Deleuze Connections

Deleuze and Politics

Edited by Ian Buchanan and Nicholas Thoburn

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'It is not the elements or the sets which define the multiplicity. What defines it is the AND, as something which has its place between the elements or between the sets. AND, AND, AND – stammering.'

Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*

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For Tanya, Courtney and Sebastian
For Runa Khalique

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Introduction

Deleuze and Politics

Ian Buchanan and Nicholas Thoburn

> We have two days to liquidate the legacy of May 1968!
>
> Nicolas Sarkozy[1]

It is now a truism of Deleuze studies that it was only after his encounter with Félix Guattari that Deleuze became 'political'. This is usually taken to mean that Deleuze only became 'active' or 'engaged' in politics after meeting Guattari, which is untrue. Deleuze was already politically active before he met Guattari – indeed, it isn't difficult to imagine that this was in fact one of the reasons Guattari sought him out in the first place – and, paradoxically enough, he actually seemed to become less active after meeting Guattari, choosing to concentrate on writing and leaving the public side of politics to Guattari. This same narrative is also used in relation to Deleuze's writing, as though to say it wasn't until *Anti-Oedipus* that Deleuze's work shows any awareness or interest in politics, which again is patently untrue. There is a profound interest in the issue of revolution and political transformation in the cluster of books Deleuze published shortly before he met Guattari, namely his book on Spinoza as well as *The Logic of Sense* and *Difference and Repetition*. In these works Deleuze shows himself to be equally against the Leninist or Paulist 'clean break' and the more measured 'reformist' options of the liberals. Both require that desire subordinate itself to interest. With Guattari, Deleuze would develop the analytic and conceptual means of turning this theme into a political philosophy that has had an enormous influence on a wide variety of disciplines from literary and cultural studies to international relations. But in fashioning this political philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari, both individually and together, took great pains to craft it in such a way that it could not easily be reconfigured as a political programme, or policy model. For this reason it has frustrated a great many commentators, perhaps none more so than those on the Left who looked

to Deleuze and Guattari as possible successors to Althusser and as alternatives to Foucault.

Perry Anderson, for one, argues that Louis Athusser's near hegemonic sway over western Marxism and indeed critical theory in general throughout the 1960s declined absolutely in the aftermath of May '68 because his thought did not provide a coherent response to what happened that summer (Anderson 1983: 39). Even if he did not approve of the turn their work took, Anderson would probably agree to the related proposition that Deleuze and Guattari burst into the limelight in the same period precisely because *their work did* provide a coherent critical response to the 'Events of May'. This does not mean, of course, that we need accept Anderson's description of what he calls 'the moment of *Anti-Oedipus*' as the irruption of 'saturnalian subjectivism' (Anderson 1983: 51). *Anti-Oedipus* is both more complex and less irrational than Anderson allows. That being said, Anderson's verdict on the state of western Marxism as a whole in this period does apply to Deleuze and Guattari's work and may serve here to put their project into perspective. Anderson's greatest disappointment concerning the development of theory in the 1960s and 1970s was its failure in the area he referred to as 'strategy', 'that is, any elaboration of a concrete or plausible perspective for a transition beyond capitalist democracy to a socialist democracy' (Anderson 1983: 27).[2] The perceived failure of the Events of May (a viewpoint Deleuze and Guattari did not subscribe to) led to a situation for which Alain Badiou has supplied the apt concept of 'Thermidorean' to describe: it was a moment in which strategic thinking was rendered unthinkable (Badiou 2005: 136). Thus the challenge of Western Marxism in the aftermath of May '68 was not to supply the strategy to go with the theory, as Anderson demands, but to use theory to cleanse strategy of its fatal taint of impracticality. This is the challenge *Anti-Oedipus* and Deleuze and Guattari's subsequent work answers and it does so by providing a genealogy of desire, showing how and when – i.e. historically – it came to be enchained, and exploring the techniques by which it may be reconfigured. As Sarkozy's declaration makes clear, it is a challenge that has lost none of its currency

Each of Them was Several

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari met in the summer of 1969. Deleuze says of their meeting that Guattari was the one who sought him out, that at the time he didn't even know who Guattari was. Evidently their meeting went well because Deleuze suggested they work together

(Nadaud 2006: 12). A lot of ink has been spilled speculating about how their collaboration worked in practice, all too often with the nefarious motive of sorting out who wrote what. It seems to us, however, that Deleuze says it all when he says that they each thought that the other had gone further than they had and therefore they could learn from each other. In conversation with Claire Parnet, Deleuze described his way of working with Guattari as a 'pick-up' method, but then qualifies it by saying 'method' is not the right word and suggests 'double-theft' and 'a-parallel evolution' as perhaps better alternatives (Deleuze and Parnet 2002: 18). It was a collective project, then, or better still an attempt by two authors to become 'several'. In one of Deleuze's typically evocative comments about his relations with Guattari he draws attention to their divergent styles and dispositions:

> Félix has always possessed multiple dimensions; he participates in many different activities, both psychiatric and political; he does a lot of group work. He is an 'intersection' of groups, like a star. Or perhaps I should compare him to the sea: he always seems to be in motion, sparkling with light. He can jump from one activity to another. He doesn't sleep much, he travels, he never stops. He never *ceases*. He has extraordinary speeds. I am more like a hill: I don't move much, I can't manage two projects at once, I obsess over my ideas, and the few movements I do have are internal. I like to write alone, and I don't talk much, except during my seminars, when talking serves another purpose. Together, Félix and I would have made a good Sumo wrestler. (Deleuze 2006: 237)

If such an aggregation of speeds and slownesses would work well in the Sumo ring, it is also suggestive of a political subjectivity, or, better, a manner of political engagement. While it is Guattari who most clearly figures here as the practitioner of a certain activism, the image of the Sumo composite implies that there is also something practical or constructive in what Deleuze might bring to the relation; not, we would argue, a sober philosophical counterpoint to Guattari's activism, but an active contribution to a style of political composition.

One can approach these two dispositions – operating as poles in dynamic combination – through the question of political practice. Deleuze's aversion to group activity, much like his distaste for the role of public intellectual, is evident. He must be rather unique in his generation for never having joined the Communist Party (even Foucault had a brief stint in the PCF), just as he was never in analysis; he remained outside the two dominant schools of French theoretical and political practice. Deleuze had some involvement in post-'68 group activity – notably with Foucault in the Prison Information Group – and signed petitions and

wrote a number of interventionist articles in support of the Palestinian struggle, and against the bombing of Vietnam, the firing of politically active homosexuals from academic faculties, human rights violations in Iran, the imprisonment of Antonio Negri and the repression of Italian *Autonomia*, the extradition of the Red Army Faction's lawyer Klaus Croissant and the 1990–91 Gulf War.[3] Nevertheless, in any conventional sense, Deleuze's politics was not particularly practical.

Guattari, on the other hand – no doubt as part of the 'wild rodeo' of his life – had a life-long involvement in radical politics, from a ten-year membership of the PCF, through Trotskyist and unorthodox left groups, the FGERI (Federation of Study Groups in Institutional Research) which had a prominent role in the occupation of the Odéon theatre in May '68, to ecology formations in the 1980s, with his base not in the academy but in the psychiatric clinic La Borde (Deleuze and Parnet 2002: 11; Genosko 2002). Given these rather different relations to political activism one might expect Deleuze and Guattari's intellectual meeting to have raised difficulties, and from Guattari's account of their encounter it appears to have done so:

> [T]he pre-project work [for *Anti-Oedipus*] with Deleuze was still very much along these lines [of the FGERI]. The idea was to discuss things together, to do things together – it was 1969, a period that was still marked by the turmoil of '68. Doing something together meant throwing Deleuze into the stew. In truth, he was already there, he was meeting people, he was doing all kind of things . . . It was during the time of the GIP (Group Information on Prisons) that I had gotten Deleuze together with Foucault to embark on what eventually became the CERFI (Centre for Study, Research and Institutional Training), by obtaining a research grant for them and their co-workers. In a way then, there really was a moment for this kind of collective work. But as soon as we agreed to work together, Deleuze immediately closed all other doors. I hadn't anticipated that. (Guattari 1995: 28–9)

The presentation of Deleuze's resistance to group activity here is intriguing. Guattari clearly conceived of his involvement with Deleuze as an aspect of his group work (Guattari 1995: 27–9). In this context, Deleuze's withdrawal is perceived as at least a little problematic. Yet at the same time Guattari talks about the way Deleuze helped him problematise a certain unproductive aspect to groups and militancy. 'Deleuze', Guattari says, 'carefully, and with a light touch, broke down a kind of myth about groups that I had' (Guattari 1995: 31). The discussion is ambiguous, but Guattari appears to be saying he invested too much in the idea of group work as a progressive activity, as if the formation of a group was always a movement in the right direction. This is manifest in what he concedes

was 'my way of pushing everything toward a positive project, a "good cause" ', and, as he speculates in another piece, his possible 'contribut[ion] [to] a certain activism, an illusion of effectiveness, a headlong rush forward' (Guattari 1995: 32, 1984: 29). Given Guattari's increasing sense of the dogmatism of the post-'68 groupuscule milieu, his relation with Deleuze, it would appear, gave him a way out. As he put it, himself, 'it enabled a certain "deterritorialization" of my relations to the social, to La Borde, to the concept of matrimony and psychoanalysis and to the FGERI' (Guattari 1995: 30).

How can one think of the function of Deleuze here, signified by his apparently self-deprecating and rather obscure image of the 'hill'? At other times when Deleuze and Guattari allude to the Sumo as an image of composition, the nature of this aspect becomes more apparent and the parallel workings or composite of the two poles – rendered at other points as a rhythm of rushes and catatonic states, speeds and slownesses, flows and breaks – is foregrounded: 'Like huge Japanese wrestlers whose advance is too slow and whose holds are too fast to see, so that what embraces are less the wrestlers than the infinite slowness of the wait (what is going to happen?) and the infinite speed of the result (what happened?)' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 281; see also 1988: 283, 356, 400). One can read this catatonic aspect, slowness or break as having two interrelated functions. At one level, as can be discerned from Guattari's account of his meeting with Deleuze, it prevents the vertigo of the descent into militant passion, the activist condition of becoming caught-up in particular practice (or, indeed, every possible practice) as an end in itself, that 'illusion of effectiveness' that constitutes the subject – however apparently destratified – as the agent of revolutionary change, with all the problems of voluntarism and asceticism this entails. The 'slow' pole opens a space for experimentation in political configurations, offering a chance to engage in self-critique, or what amounts to the same thing, places the particular arrangement or problematic in relation to the outside.

At a second and perhaps more radical level, the catatonic, zero-point state signifies an absolute evacuation or renunciation of political agency and subjectivity – one is reminded of the importance for Deleuze (1997) of figures like Melville's Bartleby ('I would prefer not to') and of his reading of 'exhaustion' in Beckett – and a surrender to the forces of the world and its potential events. Jérémie Valentin (2006: 194) expresses this well when he argues that here: 'The voluntarism and activism of subversive politics is put between brackets to the benefit of an "involuntary" posture that permits the event to occur as the will finds itself paralysed.'

This may sound like an unproductive option for political composition, and the way Deleuze sometimes presents the condition – for instance, 'like a cork floating on a tempestuous ocean: he no longer moves, but is in an element that moves' (Deleuze 1997: 26) – might leave one, with Peter Hallward (2006), confirmed of this impression. Yet, to gesture toward the figure marking the horizon of modern revolutionary politics, in an important way this break or zero-point not only offers an inflection of Marx's sense of the necessarily distributed nature of a properly communist politics, but expresses a renunciation of, or an exhaustion with, the clichés of received practice, and an opening to or a calling for the unforeseen. There is much tension and suspense in this manoeuvre, that 'infinite slowness of the wait (what is going to happen?)', a tension one might interpret with Blanchot as the particular 'impatience' and 'wrenching violence' of the thought of communism on the present (Blanchot 1997: 96). The catatonic hill, then, precisely in its slowness is traversed and energised by gradients, powers and other worlds. In this sense it exists, just as the 'private thinker', in a 'populous solitude': 'like the desert itself, a solitude already intertwined with a people to come, one that invokes and awaits that people, existing only through it, though it is not yet here' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 377).

Deleuze's presentation of his and Guattari's different dispositions is of course already a reflection upon their *composite* practice, and it is only as such – as dimensions, variously configured and articulated, of their collective writing machine – that it makes sense to isolate these poles.[4] It is a composite, then, that suggests a political sensibility, a somewhat restless manner of engagement that seeks to contribute to the calling-forth of different worlds but knows that it is not a simple matter to escape this one, that the elaboration of concepts and collectives requires – following Genet (1989) – a degree of 'betrayal' if politics is to resist cliché and closure and remain open to the inadmissible. This, for Deleuze and Guattari, is the event – and continued promise – of '68, an 'amplified bifurcation or fluctuation' in the field of possibility that for those caught in the steel traps of received political forms seemed to come from nowhere (Deleuze and Guattari 2006: 236).

Here we have approached Deleuze and Guattari's political sensibility through the frame of political activity, but it is a sensibility that traverses social practice and is found in their work in many forms and arrangements, from their discussion of Melville and T. E. Lawrence, to their meditations on drug use, masochism and courtly love. Given this, it would be a mistake to reduce Deleuze's political thought to a circumscribed 'Deleuzian politics' or to the elaboration of a particular political practice,

agent or subject. Deleuze and Guattari's proposition that 'everything is political', that 'politics precedes being', needs to be taken seriously, offering perhaps an extension to new levels of complexity of Marx's casting of revolutionary politics at the level of the *social* rather than the 'mere' political (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 213, 203; Marx and Engels 1973: 12). This is only so, however, inasmuch as this generalisation of political thought and practice engages fully with the specific problematics that might be taken as the (albeit open and contested) set of contemporary sites, regimes and expressions of power. Deleuze and Guattari do not fail here; they offer a rich set of insights and, more importantly, conceptual tools for critical intervention in contemporary political thought and practice. Through a selection of these sites, themes and problems the chapters in this book take up and explore the question of 'Deleuze and politics' – themes of revolution, friendship, cynicism, democracy, capitalism, militancy, subjectivity, desire, war, fabulation, micropolitics, minority and fascism. At the same time as engaging with these political problematics and their contemporary social expression, the chapters also contribute to the critical and open field of research on the nature of Deleuze's political thought, a thought about which no final conclusions should be drawn here.

Each of Us is Several

Ian Buchanan argues that Deleuze's political philosophy can be understood as a contribution to and a departure from the concentrated debates on the issue of power that dominated the French intellectual scene in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Desire, rather than power, Deleuze and Guattari argue, should be the central plank in any meaningful account of contemporary politics. In an interview with Foucault published shortly before the appearance of *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze makes his case for focusing on questions of desire rather than power by arguing that the manifestations and machinations of power are obvious. What isn't obvious, he argues, is why we collectively tolerate it. For Deleuze, Buchanan argues, the central political question is the mystery of voluntary subservience. Buchanan shows how *Anti-Oedipus* provides a first and provisional response to this problem, which was to preoccupy both Deleuze and Guattari for most of the rest of their lives.

Gregg Lambert approaches the question of the nature of Deleuze's political philosophy from an ontological perspective, foregrounding the question of friendship. The question of what constitutes a friend is, Lambert argues, ontologically prior to the question of what constitutes

the political. Lambert then shows how the interrogation of friendship and its many possible betrayals and indeed its inherent internal contradictions needs must alter how we conceive of political relations. Deleuze, he shows, asks us to consider whether friendship, and therefore by extension politics, can contain without logical contradiction its apparent opposite, namely malevolence. Lambert then connects this question to the issue of class struggle and shows that friendship can (without falling into a Schmittian friend and foe dichotomy) contain and indeed be built around notions of struggle and contestation. In this way, Lambert shows that we have really only scratched the surface of Deleuze's political philosophy and that it is much more complexly conceived than has hitherto been recognised.

In a highly polemical chapter, Isabelle Garo examines the way in which Deleuze's thought engages with the principle elements of French left-wing thought and action: the analysis of economic and social reality, and the relation to Marx and Marxism. Garo argues that Deleuze's claim that everything is political does not extend the domain of political thought in a useful and effective fashion, but rather leads to its dispersion and eventual nullity because it cancels out its specificity. She charges Deleuze with vitalism, arguing that terms like 'flow', which she says form the core of his ontology, blur the necessary distinctions between the different dimensions of the real. For Garo, there is a fundamental problem at the heart of Deleuze's thought that has too long been overlooked, and that is the way his conception of politics seems to disable in advance any attempt at collective praxis.

In a chapter keyed to the contemporary geopolitical situation, Eugene Holland revisits Deleuze and Guattari's account of fascism not, as he puts it, to create a universally valid definition of fascism, but rather to construct a conception of it appropriate to the advent of what he sees is a new kind of fascism emerging in the US today. Unsettling Deleuze and Guattari's adoption of Virilio's notion of fascism as the 'suicidal state', the chapter pays careful attention to the place of the fascist war machine and total war in the passage to global capitalism. As well as exploring the integrated libidinal, economic and geopolitical scales of Deleuze and Guattari's concept, Holland takes their concept beyond its terminus in the cold war to consider the shared psychic formations of the German *Freikorps* and the US Christian fundamentalist right, and the place of Bush's new hot wars in global accumulation.

Nicholas Thoburn's chapter turns to the question of political subjectivity. Outlining a diagram of militancy through Guattari's critique of Leninism and Sergei Nechaev's *Catechism of the Revolutionist*, Thoburn

considers the affective, semiotic and organisational dynamics of this persistent figure of extra-parliamentary politics. The chapter examines the animation of the militant diagram in the Weatherman organisation at the turn of the 1970s, placing particular emphasis on the problematic function of Weatherman's passional line of flight and the specific techniques deployed in the construction of militant subjectivity. In contrast, Thoburn draws on Marx's understanding of the party to outline a dispersive or a-militant ecology of political composition that suggests relations between Deleuze and the left communist critique of activism.

Situating her argument in the broad context of poststructuralism's contribution to politics in general, Claire Colebrook's chapter raises the question of whether or not Deleuze's thought can usefully be considered to have radicalised Kantian anti-foundationalism. Colebrook traces a line back from Deleuze's more overt political works with Guattari to *Difference and Repetition*, a work he completed shortly before meeting his future collaborator. Colebrook shows that this work contains the seeds of several of the key politico-philosophical lines of flight the capitalism and schizophrenia project would develop. In particular, she focuses on the problematic of good sense and its implications for a contemporary politics. By doing so, she is able to sharpen the distinction between Deleuze's work and that of his two most important peers, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida.

Jason Read argues that Deleuze and Guattari's slogan, 'desire belongs to the infrastructure' of society itself, can be used to summarise their project. This slogan, Read shows, highlights what he refers to as an 'immediate coincidence' (he borrows the phrase from Paolo Virno) between the logic of late capitalist production and the production of the subjects who inhabit its universe. Read traces this idea back to Marx and in this way demonstrates an important affinity between Marx's work and Deleuze and Guattari's. But it is, as he shows, an affinity born of a link to a 'minor' Marx rather than a 'major' or doctrinal Marx, to use Deleuze and Guattari's own terminology. One may speculate that it is *this* Marx that Deleuze's fabled book on the 'greatness of Marx' would have revealed. Read's chapter gives us a glimpse of this other Marx and shows very clearly its significance to Deleuze and Guattari's work.

Manuel DeLanda makes his contribution as a materialist rectification of the contemporary 'conservative turn' – itself disguised as radicalism – to idealist categories in the humanities and social sciences. If materialism is the terrain proper to progressive politics, it is toward fixing the shortcomings of the forms of materialism associated with the left that the chapter is oriented. DeLanda places the need for a concept of objective

synthesis at the centre of materialist research and explores the aspects of such a concept through Deleuze and Guattari's approach to strata and expression, in the process showing how the linguistic turn can itself be explained by the particular properties of the language stratum. In the course of his consideration of the problem of scale, DeLanda provocatively challenges Deleuze and Guattari's attachment to Marxism, a perspective that he equates with the subsumption of different scales and dynamics to the false category of 'the capitalist system' and a problem that is not overcome in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of capitalist axiomatics.

The emergence of the figure of 'becoming-democratic' in Deleuze and Guattari's later work provides Paul Patton with the opportunity to consider what he argues are the democratic principles implicit in their political philosophy. Noting the lack of a specifically political modality of thought in Deleuze's work, Patton detects a normative turn in Deleuze's work in the 1980s toward a positive engagement with the institutions and values of modern liberal democracy, especially through the concepts of rights and democracy. Conceived not as transcendent principles but as opportunities for a politics of intervention without foundation, rights and democracy are explored here through problematics of opinion, nation, majority, capitalism and inequality, as well as in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's critical comments about contemporary democracies. In particular, Patton argues that becoming-democratic compels a rendering 'intolerable' of that which is widely tolerated.

Exploring the complex relation between minority, ethnicity and European identity, Janell Watson puts Deleuze's concepts to use to break with the paradigm of identity that fuels much left intellectual intervention on the question of Europe. The chapter draws the political issues of Europe into the terrain of structure and relation (and away from mystifying images of identity) through a consideration of Deleuze and Guattari's figure of the minoritarian, a concept that seems to anticipate the patterns of power and politics of contemporary global culture – 'ours', as they say, 'is becoming the age of minorities'. Working through problematics of race, borders, nationhood and the state-form, minority emerges here as both a dynamic of control and the field of progressive and inventive political expression.

The specific object of Philippe Mengue's contribution to the volume is the problematic of 'fabulation'. Deleuze enticingly alludes to this Bergsonian figure in invoking a 'new earth' and a 'people to come', yet offers little elaboration. For Mengue, the concept of fabulation and its relation to the question of 'the people' raises important concerns both for

the critical analysis of Deleuze's concepts and for politics more widely. Tracing the problem of myth and fabulation through Nietzsche, Heidegger and – in his rather different fashion – Deleuze, Mengue argues that a concern with fabulation enables an understanding of transversal 'unity' in Deleuze, one constructed as a 'democratic plane of immanence'. For Mengue, this necessitates unsettling a number of Deleuze's direct and popularly perceived political and conceptual positions, not least his critique of democracy and disavowal of the autonomy of the political.

It is with a precise investigation of the problematic of micropolitics that Ralf Krause and Marc Rölli's chapter concludes the collection. Krause and Rölli underscore that micropolitics is not a politics in miniature but a concern with the multiplicity of flows that traverse individuals and social wholes, flows that do not correspond with articulated interests, identities and institutions but operate as the unconscious machinery of desire and action. While this is fundamental to Deleuze's thought as a whole, the nature of a specific level of micropolitical association and action remains ambiguous. This chapter develops the contours of such association through a consideration of the relation between micropolitics and Foucault's conception of power, and a critique of models of radical democracy. It is appropriate that the book ends not with a set of rules or procedures, or a mere 'resistance' to power, but with a 'pragmatism of assemblages' oriented toward the conditions for critical and inventive modes of sociality.

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Notes

1. Reported in *The Guardian*, 5 May 2007.
2. What has to be remembered here, however, is that although this indictment is framed in such a way that it seems to take aim at individual theorists, and clearly Anderson wants to call theorists like Deleuze and Guattari to account, it actually applies to the situation itself. As Fredric Jameson put it, refuting criticisms of Theodor Adorno's alleged break with Marxism: 'It is not, indeed, people who change, but rather situations' (Jameson 1990: 4).
3. See Murphy (n.d.: section 6) and the texts on Zionism, Palestine, Croissant, Negri and the Gulf War in Deleuze (2006).
4. At a biographical level, then, the different sensibilities are not wholly differentiated. Guattari (1995: 32), for instance, insists on a persistent additional dimension to his 'activist' practice as 'an unconscious sabotage, a kind of passion for returning to the zero-point', and Deleuze submits that while 'Félix was a man of the group, of bands or tribes', he was also 'a man alone' (Deleuze and Parnet 2002: 16).

