise the universe (or even 'a world') must be thought of against the always-open sum (and subtraction) of all other fragments subsisting in the universe (Deleuze 2004: 75)? It is only in the sense of this pluralism, of the fragmented or dismembered unity between the particular and totality, that we can understand and affirm Deleuze's statement that 'the world is made up by remarkable singularities' (Deleuze 1997: 92).

At this point, let us leave this universe made up by this particular red wheelbarrow against the general background made up by a universe of white chickens and return to Deleuze's earlier statement on Heidegger: 'We must not refuse to take Heidegger seriously, but rather we must rediscover the imperceptibly serious side to Roussel (or Jarry). The serious ontological aspect needs a diabolical or phenomenological sense of humour' (Deleuze 1988: 111). What would be a 'phenomenological sense of humour' and does this not sound funny to begin with? Moreover, why is it combined here in this statement with 'diabolical'? What is diabolical about a phenomenological sense of humour? Would it be more than the super-serious tone of Heidegger mixed in with Jarry's Père Ubu or Roussel's infernal alphabetic machines? But finally, why must the phenomenon be funny?

In order to respond to this series of questions, let us take up the poetic statement again by George, 'where the word breaks off no thing may be'. Might this event also be described as a moment of laughter or stuttering, rather than one of sadness and self-renunciation as in Heidegger's meditation on this poetic statement? Stuttering is a phenomenon of broken words, or particle-words; or of non-linguistic blocs of expression, as in the poetry of Artaud or Cummings. Therefore, laughter is also linked to silence as a phenomenon, just as stuttering functions as a 'sign' that also points to the limits of language. In short, this opens a region of expression that is usually excluded from traditional phenomenological enquiry (even though I would qualify this statement by referring to Heidegger's own enquiry into the phenomenology of 'boredom', which I always thought to be as funny as it was profound).<sup>19</sup> We might even make a maxim from the above observations: one must have more than a little sense of humour in approaching the being of the sensible, or the being of sensation,

since in the human experience, these things first of all border on non-sense, that is, the sense that remains un-sensed, un-felt and un-thought in very being of the phenomenon. Often, what is the un-sensed, the un-felt, and the un-thought in the thing strikes against the very being of appearance and threatens to overturn it into its unreal and sterile doubles, its false semblance and nothingness.

Here, we might understand why Jarry always functions as Heidegger's uncanny double in Deleuze's passage cited above, and, in a certain sense, as a corrective to the overtly sombre *melos*, or melody, of the latter's work. In fact, can one imagine a laughing Heidegger, a sense of humour in the face of the event of silence where the word breaks off, instead of the usual religiosity and melancholy atmosphere that surrounds the 'mystery of the word'? And yet, my answer would be, 'yes, of course', since Heidegger with a sense of humour is namely – Nietzsche! As Foucault once confessed in an interview that Deleuze cites in his study: 'My whole philosophical evolution is determined by my reading of Heidegger, but it is Nietzsche who brought me to him' (Deleuze 1988: 149n). This confession underlines the importance of Foucault in Deleuze's confrontation with phenomenology. As he writes:

Everything takes place as though Foucault were reproaching Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger for going too quickly. And what he finds in Roussel, in a different way again in Magritte, and what he could have found in yet another sense in Jarry, is the audiovisual battle, the double capture, the noise of words that conquered the visible, the fury of things that conquered the sayable. (Deleuze 1988: 112)

Here, we have a different meeting of the word and the thing at the limit, a limit which is rearticulated as the fold between the visible and the sayable that becomes a theme in Deleuze's later work, following Foucault's method. Again, this concerns the specific status accorded to the vision of the phenomenon, the being of the sensible, which is neither reduced to appearance through the sensory organ, or to intentionality in language (that is, signification). What Deleuze discovers in Foucault is a certain conflict or antagonism between the visible and the sayable, one which he argues is pacified too quickly by traditional phenomenology, which, it is true, 'blesses too many things'. Perhaps this is the 'diabolical' sense of humour that he finds in Foucault that is completely absent from Heidegger's 'ontological difference' or Merleau-Ponty's 'savage experience'. Thus, it is by violently wrenching these forms apart and setting them back into their ancient confrontation that Foucault rescues the phenomenon from a state in which the entire question of power was too quickly or precipitously 'pacified' by traditional phenomenological approaches. In this regard, Deleuze cites Foucault's comments on the significance of Brisset: 'He undertakes to restore words to the noises that gave birth to words, and to reanimate the gestures, assaults, and violences of which words stand now as the silent blazon' (Deleuze 1988: 149n). Is this not an approximation of the statement 'where the word breaks off no thing may be?' Here we see a sense of language as phenomenon that Deleuze has found in certain writers, in children

and in the schizophrenic's vision of language as full of violent blows, shocks and lacerations. And yet, in the above citation, 'silence' appears as the place of the sign of language. In its normal operation, language itself 'silences' these blows and the signs stand in for this violence (and on the other side, concerning visibilities, his particular use of Bacon's self-portraits, or of contemporary cinema, for exploring the phenomenon of a pure light-being, as the visual signs that appear at the limit of what is seeable). Again, we might note the significance of Foucault for Deleuze's later mediations on this problem, since it was Foucault who also wanted to restore to both forms all their violence, their radical cuts and arbitrary gestures. This is the element that Deleuze discovers in Foucault's method of folding the visible with the sayable, which is power. What is the poetry of power? That is, the *poiesis*, the bringing forth into presence of the 'diabolical' powers that condition the expressions of the visible and the sayable. It is by means of this radical reorientation effected by Foucault, according to Deleuze, that the very being of power appears as that 'strange thing' which shows itself in itself. It is here we find, finally, a dimension that is just barely opened by Foucault's work, which I will return to in the last section of this study: a dimension that appears beyond-phenomenology, and as the 'overturning of metaphysics'. For if Heidegger announces in his great work that 'only as phenomenology is ontology possible', then Deleuze in turn remarks, only as pataphysics, as the science of the particular, is phenomenology justified. According to this new method, which Deleuze first ascribes to Jarry, then to the planetary concept of Kostas Axlos, and finally to Foucault, the phenomenon would be rediscovered at the limit where metaphysics as the science of the general overturns into its opposite, to show a *vision* of the universe that is in itself, fragmentary and fragmented.

### Free indirect discourse and the collective assemblages of enunciation

Returning to the question of expression – although it is true that we have never left it – let's ask what is the difference between a code and a language? As Benveniste recounts this distinction, a bee has a code and is capable of encoding signs that designate a message, but does not have a language. This distinction rests upon the fact that the bee cannot communicate to a second or third bee what it has not seen or perceived with its senses, while human beings are capable of what Deleuze defines as 'free indirect discourse'. This is at the centre of the problem of falsehood as well as the faculty of fiction – which Deleuze calls, after Bergson, 'a fabulating faculty' (the powers of the false). As Deleuze and Guattari argue in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 'the "first" language, or the first determination of language is not the trope or the metaphor, but indirect discourse' (DG 1987: 76–7). We might ask why so much emphasis is placed on this distinction and on the determination of language as free indirect discourse? But, free from what, if not from the subject as the first determination of language? As Humpty Dumpty says, 'When *I* use a word, it means just

what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less . . . The question is, which is to be master – that's all'<sup>20</sup> (see Deleuze 1990b: 18). Therefore, we might understand that Deleuze and Guattari's entire theory of language is made to answer this provocation, to prove that the subject is not master of the word it chooses to express its beliefs or its desires. As they argue:

It is for this reason that indirect discourse, especially 'free' indirect discourse, is of exemplary value: there are no clear, distinctive contours; what comes first is the insertion of variously individuated statements, or an interlocking of different subjects of enunciation, but a collective assemblage resulting in the determination of relative subjectivation proceedings, or assignments of individuality and their shifting distribution within discourse. (DG 1987: 80)

Deleuze and Guattari go to great lengths to deny the existence of 'individual enunciation'. They write: 'There is no individual enunciation. There is not even a subject of enunciation' (DG 1987: 79). Consequently, language is primarily social and is made up of statements and order-words. One does not speak as much as one repeats, the emphasis here being placed on the redundancy of statements as well as on the effect of the relative identity (or stability) that corresponds to the subjectivity of speech-acts (or subjectivization proceedings). The subject (or 'I') is actually the effect of redundancy that belongs to language and which determines the intersubjectivity of communication, then the collective assemblage of enunciation refers to the redundant complex of acts and the statements that accomplish this redundancy. The notion of the collective assemblage of enunciation takes on a primary importance in Deleuze and Guattari's theory of language and speech-acts because it will account for the social character of all language. The primary meaning of language is social and the so-called individual speech is only the effect of a more primary repetition at the level of statements and performatives (or 'order-words') that define a given social field. As they write, 'The only possible definition of language is the set of all order-words, implicit presuppositions, or speech-acts current in a language at a given moment' (DG 1987: 79).

In order to account for the real definition of the collective assemblage, that is, the causality that determines the redundancy in statements and the institution of order-words in language, Deleuze and Guattari return again to the Stoic theory of expression as the effect of incorporeal transformations both at the level of the sense of statements and at the level of bodies. We recall that the incorporeal was defined as an 'extra being' that occurs between the sense of the statement and the plane occupied by real bodies. It is the particular nature of this 'extra being' that will determine the event of transformation in sense on both planes instantaneously. What transforms the accused into the convict is the incorporeal attribute that is the expressed of the judge's sentence; again, this is something that Kafka first discovered in 'The Judgement' where the statement of the judgement (the accusation of the father) is transformed into the act of suicide by Georg.

The expressed cannot be separated from its expression, and neither can the attribute be located in the body of the convict to account for this transformation in sense. The logic of expression addresses precisely these transformative events both at the level of sense and at the level of bodies, or rather, the event that occurs at once both at the surface and in the depth. Assemblages of enunciation do not speak 'of' things, but rather speak at the same time on the level of things and on the level of contents.

For example, bodies age and mature according to a biological process, but the statement 'you are no longer a child' transforms the expressed sense of the body as well as the meaning accorded to age into a moral category of subjection. By comparison, the statement 'you are only a girl' expresses a similar transformation of the body's sense that is inserted into a set of other-order words that determine the social meaning of gender. Likewise, we might say that the colour of the body may appear as an attribute, but the inscription of race in the statement 'you are a black man', or even 'you are a white male' introduces an incorporeal transformation that changes and determines the body's specific social meaning. It is only on the basis of the statement that 'black' or 'white' expresses a meaning that cannot be determined simply from the attribute of whiteness or blackness that is the property of the body. In both statements what each attribute expresses, although differently, is an incorporeal transformation that is applied directly to bodies and is inserted into the subject's actions and passions. In short, it subjects the body to an 'order'.

A society is composed of these order-words that pin meaning to bodies and cause them to be individuated or to correspond to their social meanings. As Deleuze and Guattari write, 'There is no significance independent of dominant significations, nor is there subjectivization independent of an established order of subjection. Both depend on the nature and transmission of order-words in a given social field' (DG 1987: 79). Society can thus be defined by the order-words that define the intermingling of bodies, actions and passions; collective assemblages of enunciation in a given society designate this instantaneous relation between statements and the incorporeal transformations or noncorporeal attributes they express (DG 1987: 81). It is in these moments that language becomes truly expressive, that is, when it becomes capable of expressing real attributes and applying these determinations directly to bodies and to states of affairs that compose the social field at any given moment.

As Deleuze and Guattari argue, although the above transformation applies directly to bodies, it is still incorporeal or internal to enunciation. For example, anyone can say 'I declare war!' However, it is only a variable that belongs to the situation that causes the bodies to enter into a becoming that transforms a social field composed of bodies into a general conflagration that transforms the whole of society. 'There are variables of expression that establish a relation between language and an outside, but precisely because they are immanent to language' (DG 1987: 82). This is why the incorporeal is sometimes defined as an 'extra being' that cannot be accounted for simply from the state of things (or bodies) or a non-linguistic being that does not originate from the sense of the statement (or language), but which first causes these two

planes of being to become related and to express the event of their immanent joining. Thus, what causes the 'order-word' (such as 'you are sentenced to death' or 'I declare war!' and even 'I love you!') is 'an extra something' that 'remains outside the scope of linguistic categories and definitions', as Bahktin also argued, but which expresses the condition of the sense of the statement and, at the same time, expresses a real determination of the states of bodies and intervenes directly into the actions and passions that define them (DG 1987: 82). Therefore, what Deleuze and Guattari define as the order-word cannot be equated with language in all its functions (description, designation, nomination, etc.); rather, it is 'what effectuates its condition of possibility' (or what they call the 'super-linearity of expression') (DG 1987: 85). In other words, it is what causes language to become expressive of the sense that is immanent to the plane of bodies. Without this variable, language itself would remain purely virtual, lifeless, and would not become a nominative order that refers to real transformative events on the plane of being.

In some ways, current critical theories – particularly those belonging to feminism and race theory – have intuitively developed a method of treating 'truth as a problem'. That is, both theories trace a set of order-words to the point where they intermingle with states of bodies and affairs in what could be called an ontology of power – the expression of 'being' determined by this differential power relation. Thus, the body of a 'white, middle-class woman' is determined in relation to the set of order-words ('you are so cute', 'girls can't do this or that', 'you need to get laid, or have a baby', 'you hate your mother', 'your father must have been abusive'), which function like modes in which the body's specific social meaning turns about. Likewise, in the analysis of race and of racialized bodies, a certain set of order-words and modes have been revealed ('animalistic', 'primitive', 'sexually promiscuous', etc.) that haunt the social subjectivity of individual bodies determined by racial inscription of these various order-words that insert themselves into bodies and determine their actions and passions. Yet, one wonders if these theories (or analytics of power relations and language) have gone far enough to reveal the causality behind the linking of these order-words with the states of bodies, or if both theories have remained at the level of representation of these linkages as mere descriptions or effects of another order that remains mysterious. This other order would be termed as 'power', and is often ascribed to white society or to patriarchal order. The question is whether reference to these formations is enough to determine the cause of a power relation, or rather only describes one of the terms of the relation itself? This is why continued references to white society or to patriarchy are not terms that explain but rather need to be explicated, and the strategies have been either to illustrate their dominance through plotting of historical strata (European colonialism, the middle passage, American imperialism or militarism), or by recourse to a very abstract notion of ideology.

Why do Deleuze and Guattari seem to reject the notion of ideology in the analysis of power, particularly within a philosophy of expression, given that ideology is the expression of a power relation in the form of a distortion of the relation itself? As we noted above, any true knowledge of being must include

an expression of cause, and it certainly is the case that historical feminism, for example, has sought to express the cause of woman's subjection by revealing the differential chain of order-words that lies at its root. In response, a pragmatic approach was devised in the invention of a new set of order-words that simply overlaid the previous assemblage and produced new social determinations, but through a purely negative means; thus, 'don't say nigger', or 'bitch'; 'don't look at me that way'; etc. In this way, the previous set of order-words and statements remained implicit, but were barred or prohibited in civil discourse, subject to the expression of a powerful constraint or inhibition that spread through language and by means of language. Here, we see a direct illustration of the manner in which force acts directly on another force, in this case the capability of 'saying' that is acted on by the creation of inclusive phrases, the prohibition or restriction of speech-acts, or enunciation.

On one level, this occurs in the manner in which language acts on language, which is then only individuated on the level of statements and individual speech-acts. It is important, however, to see the tangible presence of a force of saying that is pre-individual and is identified with the power of enunciation itself. Thus, one of the most important and pragmatic transformations occurred on the level of statements (of language) in the creation and enforcement of inclusive linguistic usages, but particularly in the area of written language. One could no longer write 'man' as a generic usage, or employ the pronoun 'he' or 'him' as a definite sense. However, as widespread and effective this new 'order' was in establishing the sense of statements and conditioning the possibility of linguistic utterances, a crisis soon emerged in that one wondered if these changes on the level of language were really effective and transformative on the level of bodies and states of affairs, or if the earlier social meanings of bodies and subjectivities remained intact and were just pushed further down *via* negation. As Freud once argued, even accompanied by the mark of negation, the truth of the proposition remains intact in the unconscious. In the area of language, a quantitative analysis of speech-acts might reveal that the use of inclusive language has weakened its effect, and that today it is still possible to say 'man' in referring to all of humanity, and to use 'he' in a generic sense. After all, these locutions still 'make sense', and are still possible as linguistic units of meaning. Their social significance has even become more neutral, but we might ask what has changed in the relations they express?

Perhaps this example indicates a further crisis, I would argue, following Deleuze and Guattari's observations, one that concerns the relationship between statements and bodies, in the sense of the power that expresses the causality of this relation. At first, there was the rather simplistic assertion, or belief, that a change in the order of words and statements would effect changes at the level of the body's specific social meaning, or that 'representation is completely expressive of being'. Gradually, this belief has weakened, and new theories have emerged in both areas that seek to address the meaning of bodies directly, and not through the privilege accorded to language as the site of expression of power, but in the expression of the body's material and historical meaning. In some ways this follows Marx's earlier argument that real

inequality cannot be corrected on the level of representation alone, but must directly intervene into the state of bodies and affairs. A state of inequality between classes cannot be transformed by the statement 'all men are created equal'; just as the equality between gender cannot be introduced by the inclusive usage 'she or he'. What this dramatizes again is the accuracy of Foucault's intuition that today power has replaced being as expressive of a true causality of the subject, or that 'power produces truth as a problem'. On the other hand, according to another major intuition by Foucault, what this also reveals is the actual 'demotion' of language as being capable of expressing causality. Language alone no longer accedes to the level of beings (states of bodies and affairs) to become expressive of their truth. 'Real effective being' remains outside language's power of expression. Language no longer has the power to capture 'real effective being'. This is its specific finitude that Foucault underscored in *The Order of Things*, and elsewhere: one which has introduced an epistemological crisis heretofore unimagined and which, according to Foucault, was inaugurated in the nineteenth century but did not achieve its full effect until the present time.

Let us take up again the earlier social transformation effected by the creation of new order-words in the areas of race and gender, which intervened negatively to bar or cross out a previous set of order-words in the determination of the subject's social meaning. (Here, I am using subject in a purely abstract sense, referring to the subject of the statement in the linguistic sense.) The problem occurs when one realizes that the negation or crossing-out of previous order-words or statements actually creates no new attribute to designate the subject; rather, it simply clears a space of 'non-determination' that the real body begins to mingle with this space of prohibition, unsayability and negation. In other words, no new positive attribute emerges immediately to take its place. Perhaps, given time, a new social meaning might emerge to become expressive of the body's real state of actions and passions, which is to say, the power of the subject to express its own substance. But this has not been the case, or remains an area of ambiguity. Rather, what emerges in place of substance is, at first, a purely formal character of differences, a pure category. But this difference is more or less empty, that is, not yet determined or waiting to be filled with specific content and meaning. It is this difference that has replaced the 'sign' that previously referred directly to the meaning of bodies, and this difference itself cannot be inhabited substantially but can only appear as the effect of the negation of the previous social meaning (of gender, or of race). In other words, there is a hidden presumption in critical theories that the mysterious and historically sedimented order of power has repressed or inhibited the positive expression of being in the case of bodies determined by gender, or by certain racialized inscription, and that substance remains trapped or inhibited from expression. There is a secret kernel of humanism at work in this assertion, which is why Althusser attacked it so vehemently. Might we not say, instead, that being is and nothing else besides? That being is equal to its expression, in all cases? This would imply that the determination of the subject's inequality is not the effect of repression of another attribute, in this

or that case, one that is found to be present in another subject, but was the positive expression of the subject's specific social meaning? The question becomes how to find a new social meaning to take the place of the previous one, and this returns us again to the question of how to create a new social meaning that directly intervenes at the level of bodies and of statements at the same time. How does the subject become capable or equal to the power of creating a new determination? But first of all this assumes that the subject creates anything. Rather, creation is always on the side of the social, and it is through the social assemblage that new order-words are created that determine individuals and individual states of affairs and bodies. Where, then, in this equation is 'the social' which is at the origin of creativity, and is the cause of statements to attach to beings (to bodies and states of affairs)?

At this point we return to the fundamental proposition of Deleuze and Guattari that all meaning is social, the product of a social assemblage, and more importantly, in the denial of the existence of individual enunciation. All enunciation is collective. That is to say, the emergence of positive difference, the source of real effective differentiation, never occurs on the side of the individual, but rather on the side of the social. The subject is a fiction associated with the redundancy of information statements. Difference, again, is real effective difference, not its representation. Of course, for Deleuze and Guattari, 'desire' becomes the location of the social, the place where new articulations of bodies and statements come into being.

This raises a third crisis: is the specific social meaning of the individual's substance completely dependent on the nature of order-words that determine this meaning: that is, is there no positive or essential quality that is expressive of this being itself as substantial predicate? This might return us to Kant's assertion: 'Being is not a real predicate'. Everything I have said above can also be applied to the being that is expressed by the statement 'man', or 'white male', etc. There is nothing essential that determines being in either case, but a differential state of variables that enters into bodies directly and determines them. Why is this called a crisis of expression? It can be called that because to say, first of all, that gender or race is determinate of being is to fall victim to the first abstraction: that these terms lead to real effective difference and are not simple static and redundant points of identity that function in a social assemblage. These are terms that are actualized in a social structure, and as Deleuze remarks, in all occasions the true subject in question is the structure itself. The question of political pragmatics becomes whether these terms may be actualized differently in such a way that they no longer refer backwards or reproduce the subject (the symbolic order)?

### Abstract machines

Finally, what is the relation of the problem of expression to the process of abstraction, which is proper to the power of philosophy, and which refers to the plane on which concepts appear and are organized into complex diagrams of

statements and visibilities that ‘explicate’ the plane of being? Deleuze and Guattari define the relation of content and expression in a diagram that has four different levels, arranged both vertically and horizontally. First, on a horizontal axis, an assemblage comprises two segments: content and expression. On the level of content, it is a machinic assemblage of bodies and states of bodies in various degrees of interaction; on the level of expression, it is an assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, and incorporeal transformations directly attributed to bodies. Then, on a vertical axis, the assemblage has what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘territorial sides’ which stabilize it, as well as ‘cutting edges of deterritorialization which carry it away’ (DG 1987: 88). We can see how this diagram works by illustrating how both content and expression, bodies and statements, are ‘taken up’ by a movement of either territorialization (which give an assemblage form, stability or relative fixity), or deterritorialization, in which case the formal property of the assemblage becomes an edge that is given motion and cuts through both bodies and statements. Only exceptional states of language cause language to enter into variation, or continuous variation, which is expressive of a state of the body as becoming.

As Deleuze and Guattari argue, therefore, language depends on its abstract machines and not the other way around. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, their overt polemic with the science of modern linguistics is an argument against an abstract machine that determines the representation of language without taking into account the specific causality of what they have defined as ‘non-linguistic factors’ that are still internal to enunciation itself. By divorcing language from the social side of meaning, or by describing its categories as neutral and quasi-universal frameworks or structures, the abstract machine invented by modern linguistics only achieves an intermediate level of abstraction, allowing it to consider linguistic factors by themselves and in isolation from their social sense. By contrast, Deleuze and Guattari seek to reinvest their description of language with a pragmatic and political sense in order to correct the representation provided by the former. ‘From this standpoint’, they write, ‘the interpenetration of language and the social field and political problems lies at the deepest level of the abstract machine, not at its surface’ (DG 1987: 91). Thus, the question proposed in the beginning, ‘What does it mean to express an idea?’ returns from this perspective as a problem of pragmatics.

What are the conditions necessary for the idea to become transformative both at the level of sense and at the same time a transformative event ‘intervening’ in the states of affairs and of bodies (defined in the broadest sense)? What is the causality of the incorporeal transformation of sense both on the level of acts and statements and bodies? In other words, what is the origin and specific causality of new ‘order-words?’ Recalling our discussion of the philosophy of expression in Spinoza, one can see here that the emphasis is placed again on the ‘cause’ of this linking between statements and bodies, which it is the object of a pragmatics fully to ‘explicate’. However, this explication is not restricted to speech-acts alone but also to certain signs that circulate historically and determine or punctuate a duration of events, or which introduce a transformation before and after. In one sense, this accounts for their interest in certain dates that have become

expressive, or which indicate the transformation of a nominative reality as well as the arrival of a new social order and a new collective assemblage of enunciation. Take 'the night of 4 July 1917, or 20 November 1923', for example. The first date, of course, refers to the Russian revolution; the second to the inflationary crisis and the collapse of the Reichsmark that precedes the rise of national socialism in Germany. But the real question they ask is 'What incorporeal transformation is expressed by these dates, incorporeal yet attributed to bodies, inserted into them?' (DG 1987: 86–7).

To illustrate further this problem of expression, we might consider a more recent date: 11 September 2001. What is the incorporeal transformation expressed by this date? What is the sense it expresses that is directly attributed to bodies, inserted into them? We cannot conclude that its meaning is limited to the punctual chain of events that took place on the morning of September 11, but rather to a transformation that continues to inform an interpenetration of new order-words and the intermingling of acts, bodies and statements. 'A terrorist crashes an airliner', 'An Arab is stopped at the border and questioned', 'A prisoner of war is tortured for information', 'A president declares war on terror', 'A heightened state of alert is announced'. What these statements now express is a variability with regard to the former meaning of the signs expressed, which Deleuze and Guattari call 'cutting edges of deterritorialization' (DG 1987: 88). Here, the sign that expresses the act of war becomes deterritorializing with regard to the former conflict between nation-states, just as the legal and juridical codes that define a state of war are placed in flux and can no longer determine the specific situations of the intermingling of bodies outside their former definitions (for example, the captive from Afghanistan is not entitled to the Geneva protections, or the president's declaration of war is not obligated to adhere to international treaties concerning the treatment of prisoners). In just a few of these instances, we might perceive that the date, September 11, expresses an incorporeal transformation that is directly applied to bodies, or as Deleuze and Guattari describe, 'intervene or insert themselves into contents' (DG 1987: 87), that is, into the framework of order-words that define the body as a site of individuation. Hence, the body of the prisoner or of the suspected terrorist corresponds to a new set of meanings that subject it to a new set of rights and procedures, and the new order-words that define these specific sites of individuation will produce unforeseen and transformative effects within other bodies and social subjectivities as well. This transformation would be the object of what Deleuze and Guattari define as political pragmatics, which concerns itself 'with the variation of the order-words and the non-corporeal attributes linked to social bodies and effectuating immanent acts' (DG 1987: 83). According to this transformational research, a statement of the kind, 'A president declares war on terror' must be analysed 'only as a function of its pragmatic implications: in other words, in relation to the implicit presuppositions, immanent acts or incorporeal transformations it expresses and which introduce new configurations of bodies' (DG 1987: 83).

Deleuze often employs the statement 'There will be a naval battle tomorrow' in order to pose the question of the internal factor that would cause this

sentence to express the sense of a date or an order-word (DG 1987: 86). Nevertheless, he also cautions, we are never presented with an interlinking of order-words and the causality of specific contents (or events), but instead seem constantly to pass from order-words to the 'silent order of things' (Foucault). Consequently, in *Foucault*, Deleuze shows that power relations designate 'that other thing' that passes between discursive statements and non-discursive visibilities (Deleuze 1988: 83). In other words, 'power' today assumes the name of that 'extra being' that runs between two different orders and yet expresses their relation, or which causes their relation to come into view as a problem of knowledge. However, if earlier in Spinoza power was unified by the idea of one substance expressing itself, today power can only be determined as an encompassing field of forces, or as a multiplicity of 'nomadically distributed differential elements' (Canning 2001: 311–13). The question, here again, is how these elements combine to give rise to each other's mutuality, which is a question of their 'virtuality', as well as of the immanence of power relations to the terms that express these relations at any given moment. As Deleuze writes,

If power is not simply violence, this is not only because it passes in itself through categories that express the relation between two forces (inciting, inducing, producing a useful effect, etc.) but also because, in relation to knowledge, it produces truth, in so far as it makes us see and speak. (Deleuze 1988: 83)

With this final statement, to which I will return later on, we can perceive the relation of the concept of power to the problem of expression, since it is identified as that 'extra-being' that today lies at the frontier of propositions and bodies that, first of all, produces the relation to truth; as Deleuze writes, 'It produces truth as a problem' (Deleuze 1988: 83).

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## II PSYCHOANALYSIS

### Chapter 3

# Deterritorializing Psychoanalysis?

## ‘Dead psychoanalysis’?

As it has been commonly understood, Deleuze and Guattari first launched their infamous assault on psychoanalysis in *Anti-Oedipus* by declaring outright their call for an end to this institution, at least in its present historical incarnation. In a dialogue from the mid 1970s between Deleuze and Claire Parnet entitled ‘*Psychanlayze morte analysez*’ Deleuze clarifies his opposition to this institution:

So psychoanalysis has spent its capital to become a major official language and knowledge in place of philosophy; to provide an axiomatic system of man in place of mathematics; to invoke the Honestas and a mass function. It is doubtful whether it is succeeding: the apparatuses of power have more interest in turning to physics, biology and informatics. But psychoanalysis will have accomplished what it could; it no longer serves the established order unofficially, it offers a specific and symbolic order, an abstract machine, an official language that it tries to weld onto linguistics in general, to assume the position of an Invariant. It is more and more concerned with ‘pure’ thought. Living psychoanalysis. No, dead psychoanalysis, because it has little chance of succeeding in its ambition, because there are too many competitors and because, at the present time, all the forces of minority, all the forces of becoming, all the forces of language, all the forces of art, are in the process of fleeing from this particular ground – in the process of talking, thinking, acting, and becoming in other ways. (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 98)

The question of whether psychoanalysis is dead is meant, of course, as a provocation, but one, I will argue, that must be taken seriously and not simply shrugged off. This last passage should throw into sharp relief the question of whether such a declaration – ‘dead psychoanalysis!’ – is really tenable for us today. I will leave this question open for now in order to mark a tangible distance between the time when such a statement seemed possible, if only to ask what happened to all these forces – of minority, becoming, of language and art – that Deleuze seemed to feel confident were possible then.

It would appear, as often occurs in the difficult art of prophecy, that Deleuze and Guattari's early assertions concerning the death of psychoanalysis were somewhat precipitous, and it is not by accident that the fate of such a pronouncement resembles another famous pronouncement concerning 'the death of God', naming the duration of a death of something, an entity that doesn't quite exactly die 'on time' but continues to live on, posthumously perhaps, like a myth or a culture of memory, or even of an illusion, one that is impossible to dispel, either now or in some unthinkable future. But then, is this 'unthinkable future' not also an inherent horizon of the Freudian institution as well? If not the death, than at least, one could say that the 'end of psychoanalysis' is also a possible future that belongs to this institution, in the moment when analysis must come to an end, and it may be necessary to 'forget psychoanalysis' to go on living without it. Is this not the brilliance of Lacan's performative and repeated gestures of dissolving a school or seceding from an association precisely at the moment when it seemed to become an apparatus that was beginning to assume too much the form of an institution that guaranteed its own permanence?

All the same, there are different manners of posing this event, some of which are clearly not concerned with the future of the psychoanalytic institution, and occur from 'outside'. This would be the position occupied by Deleuze, who posed this question from the ground of philosophy. (Of course, it would be less the case for Guattari, who was an analyst and a clinician.) Therefore, I will begin my commentary on the above passage by reframing the question of 'the end of analysis' in their own terms. As Deleuze and Guattari say, it is not a question of whether psychoanalysis has a future, one or even several, but of whether it has a 'becoming', perhaps a chance of becoming something else, something that does not resemble its past. It is here that we encounter a strange sort of imperative that occurs in their work, one that is especially pronounced in the period we have already mentioned, of the mid 1970s. It is an imperative that is well known but less well understood and can be phrased in the following manner: that to liberate desire from its official language and the positive conditions of the unconscious (or, as we might say in Lacanese, to 'reinvent the drives') it will be first necessary to engage in a process of 'deterritorializing psychoanalysis'.

'Deterritorializing psychoanalysis'? What could that mean? Are we speaking here of the future of the Freudian institution, or rather the 'becoming' of what it discovered and introduced into the world, the future of a concept and what it supposedly was made to designate? Which is to say the concept of the unconscious itself? I think this phrase is sufficiently ambiguous to wonder what, in fact, we are here to talk about. Are we talking about (a) 'deterritorializing psychoanalysis' in the imperative sense of causing psychoanalysis itself to become deterritorialized from the historical legacy and dominant institutions that belong to the psychoanalytic movement after Freud? Or, are we talking about (b) a 'deterritorializing psychoanalysis' in the sense that we could conceive of a psychoanalysis that would itself be deterritorializing, a psychoanalysis that would be without walls or frontiers, made for the open road, so to speak?

Because I cannot finally decide which sense of this phrase is correct, I will address both senses of ‘deterritorializing psychoanalysis’ that correspond to each meaning in the sections that follow.

### ‘Deterritorializing psychoanalysis’

Addressing the first sense of the phrase ‘deterritorializing psychoanalysis’, a further question occurs, which is whether we can imagine a rigorous concept of ‘the unconscious’ *outside* the discourse of psychoanalysis, that is, removed from its institutional history, its apparatus, its associations and protocols, its ‘technique’ and its metapsychological theory? At first glance, one might think this impossible, given that the concept is so thoroughly inscribed in the history of the psychoanalytic movement, and was invented by Freud who still holds a certain patent on its application to social, cultural and individual phenomena.

A fundamental thesis that one can find throughout the writings of Deleuze and Guattari is that the unconscious does not exist; more accurately, the unconscious does not exist prior to the moment of its production. To say it did would be to accord it an ontological determination, something that Freud subtracted from the concept in his article ‘The Unconscious’ (1915), in which he submitted the notion to a purely topological definition of the psychic apparatus (which looks a bit like Hjelmslev’s screen projected over an indeterminate signifying matter). As Deleuze writes,

it is not a question, by one method or another, of reducing the unconscious; it is much more a question for us of producing it – there is no unconscious that could be said to be already there, since the unconscious must be produced and it must be produced politically, socially, and historically. (Deleuze 2004: 381)

The imperative of ‘deterritorializing psychoanalysis’, however, immediately poses a problem for us to resolve: deterritorialize it from what? What is the specific form of territory that appears so problematic for Deleuze and Guattari, and which motivates their imperative to deterritorialize? There have been many responses to this question, of course: Oedipus, the family, castration (i.e., the ‘splinter in the flesh’), and, most of all, *desire*. I will address these later on. But are these territories, properly speaking? Are they not rather the ‘forms of *significance*’ that are reproduced by psychoanalytic interpretation? To deterritorialize psychoanalysis, consequently, can mean nothing less – although perhaps it will mean something more – than to remove it from the one constant that defines its formal operation and reproduction of its authority, and by this I mean the analytic space itself (i.e., to deterritorialize the very space in which the unconscious is produced and reproduced).