Chapter 1

Power, Theory and Praxis

Ian Buchanan

> Whether we are Christians or atheists, in our universal schizophrenia, *we need reasons to believe in this world*.
>
> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*

In the long aftermath of May '68, an event which many French intellectuals came to think of as a 'failed revolt', the question of power – what it is, how it functions, who has it and who does not – was the principal concern of the majority of France's leading intellectuals. Along with the interrelated questions concerning the possibility of resistance and (more concretely) the possibility of political action itself, power was the uppermost concern of Louis Althusser, Alain Badiou, Etienne Balibar, Jean Baudrillard (albeit ambivalently), Pierre Bourdieu, Cornelius Castoriadis, Hélène Cixous, Régis Debray, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Henri Lefebvre, Jean-François Lyotard, Nicos Poulantzas, Jacques Rancière and Paul Virilio. Very far from homogeneous in their political and philosophical allegiances, though most would own to a Left-orientation, providing it was clear that didn't mean they were Marxists (or, in the case of Althusser and Althusserians like Balibar and Rancière, they would own to a Left-orientation providing it was understood that meant they were a very particular type of Marxist), there is a surprising degree of consistency across the quite diverse body of work produced by these writers in the decade after May '68 concerning the question of power.[1]

There was, for instance, broad acceptance of the idea that power is not a simple matter of coercion or repression, the domination of one group of people by another. It was generally agreed that contemporary society cannot be understood as the product or the expression of a powerful ruling elite exercising influence over a powerless majority. Moreover, there was broad agreement that power resides in the ordinary, that

tradition, law, language and the way we organise our daily lives is directly and indirectly inflected by the operations of power. Similarly, there was a general acceptance of the proposition that power requires a degree of complicity on the part of the ruled to function, but broad disagreement on the question of how this complicity is achieved. All theorists mentioned agree that the situation in which the planet finds itself today is parlous, to say the least, and they more or less agree on the cause, namely capitalism; what's more, they all agree things are in desperate need of change, but they disagree – often quite vehemently – as to how this change might be achieved. The debate that raged in respect to this last question concerned power directly inasmuch as the central point of contention was whether or not change could be achieved without forcibly taking power through some kind of revolutionary action.

Anti-Oedipus was lobbed into this fray like an intellectual cluster bomb – it had multiple targets, from the primacy of the signifier in linguistics to the dependency on lack in psychoanalysis, but its primary objective was (as Michel Foucault astutely points out in his highly influential preface to the English translation) to caution us against the fascist inside, the desire to seize power for oneself. The principal thesis of *Anti-Oedipus*, around which its many conceptual inventions turn, is that revolution is not primarily or even necessarily a matter of taking power. Insofar as taking power means preserving all the old institutions and ideas in which power is invested it could even be said that revolutions of this type are actually counter-revolutionary in purpose and intent because they change nothing essential. By the same token, Deleuze and Guattari were concerned about the allure of power, its apparent ability to drive us to desire to be placed under its yoke. The most important political question, as far as Deleuze and Guattari are concerned, is how it is possible for desire to act against its interest.

Shortly before the appearance of *Anti-Oedipus*, the French cultural affairs journal *L'Arc* published a lengthy special issue dedicated to Deleuze's work. Wedged in among the criticisms and encomiums of various luminaries, there is a marvellous 'conversation' between Foucault and Deleuze pointedly entitled 'Intellectuals and Power'. Deleuze clearly uses the conversation to give notice of both the main themes and the principal critical targets of his forthcoming book, *Anti-Oedipus*; it might even be said to be the more concrete of the two. Deleuze pinpoints three 'areas of concern' that taken together could be said to adumbrate the schizoanalytic project as a whole. Firstly he challenges the nature of the relation between theory and praxis, arguing that the latter is neither simply an extension of the former nor its inspiration; then he challenges the centrality of interest

in understanding the operation of power; and lastly he emphasises the importance of the microphysics of power and the potency of the powerless's demands.

Theory, Deleuze insists, 'is exactly like a tool box. It has nothing to do with the signifier . . . A theory has to be used, it has to work. And not just for itself' (Deleuze 2004: 208/290).[2] He goes on to suggest that 'theory is by nature opposed to power', but its ability to oppose power is severely curtailed if it becomes too fixed in either its method or its object (Deleuze 2004: 208/291). For this reason, Deleuze rejects the idea of reform in favour of revolution, although it must be made clear that by the latter he does not mean a militant overthrow of a governing body. Perhaps most interestingly of all, Deleuze short-circuits the expected relation between theory and praxis. 'Praxis', he says, 'is a network of relays from one theoretical point to another, and theory relays one praxis to another.' But, he adds, a 'theory cannot be developed without encountering a wall, and praxis is needed to break through' (Deleuze 2004: 206/288). He goes on then to give the example of Foucault's work on prisons which began by offering a theoretical account of the penal system but soon felt the necessity, as Deleuze puts it, of creating a relay to enable the imprisoned to speak for themselves. But, he insists, the GIP, Foucault's practical mechanism for enabling the prisoners to speak for themselves, was never a matter of the application of a theory. It was, rather, in language that is familiar to us from the later *A Thousand Plateaus*, a matter of multiplicity. 'For us, the intellectual and theorist have ceased to be a subject, a consciousness that represents or is representative. And those involved in political struggle have ceased to be represented, whether by a party or union that would in turn claim for itself the right to be their conscience. Who speaks and acts? It's always a multiplicity, even in the person who speaks or acts. We are all groupuscules' (Deleuze 2004: 207/289).

Deleuze's hypothesis is that hitherto most theories of power, particularly those developed by the Left, treat it as a problem of interests – power is consolidated in the hands of a ruling class and exercised according to a set of protocols that best serve their interests. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003, for instance, was blatantly in the interest of the ruling elite in the US inasmuch as it offered a tremendous opportunity for personal and corporate enrichment by pushing up the price of oil and providing a colossal windfall of lucrative 'no contest' and virtually 'no oversight' reconstruction contracts to swell the coffers without providing any tangible benefits for the Iraqi people footing the bill. In actual fact, not only has the ocean of money poured into reconstruction in Iraq

failed to provide any benefit to the Iraqi people, in many cases it has worsened their situation. As British journalist Patrick Cockburn (2006: 82–99) points out in his pungent account of the US occupation of Iraq, despite the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars, basic civic infrastructure such as power, water and sewage is still well below prewar levels four years after the official cessation of hostilities. Ironically, the American-led reconstruction of Baghdad has proceeded much less efficiently and effectively than did Saddam Hussein's regime following the first Gulf War. When faced with such egregious examples of the (mis-)use of power, it is, as Deleuze puts it, perfectly obvious who exploits, who profits and who governs (Deleuze 2004: 212/296). Yet, having said that, we are still faced with an important problem:

> How does it happen that those who have little stake in power follow, narrowly espouse, or grab for some piece of power? Perhaps it has to do with *investments*, as much economic as unconscious: there exist investments of desire which explain that one can if necessary desire not against one's interests, since interest always follows and appears wherever desire places it, but desire in a way that is deeper and more diffuse than one's interest. (Deleuze 2004: 212/296)

The problem of power is not only more complicated than the question of whose interests are being served, it is also poorly formed if it is formulated only in terms of interest because there are many other varieties of power at work besides interest.

For Deleuze, the only adequate way of posing the question of power is in terms of desire. But one has to first of all abandon the old binaries that distinguish between the powerful and the powerless, those who have power and the freedom to exercise it and those who do not, because such rigid separations blind us to the real complexity of power relations. Power is a highly variegated substance with both a consolidated (molar) and dispersed (molecular) form. Consolidated and dispersed are not simply new codewords for powerful and powerless, but a reconfiguration of our understanding of how power actually works into the language of process. Every substance has both a consolidated and a dispersed dimension, depending on how you look at it. To the naked eye the human body is a self-contained whole made up of solid-state organs and limbs, but under the microscope it is a vast multiplicity of cells which are made up of even more microscopic entities which rely on the pre-existence of still smaller entities and so on to infinity. The body never ceases to be the body, regardless of how infinitesimal our gaze is, just as the cells composing our body never cease in their being when we look up from the

microscope. This is not to say that these two perspectives on the body are either arbitrary or merely notional because the reality is that there is a very real tension between the molar and the molecular that Deleuze and Guattari ascribe to the 'law of large numbers'. Take the example of the elite athlete: if they over-train, or push it too hard in competition, then the exertions of the molar body, i.e. the body seen as a whole, lead to a rapid breakdown of the molecular body; but, by the same token, it is precisely the condition of the body in its molecular dimension that determines whether an athlete will be great or not – they triumph or fail according to whether their muscle fibres are composed one way and not another. It might be said that the reason philosophy has been unable to answer the question of 'what can a body do?' is that it hasn't found the right way to pose the question so that it takes account of the body's inherent multiplicity (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 283/314). This is effectively Deleuze's complaint about the standard conception of power as interest: it doesn't take account of power's multiplicity.

Power, for Deleuze and Guattari, is machinic. It operates via three types of machine, desiring-machines, social machines and technical machines. Social machines are effectively desiring-machines built on a social scale, while technical machines are simply desiring-machines of a practical type. It is axiomatic for Deleuze and Guattari that no technical machine can exist without the prior investment of desire. From a political perspective, however, it is probably social machines that are of greatest concern and indeed relevance. Social machines are statistically constituted and follow a law of large numbers (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 316/342). Social machines are, in other words, social formations brought into being by the accumulation or aggregation of desiring-machines. The net result of this process, however, cannot be understood in linear terms. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they explain their approach in Darwinian terms, rejecting the inherent idealism of those social histories which grasp social formations in terms of degrees of development or types of forms in favour of populations and coefficients of speed. Social forms do not precede or pre-exist populations, they are more like their statistical result. 'Thus the relationship between embryogenesis and phylogenesis is reversed: the embryo does not testify to an absolute form preestablished in a closed milieu; rather, the phylogenesis of populations has at its disposal, in an open milieu, an entire range of relative forms to choose from, none of which is preestablished' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 54/64). By the same token, the degrees of development are not degrees of perfection measured against a pre-existing template or model, but states of equilibrium in a more or less constant movement of

variation whose end result cannot be known. 'Degrees are no longer measured in terms of increasing perfection or a differentiation and increase in the complexity of the parts, but in terms of differential relations and coefficients such as selective pressure, catalytic action, speed of propagation, rate of growth, evolution, mutation, etc.' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 54/64). Essentially what Deleuze and Guattari are arguing here is this: the movement of microscopic entities combines to produce macroscopic entities which in turn re-act on those same microscopic entities, forcing them to adapt and change.

As a simple example of this, one can look at the notions of the crowd, herd or swarm: all three are composed of *x* number of individual beings who by themselves act quite differently to how they act in a group. To put it another way, the behaviour of the individual components of these three forms taken on their own is not a reliable indicator of the behaviour of the collective form. As is well known, perfectly docile men and women can behave with extraordinary courage or equally extraordinary violence once swept up in a crowd. But crowds aren't true social formations inasmuch as they are ephemeral gatherings of people, living and dying with the moment. If anything they are more like limit-points of social formations, moments of rupture with the potential to engulf and drown an existing social system. And throughout Deleuze and Guattari's work, particularly in their accounts of schizo delirium, the crowd, herd or swarm function emblematically as a kind of anti-social form, a form of collectivity whose internal bonds are differently configured to those of bourgeoisie society in the era of late capitalism. True social formations are more enduring than crowds and it is precisely the problem of how they endure, or rather how they are made to be more enduring than spontaneous irruptions like crowds, that is central to Deleuze and Guattari's various attempts to engage with the problem of the political. Deleuze and Guattari's thesis in this regard, though complex in its details, is in fact relatively simple and not unfamiliar in its thrust: social formations come into being and endure by capturing and coding the flows of desire. Social formations are in this precise sense machines, but in contrast to technical machines which extend man's capacity to undertake defined tasks social machines incorporate man himself into its mechanisms (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 155/165). As such, their formation is not simply a matter of 'scaling up', that is going from a small group of persons to a large group of persons, or even from a single individual to an entire nation.[3]

The first social machine to capture of desire was the territorial machine. Invented by the so-called 'primitive peoples' it has now disappeared in most if not all places in the world, surviving here and there only

as a revenant, something thought to be long dead but somehow still with us. Capitalism is built on the ruins of social formations like the territorial machine that went before it, mobilising their eviscerated structures to its own ends. In this precise sense it is correct, Deleuze and Guattari argue, to 'understand all of history in the light of capitalism, provided that the rules formulated by Marx are followed exactly' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 153/163). Principally, this means recognising that history is contingent, which is to say its apparent necessity is always after the fact. History comprises a long sequence of accidents, mishaps, chance meetings and unexpected syntheses, rather than a logical progression from one kind of society to another, or from conditions of scarcity to conditions of plenitude. More especially, it means recognising that history is discontinuous; it is made up of ruptures and limits, breaks and transformations, not continuity or progress. 'For great accidents were necessary, and amazing encounters that could have happened elsewhere, or before, or might never have happened, in order for the flows to escape coding and, escaping, to nonetheless fashion a new machine bearing the determinations of the capitalist socius' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 154/163). And as will be seen in more detail in what follows this is exactly the way Deleuze and Guattari narrate the history of the formation of capitalism. Deleuze and Guattari's hypothesis, which structures their entire account of the genealogy of social forms is this: capitalism was known to the primitive peoples as that which would destroy their society and their rituals were designed to preserve them from this menace. 'If capitalism is the universal truth, it is so in the sense that makes capitalism *the negative* of all social formations' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 168/180). Thus the two regimes preceding capitalism, the territorial machine and the despotic machine, can be understood as 'negations of negations' (to use Hegel's concept) in that their structures are designed to inhibit the irruption of capitalism's free-flowing flows.

This hypothesis has three components. First, it assumes that desire is essentially gregarious in nature, inasmuch that as humans we seem driven to want to live in groups. Deleuze and Guattari arrive at this point in a classically dialectical manner, namely via what Hegel referred to as the path of the negative (*via negativa*). If desire was not gregarious, not part of the very infrastructure of society, then, they reason, we could not explain how it is possible for people to fight for their own oppression. But, by the same token, desire is not bonding, it may bring a group together but it will not necessarily enable the group to endure. This is the second assumption: desire has to be trained or disciplined to produce lasting collectivities (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 208/227). For this

reason, all social formations prior to capitalism viewed the flows of desire as dangerous and they dealt with this danger by a practice Deleuze and Guattari refer to as 'coding'. 'Flows of women and children, flows of herds and of seed, sperm flows, flows of shit, menstrual flows: nothing must escape coding' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 156/166). This is the third assumption: desire is socialised by codification (i.e. the attribution of symbolic meaning). Women, children, herds, seed, sperm, shit, menstrual blood and so on are transformed into gifts from God, or given some other symbolic value and thereby given a social function they did not previously have. This is what coding is at its most basic. When Deleuze and Guattari say we should not ask about the meaning of something, they are referring only to the operations of the unconscious. Beyond that, they take exactly the opposite view: we must inquire about meaning, but in a functional rather than semiotic sense. What we have to decipher is the social purpose behind the encoding of every aspect of daily life from the most mundane and the sheerly biological to the complex and metaphysical.

Anthropologists have of course been engaged in this task for a century or more, but mostly with a view to trying to understand what the codes mean to the people whose lives are structured by them. Deleuze and Guattari do not take this route. They aren't interested in 'local knowledge' or in finding out 'what natives think'; rather what they are trying to discern is something on the order of the universal by which they mean the non-psychological and indeed non-cultural functional order of things. If a label has to be applied, then their choice would be 'machinic', or perhaps 'constructivist'. Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the territorial machine, which in their view was the first social machine, overturns two paradigmatic assumptions that have conditioned the field of anthropology more or less since its inception: first, that the incest taboo is universal and proscribes a *real* desire; second, that all relations between subjects are ultimately relations of exchange. Deleuze and Guattari argue that neither of these hypotheses holds up under scrutiny. Their counter-argument is that the incest taboo is an instrument of socialisation that captivates desire by luring it into feeling guilty, and that society is inscriptive not exchangist.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, Nietzsche rather than, say, Lévi-Strauss or Mauss has provided the most important account of the anthropology of so-called primitive society. Nietzsche's thesis, which Deleuze and Guattari adopt and rewrite in their own language (to the point even of speaking for Nietzsche), is as follows: Man was constituted as a social being via the repression in himself of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to

as either the 'germinal influx' or the 'biocosmic memory' by which they mean desire in its 'free labour' state, that is desire prior to 'primitive accumulation'.

> All the stupidity and the arbitrariness of the laws, all the pain of the initiations, the whole perverse apparatus of repression and education, the red-hot irons, and the atrocious procedures have only this meaning: *to discipline* man [*dresser l'homme*], to mark him in his flesh, to render him capable of alliance, to form him within the debtor–creditor relation, which on both sides turns out to be a matter of memory – a memory straining toward the future. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 207–8/225, translation modified)

Primitive rituals must suppress our biological memory and transform it into a memory fit for socialised man written in words. If, as Lacan argues, the unconscious is structured like a language, then it is because of this process, which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the 'system of cruelty' (after Nietzsche), and not a natural predisposition. The system of cruelty ensures that the organs are 'hewn into the socius' in such a way that 'man ceases to be a biological organism and becomes a full body, an earth, to which his organs become attached, where they are attracted, repelled, miraculated, following the requirements of a socius' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 159/169).

Primitive society is built on a foundation of collective ownership of all organs – by contrast, what we think of as postmodern or contemporary society effectively reverses this process, and by 'privatising' the organs subordinates us to them (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 157/167). The collectively owned organs are referred to as the Earth. 'The earth is the primitive, savage unity of desire and production. For the earth is not merely the multiple and divided object of labour, it is also the unique, indivisible entity, the full body that falls back on the forces of production and appropriates them for its own as the natural or divine precondition' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 154–5/164). The earth is the body without organs on a social scale – it is in effect the body without organs of all the bodies without organs of all the individual subjects in any given society. Communities are formed in the same way as subjects: an aggregate of syntheses gives rise to a 'whole' that acts retroactively on the syntheses to yield an entity qualitatively different from its component parts. That entity is then enjoyed or consumed for itself. Deleuze and Guattari's thesis is that communities can be formed in this way because subjects are formed in this way. By the same token, subjects can be formed in this way because communities are. This is what is meant by their thesis that desire forms part of the infrastructure of society.

So, how does the territorial machine work? First of all it has to capture desire and compel it to change its functional outlook from the biological to the social. There isn't a single or universal repressing agent, Deleuze and Guattari insist, but rather an affinity or co-efficiency between desiring-machines and social machines (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 201/217). The medium through which this affinity or co-efficiency works is the system of representation, which takes hold of and represses the 'germinal influx' that is desire's representative. The germinal influx refers to – that is, it presupposes – a flow that isn't codable. By codable Deleuze and Guattari mean capable of generating an 'equivalent' of some type, something that can *supplement* (in Derrida's sense) the original flow both in the sense of taking its place and of multiplying it. 'For the flows to be codable, their energy must allow itself to be quantified and qualified; it is necessary that selections from the flows be made in relation to detachments from the chain: something must pass through but something must also be blocked, and something must block and cause to pass through' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 178/192). What passes through compensates for what is blocked, creating a surplus value of code which for Deleuze and Guattari is central to understanding desire (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 179/192–3). Coding is usually, though not exclusively, accomplished by means of prohibition and exclusion. The most well-known and indeed the most obviously significant example of this is the prohibition against incest. But as Deleuze and Guattari insist, incest is strictly speaking impossible and herein lays their practical dispute with psychoanalysis.

> The possibility of incest [from the point of view of the unconscious] would require *both persons and names* – son, sister, mother, brother, father. Now in the incestuous act we can have persons at our disposal, but they lose their names inasmuch as these names are inseparable from the prohibition that proscribes them as partners; or else the names subsist, and designate nothing more than prepersonal intensive states that could just as well 'extend' to other persons, as when one calls his legitimate wife 'mama', or one's sister his wife. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 177/190)

We can 'never enjoy the person and the name at the same time – yet this would be the condition for incest' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 177/190). We can only understand this if we go back to their discussion of desiring-production and the legitimate and illegitimate uses of its syntheses. The system of persons corresponds to the illegitimate use of the syntheses of the unconscious; it renders subjects global and specific and institutes restrictive and segregative relations between them. By contrast,

the system of names corresponds to the legitimate use of the syntheses of the unconscious and it is this that is truly desired. 'What is desired is the intense germinal or germinative flow, where one would look in vain for persons or even functions discernible as father, mother, son, sister, etc., since these names only designate intensive variations on the full body of the earth determined as the germen' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 177/191). What the incest prohibition in fact proscribes then is uncoded desire; what the prohibition enacts is precisely a codification of desire. There are three levels to this codification: 'Incest as it is prohibited (the form of discernible persons) is employed to repress incest as it is desired (the substance of the intense earth)' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 178/191). Meanwhile the desire to transgress this prohibition, for which the figure of Oedipus is emblematic, is put forward as a lure to conceal the true form of desire. 'It matters little that this image is "impossible": it does its work from the moment that desire lets itself be caught as though by the impossible itself. You see, *that* is what you wanted!' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 178/191). The three parts of the system then are: (1) germinal influx as the *representative of desire*; (2) the prohibition against this representative of desire is the *repressing representation*; while (3) the figure of the transgressor is the *displaced representative* (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 180–1/193).

> Incest is only the retroactive effect of the repressing representation *on* the repressed representative: the representation disfigures or displaces this representative against which it is directed; it projects onto the representative, categories, rendered discernible, that it has itself established; it applies to the representative terms that did not exist before the alliance organised the positive and the negative into a system in extension – the representation reduces the representative to what is blocked in the system. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 181/195)

How does this work in practice? Consider, for example, the now largely obsolete prohibition on sex before marriage in Western societies. This prohibition depicted sex outside of the marriage as deleterious to the well-being of both the individual and society itself inasmuch as was it deemed to promote lasciviousness and a cavalier attitude towards relationships. But as is obvious enough, it is the prohibition itself that creates the possibility of 'sex before marriage', which in this sense is equivalent to incest. The point is that the very desire called 'sex before marriage' is created by the prohibition, and does not in this sense represent real desire. It is a displacement of real desire which as Deleuze and Guattari tirelessly argue knows neither persons nor names. The supposed reward

for respecting this prohibition was a happier, longer-lasting marriage and a stable society in which to bring up one's children. More particularly, respecting this code attracted prestige in the community, compensating for the loss of sexual freedom (libido is thus converted into numen and then voluptas). The logic behind this prohibition was extended to all aspects of daily life that might be construed as condoning lasciviousness – so, for instance, in the 1950s rock 'n' roll was subject to censorship. The length of skirts, the movement of hips when dancing, the style of music, were all seen as releasing undesirable flows of desire that had to be dammed up. Following Freud, Deleuze and Guattari refer to this process as secondary repression or repression proper (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 201/217). If this prohibition has fallen into a kind of moral redundancy it is perhaps because it is seen as a contributing cause to an even graver moral problem, namely 'extra-marital sex', inasmuch that by drastically restricting sexual freedom on one side of the marriage divide it leads to delinquency on the other side. But we have to be wary of such conclusions because this assumes that the prohibition is directed against an actual pre-existing desire when in reality it is the prohibition that makes it possible in the first place.

Coding desire is not enough by itself to produce an enduring social machine, however; it is merely the means. A change in the nature of the relations between individuals in a group is required for a social machine to come into being. There are two kinds of relationships between people in groups, according to Deleuze and Guattari: affiliations and alliances. The former is linear in composition (uniting father and son to form a lineage) while the latter is lateral (uniting brothers and cousins to form a tribe). The social machine mobilises both types towards its own ends.

> The whole system evolves between two poles: that of fusion through opposition to other groups, and that of scission through the constant formation of lineages aspiring to independence, with capitalisation of alliances and filiation [. . .] The segmentary territorial machine makes use of scission to exorcise fusion, and impedes the concentration of power by maintaining the organs of chieftainry in a relationship of impotence with the group. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 167/179)

Rarely if ever mentioned in the secondary literature on Deleuze and Guattari, filiation and alliance are absolutely central to any understanding of the political dimension of their work. Corresponding to the legitimate and illegitimate uses of the passive syntheses – filiation is by nature intensive, non-specific, inclusive or non-restrictive and polyvocal, while alliance is extensive, specific, exclusive or restrictive and

segregative – filiation and alliance are 'like the two forms of a primitive capital: fixed capital or filiative stock, and circulating capital or mobile blocks of debt' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 161/172). The chief is descended from a long line of chiefs and derives his right to rule from his lineage (fixed capital); but he could not rule effectively if he did not form and maintain alliances outside of his immediate family through elaborate feasts and gift-giving, if, in other words, he did not use his wealth to induce others to be in his debt (circulating capital). By this means the chief converts perishable wealth – e.g. food, skins and weapons – into imperishable prestige, namely the mandate to rule. This disequilibrium in the machine is fundamental to its operation (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 164–5/176).

In this system the negative that has constantly to be negated is the apparent positive of 'stock', that is to say accumulated wealth that if allowed to grow would become capital and thereby begin to unleash flows of its own, flows that would escape codification. All the variations on the potlatch rituals, some of which include the deliberate destruction of surplus food by fire or dispatch into the sea, are structured to achieve this goal of eliminating 'stock'. In doing so, the tribe puts itself in the debt of its neighbours and at the mercy of the elements, thereby ensuring by power of necessity that all members of the tribe work together to stave off starvation. Tribe members wear the signs of their tribe on their flesh in acknowledgement of this common cause and their individual indebtedness to the tribe for providing for them.

> It is not because everyone is suspected, in advance, of being a future bad debtor; the contrary would be closer to the truth. It is the bad debtor who must be understood as if the marks had not sufficiently 'taken' on him, as if he were or had been unmarked. He has merely widened, beyond the limits allowed, the gap that separated the voice of alliance and the body of affiliation, to such a degree that it is necessary to re-establish the equilibrium through an increase in pain. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 208/225)

Primitive inscription is the instrument whereby the intensive filiative relations of lineage and descent are bonded with the extensive or allying relations of the tribe. However, alliances do not derive from affiliations; on the contrary, they are designed to counter the concentrated power of affiliation. By the same token, alliances are not the product of exchanges – the chief doesn't exchange his wealth for allegiance; he must convert his wealth into allegiance. There is no general equivalence – such as one finds in the capitalist system of money – in the primitive economy which would enable exchange: in consequence, and quite deliberately, the giver must

always give more than is strictly necessary so as to ensure indebtedness, but by the same token to prevent this from becoming an exchange the ritual of gift giving makes the gift seem like a theft (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 203/219). 'The problem [that the social machine must resolve] is one of passing from an intensive energetic order to an extensive system, which comprises both qualitative alliances and extended filiations' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 170/183).

Who brought the primitive system to an end? 'Some pack of blond beasts of prey', as Nietzsche put it, meaning the founders of the state (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 209/227). The basic components of the despotic machine were always already present in the territorial machine, but ritual inoculated the socius against their toxic sting and prevented them from becoming organised in such a way as to become machinic in their own right. In this sense, it can even be said that the territorial machine presupposes the despotic machine (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 239/260). That is to say, it could not be haunted by what it could not imagine (even if it could not give a definite shape to its fears), thus it has to be said that the territorial machine knew about the despotic regime all along. The extension of this thesis, which is central to Deleuze and Guattari's account of the despotic regime, is that the State did not come into being piecemeal, or in stages, but was born fully formed as an idea. 'The State was not formed in progressive stages; it appears fully armed, a master stroke executed all at once; the primordial *Urstaat*, the eternal model of everything the State wants to be and desires' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 237/257). This is only possible – in both the theoretical and historical sense of that word, which is to say at once logical and realisable – because the despotic State knows only a virtual existence. The despotic machine is an abstraction that is only realised as an abstraction (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 240/261). In this way, it conditions both what came before and what followed, namely the primitive territorial machine and the modern capitalist machine. This is only logically and practically possible insofar as we conceive the despotic machine *dialectically* as a 'vanishing mediator' (Jameson 1988).

Deleuze and Guattari, themselves, confirm that this dialectical apprehension of the despotic machine is correct by citing Marx's concession in the introduction to the *Grundrisse* that it is possible, as Hegel insisted, for history to proceed from the abstract to the concrete (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 240–1/261). Marx generally took the view that Hegel got things back to front in this regard and famously described his own conception of the dialectic as a case of standing Hegel on his feet (Marx 1976: 103).[4] The one exception to this rule, however, is money:

> Money may exist, and did exist historically, before capital existed, before banks existed, before wage labour existed, etc. Thus in the respect it may be said that the simpler category can express the dominant relations of a less developed whole, or else those subordinate relations of a more developed whole which already had a historical existence before this whole developed in the direction expressed by a more concrete category. To that extent the path of abstract thought, rising from the simple to the combined, would correspond to the real historical process. (Marx 1973: 102)[5]

Deleuze and Guattari argue that the concept of the State should be thought in exactly the same way:

> The State was first this abstract unity that integrated subaggregates functioning separately; it is now subordinated to a field of forces whose flows it coordinates and whose autonomous relations of domination and subordination it expresses. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 241/261)

The crucial implication in all this is that the despotic machine has never *actually* existed. Its existence is, and has only ever been, virtual. Therefore our experience of the modern capitalist state in either the personal or the collective sense cannot be used to guide us in our understanding of the despotic machine. It does not function in the same way as its (never extant) predecessor. Indeed, its function is purely theoretical: it mediates between the primitive territorial machine and the modern capitalist machine. It is a passage that follows the path of the knight's move, zigzagging from its point of departure to its destination without stopping at any of the points in between. Given that the despotic machine remains abstract throughout this process, it can only be described as a 'vanishing mediator', that is to say a catalytic agent enabling the transmission of energies between different mutually incompatible social regimes.

> In theory the despotic barbarian formation has to be conceived of in terms of an opposition between it and the primitive territorial machine: the birth of an empire. But in reality one can perceive the movement of this formation just as well when one empire breaks away from a preceding empire; or even when there arises the dream of a spiritual empire, or wherever empires fall into decadence. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 211/228)

Deleuze and Guattari insist that the despotic machine is not a transitional stage between the primitive and the modern, and indeed it could not be given its virtual status; but that doesn't stop it from being a mediator of the vanishing type.

So how does the despotic machine work? 'The founding of the despotic machine or the barbarian socius can be summarised in the following

way: a new alliance and direct filiation. The despot challenges the lateral alliances and the extended filiations of the old community. He imposes a new alliance system and places himself in the direct filiation with the deity: the people must follow' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 210/228). The despot can be recognised by his willingness to start from zero, to scratch out everything that had gone before and begin again from a blank slate. Despotism is a form of social machine, rather than a particular psychological state, and although it can be the occasion of great violence, it need not manifest itself in a military operation. Moses, St Paul, St John, and even Christ are for this reason counted among the despots according to Deleuze and Guattari, for what their visions entailed was precisely a new alliance with God based on a filiation proclaiming a chosen people, God's children (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 211/229). The despot, or his God, becomes the full body on which the socius inscribes itself, replacing the territorial machine's earth. However, what counts is not the person of the new sovereign, nor indeed his psychology, but the nature of the new regime this change inaugurates: the 'megamachine' of the State replaces the territorial machine, a new hierarchy is installed, placing the despot at the top and the villagers at the bottom, bureaucracy replaces intertribal alliance and most importantly of all stock becomes the object of accumulation and correspondingly debt is rendered infinite in the form of tribute to the despot (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 212/230). 'What is suppressed is not the former *regime* of lateral alliances and extended filiations, but merely their determining character' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 213/231). The territorial machine's components continue to exist, but only as the cogs and wheels of the despotic machine that has overtaken them from within and without. The new regime overcodes all the previous codings of desire and in this way extracts its requisite share of surplus value.

As has already been signalled, the role of money is decisive in understanding the despotic machine. The despotic machine, like the primitive machine, feared the socially corrosive effects of decoded flows, particularly the flows of money its merchants unleashed. But having said that, money is the invention of the State, primarily for the purposes of taxation by means of which the State rendered debt infinite. 'The infinite creditor and infinite credit have replaced the blocks of mobile and finite debts. There is always a monotheism on the horizon of despotism: the debt becomes a *debt of existence*, a debt of the existence of the subjects themselves. A time will come when the creditor has not yet lent while the debtor never quits repaying, for repaying is a duty but lending is an option' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 215/234). That time is now, as

Deleuze would make explicit in his essay on the 'societies of control' (a nightmarish phrase he borrowed from William Burroughs): 'A man is no longer a man confined but a man in debt' (Deleuze 1995: 181/246). It is debt rather than the rule of law that holds the despotic machine together (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 216/235).

The Civilised Capitalist Machine

But these decoded flows unleashed by the despotic machine are not by themselves enough to 'induce the birth of capitalism' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 243/263). Capitalism does not begin, doesn't break free from the long period of latency that is the despotic age (which Deleuze and Guattari also refer to by the more familiar name of 'Feudalism') and come into being in its own right until the advent of the Industrial Revolution when it appropriates production itself.

> Doubtless the merchant was very early an active factor in production, either by turning into an industrialist himself in occupations based on commerce, or by making artisans into his own intermediaries or employees (the struggle against the guilds and the monopolies). But capitalism doesn't begin, the capitalist machine is not assembled, until capital directly appropriates production, and until financial capital and merchant capital are no longer anything but specific functions corresponding to a division of labour in the capitalist mode of production in general. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 246/268)

This is the historical transformation for which Marx's general formula of capital M-C-M´ was intended, the moment when capital begets capital, the moment when capital becomes filiative (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 247/269).

> This is no longer the cruelty of life, the terror of one life brought to bear against another life [as was the case in the primitive territorial machine], but a *post-mortem* despotism, the despot become anus and vampire: 'Capital is dead labour, that vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks.' Industrial capital thus offers a new filiation that is a constituent part of the capitalist machine, in relation to which commercial capital and financial capital will now take the form of a new alliance by assuming specific functions. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 248/270)

As Deleuze and Guattari insist, contradictions are not what bring social systems down; on the contrary, they are the very motors which give society its dynamism. Social machines feed off 'the contradictions they

give rise to, on the crises they provoke, on the anxieties they *engender*, and on the infernal operations they regenerate. Capitalism has learned this, and has ceased doubting itself, while even socialists have abandoned belief in the possibility of capitalism's natural death by attrition' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 166/178). The defining contradiction at the heart of the modern capitalist machine, the ultimate obscenity which it must constantly try to paper over, is the scandalous difference in kind between the money of the wage earner and the money of the financier, between money that functions purely as payment (alliance) and money that functions as finance (filiation).

> In the one case, there are impotent money signs of exchange value, a flow of the means of payment relative to consumer goods and use values, and a one-to-one relation between money and an imposed range of products ('which I have a right to, which are my due, so they're mine'); in the other case, signs of the power of capital, flows of financing, a system of differential quotients of production that bear witness to a prospective force or to a long-term evaluation, not realisable *hic et nunc*, and functioning as an axiomatic of abstract quantities. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 249/271)

The money in my pocket can be used to buy goods and even to set a value on certain goods, but ultimately this is a limited power in that its effects are always confined to an extremely localised sphere of influence. In contrast, the financier's money is capable of affecting the lives of millions, indeed billions, of people as is evident in the operations of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These two institutions, supposedly disinterested and global in outlook but in reality acting out US policy, transform the finances of whole nations into mere wage earners' payment money.[6] Persuaded that a first-world standard of living is in reach, third-world nations have taken on vast amounts of debt in order to undertake a variety of infrastructure projects that have for the most part done little if anything to benefit the majority of citizens. That debt has meanwhile reduced them to a state of peonage as the interest payments required have sucked the life out of their national economies.[7]

The dream the third world has been talked into adopting as its own is the dream of transforming payment money into finance money. No 'integration of the dominated classes could occur without the shadow of this unapplied principle of convertibility – which is enough, however, to ensure that the Desire of the most disadvantaged creature will invest with all its strength, irrespective of any economic understanding or lack of it, the capitalist social field as a whole' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 249–50/272). Thus Deleuze and Guattari can say it is the banks that control

desire in contemporary society. This is no less true today than it was in 1972 when *Anti-Oedipus* was published; indeed it is no exaggeration to say that it is truer today than it was then. 'Measuring the two orders of magnitude [i.e. the two types of money] in terms of the same analytic unit is a pure fiction, a cosmic swindle, as if one were to measure intergalactic or intra-atomic distances in metres and centimetres. There is no common measure between the value of the enterprises and that of the labour capacity of wage earners' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 250/273). As Michael Parenti argues, terms like 'development' (as found in such bureaucratic buzzwords like 'community development' or 'developing world') are mobilised to disguise precisely this fact. Contemporary cultural studies' refusal of such labels as 'first world' and 'third world', allegedly on the grounds that such terms are elitist, cannot but be seen as complicit, albeit unwittingly, with the present order of things known as the 'Washington Consensus' (Parenti 1995: 6–14).

But it is not even the economic changes capitalism entails that are decisive as far as Deleuze and Guattari are concerned. It is rather the nature of the social machine it produces that is crucial: it is an enormous, global decoding machine, which evacuates the meaning out of all existing social codes, that is to say all the rules, regulations, laws, codes of conduct, rendering them completely arbitrary, or rather purely functional. Decoding in this context doesn't mean interpretation or deciphering, it literally means taking the code away. Taking their place is the axiomatic. The 'axiomatic is not the invention of capitalism, since it is identical with capital itself. On the contrary, capitalism is its offspring, its result. Capitalism merely ensures the regulation of the axiomatic . . .' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 274/300). This amounts to saying that government and its regulatory agencies exist at the behest of and for the benefit of capital. 'Why not merely say that capitalism replaces one code with another, that it carries into effect a new type of coding?' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 268/294). Because the axiomatic is different in kind to the code; it is unavowable: 'there is not a single economic or financial operation that, assuming it is translated in terms of code, would not lay bare its own unavowable nature, that is, its intrinsic perversion or essential cynicism (the age of bad conscience is also the age of pure cynicism)' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 268/294). Capitalism is not something we can believe in – not even those free marketers who profess to 'believe' in the market actually do, otherwise they would not also demand its regulation. The US demands free access to global markets, but does not reciprocate: its markets are tightly controlled. But having said that, capitalism's flows aren't code-able: money is a general equivalent giving

common measure to all things, but in itself floats free of all attempts to give it meaning (such as the gold standard that once served to guarantee currency) (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 269–70/294).

Capitalism doesn't require our belief to function, but it does require regulation. It unleashes flows that need damping if they aren't to carry the system itself into ruin. It needs to produce anti-production as well as production. The drive to innovation needs to be countered by the manufacture of stupidity. 'The State, its police, and its army form a gigantic enterprise of anti-production, but at the heart of production itself, and conditioning this production' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 256/280). By stupidity they mean both the manufacture of consent and the application of coercion, that is to say the constant flow of 'reasons to believe in this world' (Deleuze 1989: 172). Ultimately this takes the form of a substitution of economics for politics. As Rancière argues, 'economic necessity', the catch cry of all governments in the postmodern era, is an extremely powerful depoliticising card for politics to play (Rancière 1999: 110). No one has understood Althusser's dictum that the economic is the ultimate determining agency better than the neo-liberals, who have turned it into the source of their political legitimacy (their body without organs in other words). The apparatus of anti-production serves two key functions:

> On the one hand, it alone is capable of realising capitalism's supreme goal, which is to produce in the large aggregates, to introduce lack where there is always too much, by effecting the absorption of overabundant resources. On the other hand, it alone doubles the capital and the flow of knowledge with a capital and an equivalent flow of *stupidity* [*connerie*] that also effects an absorption and a realisation, and that ensures the integration of groups and individuals into the system. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 256/280)

Today, this is the role assigned to religions and traditions: the absorption of the deracinated energies capitalism has detached from its body. This is what Deleuze and Guattari mean by reterritorialisation: the tying back down of desire. Modern societies are caught between two poles. 'Born of decoding and deterritorialisation, on the ruins of the despotic machine, these societies are caught between the Urstaat that they would like to resuscitate as an overcoding and reterritorialising unity, and the unfettered flows that carry them toward an absolute threshold' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 282/309). In effect, modern societies are torn in two directions: 'archaism and futurism, neoarchaism and ex-futurism, paranoia and schizophrenia' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 282/309–10). What is crucial to understand in all this is that the relations of alliance

and filiation which structure all types of society no longer apply to people, as they did in the previous territorial and despotic regimes. In the modern state, these relations apply to money (in this sense, the age of the axiomatic is not congruent with biopolitics as some have suggested, but already a step beyond – it isn't concerned with the bios at all, its concern rather is finance money). In this situation, 'the family becomes a microcosm, suited to expressing what it no longer dominates' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 286/315). The family becomes an object of consumption in the modern system. It is on this terrain that Oedipus can finally take root. 'The Oedipal triangle is the personal and private territoriality that corresponds to all of capitalism's efforts at social reterritorialisation' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 289/317). Its purpose is to neutralise the threat of schizophrenia, the modern capitalist machine's absolute limit, by creating an *interior* limit to the movement of desire that pulls it up short of the *exterior* limit (i.e. schizophrenia).

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Notes

1. For a more detailed political contextualisation of Deleuze and Guattari's work, see Thoburn (2003).
2. All page references for Deleuze and Guattari's work are first to the English version and second after the slash the French.
3. Manuel DeLanda's (2006: 10–19) 'assemblage theory' is in an example of a theory of 'scaling up'.
4. For an extended discussion of this point see Buchanan (2000: 17–19).
5. Deleuze and Guattari cite this passage themselves (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 240–1/261), but the English translation does not agree with the English source the translators cite, i.e. the source I have cited.
6. Naomi Klein mordantly describes this situation as 'one-way strip poker' whereby 'the United States and Europe – via the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation – tell the developing world, "You take down your trade barriers and we'll keep ours up"' (Klein 2007: 10).
7. 'Debt repayments today represent a substantial net transfer of wealth from the working poor of the Third World to the coffers of international finance capital' (Parenti 1995: 21).

Chapter 2

Deleuze and the Political Ontology of 'The Friend' (philos)

Gregg Lambert

Late in his life – in 1988, after *Foucault* and in the midst of co-writing with Guattari *What Is Philosophy?* – Deleuze had a brief exchange of letters with Dionys Mascolo (the author of *Le Communisme* and *Autour d'un effort de mémoire: Sur une lettre de Robert Antelme*), a correspondence which quickly turned to the subject of 'the friend' (*philos*). It is from this context that I would like to construct a genealogy of this concept in Deleuze's later writings, particularly in relation to Deleuze's assertion that the democratic ideal of friendship has been totally 'corrupted' (*pourri*), a term that Deleuze employs with greater frequency in his last works.[1] According to one of the major arguments put forward in *What Is Philosophy?* the political idea of friendship, understood as the democratic consensus of friends or equals, as well as the instruments of speech and communication, have become corrupted by being completely permeated by money (for example, appearing today as the inter-subjective idealism of free markets).[2] But what happens in this new situation to the possibility of the friend, a concept that originates in Occidental thought from the period of the Greeks, which already determines the intersubjective idealism of politics? And what of Communism? Has it not also been called, in its modern utopian version, a universal society of friendship? Consequently, it is precisely this question that returns two years later in an interview with Toni Negri, in which Negri raises the question of friendship in the age of 'communication', and asks whether or not it still constitutes a utopian version of politics:

> In the Marxist utopia of the *Grundrisse*, communism takes precisely the form of a transversal organization of free individuals built on technology that makes it possible. Is communism still a viable option? Maybe in a communication society it's less utopian than it used to be? (Deleuze 1995: 174)

Responding to these questions in what follows I will suggest that prior to the construction of any political ontology – or, for that matter, any political theology – we must return to ask 'what is a friend?' In fact, I will argue that it is on the basis of what Deleuze evokes as a certain 'distress' placed into the possibility of friendship, or as the failure of an earlier concept of friendship to any longer designate a 'living category' upon which the thinking of political association could be grounded, that becomes the very occasion of the question that appears as the title of Deleuze and Guattari's last book published in 1991: *What Is Philosophy?*[3] It is not by accident, therefore, that within the space of a few years of these earlier discussions with Mascolo and Negri – I will return to Deleuze's correspondence with Mascolo below in greater detail – Deleuze and Guattari propose nothing less than to take up again the question of 'the friend' as the very ground of *philos*-ophy in the West. In other words, confronted by the perceived corruption of this earlier ground, effecting a change in the image of thought divided within itself (either through dialectic or communication), that Deleuze and Guattari are forced to raise again the question of philosophy, uncertain whether or not all their previous answers, or what they thought they were doing together all along, any longer described things the way they are now. They write:

> It had to be possible to ask the question 'between friends,' as a secret or a confidence, or as a challenge when confronting the enemy, and at the same time to reach that twilight hour when one distrusts even the friend. It is then that you say 'That's what it was, but I don't know if I had really said it, or if I had been convincing enough.' And you realise that having said it or being convincing hardly matters because, in any case, that is what it is now. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 2)

Implicitly – here, I might even say cryptically – this last book written together, 'between friends', repeats an earlier question posed by Heidegger also in the twilight of his philosophical career: *Was Heisst Denken?* (*What Is Called Thinking?*).[4] The secret affiliation between these two works that span a brief period of forty years is, in fact, is the figure of Hölderlin who is the frequent subject of Heidegger's meditations on the subject of 'the friend' and who appears in the second part of the book, and is cryptically referenced in Deleuze's correspondence with Mascolo as 'the German poet who wrote in the twilight hour' of the friend who must be distrusted and who, for that reason, places the thinking (of friendship, but of philosophy itself as we have seen) 'in distress'. Of course, given the significance of this 'German poet' in Heidegger's own

reflections on the original relation between *philein* and *philia*, we might understand here that the friend who one should be wary of is Heidegger himself who should be distrusted for obvious reasons, particularly any political destination of thinking *after* Heidegger's betrayal of precisely this relationship.[5] But then, I would suggest, perhaps this only addresses a general feeling of betrayal and suspicion that now characterises any possible relationship between philosophy and politics, and which can only be described thereafter according to the image thinking in distress. It is on the basis of this 'concrete situation', in thought but also history as well, that the relationship between philosophy and politics must be situated in Deleuze's later thought, since it is precisely on the original ground where philosophy first revealed itself as a 'communication between friends' that a new situation has emerged where this earlier ground itself is confronted by a 'catastrophe' that interrupts this conversation.

To briefly summarise this new situation according to the three major statements I have outlined above, which will become the sub-themes of my interrogation of the concept of 'the friend':

1. Speech, or communication, has been completely corrupted by capital and therefore may no longer serve a utopian function.
2. The philosophical representation of friendship may no longer indicate a living category, or what Deleuze calls a 'transcendental lived reality', on the basis of which the expressions of political strategy or alliance could be based.
3. 'The friend', therefore, now appears as the one who we must be wary of, especially in a time of distress.

Turning to the conversation between Deleuze and Mascolo, in a letter dated 6 August 1988, Deleuze writes the following in reply to Mascolo's letter, where he first raises the possibility that the basis of philosophical friendship (solidarity of thought) is 'the friend' who shares a suspicion concerning thinking itself:

> Your answer was very kind and thoughtful: if there is a secret, it is the secret of a thought that is suspicious of thinking, thus a 'concern' [*souci]* that, if found in another person, is the basis of friendship . . . Couldn't we reverse the order? Friendship comes first for you. Obviously friendship would not be a more or less favourable external circumstance, but, while remaining the most concrete, it would be the internal condition of thought as such. Not speaking with your friend or remembering him or her, etc., but rather go through trials with that person like aphasia and amnesia that are necessary

> for any thinking. I no longer remember which German poet wrote of the twilight hour when one should be wary 'even of a friend.' One would go that far, to wariness of a friend, and all that would, with friendship, put the 'distress' in thought an essential way.
>
> I think there are many ways, in the authors I admire, to introduce concrete categories and situations as the conditions of pure thought. Kierkegaard uses the fiancé and the engagement. For Klossowski (and maybe Sartre in a different way), it is the couple. Proust uses jealous love because it constitutes thought and is connected to signs. For you and Blanchot, it is friendship. This implies a complete reevaluation of 'philosophy,' since you are the only ones who take the word *philos* literally. Not that you go back to Plato. The Platonic sense of the word is already extremely complex and has never been fully explained. Yet one can sense that your meaning is altogether different. *Philos* may have been displaced from Athens to Jersualem, but it was also enhanced during the Resistance, from the network, which are affects of thought no less than historical and political situations. There is already a sizeable history of *philos* in philosophy of which you are already a part or, through all sorts of bifurcations, the modern representative. It is at the heart of philosophy, in the concrete presupposition (where personal history and singular thinking combine) . . . (Deleuze 2005: 329–30)

In the above passage, Deleuze is responding to the normal view of friendship according to which there supposedly exists a suspension of other forms of interest and desire (the erotic, the purely egotistic) in such a manner that allows the friend to exist beyond suspicion of malevolence. Thus there is a certain piety that surrounds and protects those one chooses to call friend, either through discretion, protection of secrets or a prohibition of violence (which seems, at first, to be impossible among friends). Certainly, there can be disagreements, but usually these can be resolved through communication or suppressed 'in the name of friendship' itself. In other words, it is this special social experience that is concretely lived with others as a form of utopia that is usually absent from the strife that defines the political sphere, or the sphere of so-called civil society which is defined by conflicting interests between individuals or classes. Is this by accident, or is this supposed dissymmetry between the strife that defines the political and the utopian experience of friendship itself the ontological reserve of the relationship between these two spheres in Occidental thought? In other words, is not the concrete and everyday experience of the quasi-utopian state I share among friends the very destination of the political idea of friendship, the manner in which the political seems to be destined (to employ a Derridean manner of speaking) from an initial state of war and the conflicting forms of

interests between strangers to a final state of union or accord within a society of friends?