According to Deleuze and Guattari, psychoanalysis produces the unconscious by means of a machinic assemblage that remains consistent across its various institutions. The components of this machine are as follows: (1) a

closed space strictly defined by time – for example, the famous five-minute session – and by an indefinite number of articles (the chair, or couch, the desk, the notepad, the pen, a few books on the table next to a table against a wall, a painting or paintings that must exhibit some relation to culture, and of course, professional journals); (2) a subject defined as the patient, which could also be a group (it does not matter how many, since the rule ‘only one person can speak at a time’ is strictly observed, and so the quantitative difference is thereby effectively negated); and finally (3) the analyst: the one who stands in for what Deleuze and Guattari define as the ‘subject of enunciation’ in such a way that even the silence of the analyst is accorded a dimension of speech (*la parole*). The assemblage of these components defines the form of analysis itself, a form that arranges the contents and counts for much more than the contents that are plugging into it. It is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, a ‘machine’ that produces the unconscious by a regular rhythm inserted into the interstices of speech and silence: symptoms, transference, interpretation, but most of all, the rumblings of unconscious desire. It is this machinic dimension of psychoanalysis that Deleuze and Guattari have made into such an object of contestation. I say this in order to clarify a long misunderstanding – they are not opposed to psychoanalysis *per se*, but rather to a certain Freudo-Lacanian analytic machine of interpretation that remains a constant throughout its incarnations.

It is somewhat uncanny that the machinic assemblage that belongs to psychoanalysis bears more than a passing resemblance to any number of plays by Beckett, particularly the later plays. Of course, we know that this is not purely accidental, since Beckett underwent analysis, and we can only guess that a number of the components (the voice, the imago, the dyadic ensemble of characters) were taken up by Beckett and transferred into his dramatic works, where they function according to a different logic. I note it in passing only to underline the fact that there is a certain similarity between the goals of Beckett’s work and psychoanalysis: in the end, the exhaustion of the subject’s speech, an emptying-out of his or her complaint (*‘O my suffering! O my life! What has become of my happiness?’*), and the reduction of the subject’s *mot juste* (which, in the end, is revealed as a just another cliché that already belongs to the long and sometimes baroque repertory of sadness). If, in the beginning, there was the word and the word was made flesh, then the end of the psychoanalytic session is the word made shit, into the excrement of the drive. It is precisely the ‘word’ that reveals its true performative dimension as an acting-out of silence; by reducing the word to its signifying dimension, that is, by inserting into a chain of signifiers that have captivated the subject, the famous silence that the subject has so long sought in order to fill it with, the drive is reduced to nothingness. It is here that silence could be said to belong to two different registers: the full silence (in all its phallic glory!) becomes the silence that marks a pause between two different constructions of desire; the anticipated silence that marked the aim of the subject’s demand returns in the form of non-sense, a residue, or left-over. Here, a major distinction emerges in our comparison: for Beckett this silence assumes a properly comic repetition accompanied by an impossible imperative to ‘get over it’, or ‘to give it up’;

however, by contrast, psychoanalysis retains a tragic attitude with regard to the possibility of ever finishing – that is, the possibility of ever not saying ‘I’ – so that even while it empties out the signifier, it leaves the unconscious structure intact and awaiting a newly determined object that stands in for the drive. One could say that it is not by chance that Freud, late in his life, despaired over the idea of an ‘interminable analysis’, much in the same way that one of Beckett’s characters can also be heard to complain ‘I thought I had done with preliminaries. No, no, we have all been here for ever, we shall all be here for ever. I know it’ (Beckett 1995: 333).

Returning to my discussion of the analytic machine, now that we have taken a survey of its components, how does it function? According to Deleuze and Guattari, the psychoanalytic machine of interpretation operates by one simple procedure: *to negate the subject of the statement in favour of the subject of enunciation*. In other words: ‘You say one thing, but what you are really saying is something else’. This is the lever by which the subject’s own statement is razed in favour of an unconscious enunciation. ‘You say you want strawberries, but what you are really saying is that you desire x’. As Deleuze writes, ‘What I say is returned to me as the subject of the statement; what I wanted to say returns to me (in my relation with the analyst) as subject of enunciation’ (Deleuze 2004: 383). Thus, the analytic machine ‘produces’ the unconscious by splitting the subject of the statement from the subject of enunciation, and it is by means of this simple procedure of division (or cleavage in the heart of the speaking subject) that the unconscious suddenly appears – somewhat like Heidegger’s lightning flash that causes the night to appear against its abyssal ground – on the side of the subject’s *vouloir dire*. The analyst only materializes the division by occupying the position of the subject’s true enunciation (a place that in the first place is handed over, or sacrificed, to the analyst by the patient), and by refusing any immediate or direct object of the statement as the subject’s true intention. This unveils what Deleuze calls a double-machine – that of interpretation accompanied by subjectivization. What the patient wanted to say is translated into another language – and primarily that of hysteria. Consequently, as Deleuze writes, ‘the hysteric is fashioned to answer this incessant echo with the eternal question of *Che voi?* Which nourishes the infinite murmur of psychoanalytic discourse’ (Deleuze 2003: 77).

Given the above observations, perhaps the question I postulated earlier, concerning whether or not there could be an unconscious outside of psychoanalytic discourse, could be rephrased in the following manner: is there an unconscious, properly speaking, *outside* the analytic session? For example, this question emerges when the psychoanalytic apparatus of interpretation is plugged into all sorts of things: culture, film, literature, myth, history and current events (September 11 being an event most easily recalled to mind, along with the nausea of psychoanalytic interpretation that occurred in its wake). It is in these circumstances that the machinic dimension of psychoanalytic enunciation has emerged so dramatically in the contemporary period, in the sense that any ‘text’ can become, willy-nilly, the occasion for the production of the unconscious. Deleuze later remarks in 1996 that ‘the psychoanalytic critic is

now more like a journalist: he creates the event, then in various fashions, offers his services afterwards' (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 105).

In the psychoanalytic interpretation of culture, or of the so-called 'text', however, where the position of analyst is lacking to operate the division between an overt signification and a latent or hidden enunciation of truth, it has often been observed that this distinctive procedure operates allegorically. At this moment, the 'text' assumes the position of the subject of the statement, while the interpretation provided by the psychoanalytic theorist or critic simulates the subject of enunciation, providing the unconscious signification of the text's overt or literal meaning. Thus, when the analytic machine is removed from one of its most critical components, the relation to the analyst, it begins to go wild, producing interpretation after interpretation, most of which are thinly veiled allegories of the same basic interpretation. This is especially true, according to a very interesting observation made by Deleuze, after psychoanalytic interpretation acquired a *statutory claim over all enunciation*, that is to say, when it adopted a notion of structure after Lacan. (Deleuze 2004: 383).

Here, we could say that the analytic machine works – and perhaps it works all too well! – yet, we could also argue that the true status of all these interpretations is not that different from the discourse of the patient who overinterprets everything. The critic does not occupy the same position as the analyst *vis-à-vis* the position of subject of enunciation in the act of interpretation; this must be accorded to a certain enunciation of *savoir* that is referred to the place of a psychoanalytic body of knowledge, that is, to a prior enunciation which the critic cites or performs in his or her interpretation of the statement or text (as in the case when a critic cites 'Lacan' or 'Freud'). The given text (of literature or film) occupies the position of the subject of the statement, whereas psychoanalytic *savoir* now occupies the position of the subject of enunciation, which is referred to by the critic as the former's true sense. In the end, it appears as if the text itself was motivated by the subject of enunciation that the psychoanalytic interpretation provides as its basis and only serves to illustrate its concepts, something that Derrida has already critiqued in his famous commentary on Lacan's reading of Poe's 'Purloined Letter'. Hence, the famous '*Wo es was, soll Ich werden*', which can be translated as 'where it (the text, the discourse, the statement) was, so the subject of enunciation operated by psychoanalysis shall come to be'.

Nevertheless, I would argue that what is missing in this act of interpretation is, surprisingly enough, the unconscious itself. There is no unconscious! In other words, what is 'produced' (or re-produced) is the enunciation of the *truth*, which is the purely performative dimension that belongs to the act of interpretation. In psychoanalytic interpretation, by means of this performative dimension the truth of the text is referred to the body of psychoanalytic knowledge (which I designated above by the technical sense of *savoir*), although often this knowledge is reduced to a discrete number of formulas or maxims: 'The real always returns to the same place', 'The letter always arrives at its destination', 'Man's desire is the desire of the other', 'The woman does not exist', etc. As an example of this, I could point to the body of work by psychoanalytic

theorist Slavoj Žižek. One can immediately see something eminently machinic, automatic, in his interpretation of anything cultural or literary. His work has the feeling of a cyclotron that has been left in high gear and that lets nothing go to waste by reusing everything, including old jokes and even entire passages from his earlier works. However, in place of the above procedure, Žižek's automaton of interpretation operates by means of simple negation (it is a dialectical machine): 'You say one thing, but what you really mean is the exact opposite'. Here, something is different, which more closely resembles the function of negation that was first outlined by Freud: the subject's own statement is returned to him or her in its opposite form; the letter returns to its destination through an operation of inversion. Here, we can see Žižek is more of a Hegelian than a Freudian, strictly speaking, which is why his chosen subject is 'the prose of the world'. And what is Žižek himself becoming today but a psychoanalytic journalist, a reporter of the unconscious at large? It would not even be surprising to see him one day hired by *Time* magazine to provide an op-ed piece on the back page, opposite the indefatigable George Will. *And yet, I would argue, the unconscious is entirely missing from Žižek's analyses. It does not exist; or rather, it has been replaced by simple contradiction.*

It is true that the literary text can be instigated in 'a transference relationship', as the theoretical body of work by Gabriele Schwab has amply demonstrated.<sup>21</sup> The reception histories of the *Sorrows of Young Werther* or *The Catcher in the Rye* can attest to this as well; however, excluding the well-known instances of psychotic identification, in most cases the text itself cannot fully occupy the position of the subject of enunciation, which is to say that it is not inaugural. For example, I can give my lover a volume of Proust and in that moment the saga of Marcel and Albertine is given an enunciating dimension that is, strictly speaking, not found in Proust. The subject of enunciation cannot be said to derive from Proust's narrative, but rather from the *parole* of the gift itself, which turns Proust's work into a cryptic cipher of my message and subsumes the work under a symbolic identification assigned to it by another register of significance. However, this does not mean that the enunciation accorded to my little gift of Proust will say exactly what I wanted it to, since inasmuch as the message must still be deciphered by the intended receiver, the subject of enunciation is inscribed in what Lacan aptly called 'the defiles of the signifier'. It is for this reason that we can easily demonstrate that the unconscious is not in the text, properly speaking, but rather occurs between the text and the enunciating dimension that makes of the text something that is sent, meant to be listened to, even obeyed. This immediately raises the possibility that it could be delayed, deferred, if not missed altogether, and the true intention never heard of again – possibilities that Derrida has already remarked by the term 'destinerrance'. I would say that this principle forms the imperative condition of the act of interpretation itself, which is to say *that the very condition of interpretation is misinterpretation*. Consequently, to summarize a very old and well-travelled debate, the fact that a letter that always arrives at its destination is precisely due to the chance of its getting lost, to which every act of interpretation responds with a categorical imperative that it always must be found precisely where it was meant to be, that

is, *destined*. This basically accounts for all the fuss that Derrida makes over the *lapsus calami* in Lacan's transcription of the final note by Dupin (the master analyst) in Poe's text: *une destine* [sic] *si funeste*.

But this raises a final question under the first proposition: that is, can the proper dimension of psychoanalytic practice ever be achieved by means of 'interpretation' alone? In other words, *is interpretation the proper route for achieving a critical or transformative relation to desire?* I have emphasized this question because I think the answer is not at all that clear. Ironically, it is here that the response to the question by both Deleuze and Guattari and by Lacan (following Freud) meet on common ground. Psychoanalysis is not a matter of interpretation. As Lacan said quite clearly, 'Psychoanalysis it is not a hermeneutics'. In fact, from the perspective of practice, this is because it has been discovered that interpretation leads more often to the failure of analysis than to the revelation of the unconscious processes: something that Freud himself readily demonstrates in his case-study of Dora, where a prejudiced and precipitous interpretation of Dora's problems immediately implicated Freud in a secret pact with Dora's father and Herr K. Of course, Dora saw through this and rejected Freud with her famous dismissal: 'Well, is that all you have to offer me? Really? I mean, why do I need you to tell me what is already too obvious and sordid about the whole affair?' As for Lacan, who we know paid scrupulous attention to Freud's mistakes, interpretation was always a last resort, and moreover, will never take the form of some information that the analyst offers to the patient, even at the end, which in fact achieves its desired effect only by the silencing of every interpretation. Nevertheless, even when it is withheld, interpretation could be said to constitute the very ethical substance of psychoanalytic practice (which is to say that it is an ethical demand that binds the analyst to an even greater degree than the patient who, it is true, cannot be held responsible for the act of interpretation until the end). At the same time, it is here that a major distinction could be drawn between the two positions on the act of interpretation. If from the perspective of psychoanalytic technique interpretation is an ethical act, in the strongest sense of the term 'act', the analyst here could be said to occupy the position of Antigone before the figure of Creon, who can perform this act only with the full knowledge that it already constitutes a death-sentence that will land on the head of the analyst himself or herself. To put this enigmatically, the analyst can only speak as a dead man, that is, dead to the question of desire, which is an issue that should concern only the living.

For Deleuze and Guattari, on the other hand, it has never been a matter of interpreting but rather of experimentation. They write: 'It is precisely that we oppose a field of experimentation, personal as well as collective, to the activities of psychoanalytic interpretation' (Deleuze 2004: 384). But what is this? Above I stated that 'interpretation' is the most highly regulated and scrutinized activity and perhaps the most ethical moment of psychoanalytic technique, whereas Deleuze and Guattari seem to have reduced psychoanalysis completely to the activity of interpretation. This constitutes the underlying point of the intense disagreement over their arguments against psychoanalysis in the col-

lected volumes of the Capitalism and Schizophrenia project, which could be paraphrased as follows: if, according to one of the most forceful theses put forward from *Anti-Oedipus* onward, psychoanalysis knowingly and quite deliberately reduces the unconscious by territorializing it and making it into a universal (that of Oedipus), it could just as well be said that Deleuze and Guattari knowingly and deliberately bastardize the psychoanalytic concept of the unconscious by turning the Oedipal construction of desire into a bogeyman that can too easily and precipitously be dismissed. (It's as if psychoanalysis were suddenly being accused of wanting to retain a repressive organization of desire, rather than providing an analysis of the dominant organization of desire that exists in modern societies.) It seems we have reached an impasse, or at least what de Man would have identified as the rhetorical traits of a strong misreading on their part.

Freud himself addressed the proliferation of so-called 'psychoanalytic interpretations' in his time – but perhaps this admonition can also apply to our own – by saying that knowledge of the unconscious cannot be gained by listening to lectures and reading books, which he compared to the same effect that handing out menus in a time of famine would have on hunger. As Freud writes, 'This analogy goes even further than its immediate application; for informing the patient of his unconscious regularly results in an intensification of the conflict within him and an exacerbation of his troubles' (Freud 1957c: 225). Perhaps this word of warning should also be heeded today by the proliferation of so-called psychoanalytic interpretations of culture and society, including the unconscious formations of gender and racial identity. We might ask what effect these interpretations have on the unconscious cause of these formations? In fact, one could even go so far as to say that the inflation of psychoanalytic interpretation can be read as one of the most pressing and visible signs of a resistance to psychoanalysis that marks our era – not only on the part of the individual interpreters, but of the association of readers, of a public, a society, and even of a culture. Thus, I would venture to say that if our knowledge of the unconscious has increased, and has been discovered to dominate almost every aspect of the subject's anxious attention to the world and to others, *this knowledge has brought us no closer, collectively and individually, to the possibility of entering into an analysis.* Here we would do well to remember the first principle of a psychoanalytic technique that could strictly be called Freudian: knowledge of the unconscious is only the beginning of analysis, not its end.

### 'Wild psychoanalysis'?

I have been quoting from an early interview that occurred immediately after the publication of *Anti-Oedipus*, where Deleuze offers the following proposition, which I will translate thus:

Today, psychoanalysis presents a certain political danger which is proper to it, and which can be distinguished from the dangers that were implicit in

the old clinical psychiatry. While the former constituted a place of enclosure that was localized, psychoanalysis, on the contrary, functions in the open air. (Deleuze 2004: 233)

We might further define this latter phrase as in a place that is 'non-localized' and in a space that is without walls. I have already outlined two aspects of this danger above: the first is the analytic machine which gives psychoanalysis a method of ambulation (allows it to get out and move around, since it is not limited to a particular location or social institution); the second aspect of this danger is a certain statutory right over enunciation that psychoanalytic interpretation lays claim to, which, according to Deleuze, has replaced the earlier temporary contract that occurs between the patient and the analyst.

It is at this point, surprisingly enough, that we might hear a resonance with Freud's early concerns over a kind of psychoanalysis that is wild, meaning out of control and perhaps too much out in the open. However, the problem of territory itself can be located in the Freudian reply to this danger; for while Deleuze and Guattari respond by imagining a form of psychoanalysis that would be deterritorializing (which they earlier had baptized with the name of 'schizo-analysis', only to abandon this title later as perhaps a little too problematic), the Freudian institution responds to this danger by territorializing psychoanalysis itself: a decision that continues to have profound repercussions on the current form of the institution and on the transmission of its knowledge. In short, an apparatus (a school, an association) was constructed to house the analytical machine, in order to administer it properly.

The unconscious is out there. It can't be disinvented. 'Well', Freud responds, 'then we had better regulate it'. Here unfolds the long saga of the psychoanalytic institution, which Lacan once compared to the Wars of the Roses. But, we might ask, was it necessary that the institution of psychoanalysis should evolve in this form – through schism, combat, betrayal, intrigue and, finally, marriage? (Except for the last means of politics, its history could only be compared to the history of the Communist Party.) Returning to Deleuze's critique of this institutional form, I will draw on several points from the early text mentioned above. The first point to be made, according to Deleuze, is that psychoanalysis has assumed a form (along with Marxism) of what Deleuze calls a 'culture of memory', perhaps even of mourning, which is to say, a knowledge that always advances by way of a veritable 'return to the source'. (The institutional form that this tradition most often takes, of course, is the form of 'the discourse of the master'.) The second point to be made concerns what I defined above as the analytic machine. Inasmuch as this is a machine, the specific knowledge (or *savoir*) it calls for is technical, and thus creates the demand for an institutional policing mechanism that validates and authorizes those in whom this machine is invested to function properly.

It is here that we might recall Freud's little article '“Wild” Psycho-Analysis', where we can bear witness to the first hint of this demand for a psychoanalytic police, a self-policing, even the issuing of papers (and, moreover, given that no police force then existed to uphold the law of psychoanalysis, when he called

for its invention, the invention of a psychoanalytic tribunal vested with the office of upholding the responsibility to the name). As Freud announces:

Neither I myself nor my friends and co-workers find it agreeable to claim a monopoly in this way in the use of a medical technique. But in the face of the danger to patients and to the cause of psycho-analysis which are inherent in the practice that is to be foreseen of a 'wild' psychoanalysis, we have had no other choice. In the spring of 1910 we founded an International Psycho-Analytical Association, to which its members declare their adherence by the publication of their names, in order to be able to repudiate responsibility for what is done by those who do not belong to us and yet call their medical procedure 'psychoanalysis'. (Freud 1957: 227)

In this passage, we are bearing witness to a certain arbitrary decision, which is to say, thoroughly historical or even 'historicizing' in its event: the founding of the Freudian monopoly, which can only borrow its apparatus from a number of other historical institutions (the association, the school, the 'cause' or political organization, etc.). Moreover, if we follow Freud's argument closely, of the two causes for instituting this form of protectionism – harm to the patients, harm to the cause of psychoanalysis itself – Freud underlines the latter as the principle concern (since 'wild' psychoanalysis more often than not produces the effect of recovery in the patient, even if the means for achieving this recovery are purely accidental and are most often caused by the patient's own resistances). In fact, Freud says quite clearly that recovery can be produced by a 'resistance to psychoanalysis', but only at the price of harming the name of 'psychoanalysis' itself. 'And this', Freud says, 'can be avoided' (Freud 1957: 227). This gesture, it is true, did nothing to prevent the spreading of psychoanalytic knowledge, only to provide a mechanism for distinguishing, in a patently juridical manner, between legitimate and illegitimate practice. It is a mechanism that merely restricts liability to the name of 'psychoanalysis' by creating a proper territory (an association of signatories) that will henceforth demarcate a lawful and proper space of a psychoanalytic *civitas*, or *polis*, from a wild and lawless frontier of 'wild' psychoanalysis. Perhaps now we can understand why Deleuze constantly refers to Freudian psychoanalysis as a 'Ciceronian science', and to Freud as 'Roman'.

In a very interesting passage that occurs in *Dialogues*, Deleuze asserts that at the same time psychoanalysis passed from its early Freudian phase to its post-Freudian phase – when it abandoned significance in favour of interpretation, the research of signifieds (or symbols) in favour of the structural agency of the signifier, the temporary contract between analyst and patient for the permanent statutory right that psychoanalytic theory now exercises over all enunciation (without regard to its specific location or context) – the site of the unconscious was displaced from its early hereditary model (in Freud) on to relations of political and social alliance. The manner in which the unconscious reproduces itself from one subject to the next is no longer to be located in the institution of the family; rather, the unconscious is produced across relations of

alliance and affiliation that have supplanted the family: alliances that reproduce themselves in the manner of a contagion, and in such a way that the family itself only functions as a secondary feedback loop for these later formations of unconscious desire (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 101). In this very suggestive remark, Deleuze perhaps opens a line of enquiry (pursued today by Willy Apollon, among others) for understanding the different schemas of alliance that have emerged in late-democratic societies: racial alliances, ethnic nationalisms, or fundamentalisms. It does not matter if each of these forms of alliance has taken on the image of a hereditary model in the sense of an archaic justification, particularly in the case of racial and ethnic schemas of alliance, since it could be shown that in each case the manner in which these alliances reproduce themselves socially exceeds any biological model of kinship or heredity. (In fact, it is precisely in retaliation for the humiliation suffered by a real or imaginary father that the most horrifying of these new alliances have spread across the earth today.) For example, how many-suicide bombers have detonated their bodies in Iraq, and what is the exact cause of *si funeste* desire? The cause of political sovereignty or the ferocious injunction of the super-ego, the retaliatory price of humiliation? In other words, how did the images of Saddam Hussein – unshaven, desolate, haggard, like a horse about to be put down or sent off to the glue factory, his decaying orifices yawning and exposed and in a certain sense invaginated by probing instruments of US officials – produce in the Iraqi identity? Were these images, and the pernicious rationale for selecting them for broadcast, approaching the image of *homo sacer* that Agamben has analysed: that of a human profaned but not legally sanctioned for murder?

This resonates with one of the most forceful theses of *Anti-Oedipus*. To continue to speak of an unconscious that produces through the institution of the family, according to old hereditary schemas and familial personages, is to continue to speak nostalgically. In order to discover its true position of the unconscious in social formations today, one must deterritorialize the unconscious and, at the same time, defamiliarize the concepts of psychoanalytic knowledge that are derived from this earlier model. This procedure that one finds clearly articulated in *Anti-Oedipus* has more than a chance relation to strategy of 'defamiliarization' (*Entfremdungkeit*) that defines the practice of a Brechtian political theatre. Therefore, if psychoanalysis is truly to regain the empirical validity of a science again, it will be necessary for it to pass through an anti-psychoanalytic phase. As Deleuze writes:

The desire or delirium (which are profoundly the same thing), the desire-delirium is by its very nature a libidinal investment of the entire historical field, immediately social. Delirium properly concerns classes, peoples, races, masses . . . We say that schizophrenia has to do, not with the family, but with a global affair, not with the parents, but with whole peoples, populations and tribes. (Deleuze 2004: 382)

Here we find, succinctly phrased, the fundamental thesis of *Anti-Oedipus*: Speak to us no more about the family, but rather of whole peoples; not about

the cloistered waterclosets of the Oedipal family full of dirty little secrets, but rather of the full body of the earth with its teeming and yet undefined zones. And yet, I wonder if Deleuze and Guattari are a little too categorical on this point in particular, that is, a bit too philosophical and not psychoanalytic enough? How does the constituted individual in a given society accede directly to this political plane of desire, except in bypassing – a bit too precipitously – the entire question of this formation altogether, which is to say, by foreclosing the dimension of the imaginary entirely? I would argue that there is a value in a ‘deconstruction’ of the imaginary in order to follow the traces of the new formations of desire, the new racisms, the new fantasies of genocide – that is to bracket ‘Oedipus’ in order to link the construction of fantasy to its new possible variables, social and political. Can we imagine, one day, a psychoanalysis that would be deterritorializing, that would accede directly to the political enunciation of unconscious desires? Moreover, would such a ‘deterritorializing psychoanalysis’ only come after ‘deterritorializing psychoanalysis’? And how would it come about – by stripping psychoanalysis of its apparatus and its machine of interpretation? But then, wouldn’t a psychoanalysis that would accede directly to the political *agencement* of unconscious desire be a form of politics, properly speaking? I conclude, therefore, by posing again the question with which it began: Can we yet imagine a time when there would be no more psychoanalysis, when the unconscious would be a subject of politics and not of interpretation? Can we even begin to imagine such a state of health, finally, the end of psychoanalysis?

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## Chapter 4

# Slavoj Žižek – It's 'Body without Organs' (BWO), Dummy!

### The hysterical question of perversion

When I was a graduate student at Berkeley in the mid 1980s a little-known Slovenian Marxist and Lacanian critic first came to lecture on Hitchcock before a somewhat bemused and shocked American academic audience. They witnessed an explosion of psychoanalytic analysis combined with a kind of rap-master assemblage of jokes, popular cultural critique and the all-too-frequent comparisons with the politics of the Stalinist regime (of which Americans had only a theoretical knowledge). Previous to seeing Žižek 'in living colour', so to speak, I had already been following his articles on psychoanalytic theory, which first appeared in French psychoanalytic journals, the bulk of which comprised his first title to appear in English translation, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989). In some ways, I could compare this early experience with being at a club in Liverpool and witnessing the first outbreak of 'Beatlemania', given the subsequent fame and celebrity-theorist status that Žižek has been accorded in the years since that first tour of the North American academy. Nevertheless, I must confess that I have remained, and continue to remain, somewhat bemused by the battery of subsequent published writings, with the exception perhaps of what could be considered his *summa theoretica*, *The Ticklish Subject* (1999). This book seems, in my view, to characterize the entire trajectory of his thinking in the decade after *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, perhaps even representing the future course of his critical programme for the 'return to the Cartesian subject'.

More recently, particularly with regard to the question concerning post-modernism, I have come to wonder about Žižek's frequent diatribes against what he calls a space of 'constantly shifting multiplicities', and why these seem always to be coupled with somewhat hysterical complaints against cyberspace, or against 'virtual reality' *as such*. If this is not simply to be taken as a metaphor, or as another instant of the infamous 'straw-man' argument for which Žižek has become renowned, I have suspected that this co-implication of postmodernism in cyberspace and of cyberspace in postmodernism (almost in the form of a chiasmus), ultimately threatens to obscure the analysis of both phenomena. In fact, this comparison remains in most of Žižek's subsequent works, and has even grown to be more trenchant and monolithic of late.

As an example, I cite a passage that appears in Žižek's reading of director David Lynch, *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime: On David Lynch's Lost Highway* (2000), a book I will often turn to in this discussion of the question concerning the postmodern in Žižek's work. In a section entitled, 'Cyberspace between perversion and trauma', Žižek opens with the following questions on the relation between multiple fantasy narratives comprising postmodern cyberspace (or what he also refers to as 'hypertext', employing an earlier language) and the psychoanalytic concept of fantasy. He writes:

An even more appropriate parallel would be the one between this coexistence of multiple fantasmatic narratives and the cyberspace notion of hypertext. Lynch is often designated as a *perverse* author *par excellence*, and is not cyberspace, especially virtual reality, the realm of *perversion* at its purest? Reduced to its elementary skeleton, perversion can be seen as a defense [I return to this later in the analysis of 'Rat Man', or the classical Freudian case-study of obsessional neurosis, where *Abbau*, or defence is a dominant gesture] against the Real of death and sexuality, against the threat of mortality as well as the contingent imposition of sexual difference. What the perverse scenario enacts is a 'disavowal of castration', a universe in which, as in cartoons, a human can survive any catastrophe; in which adult sexuality is reduced to a childish game; in which one is not forced to die or to choose between one of the two sexes. As such, the pervert's universe is a universe of the pure symbolic order, of the signifier's game running its course, unencumbered by the Real of human finitude. Isn't cyberspace also a universe without closure, unencumbered by the inertia of the real, constrained only by its self-imposed rules? In this comic universe, as in a perverse ritual, the same gestures and scenes are endlessly repeated, without any final closure. (Žižek 2000: 36)

In attempting an analysis of this passage, we must first recognize that Žižek's statements concerning cyberspace, in many ways, are built upon the same old assertions concerning technology and the machine in earlier philosophical writings from the 1950s during the period of the Cold War and nuclear proliferation, particularly concerning the human's denial of mortality and attempt to place the immortal substance of the drive in the indestructible body of the machine that one can find demonstrated so well in Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*. In fact, the interpretation of cyberspace here is to a great degree identical to these earlier interpretations of machine technology and the desire for immortality. Moreover, one can detect more than a slight odour of Christian theology and its morbid taste for mortality in the diatribe against a 'perverse universe' without death or guilt, beyond finitude. (And it is worth noting that in contradistinction to other moments in his writings on the subject of human mortality, concerning the question concerning cyberspace, Žižek always resorts, or retreats, to a fairly run-of-the-mill existential analysis of finitude.) It is important to highlight that in Žižek's normal reading the substance of human finitude is always marked by the moment of castration, the

division of the sexes, which is why the question of gender and sexuality is fundamental to the psychoanalytic treatment of the question of human finitude. Thus, the question of the hysteric is, according to Lacan, 'Am I a man or a woman?' while the same question for the obsessional is 'Am I living or dead?' But it is important to hear that this is how the obsessional understands and translates the hysteric's question, in a manner that sexuality is inscribed more generally in terms of finitude, and the finitude of the body specifically. That is, the obsessional neurotic responds to the interpellation of sexual difference with the question: Am I living or dead? Am I, as subject, situated on the border of life, bound up with the living organism of the body, or rather am I somewhere beyond? Here, situated in the realm of cyberspace, we can hear the echo of the obsessional neurotic's question resonate with the question of virtual reality itself. This would imply that the question of the division of the sexes is displaced on to the space of the virtual, which bypasses or disavows the reality of castration in such a manner that the subject is able to choose one or the other, or both, and this choice appears against the backdrop of a fundamental question of species-determination (as in the classical example of perversion in the writings of Sade). The question will be whether the trauma (or real) of castration appears here rather than in its lived sexual body, or whether this trauma is elided altogether and reappears in a completely different form or location.

I will cite another passage on this subject from *The Ticklish Subject*, which further situates the domain of cyberspace in Žižek's analysis in terms of this question of living or dying, or in the space 'in between two deaths':

It is clear we are dealing here with the domain 'in between two deaths', the symbolic and the real: the ultimate object of horror is the sudden emergence of this 'life beyond death' later (in *Seminar XI*) theorized by Lacan as *lamella*, the undead–indestructible object, Life deprived of support in the Symbolic Order. This, perhaps, is connected with today's phenomenon of cyberspace: the more our (experience of) reality is 'virtualized', changed into a screen-encounter exchanged on an interface, the more the 'indivisible remainder' that resist being integrated into the interface appears as the horrifying remainder of undead Life – no wonder images of such a formless 'undead' substance of Life abound in today's science-fiction horror narratives, from *Alien* on. (Žižek 1999: 155)

In this passage, Žižek sets up a direct causal relationship that we can briefly examine: the more our (experience of) reality is filtered through cyberspace, the more we are confronted by the horrifying remainder of undead, formless, substance of life. Thus, the question, 'Am I living or dead?' begins to issue from the interaction with cyberspace itself. It is Žižek's explanation for this that is most telling, since 'this remainder is the price we have to pay for suspension of the paternal Prohibition/Law that sustains and guarantees our access to reality' (Žižek 1999: 156).

In taking up my interrogation of both of the above passages, we must ask which reality are we actually speaking of here? (1) 'reality itself', that is, if

there can be said to be such a thing, and I will return to this point in my analysis later on; or (2) 'the (experience of) reality that is mediated by cyberspace'? In fact, this question is already redundant, by the fact that in contemporary experience there is no reality that is already not mediated in some way by cyberspace; thus, to speak of a reality outside this relation to cyber-reality is, in some ways, already to speak of this relation in terms of a false dialectic: the actual position of reality is 'always already' posed in its relation to cyberspace, and it is from the position of cyberspace that the real of reality is already 'set upon' or 'set up', in the sense that Heidegger speaks of in terms of the uncanny power of the virtual that turns reality itself into a 'standing reserve' (*Bestand*) for its virtualization. As Heidegger writes in his famous address to an earlier question concerning technology:

The name 'standing reserve' assumes the rank of an inclusive rubric. It designates nothing less than the way in which everything presences is wrought upon by the challenging revealing. Whatever stands by in the sense of standing reserve no longer stands over against us as an object. (Heidegger 1977: 17)

Here, Heidegger's statement can be applied to the question concerning cyberspace as well, which also no longer stands against us as an object but must be understood as an uncanny power that transforms every objective relation into a standing reserve for further virtualization. I cannot develop the many relays that could be drawn from the current discussion to Heidegger's essay concerning technology; however, in a longer analysis it would be necessary to discuss the manner in which the technology of cyberspace has not only been stripped of its 'tool-like' character, and appears 'ready-to-hand' or 'standing by', but as in Žižek's passage, it also appears stripped of its objective character. It no longer stands over against us as an object, but rather appears as an ominous presence that challenges and reveals the manner in which reality is ordered and presented to us. Instead, I want to return to take up Žižek's first question: 'Is not cyberspace, especially virtual reality, the realm of *perversion* at its purest?' This question is repeated later on: 'So, again, doesn't our experience of cyberspace perfectly fit this perverse universe?' Of course, as you might have already guessed, my answer to these questions would be: 'Well, *yes* and *no*'. In turn, I would ask the following series of questions: why perversion (as such)? Particularly concerning 'cyberspace, and virtual reality', since Žižek seems to separate these two realms when they are normally conflated: why is 'virtual reality', as somehow distinguished but belonging to cyberspace, 'the realm of perversion at its purest'? I will quickly pass over a number of technical questions that would have to be taken up in a more extended analysis of this interpretation: What are the distinct, one might even say 'ontological' differences between 'cyberspace', 'hypertext', and 'virtual reality'? Can these regions or phenomena be reduced in such a manner as to designate the same thing? Moreover, taking up Žižek's frequent use of the term 'hypertext' to describe the particular narrative construction of 'cyberspace', is this not simply a metaphor that belongs to a more primitive stage of internet technology, one

that has been surpassed by more recent technologies and, thus, different imaginary constructions of the narrative possibilities of virtual space? Finally, isn't 'virtual reality' more of a genus designation, or category, under which one could subscribe 'cyberspace' and 'hypertext' as different species, or one could also say, one might even say 'historical' materializations (or actualizations) of the virtual?