By contrast, what do the above examples of concrete situations and categories share in common except that they refer to intensive states of extremity: the broken engagement, the couple who become rivals, or jealous lovers, friends who are suddenly separated by incredible distances (whether spatially, or merely psychological), or drawn into an inexplicable trial that threatens to exhaust the possibility friendship itself. Thus, even though they remain friends, they find themselves struck dumb by their own passivity, can only be silent before one another, or like Beckett's couples, prattle on incessantly about their own selfish cares and their 'needs' (including the need for friendship itself, or the return into friendship).[6] Here, we can imagine that the concept of friendship that Deleuze has in mind does not refer to a peaceful state of community, or sharing in common, but rather to the various 'limit-situations' and intensive states of difference that can only occur between friends. It seems that a state of friendship can only exist within the narrow confines of a social relationship that is already conditioned by the pre-existing interests that determine what is 'common', becoming the basis of proximity, identification, fraternisation – but also the implicit conditions of alienation and hostility as well. Consequently, this peaceful state of bliss and consensus is always haunted by the outbreak of a difference that it cannot pacify, repress, or through which it cannot communicate, and here we touch on something of a political problem that can only belong to friendship, an event that presupposes or occurs only in a state of friendship with its abstract notions of identity and consensus.

Deleuze himself refers to these intensive states of difference as 'secrets' that become a constant source of 'concern' (*souci*) in friendship, and in a certain sense, it is because they represent the various thoughts of suspicion, rivalry, paranoia, even desire, that each friend must keep secret from the other, even though these thoughts are already divided 'between friends' and are shared, constituting, perhaps, the positive contents of the unconscious that each friend bears in anxious concern for the other.[7] If these contents are secret, it is because they constitute the repressed *differends* of friendship itself, or intensive states that would cause the friendship to become something else, such as enmity. It is in this sense that they must remain secret – statements that are unsayable, deeds or actions that are unrealisable, desires that are unobtainable within the limits of friendship – and a source of constant anxiety and care. Consequently, as Deleuze seems to imply in the above passage, this is one reason that the friend must be kept under constant surveillance, under

careful guard (implying a different motive for proximity than simple amity); moreover, every statement made by the friend must already contain the unspeakable as its secret condition, almost as if the actual contents of the conversation between friends are only made to paper over the unsaid, which seems to grow in quantity the longer the duration of the friendship, and which is why friends often appear to talk endlessly about nothing, or have a habit of saying whatever comes to mind. (One might add that friends are like philosophers in this respect and this may even indicate one of the origins of philosophical enunciation.)[8]

But what happens when, as Deleuze remarks, 'friendship puts the "distress" in thinking'? Here, distress is no longer merely 'concern', or an anxiety over what is already *virtual* in friendship as its secret reserve, or as its outside. Distress indicates a limit-situation that occurs when the unspeakable rises to the level of the expressed, or the impossible action is realised, interrupting the 'peace' that is normally associated with its semi-utopian state, threatening to transform the friend into a rival or an enemy. For example, a friend can suddenly become duplicitous out of a secret source of jealousy or social envy, and can seek to damage the image of the friend in the society of others. This becomes an event that could end the friendship through the charge of betrayal. A betrayal of what exactly? The unspoken rule between friends that one should always speak positively of the friend and never seek his or her destruction? Is this not the rule that first defines what friendship *ought* to be in its very concept, if not in reality? The one betrayed in friendship will say: 'And I thought you were my friend? And yet, you have been speaking behind my back and plotting my destruction all along.' As another example, we all know of those friends who, precisely in the name of friendship itself, will encourage the betrayal of a third friend (especially a lover or fiancé) in order to consolidate their role as 'the best friend' and to make themselves appear more 'proximate', more honest and truthful, more sincere than the friend or the lover who always ends up failing the ideal of friendship. These are just a few of the concrete situations that cause us to think the concept of friendship in 'distress'. In these situations, the friend is now in the very place to betray the semi-utopia of friendship, either through self-interested cunning or desire, *or through hatred of the spirit of friendship itself*. Implicitly, these concrete examples also point to the inherent limitation and weakness of friendship as a social bond, or as a primitive dyadic form of social organisation; it seems the minute that friendship extends beyond its simple dyad, that is the moment when it attempts to constitute a social assemblage comprised of more than two persons, this reintroduces the principle of 'the Third' and along with it

the possibilities of rivalry and competition over self-interest that is usually deferred to other social relations, especially political ones.

Perhaps this is why Deleuze admits the possibility of 'malevolence' into the proximity of friendship, and asks whether this constitutes the failure of 'the friend', that is of this or that particular friend, or rather the failure of a certain concept of friendship itself that we have inherited from the Greeks, including the idea of a democratic assemblage of friends that always number more than two individuals, immediately ushering in the possibilities of rivalry and, at its extreme limit, violence and even warfare. In its original situation, such as Deleuze describes it, the friend is introduced into the relationship to knowledge of the Entity; as he writes: 'the Greeks violently force the friend into a relationship with the Thing and no longer merely as an extrinsic persona or Other' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 4). Why violently? It is no longer that the friend appears extrinsic to the Thing's essence, but is intrinsic to the very nature of the Thing's revealing itself. In other words, from the Greeks onward, philosophy is no longer a conversation about Things (wisdom), and the presence of the friend is essential to thought being divided from itself and pursuing its unity again by means of the dialectic instituted between friends, each of which functions as both claimant and rival to the Thing's essence. In other words, according to the Greek dialectic of *amphisbetisis*, friendship can only exist through the vigilance of an active and creative will that intervenes in order to mediate all rivalry and competition over an Entity, by shaping and organising the component interests into aesthetic and ethical expressions of the beautiful and the good, by excluding or repressing certain desires, especially the erotic and purely egotistic instincts, and, finally, by turning 'concern' itself into an exercise that requires moral discipline, a general athleticism and courage, and an aesthetic sensibility capable of appreciating the virtues of perfect friendship. According to this model, friendship becomes an art which requires of its creator moderation in appetite, sobriety, purification of thought and, above all, piety.[9] But then, in a statement that I will return to below, Deleuze asks: 'Is this not too great a task?' In other words, was the ideal of friendship already doomed to fail from the very beginning? Would not every friend already be destined to betray the perfection of friendship like an athlete who succumbs to exhaustion, having reached the limit of his or her powers, and slips into bad form? It would seem here that what is commonly called Platonic love is not the only impossible social idea introduced by the Greek philosopher; the idea of friendship may very well be an even greater source of contradiction in the Occidental societies. The only worse thing we can imagine is that Plato invented these

ideals from a spirit of malevolence and bad faith, rather than simply from an experience of irony in which his own personal history and singular thinking combined in the creation of these concepts.

Returning to the correspondence between Mascolo and Deleuze, Mascolo cannot go so far as to acknowledge 'malevolence' as a possibility between friends. Replying to Deleuze's proposal to reverse the condition of distrust, making friendship responsible for putting thought in distress, he expresses a certain amount of anxiety over what this would imply, for if this were the case it would make friendship itself 'unthinkable', if not 'unliveable':

> You suggest a reversal of the proposition, making friendship come first. Friendship would then be put in 'distress' in thought. Once again due to distrust, but this time the distrust of friends. But then where would friendship come from? That is a mystery for me? And I cannot imagine what *distrust* (an occasional disagreement, of course, on the contrary – and in an entirely different sense that excludes *malevolence*) is possible of a friend once he or she has been accepted in friendship. (Deleuze 2005: 331)

In his reply, Mascolo seems to argue that the bond of friendship, while open to an occasional disagreement, is not vulnerable to actual malevolence, that is once a friend has been accepted into friendship. This would imply that friendship cannot be placed into distress by the friend himself or herself, which would be not merely 'unthinkable' but rather a thought that is outside friendship. To summarise the phrase by Hölderlin that Mascolo refers to here, '*Without [the life of the spirit between friends], we are by our own hands outside thought*' (Deleuze 2005: 331; emphasis added). Following Deleuze's assertion, on the other hand, let us admit this as a possibility – that the friend could, by his or her own hand, do the unthinkable (at least, what is unthinkable for Mascolo) – and would be capable of expressing true malevolence for 'the friend'. The first thing one would have to ask is whether, considering this possibility, which is the cause of wariness, would friendship even be possible any longer (at least in its classical sense)? If we have established that the utopian state of society shared between friends implicitly informs the various political idealisms that have been created by Occidental philosophy, following the Greeks, up to and including the expression of 'absolute democracy' (Negri), then what would be the political consequences for this idealism once we admit into the concept of friendship itself the possibility of real malevolence, which in a Christian universe must also include the possibility of evil, or of 'doing evil to the friend'? First, there would be no more basis for any belief in friendship, nor for 'having faith in one's friend'

(which, I would argue, may be a more severe expression of nihilism than any existential or historical experience of atheism).[10] Friendship would become the occasion of a different kind of 'concern' than was expressed by the Greek principle of dialectical rivalry (*amphisbetesis*); on the contrary, it would be a constant source of suspicion, anxiety, fear of unmitigated or unmediated violence and, above all, an expression of moral vigilance that is accompanied by neither piety nor by aesthetic virtue but by a different kind of disciplinary spirit altogether, one that most closely approximates the modern character of police surveillance. Accordingly, if the stranger must be kept under constant watch, then one must be especially wary of the so-called 'friend' who may be guilty of committing (either in the future or in an unknown past) some unspeakable act against friendship itself, even though this crime remains unconscious. But then, are these not just the expressions of a dystopian state of friendship or the current state of democracy today?

Here, we must return to explore the 'catastrophe' that is the cause of our modern dystopia of friendship, and to what Deleuze calls the affective disturbances amnesia and aphasia that this catastrophe introduces between friends. Aphasia is not determined here by the simple form of strife or conflict that causes silence, as when 'friends don't speak with one another', but refers to a more fundamental experience of the loss of a common language of friendship. Amnesia must be understood as more extreme than the simple forgetfulness that occurs 'between friends', as when they are separated by distance or time. My distance from the former 'childhood friend' is more or less accepted as the inevitable consequence of adulthood, as is the 'murmur of social anonymity' that almost always borders upon and threatens any friendship founded by momentary episodes of proximity. Thus the friend emerges from this anonymity only to gradually merge with it again like the ebb and flow of all social relationships that are defined by proximity (that is, limited by the conditions of time and space). Normal conceptions of friendship are usually bordered by these conditions of permanence and volatility, and they are part of what distinguishes 'the friend' from other social relationships, such as the relationship with the stranger, the member of the family or the mere acquaintance. (What is particular to the relationship that defines 'the friend' is a character of *becoming* that does not seem to belong to these other relationships.) However, the experience of real amnesia or aphasia can never be imagined to belong to friendship, unless by the intervention of some catastrophe or by an 'outside' force that first appears as violence. I would argue at this point that a state of war becomes applicable as a possible causality, and the name of 'catastrophe'. This seems to be what

Deleuze refers to under Mascolo's concept of the friends of the resistance, which he says fundamentally changes the Greek concept of friendship into something distinctly modern, a change that is philosophical as much as it is historical and political and which, in turn, demands that the concept of '*philos*' be completely rethought. He writes: '*Philos* may have been displaced from Athens to Jerusalem, but it was also enhanced during the Resistance, from the network, which are affects of thought no less than historical and political situations' (Deleuze 2005: 330). Thus the militant idea of the friend (or 'comrade') necessarily includes the possibility of 'distress' *and* 'betrayal' as the very conditions of friendship, understood in this context as the occasion of secret confidence, or a common goal of association. Very simply, this is something that the Greeks would never have imagined, since they did not place friendship directly into a relation to war, whereas the modern notion of 'the friend' already includes this relation in the opposition between 'the friend' and 'the enemy', as Schmitt has already argued in *The Concept of the Political* where we find the following statement: 'War as the most extreme political means discloses the possibility which underlies every political idea, namely, the distinction between friend and enemy' (Schmitt 1996: 36).

Rather than tracing this distinction through the political philosophy of Schmitt, however, at this point I would prefer instead to turn to Marx, who fundamentally transformed the original Greek concept of friendship by defining the situation of friends in a distinctly modern sense of war, a war between two classes of society, or the war between the two estates. At the same time, Marx draws on the same source by defining communism as the absolute spirit of a society of friends, 'the friendship of the proletariat'. Within the private sphere of the civil society, therefore, Marx placed all the contradictions that divide the human species (*Geschlecht*) into different classes; however, in the sphere of the political he situated the concept of friendship. However, it is important to notice that for Marx friendship would no longer function dialectically to mediate rivalry and competition between individuals and classes, since this belonged to an earlier political form that itself is only a product of a previous 'self-alienation' of the species. As Marx writes, 'the possessing class and the proletarian class represent one and the same human self-alienation' (*Selbstentfremdung*) (Marx and Engels 1978: 133). What would be the basis for political friendship except that of pursuing one's own 'private interests' in the designated sphere of the *polis*? In other words, since rivalry and competition are only the effects of an original division and the dialectic of friendship (or democracy) only serves to mitigate and pacify the fundamental contradictions that afflict society. A

classless society, on the other hand, would be defined by the cancellation of this division and all its consequent differences in the creation of one 'species-being' who would share, from that point onward, 'the same conditions of social existence'. For such a species, the very condition of friendship will have changed along with the function of the political, which will disappear along with the division between the political state and civil society. However, in the historical present, from the perspective that Marx saw clearly, only the state of total war approximates such a situation, when the internal contradictions of society take on an externalised form, that of a *real* contradiction between two apparent species-beings. In response to the question, 'Who is the friend?' Marx will write only the one who shares with me the same conditions of social existence, for every other social species is my enemy. Thus the term 'Comrade' bears both the militant idea of an ally in a struggle or war, as well as the social idea of the friend who is linked to a bond that is not inherited, but becomes a source of constant concern (*souci*). But in this case, concern is defined by 'action' and by the labour of negativity (critique) in which all existing social relations, including the social relationship of friendship, are exposed to a process of *becoming* that Sartre once compared to being dipped in a bath of sulphuric acid, stripping away their dross and ideological facades, and perhaps revealing at the end of this historical process the face of the only *real* friend.[11]

Here, it should be obvious that the nature of this concern (*souci*) must be understood completely differently than its earlier political manifestations, since it was Marx who was perhaps the first to announce that it is precisely 'the friend' who one must be especially wary of in a time of war, since 'the friend' could in fact turn out to be the worst 'enemy'. In other words, as he and Engels warned many times, the very principle of democratic friendship must be suspected of harbouring the greatest chances for betrayal. For example, this principle of treachery is clearly outlined by Marx and Engels in their 1850 'Address to the Communist League', where they write:

> At the present moment, when the democratic petty bourgeois are everywhere oppressed, they preach in general unity and reconciliation to the proletariat, they offer it their hand and strive for the establishment of a large opposition party which will embrace all the different shades of opinion in the democratic party, that is, they strive to entangle the workers in a party organisation in which general socialist democratic phrases predominate, behind which their special interests are concealed and in which the particular demands of the proletariat may not even be brought forward for the sake of beloved peace. (Marx and Engels 1978: 505–6)

Of course, we can easily imagine that one of 'general socialist democratic phrases' that Marx and Engels are referring to was the phrase of friendship, which they warn must be 'most decisively rejected'. It is also here that we might be addressing something comparable to the network of the Resistance that Deleuze refers to in his letter to Mascolo as profoundly transforming the concept of friendship through a concrete and historical situation. What both situations demonstrate is the fact that the very principle of democratic friendship was to be distrusted, even to the point of representing malevolence and treachery. One could not be, as Deleuze is implying in reference to Mascolo's own experience in the Resistance, 'a friend to the S.S.' and 'a friend to the Resistance', any more than for Marx and Engels one could be a 'friend to the petty bourgeois' and a 'friend of the proletariat'. It is only from the overt differences in the historical and political situations that one contradiction would appear to be more extreme than the other; in reality, however, they represent the same contradiction between 'the friend' and 'the enemy', creating an extreme antithesis that cannot be resolved dialectically, which is to say, neither philosophically nor politically.

Only war brings this dialectic to the point of an extreme antithesis, in which it splits apart into two opposing identities, producing the threat of an unmediated and generalised violence that becomes too great for the idealistic aspirations of political friendship, which can no longer serve as the principle for mediating new social antagonisms produced by this form of contradiction. If the Greeks had been successful for a time, according to Deleuze, in forcing friendship into a certain relation to violence (though by excluding actual violence to another sphere altogether, to a space that lies outside the political sphere), the appearance of this new antagonism becomes too great for this archaic concept of friendship, which falters or fails to reconcile this opposition, or as Deleuze says in a very telling remark, becomes 'exhausted, too weak, or too traumatised to maintain the relationship between different claimants and rivals together in a common accord'. Of course, in this description Deleuze is also referring to the dispersion of the city (*polis*) as the designated open space (*agora*) for these great athletic contests and tragic battles; instead, this space becomes identified with 'the world', and at the same time, becomes 'molecular' and indiscernible, merging with other, formerly peripheral, spheres and can no longer can be gathered and centralised (and here, one can invoke Foucault's thesis concerning modern forms of power that exceed the earlier spaces in society reserved for the visible exercise of sovereign power). In response to the appearance of this new form of social contradiction, to employ

a classical Marxist terminology, new techniques are forged that assume all the hallmarks of the brutal forms of domination and subjugation that characterise modern so-called political programmes, as well as new forms of subjective processes that are more submerged within the so-called private spheres of social life (such as the everyday subjective experiences of racism or sexism, for example). It is precisely at this point, as Deleuze recounts in his latest writings on Foucault, that we witness a transition from earlier disciplinary society to what he calls a 'society of control', since the principle of control is itself premised upon a realisation of the unmediated nature of the primary contradiction of society itself, as Marx had earlier defined it, and consequently its submission to a series of transformations that seek, not to resolve this contradiction – it is actually deemed to be irresolvable! – but rather to cause it to change into something else that can be better identified and controlled.

Finally, returning to the theme of 'exhausted friendship' in the correspondence with Mascolo, it is here that Deleuze invokes the thought of Blanchot, but also where he situates the importance of Mascolo's idea of communism as the 'absolute spirit of friendship', even though we must now understand the concept of 'the friend' as stemming from the experience of catastrophe and existing after it:[12]

> When again today Maurice Blanchot, one of the rare thinkers to consider the meaning of the word friend in philosophy, takes up this question internal to the conditions of thought as such, does he not once more introduce new conceptual personae into the heart of the purest Thought? But in this case the personae are hardly Greek, arriving from elsewhere as if they had gone through a catastrophe that draws them toward new living relationships raised to the level of a priori characteristics – a turning away, a certain tiredness, a certain distress between friends that converts friendship itself to the thought of the concept as distrust and infinite patience? (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 4–5)

According to this passage, the situation of the exhaustion of friendship, which is characterised by a general climate of distrust, is not simply a conversation between friends that has run its course and is coming to an end (the moment when, for example, one can just as easily give up the possibility of friendship altogether). Rather, it refers to a physical exhaustion, to a fatigue that is incarnated in the flesh, to a distress caused by the friendship being placed under too much strain by violence and catastrophe, even, as we have seen, by an act of malevolence in which the friend himself is suspected of being its accomplice. Thus it is not that friendship is merely exhausted from too much dispute, in the metaphor of the

athlete who fails under too much strenuous effort, but rather by the experience of violence that is unthinkable in friendship itself.

It is this experience that causes Deleuze and Guattari to be led back, by way of a number of other conceptual personae such as 'the lover' (or 'fiancé'), 'the couple' and, most of all, through 'woman' herself, to the friend as the original conceptual persona of thought being divided within itself in order to establish the original possibility of thinking itself as either dialogue or conversation. They write:

> Unless we are led back to 'the Friend,' but after an ordeal that is too powerful, an inexpressible catastrophe, and so yet another new sense, in a mutual distress, a mutual weariness that forms the new right of thought (Socrates becomes Jewish). Not two friends who communicate and recall the past together but, on the contrary, who both suffer an amnesia or aphasia capable of splitting thought, of dividing it in itself. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 31)

This description of the return to 'the friend' – even though here on a completely new ground that bears a different sense that it did for the Greeks – repeats line for line the earlier passage from Deleuze's letter to Mascolo concerning his contribution to the concept of 'the friend', which leads back to the origins of philosophy. By either implication or overt citation of the scene of thinking divided in itself, around an experience of amnesia and mutual distress, one can find a reference here to the figure of Robert Antelme, the friend who returns from Dachau – rescued by Mascolo, Francois Mitterand and Marguerite Duras – and whose desiccated body and barely discernable voice gives testimony to the catastrophic violence he had experienced. Here, it is not the tired and depleted body of the athlete, but the broken and completely exhausted body of the victim of the camp, 'the bag of tattered rags and bones', which provides a new image of the friend who exists in the wake of a catastrophe, having experienced 'the extreme limit of pain' (Hölderlin).[13] Here, we have the concrete expressions of amnesia and aphasia that Deleuze refers to in his earlier work, as well as the concrete image of 'the friend' who puts distress into thinking. In other words, by this short itinerary through this very rich and complicated genealogy of sources, influences and works that determine Deleuze's concept of 'the friend', I believe I have established the figure of Robert Antelme, who appears in the works of both Blanchot and Mascolo, as what Deleuze and Guattari call a new 'conceptual persona'. The significance of this identification should not be treated lightly, since I have cited the passage above where Deleuze claims that it is this new conceptual persona 'arriving from elsewhere' who transforms the concept's

history by becoming a 'living category', or the expression of a 'transcendental lived reality': the reality of the friend who survives a catastrophe, but also to the concrete situation of friendship this evokes, since in order for it to survive, the idea of friendship itself must pass through an indefinite period of amnesia and aphasia. In other words, this refers to a thoroughly *postwar* concept of friendship, a concept that is still patiently awaiting a philosophy capable of thinking it.[14]

But how can we prove that Deleuze has Antelme in mind, aside from the correspondence with Mascolo concerning his memory of Antelme's journey back to Paris from Dachau, when he refers to the concept of 'the friend', or to Mascolo's own contribution to the philosophy of friendship, such that it would cause a revaluation of the very meaning of *philos*-ophy? Actually, this is the easiest question to answer. The answer is a passage that appears about midway through Blanchot's *The Infinite Conversation,* which collects his writings between the period 1953 to 1965, which Deleuze himself calls a conversation between 'fatigued friends'. It is there we will find the following meditation on Antelme's figure in the first section on 'limit experience' under the subtitle 'The Indestructible', where Blanchot writes:

> Each time the question: 'Who is "*Autrui*?" ' emerges in our words I think of the book by Robert Antelme, for it not only testifies to the society of the German camps of World War II, it also leads to an essential reflection. (Blanchot 1993: 130)

Of course, what is this essential reflection if not the complete revaluation of the destination of the friend at the basis of both philosophy and politics? Moreover, it is not by accident that *Autrui* (the Other Person) is offered in *What Is Philosophy?* as the primary example of a concept in philosophy. In my previous work, I have argued for its inclusion among the most fundamental concepts of philosophy, and Deleuze himself invokes this concept in the final pages of *Difference and Repetition* and in the opening of *What Is Philosophy?* as perhaps even the first concept of philosophy (Lambert 2002: 157–8). Why? Because the concept refers to the actuality of thinking as being divided in order to first become capable of being socialised; without this first division of thought within itself, neither dialectic or dialogue would be possible as the actuality of thought between self and other. As Deleuze writes elsewhere, thought demands to become divided within itself and, at the same time, externalised within another who thinks the same thing; it is only because two beings divide and share the same thought that thought can become differentiated from itself, which is an echo of thought's first passage into the

dialectic. In other words, without this primary division of thought within itself, or rather of thought outside itself within the 'the other person', there could be nothing like truth that appears as 'an Entity', nor even the appearance of 'the Thing' that is interposed between two who attempt to think the unity of its concept that they share in common: Thought itself.

One can easily see why any transformation of the concept of 'the other person', which comprises thought's internal presupposition of sociability, would lead to an 'essential reflection', following Blanchot, since it would change the essential character of thinking itself. It is in this sense that we might now return to the citation given earlier concerning the relationship between 'the friend' and 'an Entity, an Objectality', or 'an Essence', since 'the friend' refers to 'a presence that is intrinsic to thought, a condition of possibility of thought itself, a living category, a transcendental lived reality' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 3). However, here I would simply substitute 'the other person' in the place of 'the friend,' since on the new ground we occupy, following the changed sense of friendship that we have been evoking all along following Deleuze, 'the friend' no longer constitutes thinking's internal presupposition or fundamental power as a 'social faculty'. Simply put, friendship has suffered from an essential amnesia or aphasia and no longer signifies thought being divided within itself, either because the presence of the friend no longer signifies this identity of thought thinking itself, or because friendship has exhausted this division, originated by the Greeks, and we must conclude that the actual category of friendship may no longer have anything in common with philosophy from this point onward. Today, I would suggest, the original Greek friend must first become *Autrui* (the other person), that is prior to any presupposition of a social commonality or relationship to identity, before we can even begin to think of the possibilities of philosophical friendship again. This is our 'concrete situation' today, which is no less historical or political. Moreover, this is why I began my contribution on the subject of 'Deleuze and the Political' by saying that we must first ask what this means for the situation of thinking itself, before we can begin to ask what it might signify for the situation of politics, either now or in the future.[15]

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Notes

1. As Deleuze suggests, 'Peut-être la parole, la communication, sont-elles pourries.' The French adjective *pourri* indicates a much stronger sense of something being rotten, the term 'corrupted' being a figurative translation. See Deleuze (1990: 238).
2. See Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 7ff).
3. This is a logical (or ontological) conclusion that Deleuze and Guattari share with Derrida who, in his treatise on *The Politics of Friendship* published in French three years later in 1994, writes the following: 'The question "What is friendship?", but also "Who is the friend (both or either sex)?" is nothing but the question: "What is Philosophy?" ' (Derrida 1997: 240).
4. See Martin Heidegger (1984). For discussion of Hölderlin, see Part II, pp. 79–150. On 'the friend,' see also Heidegger (1951).
5. I am not only referring to Heidegger's role in the National Socialist Party, but to the betrayal of the philosophical friendship with Edmund Husserl when he removed his previous dedication to his teacher in a later edition of *Zein und Zeit*.
6. Here, I am particularly thinking of Beckett's later play *Catastrophe*, which portrays three 'talking heads' in overlapping monologue about themselves and their relationships.
7. Of course, I continue to employ the French term in parentheses to echo the Heideggerian term for existential concern (or *Sorge*), which is *Angst*.
8. A good illustration of the kind of conversation I am referring to, in which the unspeakable constitutes the linguistic condition of enunciation, expressed in the forms of prattle and idle speech between friends, is Paul Celan's 'Conversation in

the Mountains', which also cryptically refers to a conversation that did not take place between Celan and Heidegger, and concerns the philosopher's infamous 'silence' concerning the extermination of the Jews. Thus, I would include this 'conversation' in the genealogy of 'the friend who must be suspected', but will return to this in another context. See Paul Celan (1986: 17–22) 'Conversation in the Mountains'.

9. See Deleuze's earliest description of the Greek dialectic of rivalry (*amphisbetesis*) in 'Plato and the Simulacrum' (1969: 292ff).
10. Here, we might recall that Nietzsche could undergo a diet of atheism only through a creative spirit of friendship, and particularly his friendship with women, which is the subject of one of concluding hymns in *The Gay Science*.
11. In *Search for a Method*, Sartre uses this metaphor of the sulphuric acid bath negatively to criticise the idealism implicit in orthodox Marxism where human beings are reduced to emanations of the historical process foretold by Marx and Engels. Here, I am using this metaphor in order to underline the process of 'purification', in an anthropological sense, which also belonged to Marx's earlier definition of the separation of the classes as a species differentiation, and the identification of the proletariat as a new species (*Geschlecht*) that will emerge at the end of the historical process. I will return to take up this analysis in another context, also in relation to the modern scientific racism of National Socialist ideology. It should be clear to the reader that my discussion on this point is guided as much by Derrida's reflections on the subject as those of Deleuze, which are more elliptical in the last writings. (One can only speculate whether they would have been more developed in the book on Marx that Deleuze was reported to have been planning before his death.)
12. Mascolo's own writings on Communism will become the subject of another chapter. It is important to note, however, that both he and Robert Antelme, who is the subject of Mascolo's short *Autour d'un effort de mémoire* (1987), remain faithful to the spirit of friendship of the communist ideal (i.e. a Marxist humanist ideology), even through the disillusionments that the French Communist Party suffered through the 1950s with the revelations of the Gulag.
13. In order to avoid any association of this image with Agamben's figure of *homo sacer*, I would simply point out that the latter is the figure of 'the body' stripped of all human resemblance, especially speech, and reduced to bare political life. By contrast, Antelme insists on speaking, in an incredible effort of memory of what happened, even when his friends tell him 'by itself his physical appearance was eloquent enough'. I believe this distinction is crucial enough in itself to disqualify any association between the two concepts. In any case, the concept of *homo sacer* is outside any possible relation to 'the friend', and beyond all friendship, even one that belongs to the future. For a characterisation of Antelme's own speech, see the Preface and Forward to Robert Antelme, *The Human Species* (1992).
14. Here, I would argue that Deleuze does not necessarily provide us with this philosophy, even though he is one of the few philosophers (along with Derrida, I would argue) who first call our attention to this 'new right of thought', according to the above quoted passage. Concerning the identification of the friend as a 'presence that is intrinsic to thought', a 'living category', or what Deleuze and Guattari call 'un vecu transcendental' (1994: 3).
15. If there is a secondary, tertiary or purely academic purpose to my reconstruction of this rich genealogy of the concept of 'the friend' – a form of exposition that Deleuze and Guattari call the 'pedagogy of the concept' – it is to refute, almost in its entirety, everything that Peter Hallward has recently argued concerning Deleuze and 'the political'. Given everything I believe I have established above

concerning the concept of 'the friend', it would be nearly impossible to claim that Deleuze's philosophy can be described as 'pure contemplation without knowledge', or that his concepts exist on a 'virtual plane that leads forever out of our actual world'. Deleuze does define philosophy as the creation of concepts, but he also admonishes us to understand that this creation can only emerge from 'concrete situations', such as the one I have demonstrated, and not from abstract categories (such as 'creative vitalism'). Although Hallward claims that his book is the result of undergoing an apprenticeship in Deleuze's philosophy of concept-creation, he hasn't seemed to grasp this one fundamental principle. See Hallward (2006: 163–4).

Chapter 3

Molecular Revolutions: The Paradox of Politics in the Work of Gilles Deleuze

Isabelle Garo

The current interest in the actuality of, or potential for, a Deleuzian politics might seem surprising. Firstly, because this politics, if indeed it exists, can only really be rooted in an era that has passed, namely May 1968 and its aftermath. Secondly, because, at the same time that it carries out a displacement and a redeployment of what had gone before, a Deleuzian conception of politics seems in many ways to consist of a conscious retreat. That is to say, it is founded above all on the recognition of a defeat and a rejection of the general model, which Deleuze feels to be outmoded, of intellectual engagement and political militancy.[1] The term 'politics' itself becomes ambiguous: it signifies at one and the same time the resonance in Deleuze's work of the exceptional political and social mobilisation that was May 1968, which was a key event for an entire generation, as well as its theoretical reworking within an original and powerful mode of thinking. This mode of thinking refuses to be a straightforward commentary on May 1968, exploring instead its potential renewal, while taking the recognition of decline as a starting point. In this way, Deleuze's reflections on politics seem both to acknowledge, from a particular perspective, a historical period that has passed, and also to trace future 'lines of flight', without for all that the emergence of a clear perspective or alternative.

It is for this reason that the actuality of Deleuzism retains a paradoxical character, in the form of a persistent combination of engagement and disengagement, both equally militant, at the point where two incompatible axes cross. On the one hand, there is a growth in interest in Deleuze's political thinking, witnessed by the numerous publications that explore this area, which seem to find in this work the affirmation of a new form of politics that has been emerging since '68. Deleuze is one of the key thinkers of this new form of politics, which has by no means exhausted its potential. On the other hand, one might wonder if it is not precisely

this kind of post-political stance that is in the process of becoming outmoded, particularly in the light of recent French political movements, which are themselves undergoing a radical redefinition in line with new conditions. The explicitly global, anti-liberal and anti-capitalist lines, the tenor of these new political movements does not correspond to a Deleuzian prognostics relating to the obsolescence of any totalising perspective.

For these reasons, the vitality of a Deleuzian politics cannot be evaluated solely in terms of its potential descriptive pertinence or its influence, but rather it must be measured by its current efficacy. If it is not considered in this way, the construction of a Deleuzian politics becomes something of a circular process, constructing a closed circuit that moves, by way of selected practices, from theory back into theory. It presents itself as the anti-systematic and anti-totalising discursive expression of these practices, but at the same time it defines them systematically in the language of a deviant micro-politics and its associated privileged minoritarian causes. In order to question this circular process, the starting point cannot be the practices which seem to validate it, but rather the investments which define it and which inscribe it in a contradictory way in the dual lineage of a real history, as well as a retreat from, or a refusal of, engagement. In short, it is a question of examining the way in which Deleuzian thought engages with the principle elements of engaged left-wing political thought and action in France: that is to say, on the one hand the analysis of economic and social reality, and on the other hand the relation to Marx and Marxism. Locating Deleuze's thought in these two ways will allow us to assess any possible discrepancy between the two strands, while avoiding the pitfall of seeking to define exactly what a Deleuzian politics is or might be in favour of the more basic question of knowing how and to what extent Deleuzism constitutes a body of thought that can operate within the sphere of historical reality in order to produce effects of a political nature.

I Economy or Politics

In an interview from 1990 Deleuze says to Toni Negri: 'we think any political philosophy must turn on the analysis of capitalism and the ways it has developed' (Deleuze 1995: 171). And an analysis of capitalism of this kind is found in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, *Anti-Oedipus* published in 1972 and then *A Thousand Plateaus* published in 1980, both of which he wrote in collaboration with Félix Guattari.[2] However, the way in which the analysis is carried out and its

conclusions are totally original: far from simply setting out a specialised economic version of Deleuzian theory, this analysis reveals itself to be the privileged illustration of an ontology of flows and becoming which does not distinguish between base and superstructure, as well not maintaining any separation between a general conception of being and a specialised study of mercantile exchange. The definition of political thought and action is played out entirely at this level, to the extent that the study of capitalism undertaken by Deleuze functions as a permanent and often explicit confrontation with Marxian theses, and in particular the way in which Marx himself narrowly associated the capitalist mode of production with the perspective of its overcoming, which he termed revolution.

Such is the singular nature of Deleuze's approach: if he effectively deals with the problem of exchange – as opposed to the problem of production – he at no point proposes a specifically economic analysis, which would define his project in a precise manner, and would impose upon him a specialised and possibly new set of concepts. Instead, borrowing on numerous occasions from already constituted economic categories, he tends to confer upon them a metaphorical significance, which tears them away from their narrow technical sense and provides them with a cluster of suggestive and allusive significations that allows them to function poetically, without diluting their original definition. Making use of a writing strategy which is both inventive and effective, Deleuze consciously eschews the notions of ideology, exploitation and alienation, as well as any mention of class conflict and class interests, in favour of a notion of desire. Apart from the fact that it destabilises any theory of work-as-value, this has the effect of telescoping the spheres of the commodity and of life, disconnecting in this way the analysis of the commodity from its classical axis and its reserved domain.

Deleuze asserts that ideology does not exist (Deleuze 2004: 264). The assertion of its disappearance signals at the same time the assertion of something else on Deleuze's part. The rejection of the distinction between base and superstructure explicitly goes against a form of Marxism which quite clearly divides the domain of production from the social and the individual manifestations which accompany it. This diagnosis of Marxism as reductionist necessarily implies that any thesis which overcomes it, and notably the valorisation of life, can be credited with a greater complexity and a superior concern for the real. In a move that was fairly common in French philosophy at this time, doctrinaire Marxism is made to serve as a convenient adversary, a 'straw man', which was easy to defeat. What is more, the extremely schematic nature of this Marxism means that it is possible to affirm without reservation

against this the fact that desire and repression belong to the infrastructure itself, effectively dismissing without discussion the thesis of the centrality of work and its exploitation:

> On the one side you put the serious stuff, the economy, the infrastructure, and then on the other side you put the superstructure, to which ideology belongs. And thus you restrict the phenomena of desire to ideology. It's a perfect way to ignore how desire works on the infrastructure, invests it, belongs to it, and how desire thereby organises power: it organises the system of repression. (Deleuze 2004: 264)

This affirmation is seductive, indicating a unity that needs to be rethought thoroughly in contrast to its preceding simplification and fragmentation. However, as well as the fact that this analysis fails to confront Marx's own ideas on this question, it tends itself to undertake a corresponding reduction, which is all the more invisible, given that it presents itself as a heightened form of attention to the concrete diversity of things and as a respect for their constitutive multiplicity. However, through the thematic of desire, infrastructure is reduced to flows and the mode of production to market exchange, while politics is correlatively reduced to repressive state practices of surveillance and control. In this regard, it is the thesis of the disappearance of ideology that is key. It aims not so much to place ideas in the position of distinct historical realities – which is not an alien notion for Marx – but much more radically to fold back the real into its concept and politics into a 'political philosophy' which at one and the same time represents it and substitutes for it. But asserting that theory is a practice boils down to validating the reciprocal approach which locates all activities under the category of action. Borrowed from leftism, the assertion that everything is political does not extend to the domain of pertinence of politics, but rather lays the ground for its nebulous dispersion, cancelling out all specificity and effacing the boundaries at the same time that it seems to radicalise the proposition and go well beyond any vague expressions of reformism: 'We are all groupuscles. There is no more representation. There is only action, the action of theory, the action of praxis, in the relations of relays and networks' (Deleuze 2004: 207).[3]

The disappearance of the category of ideology has as its correlate the disappearance of the category of representation, another common characteristic of French philosophy in the 1960s. But this disappearance also demands at the same time the fusion of what was, up to that point, distinguished: in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, the crucial move, which precisely gave the work its title, entails the establishment of a permanent correspondence between desire and economic exchange. If Deleuze and

Guattari are in some respects close to the tradition of Freudo-Marxism and the ideas of Wilhelm Reich, they feel that his project remains incomplete, because it maintains the notion of a parallelism between the impulses of life and social activity, and it clings to a Freudian topograhical model of a stratified social and psychological field. Instead, it is necessary to develop the notion of 'desiring production', which is synonymous with 'the coextension of desire and the social field' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 32). But such an assertion calls for a demonstration. And it is at this point that Deleuze's particular style comes into its own, insofar as it is thought of as a distinct mode of argumentation, because if this correspondence is not referred back to a common causality, which can be clearly demonstrated, it is nonetheless established by means of a notion that works as a metaphor at one and the same time of mercantile exchange and individual desire. This metaphor of flows is a veritable conceptual operator, which assures a constant passage from one level to the other and which, in sum, establishes their indistinction rather than proving it.

It is precisely why the notion of flow, which mediates the most important considerations of Deleuzian philosophy, constitutes the heart of an ontology that is vitalist in inspiration, and which conceptualises all processes in terms of exchanges of energy. The unique style of Deleuzian philosophy is in no way secondary, because it is this style which effects the conceptual symbiosis that unifies the most diverse aspects of the real, unfolding its infinite possibilities, whether they be critical or poetic. The discourse of flows expresses itself in ever more sinuous, stratified and proliferating terms, throughout the passages dealing with it in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, by means of the elaboration of a group of subordinate concepts, which develop the subject while at the same time systematising it, and which were destined to become key concepts in Deleuzian thought, most often referred to today to illustrate its continuing actuality: 'Capitalism tends toward a threshold of decoding that will destroy the *socius* in order to make it a body without organs and unleash the flows of desire on this body as a deterritorialised field' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 36).

The obscurity of such a statement, taken out of context, is not so offputting when it is encountered in the course of the dense prose of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* within which it is embedded. It fascinates by the evocation of an enigma and the explanations that it seems to suggest without describing them. Playfully mixing fields and concepts, intricately weaving together the registers of Marxist economy, Hjelmslev's linguistics, psychoanalysis and its critique, Riemannian mathematics and

contemporary physics, Deleuze puts into practice what he postulates: a hybridisation of these knowledges. In doing so, he reinforces the claim that the dimensions of the real are indistinct, a claim which authorises in turn the rapprochement of the most specialised scientific concepts under the aegis of an ontology that demonstrates their real significance.

Strangely enough, the extreme density of certain passages in Deleuze's work is attenuated by the scope of the two volumes and by the continuity of reading that this scope imposes: from page to page, the same terms proliferate, and if they are never precisely defined, their meaning gradually becomes clear, emerging from the diversity of their particular usages, and is elaborated by means of the variations that affect them, as well as the powerful conceptual poetry which emanates from them. Deleuzian poetics is the other version of a philosophy, coextensive with it. Rather than being a form of artificial rhetoric, it is instead a coherent discourse in its own right which deals with the nature of thought and the texture of the world. And it is important to measure to what degree the definition of politics is directly linked to this approach, which leads Deleuze to think of it as 'political philosophy', refusing to dissociate a specific practice from the theorisation which, far from founding it, is its most adequate form of appearance, its authentic manifestation. In this sense, politics appears as the performative statement of its own omnipresence, but in its philosophical modality, which leads Deleuze to point out that '*Anti-Oedipus* was from beginning to end a book of political philosophy' (Deleuze 1995: 170).

However, it is precisely here that the paradox alluded to above comes into focus. That is to say, this definition of politics, which at first sight appears to render almost superfluous any practice other than its discursive development, nevertheless comes up against its more traditional meaning and the taking in charge of objects which are specifically political, as well as the perspective of their transformation: which is to say the State, the overcoming or destruction of power, as well as its local subversion or general revolution. And Deleuze, far from shrinking from this task, even proposes a theory of the State which attempts to take into consideration human history in its entirety. But one might consider that an underlying conflict results from this in the shape of a tension between a conception of politics as being inherent to the Deleuzian approach, and immanent to his philosophy and its particular 'politics', as it were, and a more traditional idea present in the same texts, which defines politics as a real sphere, which is relatively autonomous and which corresponds to the State apparatus and the historical process of its constitution. But how are the two linked if, at the same time, the term politics ceases to indi-

cate the possibility of collective action which associates in its aims the collective mastery of economic flows and the effective transformation of power? In this sense, it seems that Deleuzian politics is, precisely as a theory, the definition of an *aporia*, an apparently insoluble contradiction which no passage to practice can surmount.

This can be verified by taking up the historical analysis of capitalism that Deleuze develops from this point of departure. Capitalism is not characterised above all as a mode of production, grappling with forces of production which are made up both of men and the social relations that establish their hierarchy. It is rather defined as 'the surging forth of decoded flows' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 238, translation modified), in contrast to the way these elements were coded in the model of 'the Ancient City-State, the Germanic commune, and feudalism' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 237). In the course of this evolution, the State changes role, insofar as it is a machine 'determined by the social system into which it is incorporated in the exercise of its functions' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 241). Capitalism is consequently nothing more than the result of the disappearance of previous forms of the State, according to the movement of a decoding which is always more systematic and more generalised, and which shows no sign of either being slowed down or replaced. Flows are deterritorialised and impose their logic according to the linear evolution which allows for the elaboration of a new philosophy of history which never asserts itself as such, undoubtedly because it has no *telos*, but is not without *archè*, however: 'Capitalism is indeed the limit of all societies, insofar as it brings about the decoding of the flows that the other social formations coded and overcoded' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 267).

It is for this reason that capitalism has 'haunted all forms of society' as the vital flow which tirelessly seeks to throw off all constraints (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 140). Singular contradictions are replaced by lines of flight which are parallel and quasi homologous because it is always a question of non-differential flows of commerce and trade which, at all times, seek to overcome obstacles and barriers and impose their dynamic of expansion. Consequently, the State sphere is nothing other than that which opposes limits to these flows and which is, in its very essence, incompatible with their constitutive drive. For Deleuze, historical becoming has as its sole principle the exchange of wealth, which operates independently from the finalities of their production and consumption. This conception of the economy is radically incompatible with the political perspective of controlling it, or even of simply regulating it. But what can we make of a politics which apparently identifies

the economy with the market and which abandons the market to its so-called 'laws'? Doesn't the refusal of what would conventionally be thought of as a leftist definition of politics inevitably lead to the imposition of an economically and politically *liberal* approach, leaving room only for marginal resistances, the contestatory force of which is limited to the private sphere?

In this binary schema, from which classes and class conflict are absent, political action is either reduced to the State apparatus or entirely mobilised by the pursuit of control and repression, or it is reduced, in the absence of any alternative, to a strategy of permanent displacement, in the attempt to escape from procedures of control. From this perspective, Deleuze's critique of existing models of politics and political practices is as devastating as it is coherent. Political parties and unions are both subject to the same critiques addressed to political institutions. Totalisation is always the restoration of 'the representative forms of centralism and hierarchy', whereas the solution is to 'create lateral connections, a system of networks, a grass roots base' (Deleuze 2004: 210). These networks cannot have a hegemonic vocation: 'Desire is revolutionary. This doesn't mean that it wants revolution. It's even better. Desire is revolutionary by nature' (Deleuze 2004: 233). What is more, Marxian ideas relating to the conquest and destruction of the State, far from defining its successive phases, simply seem incompatible with it (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 385).

Neither socialism nor communism are compatible with Deleuze's politics. Talking about '68, Deleuze says that the event was by nature molecular, and not molar: 'Those who evaluated things in macropolitical terms understood nothing of the event because something unaccountable was escaping' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 216). Elsewhere he writes, 'They say revolutions turn out badly. But they're constantly confusing two different things, the way revolutions turn out historically and people's revolutionary becoming' (Deleuze 1995: 171).

If no other mode of production can be envisaged, it is only logical that the only thinkable and even desirable possibility is to go to the limits of the present system. And it is for this reason that one finds this strange apologia for a 'deterritorialisation', that is actively pursued and accelerated, of mercantile flows. This process finds its clearest expression in the contemporary world in the phenomena of economic and financial deregulation. It is almost as if, in the absence of long-term political impact, Deleuzian ideas, given that they provide an obvious descriptive value in the light of a victorious liberal counter-formation, have finally found an era with which they coincide. However, curiously, it is precisely at the

heart of the texts which confront this perspective that the theme of revolution arises/re-emerges, as if it were a question less of confronting and more of avoiding the political consequences of the proposed analysis:

> But which is the revolutionary path? Is there one? – To withdraw from the world market, as Samir Amin advises Third World countries to do, in a curious revival of the fascist 'economic solution'? Or might it be to go in the opposite direction? To go still further, that is, in the movement of the market, of decoding and deterritorialisation? For perhaps the flows are not yet deterritorialised enough, not decoded enough, from the viewpoint of a theory and a practice of a highly schizophrenic character. Not to withdraw from the process, but to go further, to 'accelerate the process', as Nietzsche put it: in this matter, the truth is that we haven't seen anything yet. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 260)

This short quotation articulates all of the dimensions of Deleuzian analysis and contains in condensed form the difficulties of this analysis. What is striking here is that the notions of revolution and fascism are evoked as political dimensions that are external to a Deleuzian analysis, while at the same time this analysis is dogmatic and renders inoperable any possibility of collective action.[4]

As for this closing mention of Nietzsche, it emphasises to what extent the reference to Marx represents above all the chance for a displacement, a way of distancing oneself from those who demonise him as an attempt to prolong the analysis and work with the concepts. For Deleuze, the problem is elsewhere and the ontology of becoming finds in Nietzsche the means to bolster more substantially the development of a philosophy which is only tangentially associated with a practice that is itself consciously marginal. Deleuze, when he deals with economic issues, remains a philosopher, and more particularly a French philosopher, coming from a tradition which values an elegant writing style as well as eschewing scrupulous historical research. (Conventional historical research of this kind would, for example, not see Nietzsche as an *anti-fascist* thinker.) In this case, it seems justifiable to ask whether the theme of the liberation of flows is not related in the first instance to the most radical aspects of liberal thought, which are precisely the most libertarian, notably Hayek, and also more fundamentally the tradition inaugurated by Léon Walras, who promoted the idea of 'value-desire'. However, even if he draws quite consciously, at certain points, on the marginalist theories of neoclassicist economists, Deleuze does not develop the analysis nor does he concern himself with their compatibility with the Marxist ideas that he associates with them, although the latter are founded on principles which are antagonistic to value-work.

Being very close to Marxism (but also to the work of Fernand Braudel), Deleuze neither contests nor refines Marxist ideas, preferring to shift and destabilise them, ultimately making them collaborate in the construction of a theory of history which constantly reworks these borrowed concepts. Deleuzian analysis, which is punctuated with references to authors and theoretical allusions, invents a new relation to scholarly erudition: it is never a question of establishing a direct line of filiation, but rather of using a momentary support in order to move off in a new direction, to pay passing tribute to an effort to produce something new. The concepts whose line of descent is most clearly marked – most notably Marxist concepts – are in this way amalgamated into the very movement of the analysis which makes them part of its own momentum. The virtuoso character of the writing stems from the fact that references, inventions, quotations and commentaries are articulated within an open system, which tends to corroborate the notion that the rhizome is a sort of 'anti-geneaology' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 11).