Of course, these associations seem so natural to us now that we might even fail to notice this conflation of their different phenomenological senses, but what is important to notice is that the relation between a certain structure of desire and a certain material construction of the virtual space of fantasy are not related until they are joined together. What is essential to notice, therefore, is that Žižek's statement is performative of this relation itself in the sense that perversion already interprets virtual reality, and virtual reality is offered as an interpretation of perversion. After he performs this synthesis of the two terms, one cannot think of virtual reality without a certain interpretation of perversion that accompanies it, and vice versa; 'virtual reality' is immediately offered as an example of perversion (a universe, 'as in cartoons', to recall the example Žižek offers above) where 'a human can survive any catastrophe'.

But again, I ask, how so? Wouldn't this relation need to be 'deconstructed' in order that we might understand how they, these realms, are mutually constructed, one to another. In fact, the image of cyberspace that Žižek offers, as a universe without closure, can only occur against the backdrop of an experience of a universe that is closed, ordered by rules, by violent and deadly impositions of the real (which forces us to die or forces us to choose one of two sexes – to quote Žižek); but then, the world without rules or limits can only find its origin in this other one, as its hyperreal or 'uncanny' double. Isn't the necessity of finitude, the end of identity, a certain defence against another image of reality, or another kind of finitude, that is more like a comedy, or perverse ritual, in which scenes and contingent identities are endlessly repeated to the point of vanishing or losing meaning altogether? That is, can we not understand Žižek's own statements concerning cyberspace as issuing from a certain 'defence' against the finitude that is precisely imagined there, one which bears no resemblance to the old finitude of the mortal creature (*ens creatum*)?

### The 'virtual' in 'virtual reality'

A student recently interviewed me for a project on gender construction in video games and during our conversation it was interesting that our conversation turned to the increased number of game characters such as Lara Croft (*Tomb Raider*) who were gendered female, implying that this is a market dominated by male consumers – the student revealed to me that this form of fantasy life is still primarily masculine – that it did not pose a problem for male game-players to choose the 'identity' of a woman in virtual space. Here is evidence that the anxiety surrounding sexual division that occurs 'in reality', in 'real-sexed bodies', seems strangely suspended in that space. The boy does not find

it a contradictory and prohibited 'identification' to want to be the girl in playing the game, even in a room full of other boys. Although this may seem an insignificant thing, I find it very interesting. Think of the boy sitting on the living-room floor of an average suburban home in America playing *Tomb Raider*, suddenly finding himself attractive, his breasts fully and voluptuously shaped, his thighs muscular and taut, perhaps even a strange and totally new sensation in his groin area (as these characters are usually drawn to represent the ideal of a certain masculine image of femininity, which is to say, the ideal object of a gaze that assumes the image of voluptuousness). Of course, consciously, this identification with the female character may not go as far as self-identification, but I would argue that because he is capable of freely choosing, the unconscious identification with the reality of his sexuality is made to appear against this virtual freedom to choose either gender. In this space, the rules of the other game, the deadly and final game of sexual division, are suspended along with the finality that accompanies gender determination. One can be both male and female, both living and dead, living and dead at once. In both senses, what Lacan calls the 'lethal factor' of identification within the field of the other, is temporarily averted or disavowed. It means that the boy's identification does not return a glance on his own sexed identity, not consciously at least, and it is precisely the fact that it does not touch upon or threaten his 'real sexed identity' that both gives it a character of disavowal and which allows it to take place 'as purely virtual', meaning having no real effects. But I wonder if the real question is what does not appear, the real, is precisely the manner in which the real question of the subject's identity appears through this simple and seemingly innocent game? Recall again Žižek's guiding question: '*Is not cyberspace, especially virtual reality, the realm of perversion at its purest?*' From this example, drawn from the contemporary culture of virtual games, we would have to ask whether the boy's activity indicates a perverse structure, a perverse relation to the drive?

We might set this example against another that takes place in so-called 'real life'. During a recent episode of 'Oprah Winfrey', Oprah interviewed an English professor who, as a 'transgendered individual', has recently chosen to undergo an operation to complete 'his' identification with the female gender. However, the interview seemed to focus on the consequences of this transformation: he was married and now his wife was having difficulty accepting the reality of this transformation, since she could not admit to suddenly finding herself in a lesbian relationship with her former husband. Their relationship was now sexually estranged; moreover, the series of relationships this individual had formed in his identity as a man had now undergone transformation as well, as they all needed to be reconfigured to fit the new gender determination, including the relationship as a parent. As you might imagine, the discussion circulated around the human cost of this transformation. What interested me in watching this episode were two points that surfaced in the discussion. First, this individual's revelation of certain odd and socially awkward moments that had surfaced in his earlier sexual relationships with women, when the subject of conversation turned to what it was like to have breasts or a vagina, at

which point, the woman he was with would usually respond: 'Why are you asking me that?' 'It is a strange question?' That is, what is this 'uncanny' desire I sense lurking at the basis of this question?

The second point was that the wife had formerly accepted, as part of their sexual life, the moments when he dressed in her clothes and played the part of the woman as a regular part of the sexual games, but when clothes were exchanged for organs, the game just got *too real* and she was no longer into it, so to speak. Despite the exceptional character of this situation, I would say that it is quite common, and belongs to normative (phallic) sexuality, and often occurs when the magical supplement that conditions the fantasy is suddenly removed or alienated, and fills the subject with a feeling of nausea. How many times have we witnessed the moment when sexuality no longer pleases, even though nothing has empirically changed – the organs are the same, the same repetitive movements of lovemaking which has become a language of sorts, the same verbal accompaniments, the same props and devices – but suddenly, everything becomes different and the idea of the fulfilment of pleasure becomes a nostalgic or vindictive object of dispute, a *differend* if you like. It is precisely in this situation where nothing has effectively changed, but everything is different, that we can perceive the crucial position of fantasy that functions as the support of desire.

Taking both examples together, we might see a certain difference between the two in that in the second a certain line has been crossed over between the virtual and the real. The question is where to situate this line. In so-called 'reality', or in its virtual fantasy support? In the second example, what had always been virtual (the identification as a woman) has been actualized and no longer is present. Since gender identifications are not structured symmetrically – this is one of the meanings that belongs to Lacan's statement that 'there is no sexual relation' – the virtual is not occupied by his former identification as a man. In fact, one could say that the virtual has been extinguished, no longer occupying a position of latency in tension with the real, and appears uncanny – the unfamiliar familiar truth of his gender identification had been accepted (by his wife, by his colleagues, by his students) so long as it remained unacknowledged and unrealized, or in psychoanalytic terms, as long as it was not 'acted out'.

This returns us to the definition of perversion in Lacanian theory, which occurs when the denial of castration is acted out. As Lacanian analyst Lucie Cantin has argued, what is 'acted out' is the denial of the signifier (of castration) as having any final meaning or word in the subject's own desire: a denial that takes the form of a demonstration – and this is crucial, a demonstration that is addressed to the Big Other – concerning the nothingness upon which the Other's desire is founded. In other words, the pervert seeks precisely to 'make nothing of it' by demonstrating its uselessness for determining the reality of the subject. As Cantin argues, there is always a 'politics of perversion' because there is this performative and demonstrative element of 'acting out' that is always addressed to the other; however, what makes this 'acting out' so threatening is that the pervert chooses to materialize and demonstrate in real

terms (in terms of organs and bodies, pieces assembled from the organization of the drives) the nothingness upon which the symbolic order is founded. 'In attempting to refuse the split from the order of nature [for example, the split in the subject caused by sexual division], the pervert targets precisely the relation to the Other, the stage for the inevitable encounter with castration' (Cantin 1996: 157). In other words, the pervert aims to get at the truth of the symbolic order – that it is really nothing, or nothing really – and to make this truth part of a demonstrative and political exhibition. It has long been known that psychoanalysis is the knowledge (*savoir*) borne from hysteria. I mean this in both senses of the phrase: that is, psychoanalytic knowledge is procured from its knowledge of hysteria; secondly, in some ways, psychoanalysis identifies with the position of the hysteric in its knowledge of the unconscious. (The issue of transference is crucial here.) Perhaps this partly solves the question as to why psychoanalytic literature has been obsessed by the figure of the pervert lately; this is because the pervert occupies another position of knowledge, one that effectively resolves the unconscious by closing it up. In other words, the pervert offers a way out by demonstrating the truth of the symbolic order in the statement – it is really nothing!

### The question on everyone's lips: is Deleuze a pervert?

Oedipus, castration – that 'splinter in the flesh' – the Holy Trinity ('Daddy, Mum and me') – after all, *it is really nothing!*

These are the infamous refrains that appear in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. Among certain Lacanians, although not Žižek for reasons I will try to make evident in this section, this has often led to a wholesale identification of Deleuze and Guattari's theory of desire as occupying a classical position of a perverse interpretation of the drives, with the accent being placed on the multiplication of partial objects (those minimal zones of ontological consistency) in place of the signifier that has been 'disavowed', that is, sent off into the unthinkability of the drives and their endless production. In my previous writings, I have called this a fairly 'orthodox' reaction to Deleuze, one that has developed into something nearing a statement of heresy that comically resembles the famous heretical tribunals that belong to the history of the early Christian Church (such as the 'Arian controversy'). It doesn't help that Žižek has recently published (no doubt, against the advice of close friends and colleagues) an extremely bad book on Deleuze, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (2004), which can be read as a papal statement of sorts to end the controversy. It has been common knowledge that part of the reason that Deleuze and Guattari first thought to write *Anti-Oedipus* was in an effort to save Lacan from the Lacanians, that is, from the burgeoning institution of students and analysands that was developing around the master which more or less had the character of a new powerful Jesuit order. What is less known is that the model for their critique was taken from Spinoza's

*Theological–Political Treatise*, and Spinoza's own criticism of the priestly interpretation of Judaic law and its misunderstanding of the language and 'signs' of prophecy. According to Deleuze and Guattari's use of this powerful allusion, if psychoanalysis was ever to be restored to its own prophetic office, then its new priestly caste would have to be kicked out of the temple, that is, from the unconscious itself which was not to be found in any sacred writings (either those of Freud or Lacan). Here we have the constant assertion in Deleuze and Guattari's writings that the unconscious is not a theatre, but rather must be understood in some ways as purely in its machinic dimension.

In the classic genre of 'gamesmanship', of one good gesture deserves another, Slavoj Žižek published a book whose main objective is to save Deleuze from 'the Deleuzians'. In other words, the manifesto was intended (in the very image of Diotanus), to lead the foxes to the hound, that is, a group of hapless Deleuzians to their demise at the hands of a clever Žižek who would dispatch them with the cunning of the dialectic. And yet, imagine that this gesture didn't quite produce the results that were anticipated. The provocation was not lost on all Deleuzians of course (whoever they might be, myself included); in fact, most Deleuzians got 'the joke', but we didn't understand one thing the book said or how it could be applied to Deleuze's own philosophy. Above all, it was obvious that the extent of Žižek's knowledge of Deleuze's writings amounts to one work, *Logic of Sense*, which is admittedly Deleuze's most Lacanian book. As for the rest, his readings of Deleuze (when he chooses to read at all) are based mostly on rumour and hearsay, that is, they are drawn from his readings of Deleuzians themselves, which are mixed together to create his own inimitable house music. Finally, one perceives in the work's analytical diatribe the distinct flavour of years and years of having to suffer the insufferable anti-Lacanian ranting of *Anti-Oedipus* as the basis of Žižek's argument that after *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze betrayed his greatest insights and went somewhat bonkers. Of course, this is simply a revision of Heidegger's earlier argument concerning Kant: that he 'retreated' before the abyss opened by his own thought, and this is a fairly routine topic in continental philosophy. Nevertheless, Žižek's judgement echoes a complaint that is representative of a typical attitude of (mostly male) French academics, somewhat hysterical and slightly homophobic as well, who blame Guattari for leading Deleuze astray from either doing pure philosophy, or from maintaining a more respectful relationship with the master.

Turning now to my commentary on Žižek's text, I would argue that his entire reading of Deleuze, which telescopes the virtual in Deleuzian philosophy, is to reduce the virtual to the position of fantasy in the psychoanalytic reading, and thus the actualization of the virtual to the symptomatic problem of 'acting out' the fundamental fantasy that structures the neurotic universe. Thus Žižek reproduces an orthodox reading of the perverse interpretation of desire in Deleuze in which fantasy occupies the surface of 'sterile doubles' in Žižek's reading, which hover over real actual bodies. Furthermore, I will argue that a contradiction structures Žižek's reading of fantasy, which also symptomatically appears in his treatment of cyberspace, as well as in what he calls

postmodernism as a 'virtual field of sterile doubles and shifting identities' that are impassive effects that emanate from the conditions of late capitalism, or commodity culture.

In the form of a provocation, Žižek declares that Oedipus actually functions as the operator of deterritorialization in the sense that castration deterritorializes the original 'polymorphous perversity of the drives' on to 'daddy, mummy, me' coordinates, as the first fundamental relay to mapping the subject's relation to the drives on to the abstract coordinates of social space. Of course, this is a strictly Hegelian reading of castration as the movement by which 'substance becomes subject'. As Žižek defines it, it is 'the capacity to abstract a quality from its embeddedness in a bodily WHOLE, in order to conceive of it as no longer attributed to a certain substance' (Žižek 2004: 83). This quality is the subject itself which henceforth falls under the position of the signifier of castration ('whose signifier is phallus') (Žižek 2004: 83). And yet, we must ask the following question: if the concept of perversion is normally understood as 'bending' or 'deviation' of instinct from its aim, can the pre-ontological reality of the drives be understood by the name of 'polymorphous perversity'? Is this, in other words, not already an effect of castration, which projects a retroactive image of the pre-ontological reality 'before it'? It is at this point that we might understand the frequent references to Schelling in Žižek's analysis precisely to resolve this problem of the pre-ontological gap between virtual and actual. 'What if, as we know from Schelling, what makes the field of potentialities an actual reality is not the addition of some raw reality (matter) but, rather, the addition of a pure ideality (of *logos*)?' (Žižek 2004: 84). Therefore, '*actuality constitutes itself when a VIRTUAL (symbolic) supplement is added to the pre-ontological real*'. The logic is quite tortuous here: on the one hand, it is said that 'actuality constitutes itself' through the addition of a purely virtual (or symbolic) supplement; on the other, 'reality is constituted' by the extraction of the virtual from the real. Which is it to be, one might ask: addition or extraction? What is the difference between the addition of a virtual element, and the extraction of the virtual from the real? Moreover, is there any difference between the form of actuality and what Žižek refers to as 'constituted reality', and does this not come back to what Deleuze underlines as the difference between a 'determining determination' and 'determined determination'? Here, we already see a certain movement, repeated several times in Žižek's analysis, by which spirit (sense) is actualized by means of a virtual supplement, and at the same time, the embodiment of sense in a shadowy object that is detached from the body's pre-ontological image and yet continues to refer to this reality *qua* signifier. Thus, the virtual always refers back to the actual for its consistency or reality. In other words, we see the passage from the virtual to the actual, but also the passage from the actual body defined by the drives to the body that is mediated by an ideal supplement, which henceforth becomes the form in which all further actualizations of the virtual are structured by the signifier of castration.

As Žižek writes: 'the minimal actualization is here conceived as the actualization of the virtual, after its extraction from the previous actual' (Žižek 2004: 83). But then, we must ask: is every actual the result of the actualization of the

preceding virtual? Or is there an actual that precedes, since every virtual has to be extracted from some actual? Of course, this is a tautological construction by means of a mechanism of simple inversion (which is characteristic of Žižek's thought) so that, in fact, the virtual is reduced to the actual, is made identical with the actual (a 'sterile double'). To put it another way, the difference between virtual and actual is mediated by the identity of a middle term which operates their distinction through its own peculiar quality of belonging to both series. It is for this reason that 'the virtual' can only appear as a 'sterile double' of this ideal element, as the impassive sterile effect, since it has no reality in itself but rather exists *qua* pure appearance, or, in Žižek's words, as a pure and impassive surface of sense-event. As Žižek writes:

Therein resides the 'materialist' wager of Deleuze and Lacan: the 'desexualization', the miracle of the advent of neutral-desexualized surface of Sense-Event, does not rely on the intervention of some transcendent, extra-bodily force. In fact, it can be derived from the inherent impasse of the sexualized body itself. (Žižek 2004: 91)

At this point I will diverge from Žižek's reading in order to address the question of what Deleuze calls 'desexualization' (apart from Lacan's use of this term) in order to provide it with the positive form which assumes the privileged place of fantasy in Deleuze's argument. Why is it that Deleuze, in his commentary on masochism, always reserves a positive and crucial role for the position of fantasy itself as the 'virtual' of desire? But it is only in relation to the manner in which desire is normally actualized that fantasy is demoted, that it appears as a 'sterile double' of so-called 'normative' embodied desire. In other words, fantasy is always trapped in what Deleuze calls a strange detour by which fantasy is already subordinated by the body and to the forms of embodiment for the point of its actualization, and these embodiments already refer to the framework of institutions and myths for the most common fantasies (or the virtual expressions of desire) that populate them. Consequently, this is why fantasy always appears as a 'sterile double'. For Deleuze, the point is to liberate the surface of fantasy itself as the true element of desire (rather than its partial embodiment), which allows it to erect itself instead of being pulled down into bodies and objects as the possibility of actualization. This is the radical Nietzscheanism of Deleuze's thesis concerning perversion, an 'overturning of Platonism' which is intended to release the surface of appearances themselves (of fantasy) from their secondary and derivative position in the organization of the idea of desire: an overturning which Deleuze and Guattari define earlier on as 'desiring economy'.

This is why to liberate desire cannot be understood in terms of simply changing the idea of its form of embodiment: that is, displacing the site of castration to some other point of the body, or to some other object that will function as its cause. It is not to displace the object-cause of desire a little to the left or a little to the right (or, more accurately, to cause it to regress to a point that can only be apprehended from behind, or to bring it a bit forward to the front

where it becomes mistaken for a number of ordinary objects). For Deleuze, as was also true for Lacan, true perversion is not about an arrangement of the body with organs, which is simply a deviation or the displacement of an object that continues to have the phallus as its signifier and, thus, the same aim as 'normative sexuality' – the embodiment of my desire in an object, or in the body of another.

Doesn't this dialectic between the fantasy and embodiment play itself out in the most quotidian and sad economy of 'Oedipal' sexuality? In its most routine organization, the subject demands that the other's fantasy life subjugates itself and takes our body as the object-cause of desire. In other words, we demand nothing less than the complete relinquishment of the entire question of desire, as well as the determination of sexual difference as the condition of possibility for the other to 'choose' (a repetition of the trauma of the forced choice of sexual difference itself) our body as the 'true' representative of the fantasy that conditions desire; thus, my body, or rather something in the place of my body, becomes the virtual (fantasy) support that lends consistency to the meaning that the subject craves. Our body becomes the 'representative representation' of desire, and we will accept nothing less than the complete renunciation of the entire question of desire that does not take our body as its complete cause. Whether implicating a heterosexual or homosexual object-relation, the structure of the fantasy that conditions the desire of the other is identical, which is why Lacan increasingly emphasized the position of phallic *jouissance* as somewhat indifferent to the question of the object-choice. It is for this reason that desire cannot be reduced to instinct, since it already appears as a strange species of universal right; it is only when the subject's 'right to desire' is accorded a sense of universal agreement by what Lacan called the 'Big Other' (the symbolic order) that desire itself can assume a generalized form that is guaranteed by the pressure of social demand, according to which 'my desire' can have no other means of realizing itself than through the particular object relation that the other's body is 'fashioned' to represent. (This, in a very precise sense, is my interpretation of the Lacanian formula that the signifier represents a subject for another signifier.) It goes without saying, of course, that the body is a 'disqualified object' (the subject itself), and there are other causes that lead the person to this strange detour of command and obedience, which have to do more with a secret and interior surface that is installed deep within the other's actual body, the surface of the subject's fantasy itself. In other words, the body is only a surface that has first been 'installed' by the fantasy itself, and only functions as a strange and indirect quasi-cause of desire, which is why it can often 'change places', can suddenly be found to be lost or missing, or sometimes suddenly to fly off, 'transfer its magical effect to other bodies', as in Lacan's wonderful narration of the myth of the lamella.

Freud himself observed early on that sadism is in fact *the* universal form of 'normative sexualization' of the drives; whereby, the original aggression that is directed toward objects in the world and other bodies finds an 'amalgamated' form in which 'a portion of the instinct is placed in the service of the sexual

function, where it has an important part to play' ; as Freud further defines it, 'this is sadism proper' (Freud 1957b: 163). I would suggest that the current libidinal economy is masochistic, which underlies the difference between Freud's time and our own. According to this scheme, the subject's own bodily image (*Körper ich*) occupies the position of fantasy which is actualized in the other's agreement to determine this image as the pseudo object-cause of desire. Any disobedience, even the slightest ambivalence, in response to this 'order' will entail serious consequences. It is around the dominant role of 'sadism proper' that Freud locates the infamously complementary relation between sadism and masochism, that is, around the 'characteristic of femaleness' in the subject who obeys. The question of gender is inconsequential to this obedience, and it is just as true that the roles of sadist and masochist can be exchanged in the sexual function. In fact, it is precisely the 'exchange character', or we might even call it 'vulgar economism', which is the most common and remarkable characteristic of current moral philosophy concerning the sexual function, and which confirms a certain claim that the economy of an Oedipalized masochistic impulse has been fully incorporated in the contemporary neurotic universe. But this is only under the terms of a tacit contract that must be honoured by both parties to the sexual function in order to preserve its air of equality in sharing the roles of subjugation: that of giving orders or commands in the sexual function. For example, if an archaic form of 'sadism proper' resurfaces in the position of either party, it threatens to destroy the economy of the sexual function and to violate the contract on which it is founded, often leading to accusations of breach and prayers for remedy and for the meting-out of punishments and remedies (including an enforced period of abstinence, or threats concerning the cessation of the sexual relationship, but most often, treaties are struck for the party who caused the offence to assume a subjugated role in the foreseeable future as compensation).

But if the current sexual function is founded upon the contract – even in the so-called areas of sexual deviancy and perversion, where the character of the contract becomes acute and highly visible, that is to say, subject to formal rituals of agreement and consensual mechanisms of control – one cannot say that either party can be understood to have actually originated its terms. In other words, who frames the original contract itself? In response, it is clear to us that the juridical and moral language that currently frames the sexual function, and renders its exchange character most evident, is itself founded upon the institutions and the myths that resolve the entire question of 'how' desire can be embodied. Above all, it provides us with a determination of the 'desiring subject' as a subject of 'rights and contracts', which is why there is a definite politics and an ethics that surrounds the contemporary myth of normative sexuality, and especially its avatars of perversion and abnormality that must always accompany to give this myth reality. This is why, ultimately, in terms that define the positions of the subject, I see no difference today between fucking and jurisprudence. It is not by means of the body and its various elements (its blood, its saliva, its various discharges and ejaculations) that the sexual relation is formed out of the body's materiality, but rather by 'words and deeds'.

If one does not believe in this myth, nor in the idea that so-called 'normative sexuality' (heterosexuality) is not as homogenous as it is made out to be by some, then certain gaps or 'states of exception' suddenly emerge. Any cursory review of the standard pornographic literature would immediately reveal the fact that the so-called 'heterosexist institution' has accounted for every possible combination of organs, including the transsexual possibilities, and is therefore not the monolith it is reported to be for purely political (or strategic) reasons in the representation of other alternatives. In other words, what has happened to Hegel in the field of postmodern representations of philosophy finds its accompaniment in the representation of the heterosexual form in the field of sexuality; both have become the creations of a purely formal straw-man argument. Not so surprisingly, this institution is always found to be populated by petty sadists and masochists and minor perverts, all of whom enjoy the little freedoms afforded them under the terms of the contract and within the secret space that is carved out of social and political institutions where these little freedoms can be expressed. However, it is not surprising to us that such 'free expression' has one universal constant: 'that my fantasy must have a body, that it must be embodied by the other, who becomes morally responsible for its actualization!' It is the presence of this demand that accounts for the nausea we feel before our most common neighbour who we suspect of the most concupiscent and dirty little secrets in the only space that is afforded him, where he is allowed to express, to actualize his desire – his little island of sovereignty. Therefore, I find it quite fantastic that there is such a great silence today concerning the perversity of the normative sexual function, which can be likened to the silence around masturbation in the nineteenth century, which Foucault called a practice in which everyone partook, but no one actually spoke about except by making it the object of scandal and licentious disobedience among children.

In his preface to the famous edition on 'The Lives of Infamous Men', Foucault wrote that at some point in the seventeenth century, at the same moment when the name of literature was born as well, a sudden and quite unexpected and surprising transformation occurred in the relation between power, discourse and the quotidian, in

an altogether different way of governing the latter and of formulating it. For ordinary life, a new *mise-en-scène* is born: . . . the minuscule trouble of pain and transgression is no longer sent to heaven through the scarcely audible confidence of the confession: it accumulates on earth in the form of written traces. (Foucault 1994: 166)

As Foucault writes, through this new literature of the ordinary relations of power:

A certain number of consequences followed from this: political power penetrated into the most elementary dimension of the social body; the resources of an absolutist political power, beyond the traditional weapons of authority and submission, could be brought into play between subject and subject,

sometimes the most humble of them, between family members and neighbours, and in relations of interests, of profession, rivalry, of love and hate. Providing one knew how to play the game, every individual could become for the other a terrible and lawless monarch: *homo homini rex*. (Foucault 1994: 168)

Can we not say that today it is in the sexual relation itself that the historical despotic personality has found a perfect place to hide, and it is for this reason that the sexual relation is kept under constant surveillance and control (especially by those who profess a neoliberal ideology of freedom for individuals and the 'right to their desire'). In other words, the universe that Sade announced is not some state of exception, or some distant and abnormal cousin of our own. *The idea of universal prostitution – the absolute right to use the body of the other as the instrument of my desire – has become the underlying command that institutes the moral and legal dimensions of the sexual function today, as well as the paranoid condition that transforms this absolute right into the different descriptions of the manners in which it can be violated by power.* That is to say, the more that desire is framed by the language of the discourse of rights, even human rights, an inevitable consequence is the creation of new policing mechanisms and new forms of control over those occasions where power becomes too literal to the political meaning of liberty that underwrites the language of desire today. But does this distort the nature of desire itself? As Bataille wrote concerning what Sade also foresaw, both eroticism and liberty are reduced in this manner. 'In liberty, liberty is impotent; yet liberty still means the decision how to use oneself' (Bataille 1986: 128).

Is not the fear and trembling that we feel before 'the lover' itself a constant testimony concerning the return of the despot, the dreaded and monstrous image of *homo homini rex* who always lurks beneath the lover's mask? In other words, the primal father that we have murdered so long ago can suddenly wake up next to us in bed and turn a terrifying glance in our direction, full of menacing desire and unimaginable longing. Perhaps this is why Deleuze, in his reading of the dominant fantasy of masochism (after Freud), always determines its true meaning from the position of the 'sadistic-anal' phase, which is to say that he determines it in relation to the figure of the father and despotic personality. 'A father is being beaten' is the formula he gives to this fantasy. Accordingly, the couple does not appear in this case under the normal terms of active (masculine) and passive (feminine), but rather as 'accomplices' (or doubles) who conspire together to free themselves from the institutions and the myths that have evolved to replace the figure of the tyrant-king and Oedipal-father.

In conclusion, I come back to the dread that is specific to Oedipus: the dread of the non-human sex in the human sex, the dread of what Deleuze calls 'desiring machines' – the dread of 'real masochistic machines', 'real schizophrenic machines', 'real paranoid machines'. In some ways, David Cronenberg's films are always drawn to explore this non-human sex, the manner in which they hook up to capital, and to strange politics of perversion.

Think, for example, of the desire-machines in *Videodrome*, or in *Crash*, where a certain supplementary phallus which replaces the mark of castration determines the possibility of a new community and causes the subjects to begin to drift. Desiring machines are much more powerful than the calculated organization of interests or ends. Judith Butler's work also has the effect of producing a radical critique that causes Oedipus to tremble, but also the same question of how an effective politics can be drawn from her position. Her critique shares a great deal with the insights of Deleuze and Guattari in this regard, and harkens back to Marx's insight that the revolution of the proletariat was not 'politics', which conserves the institutions of civil society, but rather a demolition and a wiping away of these institutions themselves – and strangely enough, the institution of sexuality, in particular, not simply because the heterosexual institution of unequal gender expresses the subjugation of a class of labour to the domestic sphere whereby the division of labour remains unrecognized because it takes place in a 'private sphere' (*idia*) of the household economy (*oikos*). This is the contradiction that determines the distinction between genders in Marx: as a relation of production in the division of labour that goes unrecognized, or is repressed below the existence of real interests and classes, and then all the cultural mystique that is built around this contradiction whose ideological expression is 'femininity' (i.e. a division of labour that is masked as a species-differentiation).

Here again, there emerges an extreme form of alienation in the form of a species differentiation; although sexual differentiation does not assume or actualize the distinction between the human sex and the non-human sex in an essential way that Marx intuited: the former is founded upon the latter as more primary biological differentiation. Lacan himself returns to this in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, when he showed that the difference between the sexes is founded on a more primary cleavage between sexed reproduction (which introduces the necessity of death and finitude into the subject) and the immortal 'lamella' which constitutes the substance of the drives. Here, Lacan can be said to be addressing the same distinction perceived by Marx, that of the distinction between human sex (based on finitude and the substitution of organs and partial objects in the arrangement of the drives) and non-human sex (which represents an arrangement of the drives that knows nothing of death or finitude, and might be equated with 'life'). Thus, this meditation might have helped us to identify the non-human sex that Marx first referred to with the immortal substance of life itself, the pure productive capacity of inhuman desire.

### Lacan's 'Dark God' and ours

In her monumental *Jacques Lacan & Co.* (1990), the intellectual biographer Elizabeth Roudinesco has been able to document brilliantly a certain theme that runs throughout Lacan's entire work, and which concerns what I would call the problem of the absence of the father, or the 'decline of Oedipus'

myth.<sup>22</sup> (I would say that Lacan took the classical trait of Freudian pessimism and gave it a sublime face in the troubling figure of feminine *jouissance*.) Throughout his career, Lacan continued to worry and brood over what he saw as the declining position of the 'name of the father' in postwar societies in Europe, and particularly in reference to American society. America is a land of perversion, to borrow a quote from Deleuze, a land without fathers; that is, it occupied a relatively identical position for the European Freud at the beginning of the twentieth century (and for the Parisian Lacan after World War II) as cyberspace does for the Slovenian critic Slavoj Žižek at the beginning of the twenty-first century. I would say that it is nothing less than the troubling figure of the pervert that appears symptomatically in Žižek's writings on postmodernism and cyberspace.

Here, I recall a line from Freud's early case on obsessional neurosis ('The Rat Man'), in which Freud suddenly compares the obsessional neurotic's structure to the phenomena of mobile homes in America, which can suddenly be lifted off their foundations and travel miles to set down again in another location (Freud 1957c: 245). From this comment, one gets the impression that Freud had the idea that all homes in America were 'mobile', and could be moved from location to location; in fact, one has the hilarious image of houses passing each other on the highway (a scene, it is true, that is factual and not uncommon in the United States), occupied by happy families waving to each other, smiling, with children leaning from the second-storey windows and the parents standing arm-in-arm on the front porch. Of course this may only be Freud's fantasy of America, not unlike the hilarious one we find in Kafka's first novel of the same name (*Amerika* with a 'K', aptly enough), which begins with the infamous passage describing the Statue of Liberty raising a giant sword in the air. Like the phenomena of the mobile home itself there is something of the real that is at the centre of this fantasy. The real appears precisely in the fantasy as that which is '*unheimliche*', as out of order, or strangely non-sensical. In this case, it is the 'home' (*Heim*) itself, that is uncanny ('*unheimliche*'), the idea of the home without foundation or an essential relation to place or site is what strikes Freud as strange.

But what does this have to do with the obsessional neurotic? As Freud goes on to argue, it is that the location of desire (or libido), of castration, in the obsessional neurotic appears without foundation, that it is constantly mobile, and can transport itself from site to site, object to object – that is to say it is not founded in the repression, but rather constitutes itself through what Freud defines as the denegation or denial. Here we approach what Lacan will later define as the structure of perversion, and some have not noticed that Lacan does not define perversion, or what he calls 'the perverse universe' through the classical topos of the fetish, but rather in relation to obsessional neurosis. In his famous commentary on Freud's case-study of the 'Rat Man', Lacan highlights the central place of debt and the avoidance of debt (or guilt) that drives the Rat Man from place to place. It is this avoidance, or 'disavowal' of a debt to the symbolic order, that structures his desire, an avoidance that Žižek also locates in the world of cyberspace, as a 'disavowal' of the reality of castration.