It is in this way that the notion of revolution is renewed and developed by Deleuze and Guattari, but only by means of a radical change in its meaning and field of application: the only real revolutions are henceforth 'micro', on the same scale as the micro-economy that parallels them, a micro-philosophy of 'what Foucault calls the microphysics of power, and Guattari the micropolitics of desire' (Deleuze 1995: 86). The miniaturisation of politics goes hand-in-hand with its diffusion across the entire social field, as well as the rejection of any involvement in or with regard to existing political institutions, particularly the State and political parties: politics is no longer a privileged sphere of authority, any more than it is the collective perspective of its conquest and transformation, but is rather a reaction to the liberal retraction of politics by the correlative expansion of individual redeployments, deviant practices, molecular contestations, which now occupy the space left by the retreat of classic forms of politicisation. In this sense, Deleuzian politics is deeply implicated in a historical moment in which militant practices are on the wane, which sometimes seems to point to their multiplication and diversification. Deleuzian politics runs alongside a widely shared feeling of failure, in the wake of '68. In its real descriptive power, it draws on an argument which has transferred its long-term dimension. But is this way of thinking valid? Is it not above all a reflection of a general disaffection which marked one section of a generation and led it to seek positions of withdrawal, positions which were to encounter thirty years later the forms of a politically established social democracy which has since theorised – and largely put into practice – its own renunciation of any project to 'change life'?[5]

The whole problem is therefore of knowing whether this is a redefinition of politics which has potential for the future or whether it is simply a reaction to a moment of political withdrawal, which feeds into those theories that announce the 'end of' and argue that the political conjuncture that lay at the heart of the cycles of politicisation and depoliticisation that punctuated the transformations in French society and the various stages of the economic crisis of the 1970s is now entirely obsolescent, pointing to what they see as the failure of the Keynesian policies of the postwar period and of what was called the 'Fordist compromise'. It is for this reason that it is far from evident that these analyses remain valid at the present moment, given that the most recent social struggles seem to be confronting liberalism head on in ever more direct ways. In this context, Deleuzian theses offer, as a sort of counter-front, a powerful reminder to those who, distanced from this repoliticisation, identify with what might be called a sort of 'societal' critique: it is rather a question of developing immanent tendencies that they ultimately feel contain the promise of a different form of social life, which operates as a system, and corresponds much more closely to the multiplication of connections which are transversal and fluctuating, within which the decline of waged labour and the death of work are affirmed quite explicitly as tendencies both powerful and ineluctable.[6]

As for the revolutionary consequences of this process, Deleuze at once affirms them but also remains somewhat circumspect with regard to them. All revolutions are, according to Deleuze, destined to be diverted from their original motivations.[7] What remains are minorities, who remain minorities and wish to remain this way. Such an assertion chimes implicitly with the rejection of any participation in the institutional game of parliamentary democracy as well as with the global critique of this form of governance, and also goes along with a declared indifference with regard to any possibility of the political unification of social struggles. An assertion of this type is situated on the ground of an ontology which is resigned to the complete opacity of the future, and which celebrates the unpredictable inventiveness of this future: 'A minority has no model, it's a becoming, a process' (Deleuze 1995: 173). In moving from the economic sphere to the social and the political spheres, the process becomes creative and singular, irreducible and non-totalisable, conferring a certain poetry on Deleuzian statements, which are both evocative and hermetic, to the point of being oxymoronic: 'A people is always a creative minority, and remains one even when it acquires majority' (Deleuze 1995: 173).

Taking up Foucault's notion of control societies which replace disciplinary societies, Deleuze pursues the analysis of new forms of resistance

which are emerging claiming that: 'Computer piracy and viruses [. . .] will replace strikes and what the nineteenth century called "sabotage" ' (Deleuze 1995: 175). But what would be the outcome of simply resisting disciplinary mechanisms and generalised security procedures? Deleuze replies somewhat enigmatically to Toni Negri's question whether communism is still possible:

> You ask whether control or communication societies will lead to forms of resistance that might reopen the way for a communism understood as the 'transversal organisation of free individuals.' Maybe, I don't know. But it would be nothing to do with minorities speaking out. (Deleuze 1995: 175)

And this interview closes with a celebration of small events which are irreducible to their conditions of appearance and a call for the creation of circuit-breaking 'vacuoles of noncommunication' (Deleuze 1995: 175). The continued thematics of revolution, which proves not to be rooted in the reality of work and societal contradictions, evolves on the one hand in the direction of private forms of 'rebellious spontaneity', and on the other hand towards a philosophy which is original in form, which renews the separation between theory and practice, but which sublimates it in a work, the paradoxical tenor of which seems precisely to feed into the development, from book to book, of an erudite commentary in the form of innovative elaborations.

II Philosophy and Politics

In his 1990 interview with Toni Negri, Deleuze made a well-known statement which brings together all the dimensions of his approach and illustrates the permanent disequilibrium which characterises this approach: 'I think Félix Guattari and I have remained Marxists, in our two different ways, perhaps, but both of us' (Deleuze 1995: 171). For Deleuze, if Marx is and remains a key reference, it is the very idea of a reference that needs to be clarified. Because, in contrast to his treatment of other philosophers, Deleuze does not devote a book to Marx.[8] However, Marx is without a doubt one of the authors whose presence, often spectral and allusive, most haunts Deleuze's work. Sometimes presented as a sort of tacit support, mention of Marx serves, on other occasions, to signal the limits of his contribution and the urgent need for a renewal of this contribution. But Deleuze provides no precisely elaborated critique to give an overall coherence to these scattered remarks. He states that: 'we're not worried about a return to Freud, or to Marx' (Deleuze 2004: 221). However, he wishes to distance himself from all those who, at the end of

the 1970s, completely reject Marx and Marxism: Deleuze was very quick to take a stand against the 'nouveaux philosophes', who were trumpeted as such by a powerful political and media operation which stigmatised Marx and Marxism as forerunners of totalitarianism and characterise Deleuze and Guattari themselves as Marxists.

For all that, the unequivocal denunciation of this perfunctory anti-Marxism is in no way synonymous with making a claim on behalf of Marxism – quite the contrary. And one of the rare and little discussed critical interventions on this subject appears in a seminar given on 28 May 1973, which is to say at the time when these issues were at their most acute.[9] Here, Deleuze sets out three ways in which he and Guattari can be distinguished from Marxism. The first is 'that Marxism poses problems in terms of need; on the contrary our problem has been posed in terms of desire.' The second difference relates to the question of ideology. The third difference concerns the double movement of recapitulation and development that Deleuze attributes to Marxism. Against the development of productive forces, he objects that there is a 'force which is that of forgetting'. And Deleuze adds:

> I think that these differences show that our problem has never been that of a return to Marx, on the contrary, our problem is much more one of forgetting, including the forgetting of Marx. But, in the very act of forgetting, small fragments linger. (Deleuze n.d.: n.p.)

As can be seen, the assertion of having 'remained Marxist' is not straightforward and one might wonder just how compatible it is with this narrative of collapse. In fact, politics re-emerges: because, in the context of the period, declaring oneself Marxist is above all a political gesture, which serves as a marker and which leads Deleuze to distinguish himself from the 'nouveaux philosophes' by putting forward one of the few analyses of the political conjuncture that he ever proposed (although Michel Foucault, for his part, welcomed the boldness of such statements from Deleuze):

> We've been in election mode for some time now. Elections are not a particular locale, nor a particular day in the calendar. They are more like a grid that affects the way we understand and perceive things. [. . .] The New Philosophers have inscribed themselves on this grid from the beginning. It hardly matters that some of them were immediately opposed to the union of the Left, whereas the others wanted to offer Mitterrand one more brain-trust. The two tendencies were identical in their opposition to the Left, but were especially united in a theme found early on in their books: the hatred of May '68. (Deleuze 2006: 143–4)

In this context, the mention of Marx's name plays a particular role in the changing ideological landscape of the time. Initially, that is to say up until somewhere around the 1970s, citing Marx was commonplace and indicated nothing more than an attachment to the broad church of the Left, including the extreme Left. Subsequently, from the middle of the 1970s, but particularly in the course of the 1980s and 1990s, citing Marxism in a favourable light takes on a new significance and is seen as the militant refusal of a disavowal at a time when this became the norm, whereas declaring oneself to be Marxist was at best seen as incongruous, and at worst as a fault, punishable by being severely ostracised. From this perspective, Deleuze and Guattari numbered among the rare intellectuals of the time who demonstrated an obstinate 'resistance' to the tenor of the times, and their declaration of Marxism should be understood as a refusal to participate in this brutal reversal of position, in the move towards positions within academia and the media that would previously have been anathema, as well as towards a cynically liberal stance. These moves were undertaken by several repentant *soixante-huitards* who would soon claim to be talking on behalf of their generation.

But of course the refusal of the apostate always involves distancing oneself from previous positions, and it is for this reason that the remembering of Marx can coincide with his 'forgetting': this forgetting, which only a name and a few concepts escape, indicates the abandonment of a certain type of theoretical work and its integration into certain practices of global importance. This occurs as a consequence of a broad definition of politics as certainly a power, but a power which comes up against the question of economic and social organisation, including institutions. In its theoretical version, the question presents itself in the form of philosophies to which Deleuze also refers, and which facilitate an understanding of this relation to Marx which is both complex and distant. Here once again Nietzsche's thought seems to be a much more solid theoretical fulcrum, precisely because it is strictly philosophical, and also because it provides the act of forgetting with its own conceptualisation. In contrast to Marx, Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche gives rise to a book, in which his anti-Hegelian stance and his hostility to dialectics serve as an indirect commentary on Marx and, in this way, allow him to situate himself politically in a manner which is indirect but which is nonetheless coherent.

Indeed, Deleuze locates himself on this occasion within the French tradition of a declared hostility to Hegel, which he makes even more radical. Hegel becomes the adversary of all theories of life and power, insofar as he is seen as promoting a perfunctory theory of contradiction: 'Dialectic thrives on oppositions because it is unaware of far more subtle and

subterranean differential mechanisms' (Deleuze 1983: 157). Hegel is never directly analysed in his own right but rather read through the Nietzschean critique of Hegel, which Deleuze broadly makes his own, so that commentary and the profession of faith become almost indiscernible in this book. Transformed into a thinker of *ressentiment*, an apologist for the 'unhappy consciousness' and of 'the will to nothingness that expresses itself in the labour of the negative' (Deleuze 1983: 159), Hegel is presented as a strange sort of dialectician who simplifies and destroys:

> The Hegelian dialectic is indeed a reflection on difference, but it inverts its image. For the affirmation of difference as such it substitutes the negation of that which differs; for the affirmation of self it substitutes the famous negation of the negation. (Deleuze 1983: 196)

Drawing a veil over the ins and outs of forms of politics that have drawn on the thought of Nietzsche, Deleuze sees Hegel as the pioneer of a dark line: Stirner, first of all, who 'reveals nihilism as the truth of the dialectic', then Marx, who accomplishes a destiny which reveals itself to be a fall through what Deleuze calls, without saying more about it, 'his famous doctrine of the conditioned ego': the dialectic only ever refers back to the I/the self, and not to the real, but to a reductive vision of history which proves itself to be incapable of really thinking the individual (Deleuze 1983: 161, 162). With Marx,

> has the dialectic found its point of equilibrium and rest or merely a final avatar, the socialist avatar before the nihilist conclusion? It is difficult in fact to stop the dialectic and history on the common slope down which they drag each other. Does Marx do anything else but mark the last stage before the end, the proletarian stage? (Deleuze 1983: 162)

What, precisely, is meant by these lines? One suspects a remarkable distortion, one glimpses the so-called 'real socialism' of the Eastern bloc, one wonders about a crushing responsibility and a threatening future. There is the presentiment of an inevitable conclusion, that of the dialectic swallowed up by its own nihilistic destiny and by the auto-destruction of which it has always been, from the start, simply the unconscious and fatal discourse, the loquacious pathology.

The political dimension of the argument is as evident as it is allusive, and the history of philosophy seems for Deleuze to be the location which is at once displaced but crucial of a bias which defines allies and enemies, which isolates fruitful inspirations and dead references. To an interviewer who is shocked by the rejection of Hegelian thought and the closeness of Deleuze to a conservative thinker like Bergson, he replies: 'Naturally, with this dialectic of negativity and contradiction, Hegel has inspired

every language of betrayal, on the right as well as on the left (theology, spiritualism, technocracy, bureaucracy, etc.)' (Deleuze 2004: 144).

Deleuze turns his visceral rejection of Hegelian thought, which he shares with a number of his contemporaries, into a sort of theoretico-political 'order-word': 'What I most detested was Hegelianism and dialectics' (Deleuze 1995: 6). But what can he do with Marx under these conditions? Sometimes Deleuze recommends the 'liberation of Marx from Hegel' by allying himself with the reading produced at the same time by Althusser (Deleuze 2004: 145). At other times he associates Marx with Freud and the bourgeoisie, who all share in his eyes the same conception of politics: 'revolutionary activity was supposed to proceed to this capitalisation of the memory of social formations. It is, if one prefers, Marx's Hegelian aspect, included in *Das Kapital*' (Deleuze 2004: 277). What is at stake is what Deleuze calls 'a certain ideology of development', which in passing does, strangely enough, give some pertinence and currency to the notion of ideology, which is in other respects disavowed.

From this point on, revolution is no longer located in a historical logic of development, but rather in a counter-culture, which finds 'properly revolutionary forces' in 'the force of forgetting and the force of underdevelopment'. Reading these pages today, it is possible to see to what extent Deleuze's political 'engagement' is coextensive with the construction of a new philosophy. The fact that Deleuze is close to Marx depends upon clear borrowings from Marx's work as well as a constant gap, creating a sort of aggressive and conflictual closeness, which is also of course very fertile. This intellectual relation is concerned less with the literal sense of Marx's texts, or with the literal and practical consequences of these ideas, but rather with the production of a sort of 'counter-Marxism', which is neither an anti-Marxism nor another Marxism, but rather a way of constructing, tangentially, a new understanding of the world as well as a very different understanding of 'politics', emphasising the continuing ambiguity of its meaning.

Conclusion

Overall, it is the heterogeneous and unstable definition of philosophy and of politics which leads Deleuze to distinguish himself from Marx and Marxism, and which leaves in suspense the question of knowing whether a Deleuzian politics can exist and what, precisely, it might consist of. On the other hand, it is certainly also legitimate to read Deleuze's work as a continual effort to move away from 'classic', conventional ways of

thinking, an effort which is conceived in the context of the time and current French politico-intellectual debates.

It should be emphasised that Deleuze never ceded to the temptation to align himself with the dominant mode of thinking which took the form of a militant anti-Marxism. And that in itself is not negligible. The maintenance of a contestatory stance and the fact that he remained faithful to the idea of revolution suffices to mark out an intellectual trajectory without equal, at that time on the margins of the university establishment, distanced from political allegiances, as well as eschewing the status of the 'fellow-traveller'. Nevertheless, this constant drive to distance himself and never to align himself politically must be seen squarely in the context of a withdrawal from political activity, which he gives credence to and prolongs much more than he analyses.[10] The continuation of this stance up to the present day indicates the permanence of a reactive and transgressive counter-culture, which delays political mobilisations while acknowledging their validity and possibility, particularly in light of the fact that the question of political alternatives remains open or rather seems to be opening up again in a period of profound change for politics and collective political action.

From this political point of view, it is not the closeness of the 1970s that is striking, but rather the fact that this period now seems so distant, particularly when one reads Deleuze's work in this way. In effect, in the period that runs from the 1960s through to the 1990s, France undergoes a political and ideological transformation which consists of the accumulation of a number of crises. First comes an economic crisis, which constitutes a brutal and definitive reversal of the economic climate, which means that the prevailing French social model fails and the Fordist model is dismantled. Then there is a political crisis in the aftermath of May 1968, which stems from lack of will, on the part of the parliamentary Left and organised labour, to build upon the general political mobilisation of 1968 and to build a real political and social alternative. Finally there is a crisis of Marxism, accelerated by its partial doctrinal sclerosis, but which is also a result of a relentless campaign that is carried out, particularly from the mid-1970s onwards, which leads to Marxist ideas being marginalised in the fields of academia, publishing, the media and politics.

Under these conditions, everything conspires to make Marx a name hated by some, associated with a number of positive virtues for others, but no longer synonymous with the bringing together of theory and political action and which, henceforth, tends to be reduced to the status of either an irrecuperable vestige of a bygone politics or a purely

philosophical reference without great purchase/import. Deleuze's work, given that his relation to Marx and politics is of a particular nature but is also contained within a defined framework, seems to correspond to this sort of transformation. For Deleuze, in a highly significant way, May 1968 must be defined as 'a demonstration, an irruption, of becoming in its pure state' (Deleuze 1995: 171), whereby becoming replaces history and gives the term 'revolution' the role of a conceptual pivot. 'Revolution' itself comes to stand for a fleeting moment of this kind: it is still rooted in the idea of political engagement, if only because such a term maintains an evocative power in France. Deleuze tends to shift it into the area of desire and personal choice, but also into the area of a style of thinking which embodies this style of life.

The political dimension of Deleuze's work is, therefore, real. But that does not mean that political analysis or even a political perspective can be found in a strictly defined way in his work. And the paradoxical feeling that his thought does have a specifically political contemporary relevance perhaps stems from the fact that what was in the process of disappearing when he wrote his work is, precisely, in the process of re-emerging today: in both cases a figure becomes blurred and persists at the same time, the very idea of politics dissolves and is redefined, as that which never ceases to haunt philosophy and also to escape it.

Translated by John Marks

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Notes

1. On this point, see the 1972 interview between Deleuze and Foucault, entitled 'Intellectuals and Power' (Deleuze 2004), which can be said to function as their official political manifesto.
2. It was Félix Guattari, much more so than Deleuze, who was engaged in intense forms of militant activity throughout his life: firstly Trotskyist, as leader of the oppositional group 'Voie communiste' from 1955 to 1965. He also participated actively in anti-colonialist struggles, and subsequently gave support to the Italian *autonomia* movement. In 1977 he founded CINEL in the interest of 'new spaces of liberty', and in the 1980s he aligned himself with the ecology movement, notably by theorising 'ecophilosophy'. In addition to this, of course, there was his activity in the field of anti-psychiatry, particularly in collaboration with Jean Oury at the La Borde clinic.
3. Deleuze says this in the course of his 1972 interview with Foucault. Foucault replies: 'So it is that theory does not express, translate, or apply a praxis; it is a praxis – but local and regional, as you say: non-totalizing' (in Deleuze 2004: 207). The collapse of representation undermines the discourse of political engagement since it perpetuates the notion of a coherent point of view and a totalising perspective. Henceforth, it is simply a question of a mosaic of activities which cannot be brought together as a single unity. Political action of this kind can no longer make a claim to the universal, but rather defines itself as a practice in its own right. In this way, the apparent modesty of the 'specific', local intellectual claims for itself the easy prestige of a de facto engagement. Furthermore, this engagement does not even need to be put into practice, insofar that it is presented as constituting the activity of thinking and writing.
4. One of the political dimensions of Deleuzian analyses can be seen here. Precisely at a time when liberal political choices have revealed the destructive effects of their domination, there is a great temptation – in the face of the potential rise of the extreme right – to support these choices in a purely negative way. And since neo-liberal policies lead, among other things, to the collapse of political perspectives and to a resurgence of racism, the circuit is duly completed.
5. This was the slogan of the Socialist Party in 1981, when François Mitterrand was first elected President.
6. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in this regard, refer explicity to Deleuze and Guattari: 'Deleuze and Guattari argued that rather than resist capital's globalisation, we have to accelerate the process' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 206).
7. Deleuze states this quite explicitly in *l'Abécédaire*: 'All revolutions are bungled. Everybody knows it, although people make out they can be revived. That's a crazy idea!' He says this with reference to the Soviet, English, French (1789) and Algerian revolutions. Further on, with reference to 1968, he adds: 'I really think there is a difference between History and Becoming! It was a question of a revolutionary becoming without a revolutionary future' (Deleuze 1996).
8. If one doesn't count a book project that never came to fruition, and which would have been entitled 'The Greatness of Marx', a project of which nothing remains today
9. In 1970, Jean-Marie Benoist, an ideologue of the far-right, published *Marx est mort* (*Marx Is Dead*), a pamphlet which had a wide readership. In 1977,

Bernard-Henri Lévy published *La barbarie à visage humain* (*Barbarism with a Human Face*) and André Glucksmann published *Les maîtres penseurs* (*The Master Thinkers*). However, it was without doubt the publication of *The Gulag Archipelago* by Solzhenitsyn which inaugurated this shift in ideological orientation. On this question see Perry Anderson (2005: 34–5) and François Cusset (2003: ch. 14).

10. I draw here on the argument of Eustache Kouvélakis, who talks of the 'antipolitical passages' in French history 'which come about in reaction to a traumatic event or experience', among which he locates the leftism that followed May '68 (Kouvélakis 2004: n.p.).

Chapter 4

Schizoanalysis, Nomadology, Fascism

Eugene W. Holland

Despite Professor Challenger's implication in the 'Genealogy of Morals' plateau of *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 43; see also 221) that 'rhizomatics, stratoanalysis, schizoanalysis, nomadology' and so forth are merely 'various names' for a single discipline, the approaches to fascism presented in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* are not obviously identical.[1] Indeed, in an important essay John Protevi has gone so far as to claim that the first step in understanding the concept of fascism presented in *A Thousand Plateaus* is to 'distinguish it from the treatment of fascism in *Anti-Oedipus*' (Protevi 2000: 167), and he in effect rejects the latter in favour of the former. So who got it right – Professor Protevi, or Professor Challenger? There are ample reasons to question the rather stark contrast Protevi draws between the two volumes, but it is more important to note that his essay was written some time ago – and that *A Thousand Plateaus* appeared nearly two decades before that. For the point of revisiting a political concept such as fascism (or any political concept, according to Deleuze and Guattari) is not to erect a catch-all definition valid for all time, but to reconstruct the concept in relation to an Event – in this case, the advent of a twenty-first-century fascism in the United States. Rather than draw up a list of features (exhaustive or minimal[2]), something like a pedagogy of the concept will be more fruitful: showing how and why it gets constructed out of components of other concepts, and in response to what kind of problem. If indeed there is such a thing as US fascism today – and that is a big 'if' – what would its concept be? And how would such a concept necessarily differ from those presented in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* some twenty-five to thirty-five years ago? In order to address (not to say answer) these questions, I will first negotiate the differences between the views of fascism presented in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* by bringing the concept into closer contact with what we

know about the actual historical instances of fascism in mid-twentieth-century Europe, and then test the value of a renewed concept by considering the degree to which, the philosophical sense in which and the historical reasons for which the current Bush regime can be considered fascist.

The most important contribution of schizoanalysis to understanding interwar Italy and Germany is its insistence on the masses' desire for fascism. In line with recent scholarship that highlights the essential populism of historical fascism,[3] schizoanalysis argues that the masses weren't somehow tricked into supporting fascism, they actively desired it. Deleuze and Guattari thus echo the important question asked by Wilhelm Reich – why did the masses desire fascism? – but they will answer it in a very different way (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 29–30). First of all, there is the question of the relation between desire and the social field. For Reich, repression makes desire irrational, and the contribution of psychoanalysis is to show how ideology then converts repressed desire into irrational susceptibility to authoritarianism and fascism. For schizoanalysis, however, the categories of rational and irrational, ideology and psychology, are of secondary importance, at best: desire is 'always already' socially engineered, by means of representations that register directly on the body without organs (BwO). Social representations impose both a form and a set of more or less fixed images on desire circulating on the body without organs. The more fixed the images are, the greater is the degree of paranoia and fascistic tendencies characterising that desire. In this respect, as Protevi notes (Protevi 2000: 168), fascism is understood as a freezing or fixation of desire – whereas in *A Thousand Plateaus* it will appear as a kind of acceleration of desire or energy. But to suggest (as Protevi does, p. 168) that this is a psychological explanation does not do justice to the conception of the body without organs presented in *Anti-Oedipus*. For the body without organs is the locus of what they insist are *social* libidinal investments, even if schizoanalysis uses both psychological and socio-political terms for them: 'the paranoiac, reactionary, and fascisizing pole, and the schizoid revolutionary pole' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 366). As they explain:

> we see no objection to the use of terms inherited from psychiatry for characterizing social investments of the unconscious, insofar as these terms cease to have a familial connotation that would make them into simple projections [of repressed desire], and from the moment delirium is recognized as having a primary social content that is immediately adequate. (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 366; see also 361)

For Reich (and for psychoanalysis more generally), desire gets repressed and deformed in the individual and by the family, and only then gets projected onto society at large, whereas for schizoanalysis desire invests the entire social field (including the family) directly and without projection or sublimation. We will return to the specific relation between (primary) social and (subsidiary) familial investments below.