I will briefly recount the hilarious journey the Rat Man takes to avoid the debt he owes in the place of the father – who had been a ‘*Spiebratte*’ (a gambler) – to a certain Lieutenant A—, who had paid a sum for a pair of lost eye-glasses (or pince-nez). As Freud interprets the perverse scenario that ensues, the real problem begins when another surrogate of the father, a certain Czech captain, after divulging the deliciously sadistic story of the rat torture (a pot of rats being placed over the buttocks, which immediately begin to bore into the victim’s anus), follows with the command: ‘You must pay back the 3.80 crowns to Lieutenant A—!’, which, Freud remarks, had sounded in the Rat Man’s ears like an allusion to the unpaid debt of his father (Freud 1957c). The coincidence of these two statements leads to their association: the identification of the father’s debt with the rat torture. We can see here the hysteric’s question, ‘Am I a man or a woman?’ suddenly take on obsessional form: ‘If I assume my place in debt to the father, then I’m really a dead man, or worse, become my father’s whore, that is, forced to pay the father back in installments (*Raten*). It is this sordid fate that Rat Man must defend himself against at all costs, and to aid in his defence (which was, after all, a defence against marriage [*hieraten*]), he devised the elaborately circuitous train manoeuvre to pay back the Lieutenant via the young lady at the post office at Z—, a six hour round-trip diversion from where Lieutenant A— was posted, in addition to inventing the impossible condition to the payment: ‘Yes, I’ll pay back A as soon as my father or the lady in question can have children’, which is to say, never (since the lady’s ovaries were removed recently in a gynaecological operation, and there is some indication in Freud’s commentary, but also from Rat Man’s aversion to prostitutes, who receive payment in ‘so many florins, so many rats’, that the father was a carrier of syphilis from his former days in the military).<sup>23</sup>

I will now translate all this back into psychoanalytic language, consistent with our earlier discussion of Žižek. It is clear that the Rat Man avoids assuming the place in the symbolic that is assigned to him by castration (‘the name of the father’) by diverting to another location and setting up a series of intermediaries and surrogates (Lieutenant A—, the Czech captain, the woman at post-office Z—), and ensuring that his debt to the father in fact never reaches its destination. Like the six-hour train ride to the post-office at Z— in order to avoid the one-hour train ride in the opposite direction where A— was stationed, this itinerary perfectly illustrates the outward-and-back loop that Lacan described as the circuitous path of the drives in perversion. In point of fact, this outward-and-back movement of the drive around an object is described as proto-typical by Lacan, even or especially, in the case of the so-called hetero-sexual object choice. The only difference is which route is determined as normative, socially sanctioned, and which is seen to be deviant or perverse. (Again, I must stress that there are just as many different arrangements of the drives in heterosexual relationships as in so-called homosexual ones; heterosexuality is not the monolith that it has been made out to be for strategic and political reasons, but rather could even be regarded as the very seat of perversion.) From the perspective of the drives, if I can alter a famous statement by Freud, *if it is indeed true that all roads lead to Rome, it is also just as true that the one you take, the one you are on now, will never get you there!*

Nevertheless, it is this circuitous loop of the drive that also defines its compulsive and repetitive character, since no surrogate object or intermediary can ever stand in permanently for the place of the missing phallus, which is why this circuit must be repeated indefinitely, although each path of a new circuit leaves an indelible trace until the field of desire itself becomes a vast network of previous paths and connections in a manner that very much resembles the imaginary locus of cyberspace. It is at this point that we can turn back to Žižek's earlier analogy in order to get a better understanding of the problem he perceives now that we have a better concept of the role of perversion in his analogy. As Žižek argues, in this hypertext rhizome, one is ineluctably enticed in conflicting directions; we, the interactors, just have to accept that we are lost in the inconsistent multiplicity of referrals and connections. The paradox is that this helpless confusion, this lack of final orientation, far from causing an unbearable anxiety is oddly reassuring: the very lack of a final point of closure serves as a kind of denial which protects us from confronting the trauma of our finitude (Žižek 2000: 37). In fact, what Žižek describes as cyberspace is nothing other than what Lacan called language, but a pure language, a pure automaton, a pure symbolic order – one that is closer to the language of psychosis. In other words, Žižek seems to define a virtual reality that I would argue is completely without 'the virtual', as a universally closed-circuit or loop of the death-drive, without end or outside. I will return to this again below to show that this is the exact definition that Žižek also assigns to the form of late capitalism, from which there is also no end in sight, and thus no virtual space for the inscription of history.

What is 'virtual' remains, strictly speaking, contingent or unactualized in the present instance of a system, whether this system is understood in biological, linguistic, economic, or psychic or political terms (that is, in terms that seem to expect this system to undergo variation or change). However, in a system where all possible variations are already included as just so many variables of the system itself, and where each instance is understood to be a repetition, then there is no 'empty space' within the system for the virtual to enter. It is a perfectly closed (or open), and has achieved a certain principle of homeostasis (or degree zero), which Freud had very early on defined as the death-drive. The absence of this 'empty space' from of all three phenomena is fundamental to Žižek's line of analysis, which is founded upon the position of hysteria. This is because it is only through the thematic exclusion (or foreclosure) of some traumatic content that the empty frame of the universal appears as a terrain for hegemonic struggle. One can see here why the perverse solution to castration (as the traumatic content of sexual division for the speaking subject) becomes so lambasted and a constant point of diatribe in Žižek's argument, since for the pervert castration is no longer traumatic because it is simply denied (not repressed, as in hysteria) and, in a certain sense, ceases to exist as the empty frame that relates one speaking subject to another by means of its constitutive impossibility – *our common and quasi-universal encounter with sexual difference is, in a certain sense, what causes us to relate to one another and drives us toward one another as a species*. Thus, it is significant to note, it is only for

humans that the empty frame that comes to be occupied by the signifier (of sexual difference) becomes traumatic, and this is a fundamental proposition for Freud as it was for Lacan, as his frequent reference to the mating habits of pigeons demonstrates. But for the pervert, sexual difference is no longer a problem but rather a challenge to be overcome, and the solution usually involves the satisfaction of a sadistic impulse at the expense of the other.

In conclusion, returning to what I earlier defined as 'the decline of Oedipus' myth, which in some ways is a hallmark of psychoanalytic interpretations of modern culture; in *The Ticklish Subject*, Žižek addresses this myth directly in terms of the distinction between hysteria and perversion, where he writes:

This opposition of perversion and hysteria is especially pertinent today, in our era of the 'decline of Oedipus', when the paradigmatic mode of subjectivity is no longer the subject integrated into the Paternal Law through symbolic castration, but the 'polymorphously perverse' subject following the super-ego's injunction to enjoy. The question is how we are to hystericize the subject caught in the closed loop of perversion (how are we to inculcate the dimension of lack and questioning in him) becomes more urgent in view of today's political scene: the subject of today's market relations is perverse. (Žižek 1999: 248)

Here, in this passage, we see the return of the same language to describe cyberspace, although this time it finds its proper terrain – late capitalist market relations as a closed loop of fluid transformations that has no outside or no 'empty place' for the subject to question this order. In the perverse universe there is no position of truth as there is in the hysteric's universe. Thus, in Žižek's reading, the perverse figure emerges as the new form of subjectivity (in Kojevian fashion) commensurate with the material and economic relationships of late capitalism. My reading of Žižek's reply is that it represents a threat from the hysterical position, the threat of the obsessional neurotic's universe. This, in fact, is the perverse universe, which borders on psychosis. What Žižek defines as the perverse universe of cyberspace is the perfectly 'closed/open' nature of a pure symbolic order that comes into being in late-capitalism, an order that is prefigured by cyberspace. Again, as Žižek describes:

The pervert's universe is a universe of the pure symbolic order, of the signifier's game running its course, unencumbered by the Real of human finitude. Isn't cyberspace also a universe without closure, unencumbered by the inertia of the Real, constrained only by its self-imposed rules? (Žižek 1999: 248)

And yet – here I return to my original question – does cyberspace, such as Žižek describes, in fact exist? Is it a reality, or rather, can we characterize it as belonging to the order of a pure fantasy? This would lead us immediately to a second question, which, it is true, is more complicated and will be difficult to answer. Is there any such thing as a 'perverse universe' in all its purity, that is, unencumbered by the real, a completely closed – or what amounts to the same

thing – a perfectly *open* universe? In other words, the universe of 'virtual reality', like the 'perverse universe', and like the 'universe of late capitalism' are all posed as complementary images of this same system. In virtual reality, the question of desire is resolved (or 'closed up') by the infinite play of fantasy; in perversion, the question of castration is resolved by an infinite number of manners of arranging the drives; in the fields of economy and politics, the question of history is resolved by an infinite number of transformations of global markets, and the question of politics is reduced to its fundamental policing and regulating functions (which has already happened to a great degree), that is, in regulating and policing the excesses and least palliative effects of economy, *but!* – and this is an important but – in a way that does not seek fundamentally to transform the system itself, but rather just to make this system more 'peaceful and orderly', so that it can operate more smoothly. Here, we see a fundamental distinction between a Marxist definition of the state apparatus as a system set up to manage the affairs of the bourgeoisie, and the current function of the state, which is more to maintain a precarious balance with the effects produced by the system itself, and which can no longer be defined as an instrumental function in service of particular class interests. That cyberspace has surpassed the coordinates of ideology also underlies the fact that the fantasy no longer appears against its instrumental determination as strategic false consciousness, but now as a 'standing reserve' for the field of capital itself.

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### III POLITICS

#### Chapter 5

## On ‘the Grandeur of Marx’

### Deleuze and ‘the dialectic’ (aka, Marx and Hegel)

As readers of Hegel and Marx, we know that the dialectic is a proven means of thinking difference, in that by tracing its movement, ‘difference finds its own concept in the posited contradiction’ (Deleuze 1994: 45). As readers of Deleuze, however, we also know that a ‘philosophy of difference’ refuses a concept of the dialectic that is founded by contradiction, because this method fails to ground a species of difference that is ‘in itself’, and ‘the negative and negativity do not even capture the phenomenon of difference, only its phantom or epiphenomenon’ (Deleuze 1994: 52). Deleuze writes at many points that contradiction is less and not more profound than difference; less profound means that it has less depth (or volume), that it is superficial (a surface phenomena), an effect of real difference. If difference can be traced or projected on to a flat space, this is because it is already reduced as an element of the space in which it appears (as either contrary or negative), and thus is no longer itself an effective force of differentiation. (According to Althusser’s revealing phrase, it is ‘already found to be pre-digested’.) This is why Deleuze says of the difference that appears via the negative or negativity, that it is only the phantom and epiphenomenon of difference because it continues to manifest itself for us (that is, for consciousness) as the ‘shadow of a more profound genetic element’ (Deleuze 1994: 55).

Although the old dialectic ‘makes difference’, it is true, it is also fashioned from abstract generalities (the one and the many, the whole and its parts, large and small). It produces contrary concepts, or contradiction, by which being is divided into itself and everything it is not. Yet, this is not effective difference, but rather formal or logical difference. As Deleuze writes, ‘it is the image of difference, but a flattened and inverted image, like the candle in the eye of an ox’ (Deleuze 1994: 51). Infinite representation (the Hegelian dialectic), therefore, suffers from the same defect as Aristotelian finite representation: ‘that of confusing the concept of difference in itself with the inscription of difference in the identity of the concept in general’ (Deleuze 1994: 50). Hegel takes the dialectic only so far, to the limit of contradiction, while real, effective difference remains *underneath* this limit in such a manner that sets the mark for philosophy following the ‘age of Hegel’.

Given the above claim that Hegel has, so to speak, ‘set the mark’, it is remarkable – and I am certainly not the first to note this! – that Deleuze did

not choose to rectify the Hegelian dialectic. That is to say, like Marx after Hegel, he did not seek to correct or to repair its false and distorted image, or like Althusser after Marx, to complicate its principle of 'simple contradiction' so that the dialectic assumes a more complex and 'overdetermined structure'. On the contrary, according to Deleuze, it was Hegel – not Marx, interestingly enough – who pushed the dialectical determination of difference to its ultimate limit, 'that is, to its ground which is no less its return and reproduction than its annihilation' (Deleuze 1994: 45). Here we find a more implicit claim that subsequent attempts to capture the movement of difference by means of a dialectical principle only discover the real already annihilated in its ground; this claim would be significant for any discussions concerning the relation between Deleuze and Marx, pro or contra. The statement concerning 'the grandeur of Marx' aside – a statement that has recently acquired the status of a missing gospel! – I will argue that the profile of any true relationship between Deleuze and Marx must be found in the domain of concepts.

The following section will briefly take up and develop these observations in order to explain why Deleuze does not resort to a dialectical 'image of thought' to ground his philosophy of difference, even though this does not mean, as I also hope to demonstrate, that he abandons a dialectical procedure of posing problems and solutions. My discussion will focus on several key passages on the dialectical image of thought from *Difference and Repetition*, which I will discuss in the context of Althusser's essay 'Contradiction and Over-Determination', an essay that Deleuze himself refers to at a critical point of his argument against contradiction and the negative.<sup>24</sup> After developing these points, I will conclude with some preliminary comments about the nature of Deleuze's version of the dialectic, which is based on a determination of the internal (or as Deleuze often says 'genetic') character of any problematic: 'the imperative internal element which decides in the first place its truth or falsity and measures its internal genetic power, that is, the very object of the dialectic or combinatory, the "differential"' (Deleuze 1994: 161–2).

To begin I recall a version of Feuerbach's thesis: it is only because the gods were created out of our confusion that they continue to confound us. We might also apply this maxim to the confusion that has surrounded the dialectic. If the image of the dialectic was the product of a certain mystification (caused by the projection of ideational form into real material processes of differentiation, or the substitution of effect for cause), then perhaps the fact that the proper representation of the dialectic continues to elude us is not due to any profound or hidden meaning, but rather because its representation already appears in the form of a false problem, one which distorts the nature of movement itself in thought and in matter. It is possible – as I will cite in a moment, Althusser suggests this himself – that an entire tradition of Marxian enquiry has been preoccupied by the false problem concerning 'true image' of the dialectic. This line of Marxist enquiry holds implicitly to the belief that once we get it right, things will work out in due course; that is, once we understand how it (the dialectic) works, then history will resume a dialectical path. (Hence, we have witnessed the repeated calls to 'purify' the dialectic, or rigorously to fashion a 'specifically Marxist dialectic'.)

If the dialectic, as Lenin said, is realized as the conception of contradiction within the very heart of things, in their development, but also in their non-development, their distortions, and mutations, and even in their disappearance, then we will have attained the definition and specificity of the Marxist contradiction, the Marxist dialectic itself. (Althusser 1965: 223)

For Althusser, the dialectical problem of representation itself takes the form of a paradox, or more specifically, the well-known aporia of 'the rational kernel in the mystical shell', which occasions the famous meditation and textual analysis that occurs in the beginning of the essay 'Contradiction and Over-Determination', concerning the image of inner (live, rational, perhaps I might even risk saying 'spiritual') essence and outer (dead, mystical) form. This aporia undergoes several variations until we arrive at the conclusion that it is not simple 'inversion', which would only amount to a change of dress, of one (dead) appearance (or metaphor) for another. Because the dialectic is contaminated in principle, Althusser argues, what is required is not its simple correction or rectification, but rather a transformation in such a way that the aporia of the shell and the kernel are replaced by a new structural determination that will throw some light on, not the old principle, but rather 'the specificity of the Marxist dialectic' (Althusser 1965: 91). To his credit, Althusser crystallizes this problem by fully realizing the above aporia in his 'theoretical practice of reading Marx', but it could also be said that this new method did not make the dialectic any less mystifying. Althusser did not, in concrete terms, solve the problem of the dialectic, but rather deferred its solution, by a more tortuous route, to 'the last instance'. As an aside, we might ask whether or not this solution had the effect of reintroducing the Hegelian absolute moment, or 'circle of circles', back into Marxist theoretical practice, although this time as this circle appears from 'below', as a kind of zig-zag line or de-centred cyclone of material history following the law of 'uneven development'?

Turning now to our commentary on Deleuze, we might notice that everything said concerning the dialectic up to this point has been posed in terms of problems and solutions. As is well known – and this is true for Althusser as well – the dialectic already represents a certain solution that is situated in practice of Marxist theory, and it is from here that the problems and questions have arisen that have challenged this theory's coherence (for example, the problem of 'the weakest link', or the problem that Althusser calls '*les survivances*', which are those points of potential social contradiction that are present only to the degree that they are '*dépassé*' and thus appear, as in dream work, as the ghosts of a future anterior). In order to resolve such problems on a theoretical level, Althusser and Deleuze both argue that problems of this type are only shadows that must be viewed from the perspective of a 'deeper', more primordial problem which corresponds to the social solution originally posed in the division of labour, that is, the primary contradiction in Marxist theory, the division between the forces of production and the relations of production. In the encounter with this primordial problem, which is the problem of production as such, society attempts to solve it by means of the division of labour, and not only once, but repeatedly.

In one of those odd, but characteristic moments in his exposition of the problem-differentiation scheme (namely, the dialectic), Deleuze does not refer to the concept of Marx, but rather a passage from the historian Arnold Toynbee 'who, it is true, is little suspected of Marxism':

We could say that society confronts in the course of its existence a succession of problems that each member must solve for himself as best he can. The statement of each of these problems takes the form of a challenge which must be undertaken as a test. By means of this series of tests, the members of society are progressively differentiated from one another. (Deleuze 1994: 327n)

As a result, the problem itself gradually appears 'overdetermined', the problem of multiplicity, whether the concept of multiplicity here is understood in the very presence of multiple classes that are the products of this earlier division, or of the many historical formations of society that correspond to the different stages of production, some of which continue to coexist and become co-implicated in a present social division (though in the manner of '*les survivances*'). Marx himself addresses both expressions of multiplicity early on in the Introduction to *The Grundrisse*, in the sub-section 'Externalization of historic relations of production'. However, in a footnote that refers to Althusser's reading in *Pour Marx* Deleuze argues that 'it is still the case that for Althusser it is contradiction which is overdetermined and differential, and the totality of these contradictions remains legitimately grounded in a principle contradiction' (Deleuze 1994: 311n). This last remark highlights, in my view, a fundamental difference between Deleuze's problem-differentiation schema of the dialectic, which I will outline below, and that of Althusser, for whom there is only one form of contradiction from which all other contradictions are derived, like a 'genus' that undergoes infinite subdivision into the multiplication of 'species' of contradiction in a differential structure. Moreover, this schema recalls Althusser's debt to psychoanalytic theory at this point of his project, particularly the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan, and one can easily substitute the two terms in the title 'Contradiction and Over-Determination' with the two primary attributes that define the Freudian concept of the unconscious: contradiction = condensation ('fusion'), and overdetermination = displacement ('mutation') – i.e., the totality of multiple contradictions subsumed under one concept in general, and at the same time, the effective distribution (or 'dispersal') of this overdetermined and differential multiplicity following the law of 'uneven development'.

In Chapter 4 of *Difference and Repetition*, 'Ideas and the Synthesis of Difference', Deleuze extracts the following dialectical progression of the problem-differentiation schema:

- first, the affirmations of being are genetic elements in the form of imperative questions;
- these develop into the positivity of problems;

- the propositions of consciousness are engendered affirmations which designate cases of solution;
- each proposition, however, has a double negative (1) which expresses the shadow of the problem in the domain of solutions – in other words, it expresses the manner in which the problem subsists in the distorted image (2) of it given in representation. (Deleuze 1994: 224)

If we were to apply this problem-differentiation scheme on a Marxian terrain of the problematic, what would it look like?

'The problems of a society, as they are determined in the infrastructure in the form of so-called 'abstract' labour [b], receive their solution from the process of actualization or differentiation (the concrete division of labour [c]). [Here I note that we have skipped the first postulate [a], 'the affirmations of being in the form of imperative questions' for reasons I will return to explain below.] However, as long as the problem [abstract labour, forces of production] projects its shadow [d-1] over the ensemble of differentiated cases forming the solution [the concrete division of the *socius*, or the relations of production], these will present a falsified image [d-2] of the problem itself'. (Deleuze 1994: 224)

In commenting on this dialectical progression, I will make two observations or clarifications of the schema that Deleuze offers, after which I will address two potential objections from a Marxian perspective.

*First observation:* In the last postulate, Deleuze implicitly rejects a dominant concept of ideology as a certain 'after-pressure' (*Verdrängung*, derived from the psychoanalytic concept of 'repression') that is projected to distort the true nature of the problem, deferring the true representation of the problem to another level of consciousness (even that of a dark or latent intentionality). By doing so, he implicitly corrects an error that has taken place in the historical appropriation of the psychoanalytic concept of 'the unconscious' (*das Unbewusste*) by the tradition of Marxist theory, especially pertaining to function of 'ideology'. In his foundational article on 'the unconscious', Freud himself stated that its effects cannot simply be referred to the presence of 'another consciousness' (albeit even one that is latent), which would reduce a dynamic understanding of the unconscious to a mere 'subconscious' level of psychic functioning; in short, the effects of 'repression' or 'distortion' would simply be inferred from the position of another subject, as we have seen repeatedly in early theories of ideology. Deleuze does retain the notion of 'false consciousness' as what he defines as the field of 'objectified illusion', since, as he writes, 'falsification accompanies and doubles the problem' (Deleuze 1994: 224). In other words, Deleuze retains the critique of the 'speculative illusion' associated with Feuerbach's criticism, the illusion that consists of the identification of thought and being, of difference in the concept from difference 'in itself'. As Deleuze defines it, the negative is both the shadow of the problem as such,

and at the same time, the objective field of the false problem in which all forms of nonbeing appear: false oppositions, distortions, illusions.

Yet, in keeping with Althusser's criticism of the Feurbachian tradition, Deleuze does not commit a simple inversion: that is, he does not locate the movement of difference on the surface of the real. Deleuze is not a vulgar empiricist. Rather, 'the origin of the illusion which subjects difference to the false power of the negative must therefore be sought, not in the sensible world itself, but that which acts in depth and is incarnated in the sensible world' (Deleuze 1994: 224). What is it exactly that 'acts in depth' and then is 'incarnated in the sensible world'? Deleuze replies, 'affirmations of difference' (see [a] above), that is, when the positivity of problems are 'posited' (in the real, in its depth) giving rise to propositions and, in turn, to 'the objects of which are those differences which correspond to the relations and singularities of a differential field' (Deleuze 1994: 224). As Deleuze immediately goes on to qualify, everything is reversed if we begin with consciousness, and try to trace the propositions back to their problems-ideas (which are by nature unconscious). If we do, then 'illusion takes shape' (via resemblance, limitation, opposition), and 'a shadow awakens and appears to acquire a life of its own', as occurs in Hegel, for example, when 'spirit' is born as a subject that acts in the world. Still, we find that there is some gesture of inversion in Deleuze's reading; for example, when he writes the following: 'Negation is difference, but difference seen from its underside, seen from below. Seen the right way up, from top to bottom, difference is affirmation' (Deleuze 1994: 55). This inversion has two aspects. First, inversion is from difference determined as negative (as not or no) to difference understood as a positive affirmation, but which is not simply 'the negation of negation'. Thus, all negation is derivative or reactive in relation to a prior affirmation, a relation which it seeks to limit or contain. 'As Nietzsche says, affirmation is primary; it affirms difference, while the negative is only a consequence or a reflection in which affirmation is doubled' (Deleuze 1994: 228). Second, Deleuze attaches this affirmation to a positive thesis of 'multiplicity', the coexistence of multiple worlds, which he draws from Leibniz. Difference is the object of an affirmation, and only affirmations can effectively make difference. There are multiple perspectives which are not gathered into one centre which orders them in advance, but rather which enter into 'play'; this would be different from the Hegelian representation of spirit as subject thinking itself (self = self), as itself and what it is not (the world, the object). On the contrary, there is no subject underlying the appearance of difference, no preliminary inside that relates itself to an outside, or projects its own limitation on to an alien or external reality. Is the dialectical form retained? Yes, but 'contradiction', especially the primary contradiction, is abandoned as less profound than a plurality of forces that begin to differentiate themselves. For example, in the context of our discussion of the Marxist dialectic, this would imply that the division of classes is not given for all cases, or that this division does not assume the same form each time for all possible worlds. In other words, if I could put this in terms of a problem that I believe concerns us all today: how do we get from difference that is determined, already over, and in this sense negative or

nonbeing (the division of the classes), to a difference that is full, effective, not yet determined? That is, how do we get from a world in which the dice is always already cast to a world that is just on the verge of a throw of the dice? Deleuze replies that it is by means of an idea which cannot be located in the real, but rather in an act that works in the depths and incarnates itself in the sensible world. This is a revolutionary Idea for which there is no sufficient reason, no grounds in this world, because the Idea already appears as a 'shadow' of a more primary affirmation, in the form of unrealized possibility, or 'a survival' – which is to say that it embodies a form of non-sense when it is determined by the concept of contradiction. This leads me to my second observation and potential objection.

*Second observation:* If we noted above that Deleuze skips the first postulate, 'the affirmations of being in the form of imperative questions', we can now find it as the object of what he calls 'a transcendental social faculty'. Revolution, for example, is the object of affirmation as well as the genesis of imperatives upon which this affirmation depends. It is a virtual object, meaning that the idea of revolution exists, and it is from its positive reality that its existence is 'actualized' according to divergent lines that represent the multiple states of this idea. Thus, the 'idea' of revolution is the transcendental object of a social faculty, which means that its concept cannot be 'traced back' from the propositions and cases of a solution which are posed in consciousness. Here, Deleuze is arguing (against Althusser) that the being of the primary problem (i.e., the being of production) cannot be traced back beginning from its states of 'non-actualization', or non being; therefore, it cannot appear in the position of 'the last instance' of a negative dialectical progression, no matter how 'rigorously' (or 'scientifically') conceived.

Deleuze argues that the negative is merely the turning shadow of the problematic upon the set of propositions that subsumes it as cases. For example, when the problematic of production is already subsumed under the negative of the division of labour, the mode of production is already determined (negatively) by the concrete relations of production. A critique that begins with the present division of labour as the primary instance of the social dialectic fails to grasp the true nature of the problem, 'but assumes as given the affirmation ready made in the proposition' (Deleuze 1994: 206). On the one hand, to affirm the same 'division of labour as given for all times effectively distorts the true social problematic from which society itself begins: for which the question of 'division' becomes an imperative affirmation, but the form of division is not yet ready-made. On the other hand, to assume the problematic of division itself, prior to the determinate cases of distinct classes that are already the products of division, is the problem of a revolutionary perspective that continues to exist alongside all its negative states. This is why, despite all its 'negative realizations', the Idea of revolution continues to exist as a reality today, even if it remains purely virtual, and often appears as a shadow of a shadow.

We might illustrate this last statement by returning to the two central problems that appear highlighted in Althusser's analysis: 'the weakest link', and the

'survivals' (*les survivances*). We already noted that they appear as problems in Marxist theory for which solutions must be created, but that they also appear in a negative form as defects of the idea, that is, as either the displacement of the virtual object (e.g., revolution), or as its 'non-actualization' despite the determinate conditions that were present in certain historical cases (e.g., England, Germany). In both incarnations it is this 'contradiction' that must be accounted for in order to meet the crisis of the Marxist idea of revolution. But here, there is the potential critique of Marxist dialectic in that the idea in both cases assumes a form of the possible, and this explains why its object is already viewed negatively: as the non-realization of the possible (viewed from its non-being, so to speak, that is projected backwards as the obstacle to its actualization); or as a defective object, a defect which serves to condemn it to the position of a future anterior. We might briefly return to the problem of the Russian revolution, for example, and say that it is not a question of its defect, but rather of its image (or shadow) which has determined the transcendental object for the other social faculties that followed it, and which acted as their fateful 'double' (the shadow of totalitarianism, that is, the case of one solution of concrete social division of production).

As Deleuze advises, 'we must guard every time against this manner in which a perfectly positive (non)-being leans toward the negative non-being and tends to collapse into its own shadow, finding there its most profound distortion, to the further advantage of the illusion of consciousness' (Deleuze 1994: 223). In the conclusion of *Difference and Repetition*, 'the negative' is defined as the third transcendental illusion that belongs to representation. As a result of its 'mystification' – and I note that Deleuze employs this word in this context which has clear origins in Marx – 'intensity is inverted and appears upside down' and the power of 'affirming difference' is 'betrayed' by limitation and opposition which are the first- and second-dimension surface effects (i.e., shadows) (Deleuze 1994: 47).

In order to ward off the inevitable objections that might be raised here, it would be a mistake to understand the nature of the problem in the sense of going back to the beginning, to the primary affirmation of being (i.e., production), as if to a moment that is prior to its distinct incarnation in society as a problem corresponding, historically, to a determinate solution or case. Rather, as Deleuze argues, this primary affirmation can and does occur, but '*as differential relations around certain distinctive points . . . relations that can become centres of envelopment within a continuum, centres of possible implication or involution*' (Deleuze 1994: 47 – my emphasis). This is Deleuze's Leibnizian solution, which holds that individuation precedes the actual determination of species, even though it is already preceded by the whole differential continuum (for example, the concrete division of labour). Later on, in the works undertaken with Guattari, these 'differential relations around certain distinctive points' will be described in terms of different 'becomings' that are actualized within a continuum of differential relations (e.g., 'becoming-woman', 'becoming-animal' or 'becoming-imperceptible'), and which are precisely characterized as 'centres of possible implication or involution'. Moreover, the

primary being of production will be recast in terms of primarily productive nature of the unconscious that one finds from *Anti-Oedipus* (1973) onward, and it is here that we can locate the first term of the above dialectical progression, in which '(a) the affirmations of being are genetic elements in the form of imperative questions'.

Is not Deleuze articulating the condition and criteria of a radical theoretical practice by saying that it must carry out a genesis of affirmation at the same time that it carries out critique of the negative? Deleuze defines very clearly at several points of *Difference and Repetition* that a critique of negativity can only be conducted on the basis of an ideal, differential and problematic element, 'on the basis of an Idea' (Deleuze 1994: 203). The idea is a multiplicity, for which Deleuze reserves the name of 'positivity' and in which there is no negativity or limitation; 'the critique of the negative is radical (here meaning 'rooted') only when it carries out a genesis of affirmation and, simultaneously, the genesis of the appearance of negation' (Deleuze 1994: 224). This forms an axiomatic rule of Deleuze's analysis in later works with Guattari, and we might also note here a certain parallelism with Althusser's famous statement from the opening of 'On the Materialist Dialectic', concerning the two requirements of a 'theoretical practice': the production of knowledge (theory) and the critique of illusion, in one movement (Althusser 1965: 166). However, we might also note the crucial difference implied in the substitution of the 'genesis of affirmation' in Deleuze's two criteria for 'the production of knowledge' in Althusser's.<sup>25</sup> This suggests that no effective critique of the negative can be produced outside an affirmation of a difference which is fully positive, or creative, and it is on the basis of this difference that the negative appears as the shadow produced by this primary affirmation. As Deleuze writes, 'practical struggle never proceeds by way of the negative but by way of difference and affirmation; that of deciding problems and restoring them to their truth; and finally, by evaluating their truths always in terms of the imperatives upon which they depend' (Deleuze 1994: 208).

But this positive evaluation leads to a second potential objection in that it would seem to leave the field open and indeterminate, so to speak, concerning where effective and affirmative difference can be engendered within an existing society. It allows for a subject to lay claim to the idea of a virtual object (society itself) in order to deploy its positive affirmation of difference; and in turn, to critique the negative forms that appear to threaten this affirmation. It even allows, or at least, does not prohibit, the coexistence of multiple affirmations, all of which grasp this virtual object as so many societies that are 'perplexed', as Deleuze says, within the same social body. As a result, we seem to be evoking a situation similar to the one recounted in 'Plato and the Simulacrum', in which there is of a series of claimants, pretenders and lovers all of whom lay claim to the idea!<sup>26</sup> But if we were to imagine for this situation that all affirmations are equal, or that all differences can coexist peacefully without undergoing negation, then we would fall into the error of the beautiful soul – a charge, it is true, that has all too often been levelled at Deleuze's conception of difference as affirmation. However, in order to posit such a

charge one has to assume the position that already reduces every difference to equality, that is, to already trace or project it on to a flat space, to place it on the slope of the identical and 'abstract' difference. At each point that Deleuze rejects 'negativity' as ultimately creative of difference, he immediately defends this assertion from the position of the 'beautiful soul' in Hegel's philosophy. Does this mean that he already assigns himself the problem of the beautiful soul, one who does not so to speak, get his hands dirty with real negativity, but chooses rather to live above the violence idealizing pure difference? (This has certainly been an underlying theme of the reception of Deleuze and Guattari's works by different critics, especially by feminists and Marxist critics.) In response to this potential accusation, Deleuze draws up two avatars of those who 'justify destruction': the poet and the politician. This returns us again to Plato, this time via the detour of Marx. The politician justifies the destruction of difference in order to maintain the identity of the established order, while the poet justifies destruction in order to release a maximum of difference. What Deleuze rejects, however, is the frequent alternative employed to wed affirmation to passive contemplation of the world, and effective difference to bloody contradiction, to 'the real world' made by so-called 'history'.

Finally, we might ask what this alternative might mean in practical terms and how it pertains to Deleuze and the dialectic (aka, Hegel and Marx)? Here I recall that difference is negative only from the bottom; from the top down it is positive, affirmative. Yet, immediately there is a possible objection which can be formulated as follows: one can only know difference from below, that is, in its concrete incarnation which implies, in its negative form. One can never know difference 'in itself', as purely affirmative. As we have already seen earlier, this criticism opens the trapdoor already prepared for by Hegel: the critique of the 'beautiful soul' who claims to know difference in its pure or unadulterated state ('uncontaminated', as Althusser would say). To clarify Deleuze's response to this problem, allow me to quote two passages from *Difference and Repetition* where he skirts this danger as well as the accusation of the beautiful soul. First passage:

In its essence, affirmation is itself difference. At this point, does the philosophy of difference not risk appearing as a new version of the beautiful soul? The beautiful soul is one in effect who sees differences everywhere and appeals to them only as respectable, reconcilable or federative differences, while history continues to be made through bloody contradictions. The beautiful soul behaves like a justice of the peace thrown onto the field of battle, one who sees in inexpiable struggles only simple 'differends' and misunderstandings. Conversely, however, it is not enough to harden oneself and invoke the well-known complementarities between affirmation and negation, life and death, creation and destruction (as if these were sufficient to ground a dialectic of negativity) in order to throw the taste for pure differences back at the beautiful soul, and to weld the fate of real differences to that of the negative and contradiction. (Deleuze 1994: 52)

Second passage:

Clearly at this point the philosophy of difference must be wary of turning into the discourse of beautiful souls: differences, nothing but differences, in the peaceful coexistence in the Idea of social places and functions . . . but the name of Marx is sufficient to save it from this danger. (Deleuze 1994: 204)

Addressing only the second defence, we must ask how the 'name of Marx' alone can be sufficient to avert this danger? Is this not tantamount to turning the name of 'Marx' into a shibboleth, a chant to which one resorts as a sacred talisman in order to ward off the shadow cast by Hegel? No. Rather what this declaration implies, I believe, is that after Marx the problem of the dialectic itself changed in principle (specifically the principle of its repetition in thought and being in one another). The difference between Deleuze and Althusser concerning this proposition is profound, since for the former it is an object of affirmation; for the latter, this affirmation must itself be produced by the labour of the negative (i.e., 'theory'). In short, these are two very different perspectives concerning the 'problematic' of difference.

The crucial point is that the system of Hegel is no longer possible for us, and therefore can be characterized as 'a survival', the negative double of an idea introduced in this world by Marx. Perhaps it is only in the sense of this repetition 'rigorously affirmed', that today the name of Marx is already enough to dispel the ghost of Hegel, but only under the condition that we affirm this difference as real and not as merely possible, or 'theoretical difference'. This would be the idea of a philosophy of difference: one that could no longer be reduced to the mere appearance of difference – that is, neither to the difference between two propositions of consciousness (the difference between philosophy and scientific materialism in traditional Marxist theory, for example), nor merely the difference between two cases of generic affirmation, or 'theoretical positions' that lay claim to the name of Marx today. Already, this is only true because philosophy was itself no longer possible *after Marx* – at least in that old style! – and it is left only to a contemporary philosophy of difference to affirm this – *with or without the name of Marx!* But then, wouldn't this also be one possible future of the dialectic image of thought as well, owing to the legacy and to 'the grandeur of Marx'? It is odd that nobody has seriously considered this as a dialectical possibility as well.