Perhaps even more important than the question of *how* desire invests the social field (whether directly or via projection) is the question of *what* desire actually invests, what its object is. Here schizoanalysis draws more on the materialism of Marx and especially Nietzsche than that of Freud. For ultimately what attracts desire is *the degree of development* of *productive forces* or of *power*, not the social representations and institutions in and by which those forces are registered and generated: 'Libidinal investment does not bear upon the regime of the social syntheses, but upon the degree of development of the forces or the energies on which these [instituted and represented] syntheses depend' (Deleuze and Guattari: 345; see also 343 and 364). Desire in this respect is will-to-power, and always invests a greater degree of development of power – provided we recognise (as Nietzsche does in Book 2 of *The Genealogy of Morals*) that greater power is always the product of a social assemblage (and never of a lone individual or *Übermensch*). So libidinal investment seeks above and before all else the development of its productive forces, its own empowerment: for schizoanalysis, this is a crucial factor in explaining the primal populism of historical fascism. Mid-century European masses weren't ideologically tricked into fascism: they actively desired it because it augmented their feelings of power. There is little or nothing psychological about this, except perhaps in one of its results (and then only to the extent that affects of power could be attributed to individuals, as 'subjective feelings'): the historical circumstances under which and the social institutions by means of which that augmentation of power occurred are of primary importance, as we shall see.

Whereas *Anti-Oedipus* construes fascism (along with paranoia) as a fixation opposed to the fluidity of desire, *A Thousand Plateaus* presents fascism as a peculiar kind of acceleration of desire; as Protevi puts it, in the later work fascism is a matter of speed: desire moves too fast rather than too slow. Fascism as excess speed corresponds to two other key differences between the first and second volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*: the introduction in Volume II of a 'cancerous' body without organs and of a 'suicidal' line of flight. In the first volume, bodies without organs and lines of flight were evaluated pragmatically or experimentally, according to their results: Is the body without organs over-full

with fixed investments (paranoia), unable to accommodate movement and change? Or has it over-freed itself by repelling any investments whatsoever (catatonia), to the point of being completely empty? Or has it succeeded in shedding its socially imposed or habitual organ-isation while yet remaining open to the free-flow investment of different desires? In a similar vein: has a line of flight become blocked and unable to continue? Or has it spun off alone into the void, without making any connections? Or has it succeeded in intersecting with other lines of flight, forging weapons and making what it was fleeing take flight? Now, in the second volume, however, there exist a body without organs and a line of flight that are intrinsically bad. There is the 'cancerous' body without organs, which appears 'to form its own specific kind of tumour . . . in a stratum that has begun to proliferate': 'How can we fabricate a BwO for ourselves without its being the cancerous BwO of a fascist *inside us*?' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 163, emphasis added). And there are lines of flight that 'themselves emanate a strange despair, like an odor of death and immolation, a state of war from which one returns broken':

> Why is the line of flight a war one risks coming back from defeated, destroyed, after having destroyed everything one could? This, precisely, is the fourth danger [of lines of flight in general]: the line of flight crossing the wall, getting out of the black holes, but instead of connecting with other lines and each time augmenting its valence, *turning to destruction, abolition pure and simple, the passion of abolition*. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 229)

What has happened here? Why the sudden appearance of concepts that preclude experimentation, that come with value-judgements built in? We now have a 'cancerous' body without organs somehow producing fascism 'inside us'; we have a line of flight somehow turning to 'abolition pure and simple': all this risks being a great deal more psychological than anything in *Anti-Oedipus* (except its redeployment of a few terms inherited from psychiatry, whose new use, as we have seen, was carefully distinguished from anything psychological). Of course, Deleuze and Guattari themselves are well aware of the danger here: they hasten to add that they

> are not invoking any kind of death drive. There are no internal drives in desire, only assemblages. Desire is always assembled; it is what the assemblage determines it to be. The assemblage that draws lines of flight is on the same level as they are, and is of the war machine type. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 229)

Well that's better: desire is always assembled; no psychology here after all. But then the question becomes: what exactly *are* the assemblages that

produce the 'thousand little monomanias [and] self-evident truths . . . giving any and everybody the mission of self-appointed judge, dispenser of justice, policeman, neighbourhood SS man' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 228)? Where in this account, in other words, does what they call *microfascism* actually come from (if not from some intrinsic psychological predisposition or passion)? And what is its relation to *macro*fascism, to actual historical fascism? In other words, why call this micro*fascism* at all? Why not micro-Oedipalisation, or mini-despotism, or group-subjugation (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 280)? Is there a historical context that justifies coining the term microfascism with reference to fascism itself, to actual historical fascism? What is the nature of the implied relation between *micro*fascism and *macro*fascism? And, to return to a question raised earlier, what does fascism have to do with the war machine?

Far more than the first volume, the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* explicitly addresses such questions, and much of what is said there tallies with what we know about historical fascism. Perhaps most important is the distinction between totalitarianism and fascism proper, and the transition from movement to regime. Totalitarian regimes (e.g. the Soviet Union, African and Latin American military dictatorships) come to power via revolution or *coup d'état* undertaken by a relatively small vanguard or group: they do not require, and in many cases actively inhibit, any popular mobilisation. Fascism, by contrast, does require popular mobilisation: fascism comes to power precisely by means of a mass movement which it then transforms into an established regime. The question about historical fascism is not only how it succeeded in transforming a movement into a regime, but how it mobilised mass support in the first place. We are, in a sense, back to the question of why the masses desired fascism – but now with a far richer sense of what is conceptually at stake. Here is Deleuze and Guattari's account:

> This brings us back to the paradox of fascism, and the way in which it differs from totalitarianism. For totalitarianism is a State affair: it essentially concerns the relation between the State as a localized assemblage and the abstract machine of overcoding it effectuates. Even in the case of a military dictatorship, it is a State army, not a war machine, that takes power and elevates the State to the totalitarian stage . . . Fascism, on the other hand, involves a war machine. When fascism builds itself a totalitarian State, it is not in the sense of a State army taking power, but of *a war machine taking over the State*. A bizarre remark by Virilio puts us on the trail: in fascism the State is far less totalitarian than it is *suicidal*. There is in fascism a realized nihilism. Unlike the totalitarian State, which does its utmost to seal all possible lines of flight, fascism is constructed on an intense line of flight, which

> it transforms into a line of pure destruction and abolition. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 230, emphasis added)

A bizarre remark indeed (the one from Virilio), for it puts Deleuze and Guattari on precisely the wrong path, a path all too well prepared by their inadequate notions of an intrinsically 'cancerous' body without organs and an intrinsically destructive line of flight. There are at least two major problems with Deleuze and Guattari's account, one bearing on this notion of the suicide state, the other on the role of the war machine in the transition from fascist movements to established regimes more generally.

The problem with Virlio's notion of the suicide state is that it depends on taking Hitler's infamous Telegram 71 – which declared 'If the war is lost, may the nation perish' – and reading it backwards as the interpretive key to the fascist movement and regime as a whole (Virilio 1998: 40). Although it is apparent from this telegram that the fascist regime eventually reached a point at which Hitler could foresee its imminent demise and would have preferred its total destruction to defeat, that apocalyptic moment of Hitler's sheds little or no light on the emergence of the fascist movement over the course of the preceding two decades: it involved a populist movement that depended for part of its support on rapid acceleration of the development of productive forces and on massive integration of unemployed and underemployed populations into the workforce (Poulantzas 1974: 99–100; Schivelbusch 2006: 169–83, esp. 171–2). In this respect, as a remarkable study by Wolfgang Schivelbusch comparing the 'Three New Deals' of Roosevelt, Hitler and Mussolini suggests, interwar Germany differs little from the United States, which mobilised popular support through the economic rejuvenation of the 'New Deal' before converting the economy to the war effort (Schivelbusch 2006: 153–69). Deleuze and Guattari themselves admit that in the evolution of German fascism, it is only later that 'arms expansion replaces growth in consumption and . . . investment veers from the means of production toward the means of pure destruction' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 231). Especially against the backdrop of Germany's defeat in the First World War and the ensuing economic and social hardships, and its humiliation in the Treaty of Versailles and the 1923 Allied reoccupation of the Ruhr, what the fascist movement offered Germans was first and foremost renewed hope and confidence in the German nation, not the prospect of suicide. This 'palingenic' aspect was also key to Mussolini's mobilisation of popular support for Italian fascism (although it seems to have operated there to a lesser degree, perhaps due to the lesser devastation and

humiliation of Italy at and after the end of the war) (Schivelbusch 2006: 142–53). Indeed, palingenesis is a key component of the generally accepted concept of fascism in current scholarship, which defines it generically as 'populist palingenic ultra-nationalism' (see note 3). Virilio's bizarre claim notwithstanding, fascist movements' mobilisation of popular support was based on the promise of rebirth, not on suicide.

As in the distinction between fascism and totalitarianism, Deleuze and Guattari's invocation of a war machine to characterise the emergence of fascism is an important insight. Indeed, the war machine is a crucial addition to the conceptual arsenal of the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Whereas *Anti-Oedipus* had deployed the term 'socius' to designate the basis or focus of social organisation at the level of the social-libidinal mode of production (the savage, despotic, capitalist modes of production; with the earth, the despot, capital, as socius), *A Thousand Plateaus* replaces 'socius' with a far richer and finer set of analytic tools, including strata, regimes of signs and war machines. If strata supplement earlier discussions of territories, and regimes of signs supplement those of codes, the concept of the war machine focuses on various forms of social organisation itself, well beneath the level of (or within) the 'mode of production'. While the concept's consistency derives from this focus on forms of sociality, its scope of variation is wide: 'The first theoretical element of importance is the fact that the war machine has many varied meanings' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 422).[4] There are in fact no fewer than six very different meanings of the war machine in *A Thousand Plateaus*, among which it is crucial to make careful distinctions. Moreover, in addition to ascertaining the different variants of a concept, it is important to identify its key components. For the concept of the war machine, these include aim, object, space and form-of-sociality. Two war-machine variants belong to nomad groups and are therefore important here only for contrast. The first barely merits the name war machine, inasmuch as it does not have war as its object at all: its essence is a rhizomatic or nomadic form of social relations operating in smooth space (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 417), and its objectives can be as varied as 'building bridges or cathedrals or rendering judgments or making music or instituting a science, a technology (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 366).[5] Nomadic bands only begin to justify the name war machine in its second variant, for here they can indeed take on war itself as their object in opposition to the State, with the aim of protecting or rescuing their smooth space from State striation: this is essentially a tactical war (in de Certeau's sense (1984)), fought against the State's strategic aim of incorporating all available 'open' space into its territory. The

sixth variant is 'the war machine of revolutionary movement . . . the becoming-minoritarian of everybody/everything' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 472–3), whose ultimate aim is to reconstitute nomadic social relations in smooth space. Here the schizoanalytic opposition between schizophrenia and paranoia, between the molecular and the molar, reappears in only slightly different terms: 'Every struggle . . . constructs *revolutionary connections* in opposition to the *conjugations of the [capitalist] axiomatic*' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 473; see also 220, 464). The third, fourth and fifth variants involve the appropriation of war machines by the State and vice versa, and require closer examination.

The third variant of the war machine involves its appropriation by the State as a means to serve the State's essentially political ends, the aim of striating, securing and expanding territory. The State war machine always has war as its exclusive object, yet it remains subordinate to the State's political aim; in this context, war is merely 'the continuation of politics by other means' (von Clausewitz, cited in Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 467; see also de Certeau 1984), and it is still only limited war. The fifth variant of the war machine – global capitalism – has escaped the grasp of the State, which in turn becomes a mere variable model of realisation for capitalist axiomatisation. Here, capital accumulation as the aim of the war machine exceeds the control of the State and pervades society totally (that is, extensively as well as intensively: via globalisation as well as real subsumption), with economic imperatives subordinating political ends, without of course doing away with politics altogether: State politics is now merely the continuation of capital accumulation by other means, as it were. The object of the global-capitalist war machine, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is no longer hot war (as means to an end furnished by the State) but capital accumulation itself, which at the time they wrote took the form of a cold war of deterrence in which the State-administered welfare system and military-industrial complex were no more than political means serving ultimately economic ends (capital accumulation) (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 467). The fourth variant of the war machine, which is fascism, serves for Deleuze and Guattari as a transition from the third war machine to the fifth: fascism is what transformed limited war into total war, paving the way for the totalising war machine of global capitalism. But here, an ambiguity appears in Deleuze and Guattari's formulations; perhaps precisely because of its transitional status, the fourth war machine deserves the most careful consideration.

The ambiguity involves the precise nature of the relations between the war-machine and the State. On one occasion (as we have seen), Deleuze and Guattari suggest that 'when fascism builds itself a totalitarian State,

it is not in the sense of a State army taking power, but of a war machine taking over the State' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 230). Instead of the State appropriating the war machine, it appears that in fascism the war machine appropriates the State apparatus. In the same vein, they affirm that 'the molecular focuses of fascism . . . interact in a war machine *instead of* resonating in a State apparatus' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 231). On another occasion, however (in the 'Apparatus of Capture' plateau), they suggest that although 'the entire fascist economy became a war economy . . . the war economy still needed total war as its object. For this reason, fascist war still fell under Clausewitz's formula, 'the continuation of politics by other means' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 467). On this line of argument, the State still assigns political ends to the war machine under fascism, and it is only well *after* the end of the Second World War (in what they call the 'postfascist' moment (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 421)) that the war machine finally prevails over the State, as the global-capitalist war machine subordinates all political and social considerations to the aim of capital accumulation. Now it must be said that Deleuze and Guattari are well aware of this ambiguity; in fact, they adopt it explicitly from von Clausewitz himself:

> It is . . . true that total war remains subordinated to State political aims and merely realizes the *maximal conditions* of the appropriation of the war machine by the State apparatus. But it is also true that when total war becomes the object of the appropriated war machine . . . the object and the aim enter into new relations that can reach the point of contradiction. This explains Clausewitz's vacillation when he asserts at one point that total war remains a war conditioned by the political aims of States, and at another that it tends to effectuate the Idea of unconditional war. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 421)

Rather than try to resolve this long-standing ambiguity conceptually, it makes more sense to examine it historically, in light of actually existing fascisms, past and present. Maybe historical fascism itself is profoundly ambiguous, or even contradictory.

Limiting ourselves for the sake of argument to the case of Nazi Germany, we can say first of all that there were indeed war machines operating after the First World War, in the margins (or near vacuum) of the very weak German State; and secondly, that the Nazi Party war machine eventually prevailed by eliminating or absorbing the other war-machines, and then 'took over' State power by simultaneously developing its own governing apparatus (SS, Gestapo, etc.) and taking control of the existing State apparatus (by placing Party members in key government positions to assure that laws were executed in accordance with

Party rule; appointing *Gauleiter*, mayors, etc. to rule over regions, towns; and so on). This complex interweaving of Party and State apparatuses may be one reason that Deleuze and Guattari are right to say that the fascist rise to power involves a multiplication of axioms, while totalitarian revolutions or *coups d'état* involve a relative paucity of axioms.[6] Even more important is that, in the process of 'taking over' and then 'building a totalitarian State' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 230), the State war machine completely discards the key features of the nomadic war machine. For one thing, war (and even total war) has become its permanent object and, furthermore, social relations are as far from nomadic as they can be: they are in fact thoroughly despotic, centring on total devotion to the despot-leader (the so-called *Führerprinzip*). The ritual initiation of SS members even included a 'bastardised catechism' during which initiates would respond to questions about why they believed in Germany and Hitler by declaring 'Because we believe in God, we believe in Germany which He created in His world and in the *Führer*, Adolf Hitler, whom He has sent us' (Burleigh 2000: 194). What the historical scholarship describes as 'ultra-nationalism' must therefore be considered in schizoanalytic terms a specifically *despotic* ultra-nationalism, where the figure of the *Führer* politically overcodes all pre-existing economic and social relations – including war machines – and aligns them on himself as head of the German State and the thousand-year Reich. Thus the 'acceleration' Deleuze and Guattari attribute to fascism – in the form of rapid economic recovery and social unification – takes place within the context of a State despotism that, just like the Depression-era United States in this respect, *had* to eventually take war as it object in order to maintain the pace of acceleration: 'the entire fascist economy became a war economy . . . [with] total war as its object' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 467; Schivelbusch 2006: 186–91). What had not been possible to attain (or attain quickly enough) through the development of productive force alone increasingly required the pursuit of power and domination (scapegoating at home and conquest abroad) to achieve. This is important for the contrast it will provide with what they call the 'postfascist' (fifth) variant of the war machine (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 421).

Now that we have seen that there is nothing intrinsically 'suicidal' about historical fascism, but rather that the Nazi State turned to total war and then to pure destruction for contingent historical reasons, we can return to consider the relations between historical fascism (macrofascism) and microfascism. Theweleit's schizoanalysis of the *Freikorps* in *Male Fantasies* (1987, 1989) presents in a particularly dramatic form the dynamics that would be adapted and systematised in Nazi macrofascism.

At the core of the 'male fantasies' of *Freikorps* microfascism lies a drastic imbalance between the self-conceptions of the male soldiers and their image of women, and particularly of female sexuality. In *Freikorps* fantasies (and often enough in their actions), the a-sexual 'white' woman was idealised and offered protection; the sexual 'red' woman was feared, demonised and slaughtered. The red woman represents pleasure and sharing, in all of their many forms and combinations, from sensuous joy and fusion with others to prostitution and communism. In order to shore up his shaky sense of self and autonomy, the male soldier constructs a 'body-armour' of rigid self-discipline that defends him against the temptations and vulnerability of sharing and pleasure and sharing pleasure. These temptations and feelings of vulnerability, which can never be completely repressed, must be thrust out of the self and projected onto others, where they are relentlessly and ruthlessly hunted down for elimination. The *Freikorps* male psyche is therefore not that of an Oedipal neurotic, according to Theweleit, but a pre-Oedipal borderline psychotic, beset by the defence mechanism of splitting rather than that of symptom formation. Not only is the one-dimensionally 'good' (white) woman categorically split off from the equally one-dimensional 'bad' (red) woman (in a failure to synthesise good and bad objects central to the diagnostic repertoire of object-relations theory, on which Theweleit draws), but the male psyche itself radically splits off any feelings perceived as weak, joyous, sensuous, sinful, female, needy, commun(ion)al, contagious, fluid and tempting; projects them onto outside others (usually women, but also communists, Gypsies, Jews, etc.); and then sets out to punish and destroy those others in a frantic attempt to affirm the strength, virility, heroism, discipline, righteousness, superiority and independence of his own grandiose self-image.

Theweleit's explanation for how such a split psyche might come to predominate in *Freikorps* men, and by extension in slightly less drastic form in Nazi fascism in general, is complex, and – stretching over two volumes of nearly a thousand pages – perhaps not altogether consistent. In line with what he understands the anti-Oedipal thrust of schizoanalysis to be, he rejects the impact of the nuclear family (insisting instead on the pre-Oedipal mother–child dyad); acknowledges but downplays the effects of the immediate conjuncture – humiliations to the male ego suffered through Germany's defeat in the First World War and the ensuing economic chaos subsequently exacerbated by the Great Depression; and ends up attributing *Freikorps* fantasies to a culture of troubled male–female relations in Europe stretching back to the thirteenth or fourteenth century (Theweleit 1987: 300–62). There is nothing wrong with this

background cultural analysis *per se*, although its difficulty accounting for why the *Freikorps* male soldier and Nazi fascism emerged precisely when and where they did risks a reversion to psychologism: 'No man is forced to turn political fascist for reasons of economic devaluation or degradation. His fascism develops much earlier, from his feelings; he is a fascist from the inside' (Theweleit 1989: 380). The problems with Theweleit's analysis are rather that his cultural explanation implicitly limits the concept of fascism to Europe and, more importantly, that it misunderstands what is 'anti-Oedipal' about schizoanalysis to begin with. Inasmuch as the nuclear family form is not limited to Europe, and given that Deleuze and Guattari at one point in *A Thousand Plateaus* seem to equate 'microfascisms' with 'micro-Oedipuses' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 228), a return to the question of the nuclear family will supplement Theweleit's European-culture explanation and enable us to better assess the geographical and historical scope of the concept of fascism.

Despite its title, the first Deleuze and Guattari collaboration does not claim that Freud's Oedipus complex is invalid, and it is not in fact directed at or against the dynamics of the Oedipus complex per se. It argues instead that the Oedipus complex and the nuclear family from which (alone) it derives are strictly capitalist institutions or assemblages and therefore have a kind of relative validity under capitalism. (They are also subject to critique in the same measure as is capitalism (Deleuze and Guattari 1983; Holland 1999: 15–18).) Just as capital privatises surplus-appropriation, the nuclear family privatises reproduction. Just as the nuclear family interposes the power of the father between the infant and the mother as its means of life, market society interposes the power of capital between the worker and the earth as its means of life. But inasmuch as schizoanalysis grants social investments primacy over familial ones, it is the sociodynamics of the capitalist market that determine the homologous psychodynamics of the nuclear family. Familial roles are secondary 'images of images' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 264) while roles such as boss, worker and consumer are at least images of primary processes: the processes of economic production, exchange and accumulation that constitute the socius of market capitalism. It is therefore not the 'child that is father to the man' (as the psychoanalytic slogan has it), but rather the boss that is father to the man, who is then father to the child. What psychoanalysis mistakenly called the 'counter-transference', in other words, actually precedes what is called 'transference' every step of the way (God → despot → boss/priest/teacher/coach/father → child), with 'transference' in effect merely returning to the original sender his own message (the originary 'counter' transference) in inverted form

(Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 265). This is the conceptual context that prevents the notion that 'microfascism = micro-Oedipus' from degenerating into psychologism 'pure and simple'. On this view, desire is indeed 'assembled', as Deleuze and Guattari insist it should be; it is what a variety of social assemblages (capitalism, nuclear families, the State, institutional state apparatus and other institutions) determine it to be.

In this light, it can be shown that the nuclear family itself contributes to the imbalance between male self-image and images of women diagnosed by Theweleit as primarily pre-Oedipal and attributed by him to the development of modern European culture in particular. As Carole Pateman has shown, while the institution of the social contract in modern societies purportedly establishes formal relations of equality among men in the public sphere, it simultaneously institutes a sexual contract in the private sphere, according to which women are subordinated to the authority of men in the nuclear family (Pateman 1988). We can even suppose that, as men's public authority diminishes with the massification of politics, the bureaucratisation of culture and the monopolisation of the economy, their assertion of private authority over the women and children under their command at home would grow all the more autocratic or brutal in compensation. In any case, inasmuch as the nuclear family is a strictly modern, capitalist institution, we can see how its form would contribute to the development of a fascist psyche: Isolated from the rest of society and hence from a wider range of social roles, the nuclear family dramatically enacts in the relation of father to mother the dominance of the strong over the weak, of commanding authority over subservient obedience, of transcendent separateness over embodied connectedness. To be sure, the pre-Oedipal, dyadic relations which Theweleit emphasises are crucial in connection with imperatives of individuation and fears of engulfment, but Oedipal relations are also important – especially as the *Freikorps* war machine gets integrated into the Nazi Party, and identification with and loyalty to the authority figure of the despotic leader come to the fore. Of course, for schizoanalysis the nuclear family is not the only institution in which these dynamics obtain – and in fact it may not even be the primary one. At least since Fichte, the modern state has been conceived in terms of two aspects that resonate directly with the parental roles of the nuclear family. One aspect (which Fichte calls the nation) involves the feeling of belonging together with fellow citizens in a shared, enclosed space and common culture. Feelings of connection with and responsibility for fellow citizens combine with trust that the Motherland as a community will provide for the well-being of its members. The other aspect (which Fichte calls the state) involves the sense of order imposed

on the nation from above by the state, in order to bolster and ensure the web of relations comprising the community, but also to relate the nation as one people to other nation-states, so that the Fatherland can protect the nation from threats to its well-being coming from outside its borders. Motherland and Fatherland can thus be understood as dual aspects of the affective investment in nation-states, resonating with and susceptible to the same kinds of distortion and imbalance as the family-form itself (Holland 2006b; Hage 2003). Given the pre-Oedipal as well as Oedipal dynamics of the nuclear family along with the Oedipal dynamics of the State, the issue for schizoanalysis is identifying the specific historical circumstances that will select out and then amplify the dynamics involved, to the point where borderline splitting becomes the dominant defence mechanism and monstrosities such as the *Freikorps* and Nazi fascism become the order of the day.