### On the 'end of (universal) history'

Starting from my last observation: if the difference in the dialectic is 'rigorously affirmed', meaning that it is not merely suspended to the position of the 'last instance', what would happen to an earlier language and concept of historical materialism? Specifically, the concept of 'necessity' and the old language of 'universal history'? This question already begs another, more primordial one, which is the following: If the earth had a philosophy, what would it be? For

example, would it take the form of a political theology (as in the case of Marx himself), or rather something more resembling a political geology? It is clear that the earth knows nothing of transcendence, but only of the plane of immanence over which the continents are like great lovers who drift apart, then together again, forming one great mass. In other words, the earth dwells on a plane of immanence that has no 'history' (rigorously conceived) and so the question (for us, who are merely its intermediate surface-dwellers) is what the earth thinks it is becoming today?

Here, in response to this question, what Deleuze and Guattari call their 'geophilosophy' in their last book must be understood as a revision of the language and the concepts of historical materialism: as the creation of an alternative language and conceptual plane that is equal to the question of the earth (which they call the only true universal!), perhaps even the invention of a new language of geomaterialism, or of a political geology. If Deleuze and Guattari come to speak more of a political geology than in terms of a political theology, this is what makes their talk of emancipation somewhat distinct both from traditional Marxism, as well as 'New Age' versions such as that of *Empire* (Hardt and Negri 2000), which might well be understood as a 'compromise formation' in this regard: as the marriage of the grand Marxist narrative of universal history with the geological metaphors borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari's second volume of the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project, and in particular, the concept of 'deterritorialization'. Of course, Hardt and Negri also recognized the need to renovate the conceptual language of Marxism in order to confront the latest stage of capitalism and the immanent reality of globalization, which is why they borrow heavily from Deleuze and Guattari's language of geophilosophy, even while they choose to keep the old narrative framework of universal history in order to tell the story of 'passing through Empire, to get to the other side' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 206).

I would not be the first to observe that *Empire* represents only the most recent attempt to recast Marx's *Grundrisse* for a contemporary Leftist audience; in many respects this revision takes its model from Deleuze and Guattari's own earlier revision in *Anti-Oedipus*, and not as much from the subsequent plane of concepts that is proposed in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In fact, the second volume of the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project eschews many of the previous strategies with regard to the concepts of Marx and Engels and, instead, seems to opt for a more purely conceptual plane of geophilosophy (perhaps even alluding to Marx's own shift from the Hegelian influenced early writings for the new abstract machine of political economy that is invented in *Das Kapital*). Nevertheless, the question that both of these approaches continue to share is the fundamental social problem of how to create a revolutionary movement of desire and, at the same time, to ward off the intoxicating fantasies associated with what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the 'full body of the despot', or with the return of a new 'state-apparatus'. Thus, their viewpoint runs counter to the appeal to 'theological forms of sovereignty', even those by an oppressed people, who often dream of a new despot, or of the nostalgic return of what Foucault defined as 'a pastoral form of governmentality', such

as the Hebrew state, or the Christian monarchy (Foucault 1997: 68). This hope, according to Deleuze and Guattari, often turns out to be the same one that always leads us back to the theology of the state-form (the benevolent nation or 'Fatherland', the 'good despot', the household order of *paterfamilias*). Their frequent critiques of the theology of the state-form, and of the desires and superstitions that are often attached to its avatars (including various national and racial ideologies), can be understood to belong to the Spinozist tradition of political philosophy, a tradition that has preoccupied Negri as well, and which can be formulated in terms of a certain question from *Anti-Oedipus* that also appears in the following passage from *Empire*:

A long tradition of political scientists has said the problem is not why do people rebel but why they do not. Or rather, as Deleuze and Guattari say: 'the fundamental problem of political philosophy is still precisely the one that Spinoza saw so clearly (and that Wilhelm Reich rediscovered): Why do men fight *for* their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?'. (Hardt and Negri 2000: 210)

Of course, Deleuze and Guattari's response to this problem always surrounds the question 'how to create a Body without Organs?' and, at the same time, 'to avoid another judgement of God'; or, in plainer terms, how to encourage new social formations of power that do not fall back into repressive states of political desire?

If the problem of the state-form of sovereignty has been one of the most difficult questions to resolve historically, then there is good reason that it appears in Deleuze and Guattari's final work *What is Philosophy?* as the first and final question of what they define as geophilosophy, since the fundamental problematic of 'how to make a philosophy with the earth' already appears across a ground that is occupied by concrete social formations, and by the historical societies that appear today more and more as throws of the dice over the same ground. Each time, we might say, the solutions can only be deemed as partial and unresolved, since each that is actualized can only be as good as what Spinoza first defined as the 'common notions' that comprise the ideal image of freedom belonging to each historical society. In other words, each time we can only say that the solution to the problem of society itself could only have been as good as the plane of concepts it occupied, and which constituted its historical ground. As Deleuze has remarked many times, concepts do not fall from the sky readymade; rather, they are pieced together from earlier concepts, for 'every concept relates back to other concepts, not only in its history but in its becoming and present connections' (DG 1994: 19). In order to understand better the composition of the plane of concepts proposed by Deleuze and Guattari's 'geophilosophy', both its possible becoming as well as its present connections must be distinguished from previous traditions of political philosophy (and from Marxism, in particular).

From the perspective of the earth (the immobile continuum, the ground of production, the body without organs), so-called 'human societies' only appear as coded blocks (either mobile or static), or as inscriptions organized

into distinctive patterns of cities and territories, more recently into populations. The earth is tattooed by the societies that emerge to represent the points of its surface that are overcoded, and human beings do not appear 'on the surface', as they are attached to it by their organs (by their eyes, their hands, their mouths, their genitals, by their great and overdeveloped anuses), in order to make *another* metabody. It is at this point, as with Aristotle, where human beings cease to be defined primarily as biological entities and become elements of an entirely different assemblage called a *socius* or 'social machine'. In turn, this creates the condition for the emergence of the great territorial machines that have distributed themselves across the surface of the earth which have bodies of human beings as their parts, and their organs are now attached directly to the earth through the intermediary of territorial signs, which are composed of matter drawn from the hybrid inscriptions of soil and blood. It is from these primitive territorial machines that the great races and the territorial bands emerge and strap themselves to the earth's body like lines that criss-cross the Egg, (BWO), carving out internal neighbouring zones, remote exterior precincts, frontiers and wastelands, boundaries and borderlines, and what Kant earlier described as the 'vast spaces of communication' (the oceans, deserts, the air) that lie between the doorsteps or portico of the *domus*, the homeland (*Heimat*), the native soil (*nation*).

Far from being a static notion, the concept of space that this process of stratification expresses is wildly productive. The specific characteristic of space that the processes of stratification expresses can be defined as a *viz activa*, by the tendency to proliferate and to multiply and become a 'manifold', something that Deleuze later on explores through the concept of 'the fold' (*le pli*). Throughout this process, the earth must be defined as a thing that remains consistent, immanently connected through all its points or surfaces (interior and exterior), or rather as a plane of consistency that becomes more compact and hardened the more strata or layers are produced. In other words, with each new surface actually produced through stratification, the earth withdraws even further into itself, becoming more impenetrable and *in-itself*. (I will comment on this tendency later when we return to the notion of 'deterritorialization'.) Human societies can therefore be described as 'megamachines' that cover the earth and thus comprise its new surfaces of inscription and encoding. The question I have raised above concerns whether these surfaces can be arranged successively in a historical description, or whether their arrangement must be sought in the distinctive process of stratification itself.

Here, the description of societies as 'megamachines' requires us to clarify all this talk of machines in Deleuze and Guattari's writings. Simply put, a 'machine' is actually a far more accurate manner of speaking of societies, since all societies are composed of the relations of production and surfaces of inscription (or what they call recording), that is, the relations of production and recording that are inscribed directly on to bodies which form the different surfaces of social machines. As they write: 'The social machine is literally a machine, irrespective of any metaphor, inasmuch as it exhibits an immobile motor and undertakes a variety of interventions: flows are set apart, elements

are detached from a chain, and portions of the tasks are then distributed' (DG 1983: 141). Of course, this description refers back to Marx's image of the relations of production that take on distinctive characteristics at each stage of the evolution of the history of capitalism. Human societies are made up of lines, some of which are segmented and appear hard and easily noticeable on a surface of inscription-recording; others, however, are more supple and appear further down (such as the flows of desire that are inscribed in the infrastructure of production itself), or take the shape of flows that circulate over the entire surface (flows of money, for example, that circulate in patterns that are difficult to perceive on first glance). Of course, there have been many different machines, as many as different organizations of the *socius* determined by the relations of production, from the primitive territorial machine, to the despotic feudal machines, to the machines of the nation-state, to the globalized machines of late capitalism. In each case, 'flows are set apart, elements are detached, and tasks distributed'; however, in each case as well, new strata are produced that bear distinctive characteristics and new elements, which is why Deleuze and Guattari constantly emphasize the notion of 'territory' in distinguishing between different strata, or arrangements of the *socius*, in order to observe 'what has changed' in passing from one level, or stratum, to the next.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, it is only from the current perspective of this last machine that we can speak of the wholesale dismantling of all the machines that preceded it – thus, of the decline of the nation-state machine and its gradual incorporation into the machinery of global capitalism which today covers the earth and constitutes a new surface of inscription and recording (or memory), and which unites all events and bodies into one *megamachine* at 'the end of history'.

It will be necessary to await capitalism to find a semiautonomous organization of technical production that tends to appropriate memory and reproduction, and thereby modifies the forms of the exploitation of man; but, as a matter of fact, this organization presupposes a dismantling of the great social machines that preceded it. (DG 1983: 141)

Perhaps this is why Deleuze and Guattari often claim that capital is perhaps the most 'miraculous' of all previous social machines, since it appears that everything that happens has been preordained to happen for its benefit, to bring it into being and to make it the internal presupposition of every previous *socius*. As Deleuze once remarked: 'The first capitalists are waiting there like birds of prey, waiting to swoop down on the worker who has fallen through the cracks of the previous system. This is what is meant by primitive accumulation' (Deleuze 2004: 268).

Nevertheless, this is partly an illusion that belongs to the 'history of capitalism' itself, that is, with the idea of universal history which is completely consistent with the encoding of capital and its specific line of development on to the full body, the earth, of the process of stratification in which it plays the role of an '*Urstaat*' that organizes every other social form that preceded it, even those

that are remote in time or place, and some that have yet to be invented ('the most ancient and the most recent forms of exploitation of man by man') (DG 1983: 140n). On the contrary, following the observations by Maurice Godelier, Deleuze and Guattari argue against what could be understood as the underlying theoretical assumption that belongs to the current thesis of globalization: rather than the West's line of development being universal because it recurs everywhere else, it must be understood as universal because it has recurred nowhere else; 'it is typical therefore [only] because, in its singular process, it has obtained a universal result'.<sup>27</sup>

To describe the class of the 'universal' as 'typical', or general, is very different from saying it is determining 'in all cases'. (This recalls the problem of logic based on syllogism.) On the other hand, many current theories of globalization (including, I might add, the theory of 'empire') continue to mistake the two types, or species of universality, which can be defined in terms of the distinction between 'totality' and 'singularity' (or the contingency of the Western line of development). Why is it, one might ask, that most critiques of the capitalist system insist on the universality of the first kind, that it has and will continue to recur everywhere else according to the line of development first established in the West, rather than developing the critical insight that its form of universality corresponds to a line of development that belongs to the West and 'could recur nowhere else'? In other words, the more that the current critiques of capitalism continue to 'universalize', the more they pretend to speak from the position of the full body of the earth, the more they continue to perpetuate the myth of globalization according to one line of development, that is, according to a singular process of stratification that encodes the entire surface of the earth. Hence, the *singular universality* that belongs to the Western line of development is expressed in the form of *absolute imperium* that characterizes its political organization of democratic states, but all along a line of a singular interest that must find its own limit 'at a certain point' in other organizations that are always located 'outside' the West.<sup>28</sup> As Deleuze and Guattari write, 'if we say that capitalism determines the conditions and the possibility of a universal history, this is true in so far as capitalism has to deal essentially with its own limit, its own destruction – as Marx says, in so far as it is capable of self-criticism (at least to a certain point: the point where a limit appears, in the very movement that counteracts this tendency)' (DG 1983: 140). In this regard, we see that the problem of 'the West' is, in a certain sense, equivalent to the problem of 'Oedipus' in Deleuze and Guattari's argument – when viewed as a form of universality that captures desiring-production, recoding all deterritorialization according to its own singular axiomatic, which becomes 'typical' as a result. 'The West' produces the *universal* as its own 'plane of immanence', which becomes its overarching myth of stratification, that of *absolute imperium*.

As Deleuze and Guattari argue, however, it is only from the perspective of the full body of the earth (or 'the absolute point of deterritorialization') that the idea of 'universal history' can first appear not only as 'retrospective' (with respect to its own line of development), but also 'contingent, singular, ironic and critical'. This remark is extremely important with regard to the possible

manners in which capitalism may encounter its own limit 'outside' or 'beyond the line' of its own internal development, and specifically the development of Western capitalist societies. In some sense, the limit in question concerns the appearance of its universality when viewed from the perspective of other societies, which could only appear as 'contingent, singular, ironic, or critical' – in other words, as finite arrangements of interest that always flow back to 'the West'. The critical remark made by Godelier above is extremely important for perceiving how the form of juridical sovereignty that underlies Western democratic institutions and ideas – and the idea of universality especially – has functioned as the immobile motor of the expansion of the Western line of development in the form of *absolute imperium*.

As Godelier observes, even the theoretical idea of socialism (developed, in part, in compensation for the forms of exploitation that belong 'retrospectively' to 'the history of capitalist societies') now confronts other societies and 'cause[s] them to leave behind the most ancient as well as the most recent forms of exploitation of man by man'.<sup>29</sup> But we might ask: *to leave them behind for what* if not for the new forms of exploitation that belong to the technical process of the production of capital, and for the benefit of 'a new impudent race of Masters' (Deleuze) and alongside the creation of new exploited classes that populate the different regions of the earth today? This is what Godelier refers to as 'the authentic universality of the West's line of development'. Here, we should not only accept this remark as ironic and critical, but also see how it prefigures the way in which Western notions of universality (but also, social justice, equality, fraternity, etc.) are today appearing more differentiated and singular from the perspective of other societies, in the light of their difference from actual practices. Perhaps this is also what Deleuze and Guattari suggest by the statement that capitalism must 'deal with its own limit, its own destruction', and this would occur precisely at those points where its own 'authenticity' is constantly being placed in crisis, where its expression of universal history appears against the background of its difference from other lines of development, in the realization that this history could indeed recur nowhere else, and would no longer cause other societies to 'leave behind' the forms of exploitation of man by man. Such is already the case, I would argue, in different regions of the world and in certain 'other societies' where there is a preference for 'primitive territorial machines' (that is, from the perspective of 'the West' concerning the so-called return of 'archaic religious fundamentalisms') over the adoption of 'Western ideas', *including the idea of socialism!*

As Marx foretold, capitalist societies have already shown themselves to be extremely resilient and capable of 'self-criticism', which is why their dominant ideology is destined to become democratic in form. In fact, democracy and its accompanying ideologies of 'self-legislation', then 'self-management' and even 'productive self-criticism' (i.e., the critique of ideology) have been shown time and time again to improve the exploitation of labour capacity, whether through the creation of the new languages of social 'polity', or in the gradual replacement of education today by new technologies of 'population management' and 'biopolitical administration'. This problem is crucial in the sense

that it calls into question every previous 'critical dogma' concerning the position from which to launch an effective critique of capitalist society – one that either assumes a position 'outside' its processes of production and recording (the position of 'truth' that operates within the traditional critique of ideology), or which becomes overtly nostalgic, even religious in its appeal to the messianic intervention of a new subject of 'universal history'. As Deleuze argued:

Ideology is not important here: what matters is not ideology, nor even the 'economic/ideological' distinction or opposition; *what matters is the organization of power*. Because the organization of power, i.e., the way in which desire is already economic, the way libido invests the economic, haunts the economic and fosters the political forms of repression. (Deleuze 2004: 268)

It is no accident that the most recent critiques of capitalist societies have been reoriented around locating a critical limit that is internal to capital itself, and developing their analysis from a position of immanence rather than transcendence, or from the perspective of external synthesis of a social agency. This even forms a certain *sensus communis* that many theories today all share in common, having benefited from Marx's earlier intuitions concerning the productive limit of capital itself, and from the intuition that the most critical relation to capitalism is not external but is rather immanent in capitalist processes of encoding desire directly at the level of bodies. The manner in which this question was posed by Deleuze and Guattari in 1974 was to ask what is the nature of the limit that belongs to capitalist societies; their response was the schizophrenic who embodies the extreme limit, or boundary formation, of desire that they found to be inherent in late capitalist society. Thus they write, 'Schizophrenia is indissociable from the capitalist system which originally conceived [of it] as an escape, a leak: an exclusive illness. The asocial individual of so-called primitive societies is not locked up; prisons and asylums are recent notions' (Deleuze 2004: 273). Political and economic theorists have already perceived that the history of capitalism in the West is contingent on a certain line of development, one that is completely dependent on *expansion*, that is, on an 'immobile motor of deterritorialization', and a process of stratification that displaces the limit internal to the capitalist *socius* on to different segments of the earth. In particular, it always confronts this same line in the 'other societies' it encounters and in the new forms of exploited labour that it has created in its attempt, as Marx said, 'to go still further'. At the same time, I recall the critical diagnosis of this tendency that is offered by Deleuze from the 1973 interview 'Capitalism and Desire':

In every respect, capitalism has a very particular character: its lines of escape are not just difficulties that arise, they are the very conditions of its operation. Capitalism is founded on a generalized decoding of every flow . . . It did not create any code; it created a kind of accounting, an axiomatic of decoded flows, as the basis of its economy. It ligatures the points of escape

and moves ahead. It is always expanding its own borders, and always finds itself in a situation where it must close off new escape routes at its borders, pushing them back once more. It has resolved none of the fundamental problems. It can't even foresee the monetary increase in a country over a year. It is endlessly recrossing its own limits, which keep on appearing farther out. It puts itself in alarming situations with respect to its own production, its social life, its demographics, its periphery in the Third World, its interior regions, etc. *The system is leaking all over the place.* (Deleuze 2004: 270 – my emphasis)

As in this passage, Deleuze and Guattari constantly emphasize that it is the very same principle of deterritorialization upon which this form of capitalism depends as its 'immobile motor' that has always haunted each society in which it historically appeared as the terrifying nightmare from which it cannot awake. This is because in each instance of deterritorialization that allows the capitalist *socius* 'to displace its own limit further out, and to move on' (across the surfaces of the earth), there always appears a frightening tendency of this process to veer toward a point of 'absolute deterritorialization'.<sup>30</sup> This produces, as they have frequently argued, the extremely peculiar, if not 'singular', expressions of dread that can be found at the basis of Western religious, sexual (or familial), political and philosophical institutions: specifically, the dread of 'decoded flows'. In fact, the more that the West has expanded by displacing its own interior limit on to the full body of the earth, the more vulnerable Western societies have become 'to a dread they feel for a flow that would elude their code', a feeling (or 'I feel') that has returned in the heart of all its social institutions. This, in a nutshell, is the entire thesis of *Anti-Oedipus* concerning the strange union of desire with this singular feeling of dread that stems from the decoded flows that haunt the capitalist *socius* from an 'outside' it has first produced, a strange amalgamation of desire and dread that finds its universal apotheosis in the obese figure of Oedipus, who appears according to a fine phrase by Artaud, like 'a dead rat's ass suspended from the ceiling of the sky'.<sup>31</sup>

### The new barbarians

Returning to my earlier thesis concerning Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, perhaps it should not come as a complete surprise that at the beginning of our new millennium *The Grundrisse* has been revised and rewritten (yet another time) to provide a new concept of revolution based on contingency and the spontaneous eruptions of intensity, one in which the 'external relation' to capitalism itself is no longer conceived as a form of universality, but rather as a multiple number of partial and discrete external relations that do not form a Unity, as in the concept of 'multitude'. As in Deleuze and Guattari's earlier manifesto, we see the careful avoidance of a new state form, as well as the conception of desire that doesn't pass through or solicit a new transcendental unity of a party, a national consciousness, or even a particular ethnic identity (although,

interestingly enough, the attribute of 'a race' remains as one possible manner of designating the unity of the multitude). Following a principle theme in Deleuze and Guattari's 'nomadic politics', Hardt and Negri's postmodern vision of a completely deterritorialized earth criss-crossed by new migratory bands of the multitudes can be understood as secretly nostalgic, as the return of an earlier form of nomadic politics and 'the Asiatic mode of production', that is, to a form of the political sovereignty that constitutes itself precisely by warding off the establishment of the state form.<sup>32</sup>

In an earlier interview conducted for the journal *Actuel*, Guattari clarifies the following with regard to this problem:

The whole question turns on a State apparatus. Why would you look to a party or a State apparatus to liberate desires? It's bizarre. Wanting improved justice is like wanting good judges, good cops, good bosses, a cleaner France, etc. And then we are told: how do you propose to unify isolated struggles without a State apparatus? The Revolution clearly needs a war-machine, but that is not a State apparatus. It also needs an analytic force, an analyser of the desires of the masses – but not an external mechanism of synthesis. What is liberated desire? A desire that escapes the impasse of individual private fantasy; it's not about adapting desire, socializing and disciplining it, but hooking it up in such a way that its process is uninterrupted in the social body, so its expression can be collective. (Deleuze 2004: 32)

In another interview that occurs during the same period after the publication of *Anti-Oedipus*, French anthropologist Pierre Clastres (who is cited often by Deleuze and Guattari) summarizes the brilliant thesis that he discovered operating throughout Deleuze and Guattari's arguments, one that responds directly to the problem of the return of the repressive apparatus of the state form to hinder any revolutionary movement of desire – the thesis of the primitive horde.

Yes, the State exists in the most primitive societies, even in the smallest band of nomadic hunters. It exists, but it is ceaselessly warded off. It is ceaselessly prevented from becoming a reality. A primitive society directs all its efforts toward preventing its chief from becoming a chief (and that can go as far as murder). If history is the history of class struggle (I mean in societies that have classes), then the history of a classless society is the history of their struggle against a latent State. Their history is the effort to encode the flows of power. (Deleuze 2004: 227)

Here one can see how this fundamental intuition, drawn from the chapter 'Savages, Barbarians, Civilized Men', is fashioned into a major operational thesis of *Empire*, a 'strategy' which is revealed from the viewpoint of the universal history of a classless society that ends with 'the multitude' successfully encoding power without resorting once again to the state form. After all, what is a multitude but a primitive *socius* that already dwells in the interstices of late capitalism, overcoded by globalized flows of capital, at the virtual fringes and the

multiple points where 'deterritorialization' occurs in a non-unifying and essentially nomadic form of collective phenomena? At the same time, it would not be difficult to prove that Hardt and Negri's fundamental thesis is basically an attempt to ward off the consolidation and return of state sovereignty through forging new alliances with the 'diabolical powers' that have always been just outside the gates of empire, even in the somewhat desperate hope that this will bring about a new rubicon. At one level, this hope can be understood as an expression of New Age millennialism, one that combines postmodern desires for hybridity and 'anthropological exodus' with the epic dimension of a new *race* – and I use this word intentionally to describe the concept of the 'multitude' – that will emerge from the 'outside' to bring about the 'fall of empire'. In other words, as they write, 'a new nomad horde, a new race of barbarians, will arise to invade or evacuate Empire'.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, it is interesting to find the following remark by Deleuze from the dialogue around 'nomad thought': 'You ask me whether I believe in nomads as an answer? Yes, I do. Genghis Khan is nothing to sneeze at. Will he come back from the dead? I don't know, but if he does it will be in some other form', perhaps, I might add here, in the form of the 'multitude'. (Deleuze 2004: 260–1).

We can already find the above thesis in the book that precedes *Empire* by some fifteen years, *Nouvelles espaces de liberté (Communists Like Us [1990])* first published in 1985 and co-written by Guattari and Negri. Here, we can already find the outline for the programme that will become further developed by Hardt and Negri in the later work, which is the political and theoretical programme of redefining collectivism through subjective processes of what he called the 'singularization of life, health, and labour', that is, a form of creative individuality that is no longer opposed to traditional notions of collectivism. As Guattari and Negri write:

The construction of healthy communities begins and ends with unique personalities, that the collective potential is realized only when the singular is free . . . Glimpses of these new alliances are already available. They begin to form and seek each other out at a time when the spontaneity and creative phase, which of course developed parallel to the big break-up and realignment in capitalist society to which we have been witness over the past three decades. To better locate and appreciate their importance, one can distinguish:

- 'molar antagonisms': struggles in the workplace over exploitation, criticisms of the organization of work, of its form, from the perspective of liberation;
- 'molecular proliferation' of these isolated instances of struggle into the outside world, in which singular struggles irreversibly transform the relations between individuals and collectivities on the one hand, material nature and linguistic signs (meaning) on the other.

Thus the maturing social transformations, which in turn affect productive work arrangements, are indeed, piecemeal, by each and every molar

antagonism: *any struggle against capitalist and/or socialist power formations contributes to overall transformation.* Social, political, and workplace advances condition each other. But, and this is our point, the revolutionary transformation occurs in the creation of a new subjective consciousness born of collective work experience – this moment is primary, all the stakes are won or lost there, in the collective creation of subjectivity by individuals . . . Singularity, autonomy, and freedom are the three banners which unite in solidarity in every struggle against capitalist and/or socialist orders. From now on, this alliance invents new forms of freedom, in the emancipation of work and in the work of emancipation. (Guattari and Negri 1990: 18–19, my emphasis)

Both these two major propositions are carried forward later in *Empire* in the following manner: first, that from here on all social transformations are piecemeal (the thesis of the discontinuous struggle against power carried out by the multitude); secondly, that primary emphasis is placed on the collective creation of new forms of subjectivity which are singular and multifaceted, hybridized and anthropologically diverse (which is a very indirect manner of describing the greater segmentarity of racialized bodies and desires today).

Perhaps I have not given enough consideration to Hardt and Negri's invention of the concept of 'multitude'. Of course, it has many sources, many of which I have already invoked: Spinoza first of all, and Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'nomad', Pierre Clastres' image of the primitive territorial machine that wards off the state form. I have openly wondered if it is a good concept, or if it merely functions as an 'epic personage' to replace the subject of the proletariat. Nevertheless, I think there are some aspects of the concept that are admirable, others that are far-fetched. The one aspect I admire is their capturing of the term 'deterritorialization' from Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy as the purest expression of the multitude. The multitude only exist in movement of deterritorialization; they are 'a flow of humanity' across of the surface of the earth. They are purely virtual and only exist virtually and not actually. The multitude moves, and this movement is the only defining trait of a multitude. Here is the greatest resistance to all the concepts of a people that are based on the fixed and territorial points of the *polis* (the city-state, the nation-state). They are a becoming-imperceptible to the subject or the individual defined by place or territory.

As Deleuze remarks, the human is defined as a deterritorialized animal; thus the multitude could be defined as twice removed from its animality. What would be a deterritorialized human? Is this not the strange notion of 'anthropological exodus' that one finds in *Empire*? In some ways this returns us to the figure of the stranger that one finds at the basis of European institutions. Marx himself forecast that the long alienation produced by capitalism would create not only a new subject but rather a new race, a new species-being. The subject of the proletariat would not simply be distinguishable as a new political subject, but rather by the distinction between human and inhuman. It would be more alien than the Indo-European stranger, and would possibly even be 'anti-human', that is, would not feel any sympathy for the human, but rather an

extreme apathy (*a-pathein*) and even indifference with regard to the conservation of the human soul. Let us imagine a singular race whose own indifference to what the human holds most dear, would appear as an immortalized substance of the death-drive?

One already finds in Deleuze and Guattari's poetic representations of the schizo and the nomad the prefigurations of a new stranger that they argue is absolutely unique to the processes of deterritorialization that they find in capitalism, its tendency to deterritorialize the human to a degree never before seen. Here, I recall their fundamental argument – capitalism produces schizophrenia (forms of deterritorializing human beings), that is, a specific form of alienation produces a new being. This is simply a renovation of Marx's argument concerning the species-being of the proletariat, and one can also find this formula recast in *Empire* concerning the creation of the multitude from the deterritorialized flows of globalization. At the same time, the same question strikes against their thesis as against Deleuze and Guattari's earlier thesis of the schizophrenic. Can one imagine a politics of schizophrenics, a unitary and collective form of schizophrenia that would represent the entity of a people, a class of schizophrenics? The same question concerning the 'political being' of the multitude reappears no less than thirteen times in the final pages of *Empire*. But here, the question of how one schizophrenic can actually recognize another as his or her 'other' (*autrui*) and 'kind' (*semblable*) is fundamental. This almost sounds like the beginning of a joke: two schizophrenics meet one day, and one says to the other . . . Thus, if the multitude is defined as a singularity, rather than a particular belonging to a universal or general class or species, is it philosophically coherent to say that two singularities can recognize each other? What would be the basis of this recognition? How can two singularities recognize each other? It is for this reason that the multitude as singular plural remains purely virtual and can only exist in virtual space, not in a space defined by particular and universal?

There is not one subjective consciousness of the universal collective, because the total nature of work under globalization is itself dispersed and irretrievably fragmented – in other words, 'deterritorialized'. Here we have the conditions for understanding the new situation announced by *Empire*: 'the set of all exploited and subjugated, a multitude that is directly opposed to Empire [that is, to Power itself], with no mediation between them' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 393). With this statement, there is no longer a need for mediation, the history of struggle mediated by a class consciousness, since all struggles are singular and confront the political conflict directly and without the instance of mediation. Moreover, it is primarily through the principle of 'deterritorialization', defined as 'the autonomous movement of the multitude', that a new *socius* is inscribed on the body of the earth, the image of a new society that is made up by the multitudes. As Hardt and Negri write, 'a new geography is established by the multitude as the productive flows of bodies define new rivers and ports. The cities of the earth will become at once great despots of cooperating humanity and locomotives for circulation, temporary residences and networks of mass distribution of living humanity. Through circulation the

multitude reappropriates space and constitutes itself as an active subject' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 397). In this last image of the endless circulation of living capital, moreover, we have a new image of 'deterritorialization', of the end decoded and active with new flows and even the creation of new living despots, which they define as points of 're-territorialization' of cities as cooperative states of humanity.

But then, we might ask the following questions: why the retention of the concept of 'humanity' for naming the points where the multitude reterritorializes on certain 'unique personalities' and even 'unique despotic personalities' in order to become active political subjects? Does this not contradict the thesis of 'anthropological exodus' mentioned earlier, and reintroduce the abstract universality to capture the deterritorialized flows of the *socius* into one 'movement' broadly speaking? It is as if in responding to the question of the political, they reach an impasse and must retain the concept of humanity as an original despot and sovereignty to shore up the demand for universal rights that appears in the final phases of the argument, that is, before the argument itself collapses into fragments of the old socialism or breaks out into song? This is a fundamental impasse, and interestingly enough, the place where the book falls apart and abruptly ends in tired socialist refrains for a universal wage, the right to reappropriation of exploited labour (which, fantastically, is no longer exploited since the multitude alienate their own immaterial capital without the external pressure of capitalist exploitation, which has been removed from the equation by the principle that they are in control of their own movements from here on) and, finally, by fragmentary observations on posses and the joys of communism. The book ends, but the machine it creates has moved on, dreaming of nomadic bands of posse militancy at the new frontiers of Empire, of a new Wild West, or a new crusade composed of nomadic militants that all sing the glories of a new communism to the tune of 'Onward Christian Soldiers'. *Everyone against empire, but each multitude in the name of their own singularity!*

Certainly, the ending is delirium, but one must understand that this corresponds to the primary thesis of *Anti-Oedipus* as well: that delirium is essentially creative and productive – it is a machine for producing desire first of all. This sounds like a criticism of the book, and in a certain sense it is, unless one understands that Hardt and Negri didn't intend to write a book with a coherently rational argument, but rather as Deleuze and Guattari did earlier, to invent a machine that would capture all sorts of desires and put them to use in tracing a path on a revolutionary plane. This is something that certainly almost all of *Empire's* critics have never understood, simply because they thought that what they had in their hands was a book instead of a machine for assembling disparate forms of political desire. As a book, *Empire* is certainly lacking in many areas, and there is not much use in labouring over the major flaws of its analysis (I have only just scratched the surface, and there are many more salient critiques of its numerous gaffes). However, as a machine, it has proven itself supremely effective in plugging into all sorts of desires – from the hordes of disaffected first-world Marxists, cosmopolitan migrants in the university, every post-subjectivity including post-humans and cyber-materialists. In short,

everyone is included in the multitude, anyone and any group whose principle antagonism could be defined as 'being against' 'empire'.

To conclude my commentary in this section, I imagine the same situation that Deleuze describes for the 'younger generations' of academic and countercultural audiences to which *Anti-Oedipus* was addressed also applies to our time as well; therefore, in a certain sense, *Empire* can be understood exactly as the *Anti-Oedipus* for our particular moment, that is, as a machine for investing revolutionary desire. (Of course, there is always the danger when this revolutionary desire is reterritorialized on to the form of 'great book', with its cult of the author and genius and its hermeneutic programme of reproduction, and this is certainly something that has happened to this book lately too). And yet, as Negri has said, 'any struggle against capitalist and/or socialist order contributes to overall transformation' (Guattari and Negri 1990: 19). But one wonders if this is enough? Again, the fundamental problem I have evoked above, following Marx's own early intuition, is that capitalistic societies have shown themselves to be extremely resilient, if not impervious, to 'self-criticism', since this is a fulcrum of their ideological form of expression as 'auto-egislative'. The real problem, therefore, continues to address the question of what form criticism must take in order to become effective or transformative of desire.

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## Chapter 6

# On ‘the Right to Desire’

### On the new rights of man

Although one certainly wouldn’t want to reduce the political simply to a question of style, nevertheless a certain style of the political has been part of a tradition we have inherited from France, that is, a grand style of politics (*une grande politique*). This style of politics is certainly most visible in the philosophies of Deleuze and Foucault; a fundamental theme that could be said to unite both of these philosophers’ works is the constant attention to the transformation of the concept of ‘natural right’ (*ius naturale*) as a result of what Deleuze later calls ‘the progressive and dispersed installation of a new regime of domination’ belonging to ‘a society of control’ (Deleuze 1990c: 247). Foucault first called our attention to this question of style in his early article on Deleuze, ‘Theatrum Philosophicum’, but it is most clearly and succinctly formulated in his short preface to *Anti-Oedipus*, which he defines in tribute to Bishop de Sales as ‘The Introduction to a Non-Fascist Life’, or, as I might rephrase this today, ‘How to get over our repression and learn again to love power’. Of course, we are not speaking of the little power of cops and teachers, the power ‘in our heads and in our everyday behaviour’, but rather the power that is accorded to our universal ‘right to desire’ (*le droit au désir*).

In this section, I would like to take up this fundamental theme of the ‘right to desire’ in the philosophies of Deleuze and Foucault in order to situate it within a style of grand politics, as part of a political programme that subscribes to a new philosophy of right. Generally, the significance of this style can be understood in the context of several recent theories of the subject in which a certain positive declaration of the subject’s ‘right to desire’ is given a foundational status. (For example, one can readily associate this claim with the recent body of work by Judith Butler, but it is present in many feminist philosophies from early on, and Butler’s work can be understood to build upon and extend this principle.) However, because this could be said to constitute only ‘one pole’ of the new philosophy of right that has travelled from France, the other can be identified with a Derridean style of interrogation, or a philosophical programme associated with the ‘deconstruction’ of the discourse of rights. Later on, I will briefly comment on the Derridean approach to the concept of right, which is more concerned with the limits of a traditional philosophical discourse in addressing an unprecedented creation of new subjects of right,

than with the potential of transforming the political institutions of right, privilege and power through a positive declaration of 'the right to desire'.

For both Deleuze and Foucault, the 'new situation' that philosophy confronts today can most clearly be recognized in the transformation of the classical discourse of the rights of man, which has been a constant theme in both these philosophers' works. Thus, if the first right that is recognized by both these philosophies would be the right to desire, the second fundamental right would be 'the right to invent new possibilities for life' (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 176). Both of these fundamental rights could be said to belong to a new declaration or discourse of rights, replacing the old universal rights of man (life, liberty, and property), since the latter have become compromised, even betrayed, by what Deleuze has identified as the four principle areas of domination or control:

- The constraints imposed by forms of territorialization (of all kinds, geopolitical, social, linguistic, sexual);
- The new forms or disciplinary mechanisms of economic '*assujétissement*' (Foucault), including a social bond based on the extension of credit and/or debt (to the degree that the contraction of debt has become a fundamental condition for the rights associated with citizenship), which is also a virulent principle in the economic politics of globalization (the instruments of debt and inflation used to control developing countries and markets);
- The crisis of institutions (the school, the university, the prison, the army, the family, etc.);
- Finally, changes that are taking place in the nature of rights themselves, which are becoming more qualitative than quantitative (as when one speaks of a right to a certain 'quality of life' rather than of 'maintaining life' at a certain level for the greatest number). (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 176)

We can readily see that the constant level of struggle that has been registered in all these areas signals an evolution in the concept of right itself, in which 'the right to desire' is an inherent principle or cause that can be found at the basis of the different sites of resistance and the subjects of struggle today. Even if the right to desire has not become part of the official discourse of universal rights – for example, it is not listed among the number of new rights adopted by the United Nations in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) – it is not difficult to imagine that the claim for the right to one's own particular desire, even prior to its recognition by a majority, will continue to exert force upon the revision of positive law and the corporation of political interests. As Deleuze writes,

'It is not at all surprising that all sorts of questions, concerning minorities, language, ethnicity, region, sexism, juveniles, reappear sometimes in the name of some archaic authority, but also within a contemporary revolution-

ary form that places again in question, in a manner that is both immanent and economically global, the institutions of the nation-state' (Deleuze and Parnet 1996: 176).

The above statement seems to reassert the nature of the right in question, at the basis of these various movements and current struggles (over sexism, ethnocentrism or racism, in particular), which can be defined as something 'entirely immanent' (an immanence that, in some localized regions, can also be expressed in the form of an ancient antagonism) and, at the same time, as economically and geopolitically diverse (or globalized) phenomena. The fact that this phenomenon is so dispersed throughout both highly developed and developing (or underdeveloped) economic zones, it seems without regard to territory, may signal for us that its greatest effects have not taken place on the level of political representation of groups and on institutions of law, but rather signals a transformation that is internal to the nature of right itself – and, I might add, to the nature of 'nature'.

If we could rephrase the classical discourse of natural right (*ius naturale*) in order to illustrate this transformation, we can see that it appears most visibly in the region of sexuality, specifically the right to the arrangement of sexual desire without interference of a dominant form: 'The state of nature has the law of nature to govern it, which obliges everyone; in this state, no one form of desire is sovereign to any other.' Of course, I am aware that there are some who would restrict this phenomenon to first-world societies where this transformation has been most visible due to a number of adjacent factors (such as the dominance of media centres, public institutions of the university and courts, the dispersion of the social and subjective forms of 'public conscience' and 'popular culture'); however, the right to desire need not be so narrowly conceived around one subject of desire, namely sexual desire. Employing a phrase from Deleuze, we might find different expressions of an 'unconscious investment' in the right to desire that could emerge within a certain 'global locality' or region; the desire for religious or cultural integrity, for linguistic purity, economic protection, even the desire for historical memory and the repatriation of the past could all be understood as examples where desire is immanent to conflict or struggle. Needless to say, given the diversity of these examples, it would be an error to think that the priority accorded to desire as an agent or catalyst of social transformation is necessarily progressive in terms of the discourse of politics (as many of the recent theories of desire appear to presuppose). The right to desire could just as well be invested in a form of the political that is despotic, or even sexist and racist. In a certain sense, even the reactionary measures taken by the family (that most archaic of social institutions) can be ascribed to a 'right to desire' as well, that is, as a drive to retain a form of desire that is most consistent with its own institution, and to protect this desire against those social elements (or 'desiring agents') who are attempting to strip the family of its only reproductive apparatus.

On the basis of the above hypothesis, that the right to desire is both immanent and global, we might need to return in another context to some of the moments

in *Anti-Oedipus* in order to rescue its major thesis concerning nature of desire from some of the readings that seek to reduce this to a nostalgic and reactionary romanticism on the part of middle-class, French intellectuals in response to the free-love movements of the 1960s in the United States. Here, I am thinking of Jameson's analysis of this thesis by Deleuze and Guattari, in particular. As I have argued in the previous sections on psychoanalysis, one would also have to confront perhaps the most conservative and moralistic argument against Deleuze and Guattari's, that of Lacanian psychoanalysis, which reduces the 'right to desire' to the discourse of perversion.<sup>34</sup> No doubt, it may come as a surprise to some, certainly to those who have been convinced by these readings, that the very problem concerning the sometimes dangerous mutability of formations of desire is stated quite clearly in many of the passages on the concept found in Deleuze and Guattari's several volumes on this subject, as well as in conversations between Deleuze and Foucault on the commingling of power and interest in what Foucault will call the 'eternally mutable game of desire' (Deleuze 2004: 297). Consequently, the idea of progress is not innate to the nature of desire itself, and what Deleuze and Guattari have identified as 'a desiring-machine' is often neutral concerning whether it will become revolutionary or fascist in principle.<sup>35</sup>

The nature of the becoming that is enacted by the right to desire is much more dependent on subjacent factors that belong to the nature of 'interest' and how interests are arranged and ordered in a given society. In fact, the above problem could be defined as a constant refrain in Deleuze and Guattari's meditation on the nature of the different 'becomings' associated with the desire for power: a meditation that has an origin in Spinoza's philosophy. If the desire for power is nothing negative in itself, and can even be determined as an affirmative and positive affect, as Deleuze often asserts, where does the tendency come from in which desire is perverted into the more violent expressions of domination, oppression and sadism? Moreover, how does this affirmative nature appear if the subject's conscious relation to desire has already been 'conditioned' – it seems, even prior to birth – by historical and psychological formations of power and interest that find their most outward manifestations in domination and oppression? If the nature of desire internal to the subject's psyche is already negatively determined, through and through so it appears, then how is a positive affirmation of 'the right to desire' possible? But then, this is the question posed most forcefully by Deleuze and Guattari themselves; it is a fundamental problem of their philosophy, a problem for which they offer many possible solutions (some of which, it is true, might be judged as more fantastic than others). This has proved to be a major stumbling-block for readers who have tried to totalize these solutions into a system (of philosophy, or 'theory'), instead of seeing them as partial and experimental attempts at solving this fundamental problem of right.

### Instincts and Institutions

Concerning the relation of this problem to a classical discourse of rights, even though Deleuze never claims that through desire we can return to an original

'state of nature', he often resolves this problem – perhaps, somewhat precipitously – by declaring that the primary state of nature is the 'unconscious', thereby replacing an earlier temporal understanding of an original state of nature with a more dynamic schema. In a very early text, 'Instincts and Institutions', Deleuze articulates the concept of right on the basis of the possible satisfaction of a need. Consequently, a classical discourse of rights (that of Grotius or Hobbes, in particular) addresses the issue of right according to the natural right of the organism to attain satisfaction, or at least the right not to be constrained or obstructed in a natural inclination. This relationship between instinct and right is clearly evident in the definition of natural right given by Hobbes:

the right to use one's own power as one wills, for the preservation of nature, that is to say, one's own life, and consequently of doing anything which, in one's own reason and judgment, shall be conceived to be the aptest means thereunto'.<sup>36</sup>

Here, life can be understood as the satisfaction of the instinct for the preservation of the organism in a natural state (i.e., living), and right can be defined as the protection of the means to attain this satisfaction that is dubbed natural. As Deleuze points out, however, what is called 'an institution' refers to an organized system of means to attain satisfaction; once an organism leaves a natural plane and enters the milieu of institutions (which now constitute the external environment for the organism), the means become artificial and the forms of satisfaction are multiplied and more complex. For example, mere life no longer constitutes a state of satisfaction, but rather life itself is defined by the multiple degrees of intensity (quality) and by artificial states of satisfaction. In a fundamental sense, Deleuze is overturning the natural concept of need in order to account for the diversity of artificial means created to address an instinctual inclination, in the sense that a dish of poached salmon glazed in truffle oil does not resemble the hunger it is made to satisfy.

Contrary to law, therefore, which is negative (as the constraint or limitation of action), Deleuze defines a social institution by this creative or inventive capacity, as essentially a model of positive action:

Contrary to the theories of law that place the positive outside the social (natural rights), and the social within the negative (contractual limitation), the theory of institutions places the negative outside the social (needs), in order to present an image of society that is essentially positive, inventive (of the original means of satisfaction). (Deleuze 2004: 25)

One can see this is where the notion of desire, as differentiated from instinct, enters into Deleuze's analysis of the social. Desire is not natural, but differentiated from instinct and already belongs to the milieu of institutions which multiply its means of attaining satisfaction. Rather than placing priority on the negative form of law as the principle of sociality (on the means of constraining

or limiting actions), Deleuze places emphasis on the creative aspect of institutions, which is the invention of new means – patently artificial – and new forms of satisfaction. This emphasis on positive models of action is political in as much as the contemporary subject is thoroughly ‘institutionalized’, a subject who inhabits institutions, whose environment is artificially constructed, and whose means of attaining satisfaction, if not the satisfactions themselves, are equally artificial. Thus, it is only by creating new means of attaining satisfaction that the subject is able effectively to transform its external environment (the specific world of the institutions it inhabits), and this activity can be defined in some sense as ‘revolutionary’.

It is in this simple modification in the classical philosophy of right, which no longer sees the negative principle of law as a productive instance in the creation of the social, that we might see this early text written in 1955 as a blueprint for the fundamental thesis we find repeated throughout Deleuze’s later works written with Guattari: that desire is immanently social (i.e., artificial); that it invests the entire social field and its action can be defined as the ‘invention’ of new environments and new means of attaining possible satisfaction for life. Moreover, because ‘the individual’ is already a negative entity defined by law (as that abstract point upon which constraint or limitation of action is exerted), it cannot be identified with the point from which desire invests the social field and potentially transforms it. Rather, Deleuze often ascribes this activity within the social, which is unconscious from the perspective of the ‘individual’, since the latter is always defined by passivity (or limitation) concerning the possibilities of action and desire. Here, we might glimpse a partial and preliminary explanation for the failure of a classical political analysis, which continues to calculate the possibility of resistance and to anticipate where such possible resistances could take place – that is, from what group, what cell, what class of the social will the possibilities of revolution arrive? – according to the classical analysis of the nature of collective interests. It is not on the basis of the representative status of a class of interests, but rather in the nature of the unconscious ‘investments of desire’ that the greatest resistances are being registered today in multiple arenas, sometimes very distant from one another. In examining this situation, the dizzying array of groups, all of which are claiming the ‘right to their desire’, a traditional analysis premised on the cohesion of the group by a collective set of interests falls into disrepair. It is here that one of Deleuze and Guattari’s most fundamental theses from *Anti-Oedipus* onward comes into play most forcefully: that the nature of collective interest is secondary to a more primary level of social investment, ‘the unconscious investment of desire’.

In some ways, this thesis from *Anti-Oedipus*, and perhaps the motive for the entire argument put forward in this book, is made to resolve the classical problem that has haunted Marxist analysis, and leftist critiques generally, since World War II: ‘How is it possible that the workers could desire fascism?’ In an early conversation with Foucault, *Les Intellectuels et le pouvoir*, Deleuze addresses this problem in a well-known passage:

We must continue to pay heed to Reich's cry: No, the masses weren't deceived at all! They desired fascism in that moment! Consequently, there are investments of desire that modulate power, causing it to become diffuse, making it so that power can equally be found at the level occupied by the cop as it can in the form exercised by a Minister of State, and there is absolutely no difference between the power exercised by a cop and that exercised by a minister. (Deleuze 2004: 296–7)

One can see from the passage above the problem that Deleuze announces first and foremost as the object of an analysis is the modulation of power by the nature of its unconscious investments. As a result of this modulation, it becomes 'diffuse', distributed throughout all levels of the social in such a way that it saturates the entire social field and animates it from within.

Any analysis that continues to employ an earlier mechanistic model of power that can be located in some position or apparatus (either deployed by class interest, or by extension, the enforcement of interest embodied by the apparatus of the state) fails to grasp its true image, often by inserting a qualitative difference, or representational function, between different concrete instances of power operated by 'false consciousness' (i.e., ideology). Suddenly it appears as if the cop is representing the state in clubbing the suspect to the ground, instead of loving the law a little too much, or stealing back a little power that is denied to him in other relationships, including his relationship as a citizen of the state. One might respond by saying that it is the very principle of state power to introduce 'lack' into the subjective relations of power so that we all become 'frustrated subjects', vying angrily to win back a little enjoyment for ourselves in our dealings with others over whom we can exercise our right (i.e., entitlement of power). What better guarantee for a society whose principle of organization is the curtailment, restraint and limitation of action on the part of each of its members than to ensure a form of desire that closely approximates sadism – an investment in the desire to limit, constrain and to control the power enjoyed by others? Moreover, such a form of investment would find no need of being centrally or hierarchically organized, since every subject would be its absolute centre. Today it is clear that power does not arrive from somewhere, from above, since it is immanent in the nature of the desires that invest a social field.<sup>37</sup>

Following this observation, the problem that any contemporary analysis of power must confront, first and foremost, is the very principle behind this diffusion. Interestingly enough, it is perhaps the contemporary discourse of psychoanalysis that has gone furthest in providing a diagram of the principle of diffusion behind the mechanisms of power; however, it is precisely against the diagrams that psychoanalytic theory has offered that Deleuze and Guattari have launched their most fervent criticisms against psychoanalysis for reducing this principle to its archaic representatives (of 'Oedipus', or the family), or for mistaking this principle for the pure formalizing power of 'the signifier' itself.

From *foyer* to *foyer*

In their conversation cited above, Deleuze and Foucault circle around one central proposition: that today, the idea of revolution cannot be totalized; therefore, we must eschew earlier forms of the analysis of power that operate through totality. This might explain why Deleuze, in particular, has constantly opposed any form of analysis (or 'theory') that continues to operate through totalization, because 'it is power, by its very nature, that operates by means of totalizations' (Deleuze 2004: 288). Consequently, a theory only appears opposed to practice when it is viewed from a point of totalization, when practice is viewed from this perspective as a consequence or the result of a theoretical understanding of the problem posed by practice. Rather, the opposite is true: theory is only the theory of its own practice; although theories can have effects on practices that are quite distant, this never happens by means of a form of resemblance that seeks to totalize all these disparate effects under one signifier. To take up the example that Deleuze offers in this occasion, one that certainly belongs to his intellectual generation, Vietnam is a case of a local struggle that suddenly found relays and sites of conflict in different countries and even within sectors of the same country. However, what is the specific relationship between the 'local' struggle of the Vietnamese people to the 'local' struggles of students in America, Germany or France for more control and access to institutions of higher education; or later, to movements of democratization and the rights of under-represented groups in certain sectors of social institutions in first-world societies? When we say that 'Vietnam' was the name of the struggle against 'imperialism', we immediately reduce the multiple forms of struggle and reduce the complexity between different struggles to one overarching myth of a certain abstract form of power. The actual relation of these very local struggles is immediately vanquished in a fog, and in fact, these real struggles immediately disappear when all we are left with is the struggle against the imperial form of the signifier itself.

As Foucault argues in the same context:

A Theory is the regional system of a particular struggle. Each struggle develops from a particular *foyer* [I will leave this French term untranslated] of power (one of these innumerable and small foyers which can be a boss, a guardian of the HLM, a director of the prison, a judge, a responsible syndicate, the editor in chief of a newspaper or journal). (Deleuze 2004: 295–6)

In this passage, '*foyer*' is an interesting term employed in Foucault's description of the 'local', 'specific', even 'singular' sites where struggle is actualized both in terms of theory and practice. Apart from designating an architectural space outside the enclosure of a house or domicile for incendiary purposes (specifically, for smoking, and here, one might also think of a *foyer* in a small café or local bar where members of the same class meet to forge friendships and alliances that could potentially ignite into a political struggle), the topological definition of the *foyer* is a conical section where there is a constant dis-

tance maintained between each of the points of a curve in relation to a fixed angle or direction. In the French, the word '*foyer*' also designates the point from which something first arrives, as in the outbreak of a contagion or epidemic. All three definitions help to clarify Foucault's use of the term to designate the position from which both theory and practice emerge, topologically, as being identical with the local, specific, or the singular; as well as being the point from which the political first develops and elongates itself across social relations, which moves diagonally across social sectors and classes, consolidations of race and gender, and links them together in an immanent form of sociality. (This recalls the observations above on Deleuze's early conception of 'the social' as primarily a creative institution and as a condition of political assemblage.) Therefore, it is always on the basis of these immanent connections and relays that a form of collective interest will later develop.

If we were to attempt to imagine this diagram of power without appealing to a form of totalization by any number of given signifiers (that of the state-apparatus, the nation, empire, race, globalization of capital, sexual hegemony, or class ideology), I would suggest we might imagine it as a croissant, which is composed of thousands of levels of paper-thin folds. The problem in any analysis of the form of power that employs this diagram or schema would be the following: what is the relation that exists between one level of the pastry and the next, or between one *foyer* and another that is a thousand *foyers* distant? It is clear that, for Deleuze, the field of desire would assume the same form as our (somewhat casual) diagram of the croissant, with its multiple levels of relays and connections that are formed by the different occasions of unconscious investment. Desire would be, at least, virtually, the whole of the croissant, as well as the multiplicity of singular planes or foyers that compose the whole. One can employ this diagram, however, only under the condition of subtracting the point of view that would be able to totalize (or represent) all these multiple points and planes within one form, since one can only conceive of the whole of desire from the perspective of a particular plane or *foyer*. Therefore, 'it is always a multiplicity we are dealing with, even in the person of the one who speaks and who acts. There are only groupuscules' (Deleuze 2004: 289).

Returning now to our discussion of 'the right to desire', one must admit that the idea that one could intervene into the organization of interests via the plane of desire is perhaps one of the most fantastic premises that belongs to both Deleuze's and Foucault's projects, a premise that marks a place of risk and a certain gamble that defines a style of *grande politique*. This assertion can be understood to address the conception of sexuality and of the body itself as a central *foyer* in both philosophies. 'The body', Foucault writes in his early essay 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', 'is the locus of *Herkunft* (root, origin): the place where willing, feeling, and thinking all take root' (Foucault 1986: 154). Thus Foucault discovered, following the events of May 1968, that through experimenting with the site of the 'body', we may one day learn how to intervene directly into the fields of politics and history, but often without any knowledge of what will happen as a result of this intervention, which is to say that it is a model of action that remains unconscious with regard to its outcome. That is,

only by intervening within and altering the subject's relation to his or her body can 'real effects' be produced that would agitate perception and consciousness: effects that gradually work their way out and engender the kind of structural and institutional disruption desired by a certain understanding of 'revolutionary action'. How does one intervene into a state of nature (i.e., the unconscious)? Deleuze answers this question many times: by means of experimentation, and of certain kinds of experimentation that bear the chance of transforming the nature of desire itself, which according to a Spinozist reading, would amount to the transformation of the nature of Nature (substances). Because it has long been understood by several critical theories that desire is the 'root' of consciousness, there has often been a certain style of the political, which is to situate a certain deliberative mechanism, or model of action, at the very intersection between the unconscious and the body. As Deleuze asks: 'must we conclude that sexuality is the only fantastic principle able to bring about a deviation from the rigorous economic order assigned by the origin?' (Deleuze 1990: 303)

As for Foucault, finally, his response to this problem of the conflation of power, desire and interest is much more cautious and tentative. Unlike Deleuze, he is not ready to resolve this problem by appealing directly to the plane occupied by the unconscious investment of desire. (His questions regarding the concept of desire and preference for the concept of 'pleasure' are well documented, particularly in the volumes of *The History of Sexuality*). Therefore, I will conclude this section on politics by citing Foucault's full response to this question, both for its clarity and its caution, if only to insert a marker where the philosophical projects of Deleuze and Foucault must be further interrogated around the relationship between desire and power (the subject of the final section):

FOUCAULT: As you say, the relations between desire, power, and interest are much more complex than is ordinarily believed, and it is not always those who exercise power who have the interest in doing so, nor always who have the interest to exert it who do so, and the desire for power, as a game played out between power and interest, is still more singular . . . Too little is known about this game of desire, for power and in the name of interest. It would take a long time for us to really know what constitutes exploitation. And desire, that's an interminable affair. It is very possible that the struggles that are now emerging, and the local, regional, and discontinuous theories that are just now beginning to develop alongside these struggles and to become absolutely embodied within these, will be the beginning of a discovery concerning how power is exerted. (Deleuze 2004: 297)

Chapter 7

How ‘Power Makes Us See and Speak’



Figure 1

The redefinition of power relations

It has recently become clear – at least for some, not for everyone to be sure – that the analytic of power is in a state of crisis. How long, it is difficult to say, but one can say that the signs are everywhere that this crisis has become more pronounced and the description of power has grown too obese and overdetermined. On the one hand, the meaning of its concept now covers the entire social field of differential relations that are characterized by an abstract and too general form of inequality; on the other hand, the concept of power has become too localized around specific subjectivities that have emerged in late capitalist societies, particularly those defined by the attributes of race, gender and sexuality. Ideally, the analytic of power would encompass actual power relations, their internal genesis, as well as the reproduction of these relations within individual terms (or subjects). Critical representation would then be able to ‘diagram’ the various components that belong to the existing arrangement of power relations within an overarching schematism (a theory of power). If possible, such a theoretical representation would allow these components and these expressions of power to become visible, and we would be capable of addressing the questions with regard to how power actually ‘works’, of *where current power relations come from and in what way they are evolving* – questions that must first of all be understood historically (concerning origin and genealogy of current power relations), and only then pragmatically or strategically (concerning a possible theory of practice in how to exercise or to resist power).

But this is where the problem truly begins. Currently, we don’t have such a theory; or rather, the theories we have been working with for over a century have become dated and may no longer provide us with useful knowledge concerning power relations today. Current theories belong to earlier questions

and answers concerning where power is coming from and where it is going, and the beings that they make visible (that is, the manner in which they make power appear as a phenomenon) may, in fact, introduce distortion into the representation of power relations that belong to current social assemblages. *In other words, our knowledge of power has become far too theoretical!*

Anyone who says differently may be guilty of spinning the problem to suit their own ideological motives, since most of the current schemata fail to grasp, much less to explain, how power truly operates on the bodies that undergo it, and often resort to earlier descriptions concerning its repressive or violent nature. These descriptions, albeit colourful and striking, may miss the true nature of power altogether, which remains invisible, though *no less felt*. It is not merely by chance that this crisis resembles the earlier crisis that Kant outlined in relation to the concept of the sublime, in which the faculty of the imagination fails to schematize a relation to a strange and mysterious power that acts on it and causes it to falter; 'power' would just be the all-too-common name of our current sublimity. Today, however, we do not need colossal mountains or tumultuous and stormy oceans to dramatize its effect, even though the failure of our current imagination to grasp its true nature is no less the cause of a generalized fear, if not a complete abdication (or renunciation), of our ability to come to grips with its mysterious nature.<sup>38</sup>

The nature of this problem concerning power may be clarified only when grasped as a problem of expression rather than representation. As a result, emphasis is placed on the creation of an adequate concept and no longer on the mysterious nature of power itself. In other words, why is it that power has been so difficult, if not impossible, to express completely with regard to its cause? Why has it been so impossible to express in its various instances in order to link them together in a general 'theory' of power relations? Is it even possible to conceive an encompassing notion of power that remains consistent in all its effects? What is the 'being' of power, and is ontology adequate to the task of answering this question (a general theory of the being of power), or rather 'epistemology' (a knowledge of power as a set of discrete practices and technologies)? A representational response to these questions may distort the true sense of the problematic by endowing power with some attribute that causes it to remain imperceptible, an objective quality that causes it to remain 'hidden' or always 'underneath' the appearance of relations defined by power. It is for this reason that Deleuze will claim a major reorientation of the approach to the nature of power that he finds in Foucault's system, by saying that power may very well not be visible, but it is not for that reason 'hidden' by some external force or agency. Accordingly, power cannot be defined – at least, first of all – as an attribute, a property that can be possessed, or that can suddenly change hands without undergoing a profound transformation of the relations it expresses. Moreover, power does not come about through hiding, since it 'produces reality' before it represses, ideologizes, abstracts or masks it' (Deleuze 1988: 133).

According to Deleuze, this reorientation that he finds in Foucault's analysis of power is radical enough to qualify as a 'paradigm shift' (Kuhn), which can

also produce disorienting effects in the previous representations of power, as when a rabbit suddenly transforms into a duck (or a duck into a rabbit). This might account for the often violent dismissals that Foucault's description of power has provoked recently. In addressing this problem of expression at the centre of his own philosophy, in 1986 Deleuze takes up Foucault's life-long analysis of power two years after the latter's death and credits Foucault with being the first thinker who has developed an adequate concept of power, particularly with the conception of 'biopower' (as the most important or critical concept invented by modern philosophy). In some ways, this gesture can be understood as an act of 'monumentalization' (recalling Nietzsche's definition of this narrative form in 'Uses and Abuses of History for Life'); although Deleuze himself will compare his own act to the art of portraiture. The question 'Why Foucault?', and how this gesture of monumentalizing Foucault as the first modern inventor of a discourse of 'power' relates to Deleuze's own philosophy, will be the subject of this section, which is offered in the form of a 'seminar' on *Foucault*.<sup>39</sup>

To begin, let's turn to what is perhaps the most succinct formulation of Foucault's definition of power in Deleuze's commentary. It appears in the first section entitled 'A New Cartographer', where Deleuze writes: 'The thing called power is characterized by immanence of field without transcendent unification, continuity of line without global centralization, and contiguity of parts without distinct totalization: it is social space' (Deleuze 1988: 27). Again power is, or can only be described as, immanence (without transcendent unification), continuity (without centralization), contiguity (without totalization) = 'social space'. What is crucial in this description is to imagine social space itself as a multiplicity of relations (i.e., immanence, continuity, contiguity) that are not already structured into a hierarchy or pyramid. As Deleuze will say, 'no doubt the pyramidal will subsist, but with a function that is diffuse and spread all over its surfaces [of immanence, continuity, and contiguity]' (Deleuze 1988: 136n). In other words, the relation of verticality (or the relation of dominator/dominated) will always be a feature of social space, but power does not flow in one direction only, as 'from above', but also comes 'from below', since dominated subjects also produce the reality of the dominator-function as a moment of transcendent unification.

The second thing for us to notice is that power must not be viewed from the perspective (or 'point of view') of a form that unifies, centralizes, or totalizes the relations that compose the entire social field. In fact, it is precisely this transcendent perspective that is subtracted from Foucault's analysis in order to grasp the reality of the social field as always already constituted by power relations a priori, even though these relations are not yet determined by any specific form. In other words, power is simply not 'added on' to the *socius*, as form is added to content, implying that the social field could somehow exist independently or outside relations already characterized by power, or that the form of power could be abstracted from real existing power relations. This will become a critical observation in Foucault's rejection of certain 'theories of power' which seem to believe that power relations could be abstracted from

the real relations that define social space, or that a society could one day be imagined to have successfully 'neutralized' the operation of power within the social field itself so that it is immune to the entire question of domination. As Foucault observed, power relations 'are deeply rooted in the social nexus, not a supplementary structure over and above "society" whose radical effacement one could someday dream of . . . A society without power relations can only be an abstraction' (Foucault 1994: 343).

Of course, this statement casts a critical glance on a Marxian theory of power crystallized in Hardt and Negri's recent argument that the state form itself is the entire problem in the formation of power, determined as a certain historical 'error' that can be vanquished by the emergence of a decentralized and decentralizing form of power of the multitude. This thesis corresponds, in some ways, to Deleuze and Guattari's early belief that to 'liberate' the expression of power from its various forms – that of Oedipus, or the state form – would allow it to evolve in different and multiple expressions, *in the sense that power would be allowed to turn about in its modes*. At the same time, Deleuze would later return to this thesis many times in order to qualify it with the following note of caution: that the liberation or emancipation of power from the forms that have captured it would not necessarily produce a new expression that was more peaceful or advantageous, particularly with regard to 'the human compound' that belongs to its previous expressions. This is the element of the 'dice-throw' that Deleuze always reminds us as being an unacknowledged feature of Spinoza's 'joy' – a feature, for example, which is strangely missing from Hardt and Negri's Spinozism – and, consequently, this aspect of 'the dice throw' and of supreme chance is highlighted in Deleuze's meditation in *Foucault*, especially in his concluding discussion of the 'Superman', which I will return to later on. For now, I will cite the last few sentences of Foucault concerning the possible form that will follow the age of the man-form and the God-form:

As Foucault would say, the superman is much less than the disappearance of living men, and much more than a change of concept: it is the advent of a new form that is neither God nor man and which, it is hoped, will prove no worse than its two previous forms. (Deleuze 1988: 132)

Returning to my commentary, at this point let's recall Peter Canning's statement given earlier on: if in Spinoza (or the premodern period) power was unified by the idea of one substance expressing itself, today power can only be determined as an encompassing field of forces, or as a multiplicity of 'nomadically distributed differential elements' (Canning 2001: 311–13). How is this so? Although Deleuze begins by referring to power as 'a thing', in the statements that follow he immediately qualifies this designation. The postulate of a thing would presuppose that the thing in question has an 'essence' or 'an attribute'; however, here power could be said to have neither. 'Power has no essence; it is simply operational. It is not an attribute, but a relation: the power-relation is the set of possible relations between forces . . .' (Deleuze 1988: 27). (Power can

only be defined as a 'strange thing', a nomination I will return to later on.) By referring to power as a 'set' of possible relations, Deleuze inserts the dimension of 'the virtual' that becomes the most crucial aspect of power relations according to his reading of Foucault's definition. What has changed to transform the notion of power as capable of being expressed by one substance to an 'encompassing field of differential forces', or as a 'multiplicity'? The key to the idea of a relation between terms in a so-called 'power relation' is their 'virtuality'. Does it then make sense to say that power 'exists', somehow in itself, independently and prior to its moment of actualization? Is there a being of power if power is defined by this character of being virtual? Here, we might see the explanation of why power has been so difficult to grasp, since our analytical language continues to posit power as a thing, even if this is only a grammatical arbitrariness that haunts ontology.

By subtracting the attribute of 'unity' from the social field (or the 'set of all sets', since social space is itself defined as a set of possible relations), this immediately leads Deleuze to the hypothesis of 'multiplicity' that characterizes Foucault's image of the social, as actually comprising multiple segments joined together (even through isolation or expulsion) in a particular historical arrangement. The primary question henceforth will be how all these segments (which earlier on I defined as '*foyers*') are made to become immanent, continuous and contiguous with one another. But then, this immediately leads us to consider whether these segments are heterogeneous, as any theory of multiplicity would seem to imply, and here we come back to the nature of this 'thing called power', since power, in fact, could be said to be the only element that all these segments share in common. We must ask in what way?

The question, 'What is power?' is the first question that opens Deleuze's chapter 'Strategies or the Non-Stratified: The Thought of the Outside (Power)' (Deleuze 1988: 70). Let us return to Deleuze's own formula and revise it for the purposes of our discussion: the terms of power (which are normally called 'subjects') do not exist outside the relations that they express, even though these relations cannot be thought of outside their current terms. Power is a relation between forces, not between subjects. This redefinition has two consequences in any analysis of power. First, what is called a power relation must first be understood as a relation between forces, not between subjects already constituted within power relations or strategies of power. Second, there is a distinction between the tendency of strategies of existing power relations to remain constant (or to reproduce themselves) and the forces of resistance that emerge within existing power relations but occupy the lines that lead outside them. Put simply, resistance can be understood materially as the points of impasse, as well as the non-strategized possibilities of action, or what Deleuze and Guattari call 'potential lines of flight' that emerge within each historical arrangement of power relations. At the same time, the possibility of resistance can also be understood spatially as a 'non-place' that suddenly emerges at the margins or within the interstices of a given form: a space that is constituted by non-stratified matter because it has not yet been encoded and internalized with that form. Here, the question of power (from within forms)

is always the same, concerning the nature of power relations that belong to that form, and this produces a sort of thought that rationalizes or administers its terms or subject-positions. By contrast, the question concerning resistance (or political pragmatics) is always asked in the following manner: 'where is power coming from and where is it going to', or where does it lead?

Power relations are nonetheless strategies in which we already dwell; moreover, 'we' are already internal to the forms of subjectification that populate these strategies. Again, there is no social space that is not already determined strategically, and Foucault's great contribution to the theory of critique was to include the formation of knowledge as one of most important manners in which strategies are instituted in social space and begin to define subjects. However, according to Foucault, there are also forces that are exterior to these strategic relations, and these constitute the future of power relations themselves (as the 'set of all possible relations', including those that are virtual and not yet actualized), and will constitute the specific forms of 'exteriority' that belong to each epochal arrangement. Deleuze defines this form of exteriority as a kind of 'crack' that occurs within every definite formation of power relations, and which immediately relates that form to a 'non-place' composed of non-stratified forces that will determine the growth or decline of that form. The future of power relations cannot be represented temporally, within a historical or teleological narrative, but rather as a kind of deformation or anomaly that seems to occur from various points that are external to the present. We might think, for example, of the 'crack' that has recently been perceived in the 'state form', which immediately relates it to globalized forces and events, causing it to undergo change and historical deformation. It would be a mistake to internalize this crack immediately in another form, even a supraform such as 'empire', since Deleuze will say that the elements and relationships that define 'exteriority' are precisely non-stratified or not yet encoded by another form of power; one can never say that they have been there all along since they only emerged alongside the current formation of power, as the resistances that define its cutting edges and its anomalous states.

A historical materialist analysis of power relations, by contrast, has always concentrated on tracing the history (or development) of specific forms of power (the 'feudal', or despotic model, the 'monarchic', the 'state form', or territorial model, the 'nation-form', or mythic model, the 'democratic' or capitalist model). What is specific about Foucault's approach is that he chooses, rather than creating a teleology of forms, to concentrate instead on diagramming the exteriority that accompanies each model, as well as the sudden combinations and even deformation of a specific 'form of exteriority' that often occurs in the transition from one model to the next. Thus, each model can be said to enclose an exteriority that constitutes its own internal relation to what lies outside it. This change in orientation that Foucault's approach represents, from tracing a history of interchanging forms to diagramming the forms of exteriority that characterize what is specific to each historical form of power relations, has been at the centre of charges of Foucault's 'a-historicism'. This is not simply a change of perspective, but rather a new manner of 'historicizing' the difference

between forms in order to give evidence that something has indeed changed between one form and the next, which is nowhere better illustrated than in Deleuze's summary of the paradigmatic change that has occurred in the passage from Greek society to modern societies:

When Foucault invokes the notion of diagram it is in connection with our modern disciplinary societies, where power controls the whole field; if there is a model it is that of 'the plague', which cordons off the stricken town and regulates the smallest detail. But if we consider the ancient sovereign societies we can see they also possess a diagram, even if it relates to different matters and functions: here too force is exercised on other forces, but it is used to deduct rather than to combine and compose; to divide the masses rather than to isolate the detail; to exile rather than to seal off (its model is that of 'leprosy'). (Deleuze 1988: 35)

From the above passage we can now see why Foucault's method of approach is properly genealogical and not historical (in the traditional sense), since only a genealogical method must account for sudden deviations or accidents that might befall the *genus* (form). This difference between history and genealogy, between the gradual progression of forms according to some internal logic and the sudden transformations of genealogical events is a 'molting' (Foucault's term) that often occurs in the transitions between one model (or diagram) and the next. In fact, one could say that Foucault's entire project, after *The Order of Things*, could be catalogued as a 'history of the outside', with the understanding that the subject does not constitute a stable object of enquiry, but rather a constantly shifting and highly fluid field of events.

### The scenes of power: 'what is a diagram'?

Returning to the question of the virtual, the basic definition that Foucault starts from is that of an 'exercise of power as a way in which certain actions may structure the field of other possible actions' (Foucault 1994: 343). That is, the analysis of power occurs in the interplay of forces between action, reaction, even the possible inhibition or incitement of other actions. Here we see the form of virtuality. In his study, Deleuze refines this definition by saying that power exerts itself directly on other powers (capacities to be, to endure, to persist, or to grow) causing a modification of power by power, or force by force. In other words, power does not take a subject as its aim, but rather the power expressed by another subject and seeks to modify its power to be or to persist, to endure, or to expand its *potestas*. We might note something Hegelian in this definition, although it doesn't pass through 'identification' or 'recognition' as the mechanisms for determining the relation between two forces. If there is a dualism in Foucault, as Deleuze says, it must be determined as a 'preliminary distribution operating at the centre of a pluralism' (of forces) (Deleuze 1988: 83). Thus, identification or recognition are not the only manners by which

force is related to another force; there are many others, as Deleuze recounts in his short list – 'to incite, induce, produce, seduce, make more or less probable, even to inhibit or repress. After all, what is desire as a force? We have many answers. It is pure self-consciousness (for Hegel); it is the pure instinct of life that undergoes modification or vicissitude (for Freud and Lacan); it is a 'craving for intense satisfaction' (for Whitehead). If Foucault does not employ the word as frequently as it appears in Deleuze and Guattari as one of the names of power, perhaps it is because this term has been so overdetermined that he does not see it as the principle manner by which a force encounters or relates to another force. Instead, it is only one mode among others that he wants to 'diagram'.

Hegel said, concerning the form of self-consciousness, that it is structured by the dual-recognition model (for example, in the lord–bondsmen instance), where it is not a question of one subject recognizing another but rather of desire confronting another desire and seeking to incorporate it as a term of its own identity. In the constitution of self-consciousness it is the force of one desire that acts immediately on another desire; this is the condition of the emergence of the subject as the phenomenon of self-consciousness (or spirit). Here, substance (in Spinoza) becomes subject (in Hegel), and power becomes a distinctly modern phenomenon. Henceforth, the power of sovereignty is what becomes visible as the reflection of this 'point', which assumes a different appearance depending on the register in which it is located in a discourse of knowledge (politics, ethics, science, or philosophy and even aesthetics). A form of sovereignty is known by means of the transformation of death into the knowledge of the life that concerns its own substance (subject). This is a very Hegelian formulation of the function of recognition in consciousness, but it also shows how power becomes productive of knowledge. This is the precise meaning of the phrase that appears in Deleuze's brilliant summary of Foucault's basic proposition that 'power is fundamentally productive, as what causes us to see and to speak'. For example, throughout his project Foucault shows how this basic concept underlies the definitions of sexuality, madness and criminality, all of which refer to a decision and definition concerning the form of life that becomes subject to a branch of knowledge. At the same time, this would account for the creation of new forms of subjectification, which are reflections of historical decisions concerning the subjects who populate institutions and their various states of exception. By expanding the definition of power employed heretofore, Foucault invents the various models under which power is defined beyond these senses: as 'governmentality', 'discipline', 'biopower', etc. The real question is what happens when these pre-existing relations are taken up by a form that unifies, centralizes and totalizes them? As Deleuze argues, this basic intuition concerning the various 'microdisciplinary' regimes and the formative role they play in both knowledge and in subjectivity immediately leads to an impasse that Deleuze highlights in Foucault's work between the eight-year period of *The History of Sexuality* and *Discipline and Punish*. If power makes us see and speak – if our own access to the truth of the subject proceeds by power – how does one get to a truth beyond 'power'? That is, if all knowledge and all particular truths are

already and irremediably saturated by power relations, is there indeed nothing 'beyond' or 'outside' these power relations?

Earlier on, I noted two areas of concern in a philosophy of expression: ontology, which can be defined as the nature of being and of beings, and the order of propositions and statements. Later, we found these two areas again in Deleuze and Guattari's work concerning the relation between a set of order-words and the state of bodies. It is not by chance that we find these two areas again in *Foucault*, this time in the descriptive order of statements and in the illustration of scenes of visibility. The statement 'Power makes us see and speak' is the manner that Deleuze immediately defines Foucault's concept of power within the philosophy of expression. If power makes us see and speak, it functions as a cause; thus, the goal of knowledge is to express fully this cause concerning its substance. Consequently, in Deleuze's commentary there are two regions in Foucault's method where the relations of power can become scene/seen: description (in language)/diagram (visibility). It is only when the being of power is grasped within both orders that power itself is capable of being 'rendered' in a phenomenological sense within Foucault's system; however, as Deleuze will go on to argue, this does not reduce Foucault's approach to traditional phenomenology, since in response to the problem recounted above, Foucault maintains a strict division (even 'agonism') between the order of statements and visibilities. The question for us to resolve is, why this insistence and how does it respond to the problem of truth announced above?

We can quickly recount the several famous 'scenes' of power that populate Foucault's work – 'Las Meninas or The Royal Family' (*The Order of Things*), the hospital (*Birth of the Clinic*), the prison (*Discipline and Punish*). Already very early, in *The Order of Things*, Foucault utilizes the tableau by Valázquez to describe a transformation of social relations, all the while focusing his analysis on the blank space that suddenly emerges in the mirror at the back of the painting – the blank and empty portrait of power itself which causes all the other elements to become dispersed in a vaster space of modern representation. However, if in this earlier work, the function of description (in language) still retains its sovereign role in determining the meaning of representation (or what 'we see' as Foucault repeats at several points in his description), Deleuze will point out that in Foucault's later portraits of power the order of language no longer retains its former sovereignty, but enters into an intractable combat with the order of visibilities that it no longer has the power to unfold or to explicate. As Deleuze says, it appears that we can pass between the silent orders of things to the sonorous order of statements by a kind of leap into abstraction.

In Foucault's approach the role of abstraction is precisely to intervene in a standard description of relations in order to show a sudden deviation or anomaly that could not logically be deduced from within the order itself. As is well known, in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault shows a relative transformation in the treatment of prisoners that would have profound effects on the global subject of rights beginning in the nineteenth century. This is the power of abstraction itself in producing a 'scene' that refers both to a specified locality (the prison, the clinic, the sanatorium) as well as to a globalized modification in power

relations. Once again, this responds to the charges of 'ahistoricism' in Foucault's method, which I will discuss in the first section, since Foucault employs diagrams to cause the constellations of forces to become visible through the description of minuscule and peripheral events, rather than intending his particular subject to become a portrait of power relations in a particular historical moment. For example, the panoptic diagram cannot simply be employed as the theoretical representation of the totality of all power relations, even though this is how this diagram has been utilized by many critics who have followed Foucault (and I will make the same observation later on concerning the concept of 'biopower' below).

Consequently, the question of 'history' must be understood according to a genealogy of diagrams that are always in the process of becoming; these diagrams and the relations between them constitute what Deleuze calls the 'double of history'. Foucault's gaze is always fixed on the sudden glimmering of exteriority that unexpectedly breaks through the centrality of forms at a given moment. In some sense, Foucault's historical method could be compared to the parable by Kafka about the leopard who breaks into the temple, repeatedly interrupting the ritual, until the moment when the leopard breaks in is included in the ceremony, and is thus normalized as an anticipated and ordered part of the ritual itself. Perhaps this could just as easily be called Foucault's prejudice as his greatest intuition: that historical causality is made up from a quantitative volume of minuscule events that suddenly cross a limit or a threshold. The task of the historian (or the genealogist) would be to select, from a dizzying array of details and descriptions left haphazardly in the archive, precisely the description of the event that would make this threshold appear as a visibility that determines our present. For example, it does not really matter how many times the leopard broke into the temple, but it becomes significant when the statement 'the leopard breaks into the temple' becomes an expected part of the ritual, because it is written down and no one can recall when things happened differently, which would now be unthinkable, a scandal.

Foucault has consistently emphasized that in 'history' there have been sudden transformations and turnabouts that produced radical discontinuity. This did not necessarily occur in the form of a revolution, but in the form of deviations and anomalies that were both instantaneous and, at the same time, slow and gradual. This image of instantaneous and slow and gradual change within the same duration is what he means by a shift in what he calls an *episteme*. For example, the episteme that concerns the figure of man (as a sovereign being, as a subject endowed with rights, as a mortal being subject to finitude) is portrayed in the famous description of a 'face that appears between two tides'. In the first tide, this face washes ashore and appears almost instantaneously as a figure drawn in the sand; at the same time, one has to wait for an indefinite duration for the second tide to come and wash away or deform this figure and replace it with another constellation or figure. And this is also the duration he refers to under the term of 'biopower', when power is organized by a set of resistances that exceed this image of man and are beginning to deform or distort its classical and modern images (Aristotle's *zoē politikē*, or the Hegelian subject of negativity, etc.).

Here we might perceive the potential of what Foucault observed when he discerned in certain particular events or moments of discontinuity that happen internally in a regime of power, a discontinuity that happens instantaneously and gradually, but at the same time, causes the historical stratification and organization of power relations to 'undergo a global modification' (Foucault 1994: 114). It is very important to see that this event spans two forms of indetermination – it is at once too instantaneous and too quick so that it is not immediately visible; at the same time, it is too gradual and slow that it poses a problem of language as well. It is for this reason that Foucault often talked about inventing new tools and finer instruments in the analysis of power, in order to study it better, to be sure, but also to cause its visibility to become an object of 'knowledge', that is, an object of statements and propositions concerning the 'truth of power relations today'. But here again, a classical problem returns: how can the statement capture its own causality (the power that first causes us to speak)? How can representation capture the very light that first causes the being of power to appear? In other words, 'Seeing and speaking are already completely caught up in the power relations they presuppose and actualize' (Deleuze 1998: 82).

In response to these questions, Deleuze applies the insights from his own philosophy of expression: power is that 'other thing' (a liquid being) that appears both on the side of statements and on the level of bodies. It is that which is felt (a relation of force that appears in the vicinity of another body and causes the relation to power); at the same time, power has a definite sense that is bound up with linguistic sense. And yet, it is neither one nor the other. Deleuze immediately qualifies this statement with a series of others:

No doubt power, if we consider it in the abstract, neither sees nor speaks. It is a mole that only knows its way around its networks of tunnels, its multiple hole: it 'acts on the basis of innumerable points'; 'it comes from below'. But precisely because it does not itself speak and see, it makes us see and speak. (Deleuze 1998: 82)

In this passage Deleuze cites a number of common theoretical clichés that seem to locate power either in terms of multiple and differential points of a structure (or 'symbolic order'), of a series within a network of social relations, or in terms of the ground (it is to be found below the level of what appears). It is precisely this character of hiding or concealment that causes us to speak about it or to ferret around for it – to capture it. Of course, this may be a prejudice. It may simply be a character of something that has no relation to either statements or visibilities from the perspective of a subject who could unify (or synthesize) both these orders in representation. In other words, the subject does not appear, as in Kant, as the condition of either the successive order of statements in time or the multiple appearances of visibilities in space; it is no longer the form of interiority belonging to the concept of understanding. Instead, statements and visibilities are dispersed across an exteriority and can undergo sudden modifications and new syntheses, even though Foucault continues to employ the traditional and

prosaic language of the historian of ideas ('around the eighteenth century, at the end of the nineteenth century, beginning in the seventeenth century') as indices of these events.

For example, 'at a certain indefinite point in the seventeenth century', Foucault argues that a whole network of politics and of power relations became interwoven with 'everyday life', so much so that power was indistinguishable with a whole set of common actions and behaviours. But it was still necessary to appropriate this power, to channel it or shape it, to bend it toward one's own interests (and perhaps this marks the particular 'strategic sense' that is given to power in the concept of ideology, as a strategy of seduction and of indirection). This is what gives power its game-like character, regardless of whether the effects of this particular game are lethal or not. As Foucault writes:

If one meant to take advantage of it, it was necessary to 'seduce' it. It became an object of covetousness and an object of seduction; it was desirable then precisely because it was dreadful. The intervention of a limitless political power in everyday relations became not only accepted and familiar, but deeply condoned – not without becoming, from that very fact, the theme of generalized fear. (Foucault 1994: 168)

What Foucault is outlining is the 'seductive' and 'desiring' character of power relations that structure the modern social field. Power is intrigue and seduction – it is a letter purloined and coveted, held as a weapon, or a threat (precisely in the sense that this letter could suddenly be opened and its contents revealed to others). Here, of course, I am referring to Lacan's analysis of the story by Poe, which portrays the seductive character of power later captured by Lacan in the phrase 'man's desire is the desire of the Other'.<sup>40</sup> Foucault's own illustrative fable was Diderot's early novel, *Les Bijoux indiscrets*, about a Sultan who owns a magical ring that makes women's genitals (or 'jewels') talk. Thus, we can define this phase in the analytic of power by its paranoid character, which runs through the major concepts invented in the nineteenth century to cause power to become visible within and between social relations, or that cause it to become spoken about in the most quotidian relations, particularly the relations that compose the social liaisons of the family. What Foucault is drawing our attention to is that this signals a 'molting' or rather 'diffusion' of power across everyday relations:

Political sovereignty penetrated into the most elementary dimension of the social body; the resources of absolutist political power, beyond the traditional weapons of authority and submission, could be brought into play between subject and subject, sometimes the most humble, between family members and neighbours, and in relations of interest, of professional rivalry, of love and hatred. Providing one knew how to play the game, every individual could become for the other a terrible and lawless monarch: *homo homini rex*. (Foucault 1994: 168)

In this passage Foucault accounts for the diffusion of power relations in terms of strategy and 'the games of desire and interest' that he would also see emerge in psychoanalysis as an institution of knowledge that both accompanies this intrigue and outlines the rules of the game at the end of the nineteenth century, especially in the family between parents and children. Thus, there is a strange symmetry between the position of the phallus that structures social relations as relations of power and desire in psychoanalytic knowledge, and the character of ideology that structures social relations through the position of capital. However, the real effective position of power does not function as an 'index' in either system; it appears in the form of a signifier that no longer resembles its earlier historical representatives, but shuttles back and forth across the social field as a mobile element of determination (structure). Literature, from the seventeenth century onwards, as Foucault argues, would be implicated in this vast machinery of power by establishing itself thoroughly in relation to the 'hermeneutic' of power relations, precisely when the description of power relations were suddenly presented as an artifice (a fiction), in order precisely to 'produce effects of truth that were recognizable as such' (Foucault 1994: 174). That is, common or ordinary life could be exposed to being organized, controlled, known, and eventually 'normalized', the more it became an object of visibility and discourse.

Finally, let us turn to another formula that Deleuze constantly invokes as the expression of Foucault's redefinition: *power incites, seduces, provokes*. This formula belongs to a passage found in Foucault's essay 'On the Lives of Infamous Men', which Deleuze constantly refers to as something of a profound discovery, a 'masterpiece'. 'How light power would be, and easy to dismantle no doubt, if all it did was to observe, spy, detect, prohibit, and punish; but it incites, provokes, produces. It is not simply eye and ear; it makes people act and speak' (Foucault 1994: 172). Here we find the convergence of the two major propositions in Deleuze's commentary: that power makes us see and speak, and that power is what incites, seduces and provokes new statements and visibilities. It seems that, *as a phenomenon*, power only emerges on those occasions where it is incited, provoked, seduced to come out of hiding or to confess its relation to other powers. Certainly, any quotidian understanding of power relations would bear this out – that power only appears in the form of a scandal or an event. It is only in this manner that it can be known, identified, incited to appear. Power exists only in the form of a provocation, or of multiple provocations, and these occasions offer 'power the occasion of sovereign intervention'. It is here that we can see power no longer defined as a single or sovereign instance, but as multiple points of intervention in social space.

### Power as bio-political danger

Let us return to the above description in order to see its continued pertinence for the principle of this diffusion today: 'The intervention of a limitless

political power in everyday relations became not only accepted and familiar, but deeply condoned – not without becoming, from that very fact, the theme of generalized fear' (Foucault 1994: 168). We can see the relevance for understanding how relations of political power intervened to 'regulate' and 'monitor' the seduction and strategies of desire and interest – the manner in which all social relations gradually come under supervision (particularly in the family and in schools, or in any relation of authority, or the external expression of power of another) to protect these relations from being 'abusive'. Thus, the statement that a limitless intervention in everyday relations is deeply condoned points to a generalized fear concerning power's perverse and 'strategic' nature. This recognizes, on the one hand, that the game of power is widespread and can occur in every social relation (particularly those based on dependency, or perceived inequality), and that political intervention into every social relation is necessary to regulate these games on a micro-logical level. Power first appears as strategy and as seduction, and in the second place provokes the fear of seduction (in the sense of hysteria, when the subject is both drawn uncontrollably to the point of seduction yet repelled by it.) On the one hand, we can understand this limitless political intervention particularly in late-democratic institutions such as the family and the school (in relations between subjects, between genders and ethnicities in particular). As Foucault observes, 'We should not be surprised at this inclination which, little by little, opened up the relations of belonging and dependence that traditionally connect the family to administrative and political controls' (Foucault 1994: 168).

At the same time, this opens another dimension that is underlined under the treatment of power under the generalized fear. This fear takes on two principle expressions: first, under the biological sense of 'contagion', those who are touched by the unchecked and abusive strategies of either domination or seduction by power are often scarred by the event in the manner of a disease. This has become a common trope or metaphor, but precisely concerning the 'biopolitical danger' that often characterizes the contemporary subject's relation to power, which can contaminate or otherwise deform the subject's normal course of development, producing an illness that can only be treated politically. The second major theme of this fear concerns the subject's own vulnerability to 'seduction', in the sense that the subject's improper relation or craving of power can produce negative and pathological effects in other power relations (hence, the father is prone to become a paedophile). Both instances belong to Foucault's concept of 'biopower' and have not been examined enough (the biological and psychological attributes and treatment of the relation to power as a disease, an illness, and generally, an aspect of neurotic character deformation that an improper relation to power introduces). Thus, in its modern concept, power always has a perverse underside that threatens to topple any social relation – no matter how minuscule, or how remote from the supposed centre. It is in this sense that it has become the obsessive object of fascination in addition to becoming the constant theme of a generalized fear. This is a morose and morbid 'fear of power' that Deleuze

and Guattari characterize under the nature of Oedipus, a morbid fear and a fascination of desire, which Foucault in his introduction to the volume described as the fascism of everyday life. In the 'Lives of Infamous Men', Foucault raises this exclamation: 'There was never a thought that there might be, in the everyday run of things, something like a secret to raise, that the inessential might be, in a certain way, important, until the blank gaze of power came to rest on these minuscule commotions' (Foucault 1994: 169).

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## Chapter 8

### Why 'Power Produces Truth as a Problem'

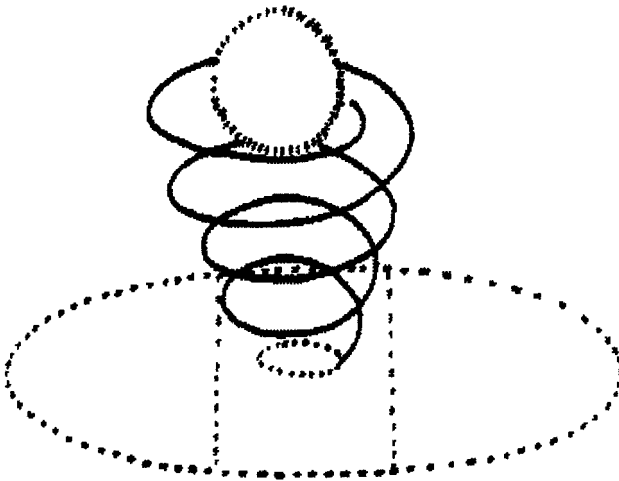


Figure 2

Return to the question of method: 'What is (*ti esti*) power?'

In the last session, we approached the problem of previous definitions of power in order to account for all the new possible modes of its objectification, that is, the manners in which power becomes visible or legible as scene/seen. Given that I have defined Foucault's epistemological approach to power as a 'paradigm shift', entailing all the affects of disorientation that would follow from this, it will be necessary to go over things again, this time from the methodological implications of what Foucault called the 'expansion of the previous definition of power'. That is, beyond the merely legal power which legitimizes power relations and political models that institute power relations (which can then undergo subsequent historical development or modulation), Foucault begins the painstaking process of describing/diagramming the different manners in which power relations take on an objectified form. Thus, Foucault shows us ways in which power relations are expressed that were previously not recognized as expressions of power (madness, sexuality, criminality

and juvenile deviancy, etc.). Even though this is a well-known understanding of Foucault's 'theory of power', it is important to remark again on the methodological innovations this approach represents and, more importantly, why Foucault decided to treat the analysis of power in this manner.

Again, we must return to the proposition that power is bound up with its virtuality and the modes in which it is actualized, not in a metaphysical expression of a being of power as such, but rather in a series of partial functions that produce effects within the organization and distribution of bodies, on the one side, and knowledge of systems of rationalizing existing power relations and their institution on the other. However, the real problem emerges when we recognize that power exists socially prior to its legal and institutional expressions, which are like the various modifications of its substance, or its 'modes'. In a Spinozistic sense, substance (power) turns about in its modes, which are necessarily infinite. Of course, this immediately calls into question the possibility of a complete objectification of power relations, that is, a total theory of power, since all theory (*theoria*) presumes a prior objectification of the thing in question.

Preliminary to the construction of any theory of power relations, therefore, is the problem of rationality, or the pretension of scientific knowledge. As we know, the Enlightenment principle of 'objectified reason' is not sufficient to clarify power relations and often ends up rationalizing forms of domination. Here, Foucault pays homage to the Frankfurt school for this critical insight concerning the problem of rationality: existing scientific or even philosophical knowledge tends to rationalize existing power relations (economic, juridical or *Polizeiwissenschaften*). In the modern period, Foucault will extend Adorno and Horkheimer's earlier critique even further by saying that this principle itself has been hijacked by the rationality of states which have committed genocide and atrocity in the name of the same sovereign principle of power.<sup>41</sup> For example, the modern problem of racism emerges precisely at the points where knowledge of populations is derived from a form of rationality that serves existing strategies of power relations.

In addressing this question on the level of his own research, Foucault says something quite striking: that when it comes to the analysis of power (that is, to the study of 'power relations'), there are no ready-made tools to be found anywhere and they would first have to be fabricated. This is like a molecular biologist saying that he first had to invent a new instrument to study cellular mitosis. Of course, in the study of power relations one previously had recourse to two kinds of instruments of analysis: either the juridical models that legitimated power relations, or the institutional models that consolidated them into definite and objective forms, such as the state form. But Foucault argues that the totality of power relations cannot be completely reduced to either, and that they are to be located elsewhere: there are existing power relations whose origins are neither the effects of legal models nor of institutional models. Here, it is not a question of the 'decline or the end of a form of centralization' that Foucault takes up under the thesis of governmentality. As he argues:

To pose the problem in terms of the state means to continue posing it in terms of sovereign and sovereignty, that is to say, in terms of law. If one describes all these phenomena of power as dependent on the state apparatus, this means grasping them as essentially repressive: the army as the power of death, police and justice as punitive instances, and so on. I don't want to say that the state isn't important; what I want to say is that relations of power, and hence the analysis that must be made of them, necessarily extend beyond the limits of the state . . . (Foucault 1994: 123ff.)

Power, in all its modes, does not appear objectively within either model earlier adopted to represent it. Therefore, as Foucault writes, 'it was first necessary to expand the dimensions of the definition of power if one wanted to use this definition in studying the objectification of the subject' (Foucault 1994: 327). I will define this as Foucault's 'conceptual need'. Both legal expressions and institutional expressions are already premised on the existence of power relations; they are both *emanations* and *modifications* of real existing power relations. However, one can't study the origin of power through its effects, which is a tautological method resulting in an explanation of power by power. *It is precisely for this reason, as Foucault himself clarifies later in his research, that there is no 'theory of power' to be found anywhere in his work.*

In the interview 'Truth and Power', Foucault confesses that his own work has constantly revised its own diagrams of power, and he criticizes much of his earlier work for gross inaccuracy in understanding the diagrams of power relations, especially the earlier works, *Madness and Civilization* and *The Order of Things*. As Foucault explains: 'It was these different regimes [of madness and scientific statements] that I tried to identify in *The Order of Things*, all the while making it clear that I wasn't trying for the moment to explain them, and that it would be necessary to try and do this in a subsequent work' (Foucault 1994: 114). (It could be argued that this was never accomplished.) This, I would say, has been responsible for the principle misunderstanding of Foucault's concept of power, and particularly the concept of 'biopower' which has been appropriated from his work by other theorists such as Butler, Hardt and Negri, and lastly Agamben, whose reading will be the object of my criticism. Most of these theorists have understood 'biopower' as a theory which either supposes the complete objectification of the subject of power, or rather sees biopower as a new form of power that emerges as a dominant form in a historical sense of modernity, as an ontological notion that succeeds earlier formations of power forms, including the form of sovereignty. I will argue that it is neither of these and must be understood in a limited fashion as only one of the ways in which power is actualized in Foucault's diagrams.

In his argument with Foucault, from the introduction of *Homo Sacer*, Agamben did not understand this 'conceptual need' and instead focused on the inner and outer directions of Foucault's later lines of enquiry, declaring that there is no theory of power in Foucault's work, as if this were a failure or defect in his project which Agamben sets out to correct with the theory of 'bare life' as the totalizing object of power. Thus, Agamben repeatedly calls

Foucault's direction of analysis of power 'mysterious', 'strangely unclear', etc. His argument is that Foucault, despite the fact of taking power as the centre of his late analysis, offers no unitary theory of power. In response Agamben refers to the objectification of 'bare life' as a primal scene in the metaphysical history of power, and in a very Heideggerian repetition of this history, as the place of objectification where power can be totalized in a theory of 'sovereign power' and 'biopolitical life'. Thus, as he writes:

The present enquiry concerns precisely this hidden point of intersection between the juridico-institutional and the biopolitical models of power [hidden, that is, in Foucault's analysis where this intersection remains mysterious]. What this work has had to record among its likely conclusions is precisely that the two analyses cannot be separated, and that the inclusion of bare life in the political realm constitutes the original – if concealed – nucleus of sovereign power. *It can even be said that the production of the biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power.*<sup>42</sup>

It should not be lost on anyone that the effectiveness of resistance of an appeal to what Deleuze calls 'the revered old Man' (which could be God, or 'the just man', or the pastoral form of sovereignty that is appealed to in a discourse of ethics) has been increasingly thrown into crisis by the occasion of the next genocide, the next war, the next act of terror, the next unassisted famine, the next devastation of the environment. As Deleuze writes, 'even today, the death penalty continues to be abolished and holocausts grow for the same reason' (Deleuze 1988: 92). Here, Deleuze is glossing a passage that appears in 'A Society Must be Defended': with the transition from a territorial state to what Foucault names a 'state of population' (including mobile populations of immigrants and refugees). As Foucault argues, 'What follows is a kind of bestialization of man achieved through the most sophisticated of political techniques, the possibilities of the social sciences become known, and all at once to both protect life and authorize a holocaust' (Foucault 1994b 3: 719). In response to this now age-old crisis of Enlightenment reason, Foucault's observation is extremely critical, even somewhat severe, concerning the decline of the rights of man. Today, the form of resistance assumed by the appeal to sovereignty or the dignity of man as a right has become less effective to the degree that it is no longer a power that resists or is active in relation to other powers, that is, the relation of power no longer flows through the earlier historical arrangement to a degree that it can effectively become a point of resistance to other powers (including forms of interest) and this implies a loss of *potestas*, that is, power defined as a vital force which structures actions by other forces. Perhaps this is why two years before his death Foucault defines the overall sense of his research as a 'theory of the Subject', *which in some ways implies that the subject is available to a complete objectification, unlike power itself!*

It is not by accident, then, that in the summary statement on 'The Subject and Power' (1982), which introduces a new direction in the study of power relations and, at the same time, offers justification of an abandonment of earlier

lines of enquiry, Foucault announces his intention to study the problem of power in other ways than by 'rationalizing it'. As he says, 'it may not be wise to rationalize society or culture as a whole', and I will turn to this below since it belongs to Foucault's later thought on the relationship between power and rationality that is determined as the history of an error, since it is clear that we have become trapped in our own history and in the development of political technologies of control. Foucault's solution to this dilemma of rationality and the technique of knowledge is to reverse the usual direction in the analysis of power relations; consequently, as Deleuze writes, 'resistance comes first in the order of power relations' (Deleuze 1988: 89). Fundamentally, this shift announced in the study of power is away from a centralized and systematic study of power itself. Such a metaphysical or classical approach tends to 'rationalize' the power relations that exist in the moment, tends to weigh and justify the decisions and the victims, the events, and the denial that belongs to those who have an interest in power and seek to know 'how' it works.

Concerning the new direction he marks out in the future analysis of power relations, Foucault remarks:

I would like to suggest another way to go forward toward a new economy of power relations, a way that is more empirical, more directly related to our present situation, and one that implies more relations between theory and practice. It consists in taking forms of resistance against different forms of power as our starting-point. (Foucault 1994: 329)

However, we must understand this only as Foucault's initial strategy in an attempt to analyse power 'otherwise than by rationalizing it'. He does not presume that the whole of power will suddenly be made to appear from these forms of resistance, and would be subject to totalization. To place the actuality of resistance first is simply to introduce a shift in the order of analysing power relations and follows from Foucault's observation that power only appears, as a phenomenon, from the perspective of another power that resists by provoking it to appear as a phenomenon. Instead, the focus is placed on the various points of resistance where power appears and on what Foucault calls 'the agonism' of specific struggles against how power is exercised. This focus results from what I already described above as the diffusion of power into everyday life – as a set of specific techniques, knowledges and administrative procedures. In any case, the problem returns to Foucault's central tenet that it is primarily as a reactive force that power becomes productive.

If power appears under this extended definition as an encompassing field of forces which take as their aim other forces, the question is whether this field of forces takes place outside 'the form of man' as traditionally defined, or whether certain forces are expressed without regard to this form of man – as a subject mysteriously endowed with certain rights. If Foucault does not employ a traditional discourse of sovereignty, or a certain form of political resistance bound up with the notion of a sovereign subject, or subject of political right, choosing instead to focus on actual forms of resistance in order to gain knowl-

edge from them and in order to diagram the current formation of power relations, it is because this political economy of power relations is too theoretical, that is, too abstract, and fails to grasp the expression of the greatest possible resistance. This is because, traditionally defined, resistance is a property or quality that belongs only to a subject who is recognized as endowed mysteriously with the powers to resist power. However, the actual expression of resistance – the power to act on other powers – is suspended or deferred to a later moment, and the concern is to build or rather produce a subject who expresses the real capacity of acting on other powers – a super-subject (of a class, a humanity or a God). It is based on no previous objectification of power relations or the subjects that populate them. Foucault placed in question the subject-character of power, the subjectivity of power, as belonging to the discrimination of other powers actually to recognize who is a subject and therefore who has the right to resist. In other words, what is the origin of this mysterious and unfathomable quality that has been bound up with the definition of the subject as a power over other powers, even to rule over life itself? This begs another question: is the subject, strictly speaking, ‘a power’? For example, do the forces that compose capital address me as a subject (that thinks, believes, wills, perceives, even desires), or rather, through me, do they address other forces that relate me, directly and spontaneously, to my powers to produce and to consume: in short to shape directly the forces of life without regard to my subjecthood? This is the critical meaning of the pronouncement concerning the death of the subject in Foucault’s thought, which, rather than indicating an expression of nihilism, remains a question to be answered: is the form of man today actually a power that expresses the greatest potency, potentiality, or capacity of resistance to other powers?

### Point, line, plane

Turning now to Foucault’s concept of ‘biopower’, I will give just a cursory explanation of this critical thesis that is mentioned only in passing at the end of ‘Society Must Defend Itself’ and is never the subject of extensive discussion thereafter. Foucault’s thesis of biopower concerns a transformation of the expression of power historically, which is no longer organized through the position of the sovereign or of the legal image of sovereignty (which, through force of violence and law, assume absolute right over man in terms of the decision to ‘let live or to kill’). This is still the form of sovereignty that Agamben wants to retain and to insert into the discourse of ‘bare life’ as the object of absolute sovereignty. Consequently, throughout the period of this organization the greatest resistance to power has been in the register of a resistance to its despotic and sovereign personality, to the pretension and abuses of a power that kills (or lets being be killed), that murders, as well as the power that lets live, or legalizes murder (in the form of war or an act of security), and that proclaims the value of one living being over another in terms of the horrible decision concerning who it will let live and who it will allow to die. Even today,

the expression of power and resistance to power is everywhere and underlies the 'ethical resistance' to the power of the state form, to globalization, to famines and wars, and to genocides. The resistance formed by the appeal to 'natural law' (the right of life to incline in the manner that is most proper to its own essence) and to the discourse of rights is founded on the same principle of state violence: on the absolute and yet unfathomable nature of right itself, that is, as the mysterious essence of the form of man who appears as a decision concerning life and death. In some ways, this decision-character must be heard in two different manners: first according to Heidegger, and then Whitehead.

The definition of 'man as a decision concerning life and death' can be understood as the appearance of *dasein*, but it must be understood purely formally in order to bring out the decision-character of this being that endures among other beings in the form of a decision. This statement has many senses that must be brought out here. In one sense, it implies that the character that defines man is a decision: man is a being who draws a line in being, and who knows how to draw a line, between himself and other beings in his immediate environment, and who is himself this line. First, the line folds back on itself in the form of man as a power among other powers. Second, there is the determination of the line (or fold) that falls back on other beings in relations of forces (power is exercised as an external line of force by which man rules man), but also as an inner fold between man and the forces of life as instinct (or sexuality).

This recalls the essential character of *dasein* (existence) that Heidegger evokes in reference to a passage that appears in Sophocles' *Antigone*, which portrays this being as 'the violent' (*Gewalt, ta dunaton*) as the one who casts itself out of its place (*poros*) in the midst of all beings and all places (*sumpanta poron*) – and whose exceptional and remarkable character which first causes this being to appear against all other beings is precisely this strange power and this violence that underlies its strangeness. It is the strange and uncanny power of a decision concerning life and death that becomes the basic definition of man as violence that erupts in the midst of all other beings. In addition, this power also implies a knowledge of life and death, of knowing how to distinguish or separate them in existence (science). This underlines the strange and mysterious form of sovereignty that can be characterized as a decision, as Agamben underlines the character of the mysterious origin of the power to institute a state of exception in the totality of beings. It is here also, returning to Aristotle's definition, that this decision appears just or fitting, or unjust. 'To have a sense of the good and bad and of the just and unjust is proper to man and distinguishes him from other living beings'. Thus, the question 'is it fitting or just?' refers to a decision that has four sides or senses in the Greek diagram: political, philosophical-scientific, ethical and aesthetic. These become the four manners of justifying force, which have many subspecies and branches of knowledge; however, all are founded upon the sovereign power of the subject to judge life itself, in its myriad forms and species, with regard to the question of whether it is fitting or just. For example, a form of life can be judged to be 'good' (in accordance with the moral idea of the

good), 'just' (in accordance with the political or ethical ideas of civil life), 'healthy' (in accordance with the physical idea of well-being), 'beautiful' (in accordance with the aesthetic idea of composition and the unity of components). Or a being may be judged to be lacking or deficient in any of these senses. The importance of this, however, is that this quadripartite division must be understood as a series of potential decisions, all of which refer primordially to the character of decision itself, as that which is most 'proper' to the form of man, and which draws a line between his being and being itself. Thus, man himself is composed of a multiplicity of lines all of which determine his existence in the most precarious manner, since each line is subject to future decisions concerning what is most proper or fitting with regard to this form. Again, perhaps this is just another manner of phrasing the problem that concerns the fate of the 'human compound', which has become so implicated in its own knowledge and technologies of control (decision) that what is most proper to this form has become exposed to the most severe indecisiveness. This is all very Heideggerian, of course, as someone might immediately object (as if there were any value in the objection that a certain problem is any less problematic because we have heard it before). At the same time, Deleuze himself could be charged with making Foucault's problem echo with that of Heidegger's in a manner that might have appeared as a scandal to some. In his own defence, we recall the line quoted earlier that 'we must not refuse to take Heidegger seriously' (in fact, the couple Foucault–Heidegger that appears throughout Deleuze's commentary could even reinvent both philosophers' works, and might serve as a necessary corrective to historical lines of research).

According to Deleuze, the early encounter of Foucault with the thought of Bichat is crucial with regard to Foucault's early intuition concerning the transformation of the nature of decision itself that is tied to the classical principle of sovereignty. This is something that Deleuze underlines in his reading of Foucault. The juridical and legal nature of sovereignty is tied to an earlier or classical conception of death as a 'point', and which allows sovereignty to appear precisely as the result of a certain juridical decision concerning 'death or life'. (As I have noted earlier on, this is a concept that Agamben wants to maintain in his theory of 'bare life' as an abstract point around which the history of sovereignty unfolds in the form of a decision, or series of decisions, regarding *homo sacer*.) In other words, the appeal to sovereign power is the appeal to the force of the decision that determines life as the ground against which all other decisions appear. Deleuze underlines the importance of Foucault's discovery of Bichat's new definition of life 'as a set of functions that resist death', particularly when this concerns the classical conception of death. In Bichat's new definition, death is not a 'point', but rather a line that is co-extensive with life itself. As Deleuze summarizes Foucault's reading of Bichat:

The thing is, Bichat put forward what's probably the first modern conception of death, presenting it as violent, plural, co-extensive with life. Instead of taking it, as classical thinkers, as a point, he takes it as a line that we're constantly

confronting, and cross in either direction only at the point where it ends. *That's what it means to confront the line Outside.* (Deleuze 1990c: 111 – my emphasis)

Here, the conception of the relation between life and death no longer takes the form of a 'point' (*punctum*), that is, the expression of an original and sovereign decision, or of a moment of understanding or knowledge – in the sense that medicine understands the point where life becomes death by watching a heart monitor go flat-line and signing the death certificate saying that death occurred at a definite point in time. Instead, this conception of the 'point' is transformed into a line of partial events, a line punctuated and somewhat discontinuous. As Deleuze says, the question becomes no longer that of a point, but where does one confront the line or threshold that crosses over into death. As a result, there is an implication of a quanta of death, of the number of partial and violent deaths that are coextensive with life, that suddenly are made to accelerate until a gradient or threshold is crossed and the living organism that is made up of a multiplicity of living systems inclines toward a state where organic death outstrips the living processes. Of course, death continues to function as a point; the judge sentences the convict to death and the governor signs the order of execution for 10 a.m.; the military plan to execute their strategic raid killing everyone in the vicinity at a precise point; the artillery begins its barrage to coordinate with the landing of paratroops. And yet, one wonders if this is the point that concerns life, and its set of functions that resist. In other words, which is the death that concerns life – the death understood as a power, unfolded as knowledge or technical practices, or the death defined as violent and multiple or partial that is coextensive with the line of life and belongs to its own form of immanence? This would be Foucault's question which, more than announcing the potential demise of 'the Form of Man' or death of the subject, calls into question the pretension of science as a knowledge of life that might itself be founded inextricably upon the power of error.

What is it that Agamben objects to in Foucault's definition of death, following Bichat, if not that it appears as the final instance of the separation of *bios* and *zoē* that follows his own thesis concerning the original Greek determination, that is, the separation of nutritive life from bare political life? In other words, Foucault's 'theory of power' departs from a model of sovereign identification of death as the moral-judicial 'point' where sovereign life departs (or inclines) from natural and nutritive life in the definition of bare life, stripped of all its power to live 'naturally' except as the minimal power of existence granted to a form of life that cannot be said even to exist below this threshold of a pure juridical and political determination. Regardless of its nakedness and its misery, even its lack of beauty, this is still a form of life that continues to correspond to law, to its legal and political definition as a kind of life that can continue to appeal to its own bare and naked right to live. Thus, it forms the very possibility of resistance and the place from which future resistances will emerge precisely in those places where power causes life to incline into bare

life (in concentration camps, refugee camps, ghettos, third world zones, urban slums, etc.).

However, this is also the basis of Agamben's misreading of the three basic lines of Foucault's research. If the first orientation of Foucault's research undertook the study of technologies of power-knowledge (the manner in which power can be understood as a folding of force on to other forces, in the sense that men learn to control other men), the second concerned technologies of the self (by which man folds this relation on to his own body and the forces interior to the body); however, the third relation, which Agamben does not perceive, concerns what Deleuze calls 'the line Outside'. The most crucial change in Foucault's thought occurs following the influence of Bichat, in replacing the image of 'natural death' with an indiscriminate quantity of a thousand partial and violent deaths that coexist on the plane of life, precisely to overturn the abstract and punctual image of death as a decision that belongs to the sovereign image of power. In other words, there is no such thing as 'natural death', since all deaths are partial and violent; the question of propriety belongs to the living compound defined as a set of functions that resist death. The function of science, for example, attempts to 'capture' and to 'emulate' the power of life itself by masking death as decision between proper or improper life, rather than as the fact of an anomaly which expresses life's own immanence to itself as a vital power.

Here again, for Foucault, the question becomes the nature of rationality that does not take as its point of departure the power to decide or to discriminate concerning the relationship of life defined by this immanence. At what point does reason itself function as a sovereign power that intervenes in life itself, as a biopolitical force that relates to another force, in order to incite or to provoke the power of life to appear, so as to 'control' and cause it to deviate from itself and from its own proper inclination? In the classical model of sovereignty, reason functions as a permanent 'state of exception' that intervenes to cause life to deviate from its own immanence, prompting the decision concerning whether this intervention is proper or improper – that is, whether it was 'just' (becoming the object of legal determination), 'good' (becoming the object of ethical knowledge), or if it occurred 'by right' (the object of political and moral discourses that define the 'rights' of actions of power relations in terms of the innate power of certain forms to include others as terms of their own substance); and finally, whether it is judged to be 'beautiful' (becoming the object of aesthetic sensibility and taste).

Earlier, the philosopher Whitehead defined the interaction between what he called 'living societies' in a common environment by the phrase 'life is robbery', but it is here he says that in higher and more complex living societies the question of morals becomes acute, 'since the robber requires justification'. Justification (or rationalization) of the acts of robbing other living societies in an environment (in the example offered by Whitehead, the manner that a crystalline structure is robbed of its own 'nutritive environment by being placed under glass') is the object of the different forms of knowledge. In the image of life defined as the coexistence of partial deaths, however, we have the

image where 'death' no longer forms a 'point', a singular event that can be captured from different points of view as 'the common object' (*sensus communis*) of the different branches of scientific knowledge (biological, medical, ethical, moral, political, administrative or legal). In the same way that a line is constructed from the multiplication of points, we can see the sense by which the sense of death itself has changed by the multiplication of a number of partial deaths, each of which are incomplete, and coextensive with life in such a way that it has become indistinguishable. Thus it cannot be said that life deviates, or is caused to deviate at any point from its own inclination by the intervention of another power which turns it toward another end or goal. *If life itself is equal to the power of error and, in turn, man becomes the form of death that life resists with its set of functions, then, the force of error is the greatest possible resistance to 'the form of man'*. The last statement may sound like a platitude, unless one considers that since the nineteenth century, or 'the age of critique', the greatest potential for resistance to the dominant forms of rationality have been rooted in the powers of error. *Error has become equal to the question of life (necessarily protean and bearing the innate characteristic of a multiplicity) and its capacities to resist.*

### Life = the power of error

It is odd that in addressing the question of life, Agamben repeatedly returns to Aristotle's definition of the human compound as *zōon politikon*, instead of turning to more recent theories of modern biology, to evolutionists after Darwin and Uexkell, or even to the philosophy of Whitehead. Yet, what Foucault is addressing is perhaps closer to Deleuze's definition of the human being as a 'deterritorialized animal' than to Aristotelian animality. Here we must ask what Deleuze means by the definition of the human as a 'deterritorialized animal'? On one level, this redefinition refers to that which has become most proper to the scientific knowledge of man in the form of a decision, as a 'point of deterritorialization' in charge of the codes of life itself! Man is the being who takes charge of life at a molecular level of living systems themselves, and, in turn, becomes the form of death that life resists with its own set of functions. In his conception of error, however, Foucault is no longer thinking of the philosophy of Heidegger (who was perhaps the last great thinker of the history of error since the Greeks), but rather is referring to modern biological science and the manner in which the events of 'error' occur in an evolutionary chain, usually through the expression of anomalies in DNA sequences. He writes:

We must take into account how anomalies traverse the entire field of biology. It is also necessary to take account of mutations and the evolutionary factors that induce them. And equally it will be necessary to interrogate this singular albeit hereditary form of error, which comes from the fact that in the human life [or in Man] life achieves the form of a living being that is never found to be completely in its own place, a species-being that is fated 'to err' and 'to be deceived'. (Foucault 1994b, 4: 774)

If in the above passage we substitute the passive construction 'to be mistaken' for the active form of 'deceives', perhaps we might come closer to the essence of Foucault's thought: in 'the form of man', life reaches the form of a living being that (1) deceives life; (2) is a singular form of life that is constituted by error; and (3) is a species whose fundamental distinction is that its own species-determination is bound up with the historical meaning of error itself. If one admits this concept (that life = error), then one can only conclude that error is the root of what has constituted human thought and its history from the beginning. Here, one can easily point to the opposition of truth and falsehood as a universal trait defining human societies, including the values that are attributed to one or the other and the effects of power that different societies and different institutions have bound to this distinction. All of this might, in fact, be understood only as the most reactive (or defensive) response to the form of error that is intrinsic to power of life.

Therefore, if Foucault argues that the history of the human sciences is 'discontinuous', it is because we can only analyse it as a series of 'corrections' to the problem of falsehood, which introduces a new distribution of a problem that is never liberated, once and for all, in the terminal moment of truth. But in this sense, the possibility of 'error' constitutes not the forgetting or the withdrawal of the promised accomplishment (as in Heidegger), but rather 'the dimension of what is proper to the life of human beings and indispensable to the temporality of the species' (Foucault 1994b, 4: 775). At the same time, it is only when we come to admit that the character of decision (and reason) is exposed to this fundamental power of error that we might begin to grasp the radical sense of Foucault's meditation on life. If the distinction of truth and falsehood is already an extreme reaction to the power of error that is found to be intrinsic to the immanence of life, in the sense of an extremely reactive response, then the power of judgement is already haunted by the possibility that we are deceiving ourselves, whether this deception assumes the form of ideology, of the unconscious, of religion – or the various other expressions of error that have emerged in modern critical discourse. In other words, the power of decision is the history of an error, or of a series of errors that have traversed the temporality of the species, which are found to be most determining with regard to the being of man (and again, we discover a certain Heideggerian resonance in Foucault's thought). Thus, the genealogy of error itself is the history of man, in the sense of a history of what is exterior to this form at any given point in its evolution and change ('a history of the outside', as I called it earlier on), and this history can only be understood as a series of 'corrections' to the actual anomalies that have traversed the form of man. There is something so profound – and, indeed, terrifying! – in Foucault's final meditation on this subject that I can only point to it without further enquiry concerning what this could imply.

In conclusion, let us summarize the earlier definitions of what is 'proper' to man according to the philosophies of Heidegger and Whitehead. According to Heidegger, human *dasein* is ontologically bound up with the

character of a decision that appears in the centre of being as a whole: a decision, moreover, that is repeated with regard to other beings and thus is necessarily a form of violence. According to Whitehead, 'man' is simply the name of a living society whose own determination is founded upon the robbery of other living societies in its immediate environment: a decision that necessarily must be justified in the form of the rationality that is proper to 'man'. With regard to his own living society, such a decision assumes the form of power relations and the image of the sovereign good. This decision is fundamentally political, according to Aristotle's definition, since it is a decision concerning what is judged to be fitting and beautiful (*kalos*) versus what is found to be disjointed and ugly (*kakos*). It is important to emphasize that this also underlies the different senses of progress that belong to the narratives of science and philosophy concerning truth and falsehood. Foucault enunciates two fundamental moments: first, the Cartesian discovery concerning the relation of truth and the subject of decision itself; second, two great texts that hail from the eighteenth century, which are Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (in the critique of taste, or the science of true judgements) and Hegel's *Phenomenology*. These two works, according to Foucault, constitute the first grand formulations of the relation between truth and life. Accordingly, 'The creation of truth is only the most recent error, the decision concerning the true life, in the most profound manner, and the value accorded to the truth constitutes the most singular manner that life has invented, in the form of man, at the very point of its origin, carrying within itself the eventuality of error' (Foucault 1994b, 4: 775). It is in this passage from Foucault's last meditation on the problem of error in the human sciences that one can hear the theme of the 'death of man' as only referring to the form of man that is bound to the fate of truth and falsehood. The meditation on the figure of superman that Deleuze brings to Foucault's meditation only announces the promise – or the foreboding – concerning what happens when the forces of life eventually surpass the form of man and will no longer represent the primacy of the 'being-in-question'. According to Foucault's intuition, this would open a radical re-evaluation of the theory of the subject. As he asks: 'Does not the entire theory of the subject have to be reformulated once knowledge, instead of opening to the truth of the world, is rooted in the "errors" of life?' (Foucault 1994b, 4: 776).

What is knowledge if, instead of constituting an opening to the truth, its fundamental power is rooted in error? In other words, how is the pretension of the 'goodwill' that is ascribed to intentionality the *cogito* – something that Deleuze himself questioned in the opening passages of *Difference and Repetition* – to be founded on a will to deception, even in the active sense of deceiving life? Is this not Foucault's most enigmatic observation on what he calls 'the will to truth'? It is here, perhaps, that we might recall the fable of the scorpion and the frog; the scorpion says it is fundamentally in my nature to deceive, and immediately dies, at a point where it is impossible to distinguish between death, murder and a suicide.

## The line outside

Let us come back – after a roundabout analysis – to the question of desire. If, as many have observed, Foucault does not employ the word frequently, perhaps it is because it has been so overdetermined, and he does not see it as the principal manner by which a force encounters or relates to another force; rather, it is one mode among others that he wants to ‘diagram’. Despite Deleuze’s earlier emphasis upon the term itself, it is interesting to notice that in Deleuze’s later work, particularly after Foucault, it is employed much less frequently. In fact, one could say that it is replaced by the term ‘life’. Of course, life is certainly an important word for Foucault, or rather it becomes one through the course of his study and what he discovers, but the first thing to notice is how Deleuze reads this important definition as well by immediately situating it, perhaps mysteriously at first, in relation to Nietzsche’s conceptions of the ‘death of God’, ‘the last man’, and ‘the superman’. However, the one concept that is suspiciously missing from this list is perhaps the most important of all: ‘the will to power’. But is it, in fact, missing? Rather, can we not substitute the ‘will to power’ for ‘life’ in the definition of a ‘set of functions that resist death’. Is not the ‘will to power’, the term of Nietzsche’s particular vitalism, the name of life?

Allow me to turn to the passage where Deleuze situates the term of ‘life’ in relation to the other terms mentioned above as a manner of demonstrating Foucault’s basic definition of power. There are several ‘points in *Foucault* where Deleuze develops this, particularly in the appendix, ‘On the Death of Man and the Superman’, but for our purposes, I will refer to the instance that occurs in the chapter we have been discussing. Deleuze asks:

Contrary to the fully established discourse, there is no need to uphold man in order to resist! What resistance extracts from the revered old man, as Nietzsche put it, is the force of a life that is larger, more active, more affirmative and richer in possibilities. The superman has never meant anything but that: it is in man himself that we must liberate life, since man himself is a form of imprisonment for man. Life itself becomes resistance to power when power takes life as its object. (Deleuze 1994: 92)

As Deleuze says:

‘the final word on power is that resistance comes first, to the extent that power relations operate completely within the diagram, while resistances necessarily operate in a direct relation with the outside from which diagrams emerge. This means that the social field offers more resistance than strategies, and the thought of the outside is the thought of resistance. (Deleuze 1988: 89)

Here, we can understand that existing power relations operate through strategies, whereas resistance comes from outside (power diagrams), and thus point

to a sector of the social that is outside existing power relations. Although, as Foucault admits, we cannot imagine a society without power relations, we can seek to develop new diagrams of new manners of exercising power on ourselves and on others: hence the theme of power as an art or manner of life in the last works. If Agamben finds Foucault's concept of power as a form of 'self-styling' so mysterious, perhaps this is because it also includes biological death as a possibility that may very well be outside or 'beyond' the subject's knowledge, but not outside the powers of subjectivization. Here, Foucault (and Deleuze) seem to be suggesting a new form of ethical heroism in the manner one folds life with death. Perhaps this is why Foucault's figure has become so menacing or monstrous to some – particularly given how he died, or the questions concerning his failure to control his own desire by holding normal biological life as a limit – and why Deleuze in some ways compares his fate to that of Nietzsche. The one who seeks to fold life and death differently from others threatens to become another species or form of life. As Deleuze writes:

That's what it means to confront the line Outside. Passionate men die like Captain Ahab, or like the Parsee rather, chasing their whale. They cross the line. There's something of that in Foucault's death. Beyond knowledge and power there's a third side, the third element of a system . . . An acceleration, one might almost say, that makes it impossible to distinguish death and suicide. (Deleuze 1990c: 111)

I underline this confession in order to point out that the more stupid and misguided (or at least, insensitive and uninformed) critiques of Foucault, have often limited themselves to sweeping generalizations based on his earliest work, such as *History of Sexuality*, and in some cases, have resulted in the rejection of any value of Foucault's entire project, based on a rejection of a passage or a paragraph made in these works. Deleuze addresses this kind of misunderstanding later in *Negotiations*:

Misunderstandings are often the reactions of malicious stupidity. There are some who can only feel intelligent by discovering 'contradictions' in a great thinker. People acted as though Foucault were talking about the death of existing men (and they said 'that's going a bit far') or as though, on the other hand, he was just noting a change in the concept of man ('that's all he's saying'). But he wasn't saying either of these things. He was talking about a play of forces, and a dominant form emerging from it. (Deleuze 1990c: 90)

Here, Deleuze might be referring to a group of pernicious critics of Foucault's philosophy who surfaced in the 1980s in France, and who threatened to reduce Foucault's entire oeuvre to the rumours of his sexuality and his experimentation with sadomasochism, and particularly his contraction of AIDS which resulted from carrying on an 'unhealthy, unhygienic and morbid lifestyle'. In a definite sense, what prompted Deleuze to write a treatise that

uses his own authority both to comment upon, expound and celebrate, and in a certain sense monumentalize, Foucault's system was an extremely defensive and strategic manoeuvre – that is, an act of strategy directed not against other subjects, but rather against the forces that were currently drawing Foucault's portrait in the sand.

Unlike Foucault, of course, Deleuze had conducted himself as a typical and somewhat boring member of the French intelligentsia (and he had never been really promiscuous or problematic except in his habit of chain-smoking – but that was just typical of French intellectuals since Sartre – although there was also something perverse in his curious habit of growing his fingernails too long and nobody really ever believed that it was because his fingertips were hypersensitive). Nevertheless, his stature and authority as a 'great French philosopher' in direct line of descent from Sartre and Valéry is unimpeachable. As a result of his commentary, however, Foucault assumes a place of honour in Deleuze's respected oeuvre that is shared by Hume, Kant, Leibniz, Spinoza, Bergson, and even with the rumour of 'the grandeur of Marx'. In effect, in a proactive move, Deleuze galvanizes Foucault's legacy as a French philosopher of great stature and summarily 'monumentalizes' his portrait.

This is my interpretation of the gesture behind the title of the book, which is simply the proper name 'Foucault' and is made in ironic reference to what Foucault in 'What is an Author?' himself baptized as the 'inventor of a discursive function', in contradiction to the legal function of an author as an index of a body of writing. Foucault, under Deleuze's act, is an inventor of a modern discourse of power in the same way that Freud invented the discourse of 'the unconscious' and Marx the discourse of 'political economy'. This is also my interpretation of the couple Foucault–Nietzsche that Deleuze employs throughout the book. According to the following formula: in the same way that Nietzsche's philosophy was distorted and deformed because of its appropriation by the National Socialists (and also by Heidegger as well), so too Foucault's work may be destined for the same misinterpretation today, and probably for some time to come.

## Notes

1. This is one of the primary differences between Deleuze and Guattari's image of concept-creation and Derrida's critical procedure of 'deconstruction'. For a more extensive discussion of this distinction in the 'style' of difference, see Lambert 2005.
2. See Alice Jardin, *Gynésis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986).
3. This was the common theme of a number of articles published in 1946 by the journal *Action*, in the special issue entitled *Faut-il brûler Kafka?*, ed. Isabelle van Welden.
4. See Marthe Robert, *Kafka* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960).
5. See the articles by Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?' and Jacques Derrida, 'Before the Law' / 'Vor dem Gesetz'.
6. This is especially true of Russian Marxist criticism; for example, in his essay, 'Kafka Unretouched', Dmitri Zatonsky writes:

Kafka is – in my opinion, clearly despite his wish which, although not expressed, was quite definite – received as a deeply decadent phenomenon of crisis, foreign to all truth of art and life. And the more the sickness of bourgeois society progresses, the more actively modernists of this sort turn their attention to this writer. (Zatonsky, in Hughes 1981: 248)
7. I will argue later that the last and most triumphant battle-cry of this war over interpretation can be found in Jameson's *A Singular Modernity*, where Deleuze is characterized as no longer even a 'closet (or apartment) modernist', but one who has shamelessly come out of the closet with his latest works on cinema.
8. The source that Jameson refers to for this quadripartite schema is Henri de Lubac's *Exégèse médiévale*, 4 vols (Paris: Aubier, 1959–64).
9. By comparison, and to refer to a more recent theoretical position that would be at odds with Jameson's conception of the only realistic perspective for the emergence of the Left as a political class in this culture, I might refer to Judith Butler's arguments against the movement of feminists and gay activists to appeal to the institutions of the state and the civil society for equal rights – in particular, the extension of the heterosexual institution

of marriage to same-sex couples – as, in fact, only consolidating the ideological authority of the state and its surrogate civil institutions (such as the courts and the university) to claim the position of the universal in extending partial rights to identifiable groups of sexual minorities. Certainly, Butler's analysis is theoretically valid, but politically problematic in terms of her identification with the figure of Antigone who would rather choose death and 'anonymity' than enter into any arrangement with the state. Instead, Butler claims the position of the 'exception to the universal' as the position from which the freedom will emerge against necessity. However, this is a politics of interest that would never compromise or exchange its identity for a general form of interest. I would even say that it is the politics of 'the Beautiful Soul'.

10. Here we come to a contradiction and potential objection to our analysis. If the strategy of containing Deleuze and Guattari has been successful in turning them, more or less, into peaceful and domesticated lapdogs of a Jamesonian Marxism, or as the fairly harmless but misguided French who simply missed out on the 1960s in the United States, and who figured a way to find another 'blue bus' or to 'do drugs by another means', for example, 'to get drunk on pure water', then how do we explain the somewhat harsh tones of rebuke with which Deleuze is dismissed in the pages of Jameson's latest book, or even in the recent attack launched by Slavoj Žižek (Jameson's secret agent or mole in American cultural politics) in *Organs without Bodies*? In response, I would simply reply: by the sudden and completely unexpected popularity of *Empire* (Hardt and Negri 2000), a book that has inexplicably transcended institutional boundaries and has attained a popular readership among countercultural and would-be revolutionaries and pop-Leftists in this society, therefore, a book which threatens to wed the traditional goals of Marxist analysis to a pseudo-Deleuze and Guattarian belief in the power of 'multiplicities'. Even in the face of the fact that this book received Jameson's earlier blessing according to his earlier strategy of containment, how can we not read its subsequent and inexplicable popularity as a threat to Jameson's image of the leftist political subject, particularly in the manner in which the subject of history it describes seems to have no relation to the alliance politics of an organized Left, but rather sets forth a position of spontaneous revolutionary activity carried out in different semi-autonomous spheres of collective interest (an alternative version of political pragmatics that Jameson has been especially hostile to and is rooted in Foucault, and in Althusser's description of 'semi-autonomous spheres')? Thus, it is not by accident that Jameson's earlier thesis concerning 'totality' emerges more literally and more starkly in the argument of *A Singular Modernity* concerning a single and unifying field for situating the analysis of both politics and culture.
11. Michel Rocard, quoted in Bernard E. Brown, *Socialism of a Different Kind: Reshaping the Left in France* (London: Greenwood Press, 1982): 50.
12. The year 1984, also marks my own entry into this chronology, as the first year of my graduate studies at Berkeley, CA.

13. These remarks on the function of literature in exile or colonization are taken from my reading of Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. See Lambert 2002: 132–51.
14. On the definition of the 'minor' form, see especially Ronald Bogue in Stivale 2005: 110–20.
15. CNN on-line. Saturday, 10 January 2004, posted: 6.48 a.m. EST (11.48 GMT).
16. In the 1970s in the United States there was a thriving culture of small presses, local poetry readings and regional meetings held in bookstores and cafés. This culture was more or less destroyed by different developments: first, by a legislative action which taxed inventories of presses and publishers and put most small presses out of business; second, by the gradual absorption of writing and poetry into universities; third, by the development of mega book-chains such as Barnes & Noble and Borders, which caused many local bookshops to go out of business. It is true that both the universities and major book-chains continue to emulate the activity of culture by becoming centres of cultural creativity and exchanges and to offer local venues for readings, yet these activities are more closely tied to national markets and sales and other cultural institutions. Today, writers follow the small stimulated flows of capital from one institution or writing workshop to the next, often indiscriminately. Few seem to be aware that this is a very recent development, and fewer have asked what impact this might have on literary culture.
17. The last line is a quotation from the poem by Stephan George, which is the subject of meditation in Heidegger's 'Words', in Heidegger 1971: 139–56.
18. William Carlos Williams, 'The Red Wheelbarrow', in Williams 1985.
19. See Martin Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, trans. William McNeill (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001).
20. Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass* (London: Macmillan, 1927), p. 125.
21. See Gabriele Schwab *Subjects without Selves* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).
22. See Elizabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan & Co.* trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
23. All the above details are compiled from Freud's case-history, as well as the original case-notes. See Freud 1957c, 10: 153–319.
24. Louis Althusser, *Pour Marx* (Paris: Maspero, 1965): 87–128. All translations of passages from this work are mine.
25. On the Deleuzian conception of 'practice', as distinct from Althusser's, see Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993): 115–22.
26. See 'The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy', in Deleuze 1990b: 253–66.
27. Godelier, quoted in Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 140.
28. For example, one cannot say that the current line of development of capitalism in Chinese society belongs to the same line of development as one finds in Europe or America – at least, not without performing an extreme reductionism in appealing to the universality of the Western line of development

as determining the conditions of stratification in other regions (for example, the allegory of centre and periphery applied to multiple places across the globe). In this regard, it is interesting to observe that the line of development that almost exclusively preoccupies the argument of 'universal history' in *Empire* is that of the Western notion of *absolute imperium*.

29. Godelier, quoted in Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 140n.
30. It is important to observe that Marx in the *Grundrisse* first adopted this image of absolute deterritorialization in order to portray the successive transformations of capital itself, which purportedly always encounters its own limit as the inherent condition of its evolution and historical transformation, all the way to the end when this limit will potentially become externalized in a new form. That is, if there is a necessary limit internal to capital itself, which functions both as the condition of its production and reproduction and as the moment when capital exhausts itself and 'turns about' into another form (that is, the moment of *crisis*), it is a limit it had first of all to *steal* from the earth – as the absolutely '*in itself*', the immobile continuum, the ground of production.
31. Artaud, quoted in Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 143.
32. On the other hand, we have in the recent work of Agamben what I would call another return of an earlier or archaic image of sovereignty that establishes the position of the despot as the uninvited, the unclean and the unwelcome as in the case of *Homo Sacer*.
33. Hardt and Negri 2000: 217. One historical counterargument can easily be made to the final vision of the multitude in Hardt and Negri's argument, since Deleuze and Guattari also observe that the profound movement of 'deterritorialization', and the collective expression of desire and delirium, need not always assume the form of a positive (or 'joyous') emancipation of political subjectivity. Deleuze and Guattari often refer to the Crusades as a historical example that could be offered as an alternative reading of 'the great flows of humanity' that one finds forecast in the final section of *Empire*. As Guattari remarked in the same interview cited above:

'The crusades were indeed an extraordinary schizophrenic movement . . . It didn't always work: the Venetian Crusade wound up in Constantinople, and the Children's Crusade veered off to the South of France and quickly lost any sympathy the people had for it. Entire villages were captured and burned by these 'crusading' children, whom the regular armies finally had to round up, either killing them or selling them into slavery . . .'

(Deleuze 2004: 270)

However, the real critical question that I would raise with regard to the concept of 'the multitude' is whether the anthropological thesis concerning primitive societies expounded by Clastres represents a critical intuition of the potential political phenomena of contemporary forms of nomadism in late capitalism, or whether it merely functions poetically, as a theoretical fiction alluding back to Deleuze and Guattari's creative use of this thesis concerning the schizoid and deterritorialized flows of desire which have emerged alongside late capitalism and which continue to haunt it.

34. At the same time, in a different context perhaps, I might entertain this as a possibility. However, I would replace some of the more dismissive and moralistic accounts of this argument (and that of Žižek, in particular) with the original formulation that Lacan gave it, even though he said very little about it subsequently, that of 'Père-version' (the avoidance or swerving away from 'the name of the Father').
35. On this point, see Ch. 1 of *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1983): 1–50.
36. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 14.
37. Even those intellectuals today continue to be seduced by the desire to speak 'in the name of the oppressed' only to find themselves compromised by the forms of interest that accompany this desire in the first place: interests that often themselves become reactionary, conservative, or repressive. It would not be difficult to find many examples of this trait among intellectuals today, who speak in the name of totalizations such as 'justice' and 'the rights of the oppressed', but in the places where they exercise power in their own self-interest are sometimes the most reactionary and conservative of subjects. According to Deleuze and Foucault, the frequency of this type of intellectual is not accidental or contingent, but the very expression of a form of unconscious desire and a certain operation of power itself, which poses the unconscious investment of desire and a conscious form of interest in an inevitable contradiction.
38. Foucault argued that violence is the exhaustion of an existing power relation and should never be confused with the expression of the 'sense' of power itself, since power is essentially productive even when it represses or prohibits, even when it kills or murders.
39. I have chosen to keep this format as a monument to the seminars I gave on 'The Analytics of Power' in Deleuze and Foucault given at Emory University (fall 2004), University of Tasmania (summer 2005), and Syracuse University (fall 2005). I wish to acknowledge and dedicate this section to the graduate students and faculty who participated in these forums and contributed to my thinking about power today.
40. See Jacques Lacan, 'The Seminar on "the Purloined Letter"', in *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton 2006), 6–50.
41. See Foucault 1994: 117ff.
42. Agamben 1998: 6. Based on the above observations and my reading of Agamben's misinterpretation of Foucault's analysis of power, it could also be said that Agamben's overt – albeit extremely 'cryptic' – repetition of Heidegger's earlier arguments concerning the metaphysical closure of the open – 'yet concealed' – 'history of being' in the 'Essay Concerning Technology' is enough to call into question Agamben's entire theory of sovereign power as being entirely derivative and somewhat disingenuous. Although I cannot go into it here, Deleuze's own intuitions concerning Foucault's fierce rejection of traditional phenomenological method is worthy of further exploration in this debate.

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