Now let us consider the current Bush regime in the same light. For purposes of comparison, the key here is the centrality and omnipresence of born-again fundamentalism in the Bush camp, from the electoral base, to the campaign strategists, to White House advisors, up to and including the President himself, of course. Charles Strozier has distilled the core dynamics of North American Christian fundamentalism from hundreds of interviews he conducted in the period just before Bush Junior's rise to power; it mirrors the *Freikorps* profile in several important respects (Strozier 1994). The dynamics of Christian fundamentalism revolve around the moment or process of conversion, the experience of being 'born again'. Because those inclined to fundamentalism tend to have, in object-relations terms, weak ego-synthetic abilities, they tend to see everything in stark, absolute terms of black and white, good versus evil.[7] That a person, an object or a desire could involve a complex combination of positive and negative is something that they are unable or unwilling to allow. This leads to extreme tension between super-ego demands for absolute and unwavering adherence to a simplistic homogenising moral code on one hand, and multifarious drives and desires arising from the complexities and ambiguities of heterogeneous human existence in a mass-mediated global consumer society on the other. When that tension becomes too great for a weak ego to bear, conversion occurs. The psyche splits asunder. Unacceptable drives and desires are categorised as sin and temptation, and get split off and projected outward onto others; the ego identifies itself completely with the righteous authority of super-ego prohibitions. Relations with others henceforth take two characteristic forms, both serving to shore up an apparently grandiose but still fragile ego. For the most part, fundamentalists tend to surround themselves with other

fundamentalists just like themselves; in this way, they avoid having to think differently about themselves or to acknowledge split-off aspects of themselves that they might see in other, different people. With respect to people who are indeed different from themselves, however, fundamentalists will proselytise; and if those others fail to convert, they will be punished, for they represent precisely those intolerable heterogeneous aspects of the fundamentalist psyche that brought on conversion in the first place. And the severity of the punishment will correspond to the desperation with which the fundamentalist seeks to maintain the self-righteous super-ego ideal over and against the temptations they constantly feel (and to which they often enough succumb): the greater the temptation, the harsher the punishment – of others. For the beauty of projective splitting as a defence mechanism – insofar as it works – is that by exclusively targeting others, it lets the fundamentalists themselves off the hook. But of course, it doesn't work – or at least not for long. It is difficult enough to suppress human drives and desires completely in oneself, and it proves even more difficult – that is to say, impossible – to convert the entire world. Heterogeneity remains irreducible; no worldly solution appears possible. Absolutely committed to identification with a radically simplified version of Christianity, but unable of course to live or force others to live in accordance with fundamentalist strictures, the final solution is . . . apocalypse. Better to destroy a world considered to be irremediably steeped in sin than to accept almighty God's defeat by such a degraded and degrading world – a defeat that would also mean one's own. The fundamentalist psyche is indeed that self-righteous, which is to say that desperate to deny its own humanity, along with that of everyone else (Davis 2006).

The similarities between this account and Theweleit's account of the male fantasies of the *Freikorps* are striking, to say the least. But the problem with *both* accounts is that they appear so psychologistic; indeed, although they are both inspired by schizoanalysis, they are both couched in the language of object-relations psychology. But they are in fact both *narratives* – or what might better be called 'scripts'.[8] In this respect, I want to insist, there is little or nothing properly psychological about them (except the borrowed terminology). They are both narrative *scripts* in accordance with which a certain segment of the population – German, American – lived/live, or tried/try to live, their lives. For my purposes, these narratives say *nothing* about individual lives or personal psychology: everything in these accounts depends on and derives from the historical conjunctures and the institutional assemblages in which these groups of people lived/live their lives. It is crucial here to remember what

the Milgram and Zimbardo experiments have taught us about institutional assemblages, their structures of authority and the exercise of power within them: in certain settings with clearly defined authority structures, people's behaviour is determined *not* by their 'inner' psychological make-up *at all*, but entirely by the scripts according to which the assemblage expects and gets them to act.[9] Of course, the experimental situations were fairly simple, and the scripted demands of the experimental authority figures relatively clear-cut. In comparison, the situations in twentieth-century Germany and America were of course far more complex, but the scripted demands of the historical authority figures were in effect no less clear-cut than those of the experimenters: obey; swear absolute allegiance to a despotic leader, whether secular or divine. What's more, the affective *force* of the absolutist historical demand for obedience is all the greater, as we have seen, precisely *because* it is so incommensurate with the complexity of the real-life situations of those expected to obey it – with psychic splitting and punitive projection as the end result. And in both historical scripts, the demand is couched as a promise, and hence as a narrative or myth, of *palingenesis*: obey, and an impoverished, defeated Germany will rise again to a position of global supremacy lasting a millennium; obey, and a sinful, fallen Christian will be born again in Christ. Of course, certain terms of the palingenic narrative (or contents of the narrative form) are bound to change: for the *Freikorps*, the projected object of punishment was woman; for the Nazis, it was the Jew; for Christian fundamentalists today, it's primarily the homosexual. But the myth of palingenesis and the dynamics of punitive-projective splitting remain the same.

It is not sufficient, however, to have discovered this (or any other) core script in common in order to declare the Fundamentalist Christian Bush regime 'fascist'. If desire really is 'always assembled', as Deleuze and Guattari rightly insist, then we have to examine the historical conjuncture and the institutional assemblages in which this alleged US fascism is supposed to operate. What war machine or group instigates it? What historical defeat motivates it? The major difference in US history is that the nation-State did not suffer a major military defeat – and didn't even suffer a minor one until Vietnam, a distant setback that pales in comparison with Germany's total defeat on its own 'soil' and subsequent humiliation at the Treaty of Versailles. But even if the United States as a whole did not, US fundamentalism *did* suffer a humiliating defeat – and it occurred at practically the same time that Italian and then German fascism were beginning to emerge: the 1920s. Like their Italian and German counterparts, North American fundamentalists were horrified

by what they considered the excessive licentiousness of post-First World War society (the 'Roaring 20s'). But the specific event that galvanised them into action was the defeat of Christian fundamentalism in the famous Scopes trial of 1925. Thus, if there is such a thing as US fascism, it will have an even more religious character than German or Italian fascism, and therefore appear less militaristic and more 'culturalist'. Moreover, the key action that US fundamentalism took in response to humiliating defeat was not to violently engage, but rather to quietly disengage from the irredeemably corrupt society surrounding them and devote their lives to strictly other-worldly pursuits – in the short term, at least. The US fundamentalist war machine at this point does not have war with society at large as its object at all.

After the Second World War, however, the war machine's aim changes dramatically. The objective of US fundamentalism becomes precisely to re-engage and 'take back' Christian America, and to take over the State apparatus for precisely this purpose. Like the *Freikorps* before them, their first target will be the 'red menace' of ungodly communists – albeit prosecuted here through the State apparatus itself (in the figure of McCarthy and McCarthyism) rather than by marauding bands of assassins. This is also the moment that the phrase 'under God' gets added to the official US Pledge of Allegiance. As North American culture grows more and more 'permissive' – with 'the 60s' representing to some eyes a return to the shameful depravity of the 'Roaring 20s' and the *Roe* v. *Wade* decision representing a second cataclysmic defeat – the Christian war machine adds war against culture (and the takeover of AM talk-radio) to their efforts at taking over the State. Like the Nazis before them, the Christian fundamentalist war machine is at this point still a minority, albeit one with mounting electoral clout. The 'defeat' or withdrawal from Vietnam is decisive. Henceforth the Christian Right will form an unholy alliance with US supremacists – a group very much like the 'white supremacists' but defined ethnically rather than racially – an alliance, that is, with those who feel that America has every right, and a God-given mission, to rule the world, and who feel that withdrawing from Vietnam, and then from Iraq, before total victory could/can be achieved is a totally unacceptable display of weakness and a stinging humiliation to their sense of self-righteous entitlement. To both groups, Clinton and Kerry were anathema, the one for abetting the corruption of US culture (with Lewinksi as the scurrilous 'red woman'), the other for publicly betraying the US supremacist mission in Vietnam – trumped only, perhaps, by the appalling prospect of legalised gay marriage. Once in power, the Christian fundamentalist-neoconservative war machine behaves much

like the Nazi Party did: consolidating one-party rule (with only mixed success, so far), strengthening executive power and circumventing the legislative branch by means of 'signing statements' and (more recently) the appointment of Party hacks throughout the State apparatus to subordinate the implementation of law to the dictates of the party.

None of this would have been possible, however, and the relevance of fascism understood as '*populist* ultra-nationalism' would have been dubious, had it not been for an event that 'changed everything' and set its stamp forever on the Junior Bush regime: 9/11. Now the country as a whole *had* suffered a humiliating and terrifying defeat – or at least an attack that could serve as cover and excuse both for terrorising the populace at home and thereby strengthening the State repressive apparatus beyond imagination, and for projecting US military supremacy abroad, first in Afghanistan, shortly thereafter in a return to Iraq to make good on Bush Senior's aborted conquest. Blatant lies were recklessly overlooked by Congress and the populace alike, as the country found convenient scapegoats and rushed to pre-emptive war to salve its wounded pride and allay its enduring sense of dread. A two-front 'war on terror' abets the suspension of constitutional rights in the service of repressive police-State rule (the Patriot Acts) and directs military vengeance against an ill-defined enemy in the service of US supremacism.

So just how similar is US fascism to its interwar counterpart? In order to pose the question most productively, we need to reconsider the fifth variant of the war machine described by Deleuze and Guattari. The fifth war machine, as we have said, is global capitalism. Having subordinated the State and its political ends to the aim of capital accumulation on a global scale, the means–ends relationship reverses, and the total 'hot' war crucial to fascism gives way to a certain kind of peace, the peace of 'cold' war deterrence:

> It was only after World War II that that the autonomatization . . . of the war machine had [its] true effect. The war machine . . . no longer had war as its exclusive object but took in charge and as its object peace, politics, the world order, in short the aim. This is where the inversion of Clausewitz's formula comes in: it is politics that becomes the continuation of war; *it is peace that technologically frees the unlimited material process of total war* . . . In this sense, there was no longer a need for fascism. The Fascists were only child precursors, and the absolute peace of survival succeeded where total war had failed. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 467)

The fascists' total hot war in pursuit of the political ends of the Third Reich failed, and in the face of defeat, the Nazi State turned suicidal. But

where over-coding in the service of the State fails, axiomatisation succeeds: 'the axiomatic marshals a power [*puissance*] higher than the one it treats, in other words, than that of the aggregates serving as its models' of realisation, that is, States (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 466). Yet it seems at first that even this axiomatic requires war in some form or other:

> the main point [is that] the growing importance of constant capital in the axiomatic means that the depreciation of existing capital and the formation of new capital assume a rhythm and scale that necessarily take the route of a war machine . . . (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 466; see also 421)

At the time Deleuze and Guattari wrote this, the global war machine principally took the form of the nuclear arms race, which translated the 'military/industrial complex' Eisenhower had warned against at the end of the Second World War into an even more capital-intensive and high-tech enterprise. One of the striking features of this 'postfascist' cold-war peace of deterrence and its 'MAD' doctrine of mutually assured destruction was that it effectively paralysed the populace rather than mobilising it (the way the Nazi regime had). Everyone was supposed to be – and most were – terrified by the prospect of nuclear annihilation, without really being expected to do anything about it (except 'duck and cover'). As effective as it was at absorbing postwar overproduction and contributing to the formation of new capital, the new 'cold' form of war/peace proceeded on autopilot, as it were, conducted by remote control without mobilising much popular sentiment.

These circumstances change significantly in the decades after Deleuze and Guattari wrote *A Thousand Plateaus*, and it is important to track these changes both to assess the value of their concepts of fascism and postfascism – and, more importantly, to update them in light of these changed circumstances (Buchanan 2006). What does it mean for global capitalism that the cold war effectively ends after 1989? What does it mean that a Bush Junior fascism would then revert to a patently aggressive 'hot' war against Iraq (quite unlike the war of recontainment against Saddam Hussein conducted by this father)? One key to understanding the import of these questions is to recall that, as Deleuze and Guattari insist, the fifth war machine 'no longer [has] war as its exclusive object' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 467): what really matters instead of war itself is the mobilisation of resources on a world-wide scale and the constant formation of new capital (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 466). And what the end of the cold war means is the possibility of converting the fifth war machine from military to non-military ends. This is precisely what the Clinton regime started to do – with considerable success. Now

Deleuze and Guattari suggest that with the fifth war machine, 'the world became a smooth space again' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 467): that may or may not have been true when they wrote it (and they mean militarily), but it was certainly not the case by the time Clinton left office. For all the demilitarisation of the globe he may have attempted, he simultaneously strengthened and accelerated its systematic axiomatisation. The striation of global space under Clinton was advanced not by the deployment of GPS or smart bombs, but by trade agreements such as NAFTA and GATT-WTO, which provided globalising capital with firm and legally enforced strangleholds on markets in countries throughout the world. Not only was he able to balance the federal budget and address the trade deficit, but by his second term the domestic and foreign trade policies he championed had generated a substantial surplus. In terms of affective citizenship, Clinton was restoring the Motherland to something approaching a more equal status with the Fatherland; development of productive force regained some ground relative to the exercise of power through military domination; providing for the citizenry came to seem just as feasible and important as protecting them: for a time, the question Clinton placed on the agenda was 'how would we spend the peace dividend?'

The concerted far-right attack on Clinton must therefore be understood as involving far more than the Lewinski affair for which he was impeached (unsuccessfully), the 'return to the 60s' he represented or the supposedly pro-gay 'don't ask don't tell' policy he proposed to the military – far more than any or all of these 'culturalist' failings for which the fundamentalist Christians so vociferously reviled him. Their neoconservative-supremacist allies had other grievances: Clinton was out to conquer the world and impose US rule ('democracy', 'free trade') not by force of arms, but by the force of trade (albeit on terms most favourable to North American and Northern capital, of course) – that is, to axiomatise rather than subjugate it. This could only lead, in their eyes, to a weak-kneed spirit of multilateral cooperation and hence a deficit of military vigilance and assertiveness abroad, combined – in the words of a Trilateral Commission report's reflections on the prosperous 1950s and 1960s – with an unmanageable 'excess of democracy' at home (Crozier et al. 1975: 113). The Clinton policies, in other words, represented – and had begun to institute – a drastically different regime of capital accumulation: one that threatened to the core the neoconservative right's favoured, military-industrial accumulation regime – what we would today (updating Eisenhower's original concept) have to call the 'high-tech-military/information-economy/fossil-fuel complex'. Much like the

Nazi regime, which favoured (and was favoured by) heavy industry and high finance at the expense of other sectors of the economy, the Bush regime of accumulation has reasserted the prerogatives of big engineering (Haliburton), big energy (Enron) and big oil over the rest of the economy, but combines them with a sense of entitlement to securing and then burning some of the planet's largest remaining reserves of fossil fuels. In this respect, a President Gore represented an even greater threat to the NeoCon supremacists than Clinton, for not only did he obviously represent continuity with Clinton's successful economic policies, but he also knew all about the environmental dangers of big oil, and worse yet offered no easy 'culturalist' targets to the fundamentalist Christian smear campaigns.

Deleuze and Guattari's concept of a 'postfascist' war machine (the fifth of their six variants) therefore does make sense of the historical record, inasmuch as it designates something very different from fascism proper, even if the fascist 'total' war machine (the fourth variant) paved the way for it, by mobilising the entire economy for war (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 421). Yet the most important feature of the concept, for our present purposes, is the notion that postfascism can in certain circumstances give way to a resurgence of something like old-fashioned fascism, as we have seen through our examination of the Bush Junior regime. Noteworthy differences notwithstanding, particularly regarding the mode of seizure of power and the broader 'postfascist' context against which it emerged, Bush Junior fascism resembles fascism proper too significantly to balk at using the word. US fascism, it is true, took longer to consolidate than its European counterparts, and its origins in a religious minority gave its initial formulations a more culturalist orientation compared to the militarism and class consciousness that characterised German and Italian fascism from the start. But the core script shared by fundamentalist Christians and the *Freikorps*, and in only slightly less dramatic form by the Nazi Party and the supremacist Bush regime as a whole, reveals that the behaviours of these social assemblages are practically speaking identical. Like the Nazis before them, the Bush Junior regime acquired mass support through a humiliating national calamity, which cemented the unholy alliance between the Fundamentalist Christians and the NeoCon supremacists, and succeeded in transforming nascent US fascism's culturalism into full-fledged police-state militarism. Yet the events of 9/11 occurred in the aftermath of the cold war, whose threat of nuclear annihilation had paralysed the populace without really mobilising them; 9/11 displaced but also renewed that sense of terror, producing not mass mobilisation but strong yet passive assent to a war

of retribution, along with abject assent to the Bush Junior assault on civil rights and the rule of law. Just as the rise to power by appointment of Bush Junior resembles his European predecessors, so does the exercise of power by the Bush regime, even if he doesn't operate as blatantly and has yet to attain their degree of success: domination of the legislature or parliament by a strong executive leader, consolidation of one-party rule, expansion of secret police powers, domestic surveillance, detention camps, the use of torture, and so on. Identical, too, is the close and reciprocal alliance between the regime and a specific fraction of capital that profits from hot war while in turn providing the regime with the means to pursue its apocalyptic, or perhaps 'merely' supremacist, ends. Ultimately, it is this that cements both the resemblance between Bush Junior fascism and historical fascism, and the alliance between the fundamentalist Christian and neoconservative movements: their all-encompassing endorsement of a vision of God-given supremacism and an alarming commitment to using any and all means to achieve it. In a somewhat broader historical context, the Deleuze and Guattari-inspired analysis of fascism and postfascism enables us to affirm that the New Deal will have failed as the US alternative to fascism if the Bush regime of accumulation through high-tech and high-energy hot war maintains the upper hand over the FDR–Clinton regimes of income redistribution and accumulation through global trade. Exchanging 'postfascist' axiomatisation for fascist military supremacism is hardly a revolutionary prospect (on the contrary), but it is already a lot to hope for – and will be even more to actually achieve.

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Notes

1. 'Professor Challenger' is a character (or 'conceptual persona') who gives a lecture in the 'Geology of Morals' plateau (pp. 43–74).
2. Much recent scholarship has set out to construct a concept of the 'fascist minimum' or 'generic fascism' in order to be able to compare various versions of or candidates for consideration as fascism; see, for example, Eatwell (1996), Payne (1995).

3. The minimalist definition of fascism agreed upon by most scholars is 'palingenetic populist ultra-nationalism'. See Griffin (1991 and 1998).
4. My thanks to Dan Smith for reminding me of the relation between consistency and variability in Deleuze and Guattari's concepts.
5. For an analysis of the relations between nomadism and the war machine, see Holland (2006a). Because war machines have such a variable relation to war itself, Paul Patton proposes calling them 'metamorphosis machines' instead (Patton 2000).
6. Their own explanation (based largely on the work of J. P. Faye) involves the proportion of domestic and foreign markets (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 461–6).
7. In schizoanalytic rather than object-relations terms, 'weak' egos are those subject to strong or overwhelming vectors of decoding and deterritorialisation.
8. On the importance of 'narrative systems' in political discourse, see Faye (1972).
9. Milgram and Zimbardo both conducted experiments in which psychologically 'average' or 'normal' people committed atrocities upon others simply because the authority figure in the experimental situation told them it was expected of them. Milgram had students administer electric shocks whenever fake 'subjects' answered memorisation questions incorrectly; even shocks labelled 'lethal' on the fake apparatus were administered as long as the lab-coated authority figure said to do so. Zimbardo's 'Stanford Prison Experiment' is especially revealing in that the students selected randomly as prison guards weren't explicitly told to mistreat the students randomly designated as prisoners: they already knew the script and behaved accordingly. Behaviour got so out of control that the experiment had to be stopped early. See Milgram (2004), Zimbardo (2007), Haney et al. (1973).

Chapter 5

What is a Militant?

Nicholas Thoburn

Félix Guattari's lament that there is 'no description of the special characteristics of the working class that established the Paris Commune, no description of its creative imagination' conveys a sense of his concern with the affective, imaginary and libidinal properties and dynamics of political subjectivation (Guattari 1984: 35). The history of the workers' movement, Guattari contends, is populated by 'mutant' workers in 'veritable *wars of subjectivity*' (Guattari 1996a: 124). He has in mind the events of revolutionary upheaval – the 1871 Commune, October 1917, May 1968 – but the problematic of revolutionary subjectivity is one that pervades modern socialist, communist and anarchist politics. This problematic is that of the 'militant', of 'militancy', a figure that persistently returns as the marker – indeed, often the self-declared *guarantor* – of radical subjectivity across the spectrum of extra-parliamentary politics. One can think of militancy as a technology of the self, an expression of the working on the self in the service of revolutionary change. However, unlike the subjective correlates of the great revolutionary events, for Guattari this more prosaic aspect of radical practice is not altogether joyful.

This paper is a critique of the militant. In particular it seeks to understand the ways militancy effectuates processes of political passion and a certain unworking or deterritorialisation of the self in relation to political organisations and the wider social environment within which militants would enact change. To this end the paper traces a diagram or abstract machine of militancy, a diagram comprised of Guattari's cartography of Leninism and the model of struggle set out by the Russian nihilist Sergei Nechaev. The paper then explores a particular concrete animation of these abstract militant functions in the Weatherman organisation in the United States at the turn of the 1970s. I then sketch the principle outlines of an a-militant diagram, or dispersive ecology, of political

composition that draws together Marx's figure of the party, Jacques Camatte's critique of the political 'racket', and Deleuze and Guattari's approach to the problem of the group and its outside.

Guattari locates the emergence of the modern militant aggregation in what he calls the 'Leninist breakthrough' during the 1903 Second Congress of the All-Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, from where – following certain procedural and organisational disputes – emerged a set of affective, linguistic, tactical and organisational traits that constitute a kind of Leninist diagram or abstract machine (Guattari 1984: 184–95). This militant machine, Guattari argues, is characterised by: the production of a field of inertia that restricts openness and encourages uncritical acceptance of slogans and doctrine; the hardening of situated statements into universal dogma; the attribution of a messianic vocation to the party; and a domineering and contemptuous attitude – 'that hateful "love" of the militant' – to those known as 'the masses' (Guattari 1984: 130). Guattari sees the break of 1903 as the moment that a particular militant diagram was set forth: 'From this fundamental breach, then, the Leninist machine was launched on its career; history was still to give it a face and a substance, but its fundamental encoding, so to say, was already determined' (Guattari 1984: 130). As with any diagram, it draws together its substance in varying ways over time and space, but there is a certain regularity of functions upon which (at least in the 1980s) 'our thinking is still largely dependent today' (Guattari 1984: 190).[1] In discussing the post-'68 French groupuscule milieu Guattari thus contends that the range of groups from anarchist to Maoist may at once be 'radically opposed in their *style:* the definition of the leader, of propaganda, a conception of discipline, loyalty, modesty, and the asceticism of the militant', but they essentially perform the same militant function of 'stacking', 'sifting' and 'crushing' desiring energies (Guattari 1995: 59).

There is, however, a trait of the militant machine that lacks full articulation in Guattari's cartography, that of *passional struggle* and its relation to a deterritorialisation of the self. One could characterise this in Deleuze and Guattari's terms as the constitutive 'line of flight' of militancy. Here one needs to complicate Guattari's analysis, which chimes with what Deleuze and Guattari (1988) will later call the 'signifying regime of signs', with an appreciation of the place within militant formations of the 'passional' and 'subjective' 'postsignifying regime of signs'. In the passional regime, one of a number of semiotic regimes that may be found in any concrete assemblage, the line of flight – the creative or exploratory aspect of an assemblage – takes a singular and dangerous

value, operating as the vector upon which subjectivity is at once deterritorialised and intensified. Passional regimes are characterised by 'points of subjectification' that are constituted through the 'betrayal' of dominant social relations and semiotic codes – Deleuze and Guattari offer the example of food for the anorexic – and a certain 'monomania' that, like a 'black hole' of destruction, draws the assemblage through a series of finite linear proceedings, each over-coded by the pursuit of its end, an existence 'under reprieve'. The particular semiotic of the passional regime is composed of a subject of enunciation – a product of the mental reality determined by the point of subjectification – and a subject of the statement, where the latter is bound to the utterances of the former and acts – though the two poles can and do switch places and may be embodied in the same subject – in a 'reductive echolalia' as its respondent or guarantor (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 129).

To isolate this passional aspect of militancy one needs to turn to an earlier period of Russian agitation and Sergei Nechaev's 1869 *Catechism of the Revolutionist*.[2] In the forty-seven principles that comprise the *Catechism*, Nechaev outlines an image of revolutionary action, operating through the closed cell of the political organisation, as a singular, all-encompassing passion. It is a cold, calculated passion that, beyond 'romanticism', 'rapture' or 'hatred', requires a dismantling of all relations to self and society that could be conceived of in any manner other than its own furtherance, even at the cost of death:

> The revolutionary is a dedicated man. He has no interests of his own, no affairs, no feelings, no attachments, no belongings, not even a name. Everything in him is absorbed by a single exclusive interest, a single thought, a single passion – the revolution . . . All the tender and effeminate emotions of kinship, friendship, love, gratitude and even honour must be stifled in him by a cold and single-minded passion for the revolutionary cause . . . Night and day he must have but one thought, one aim – merciless destruction. In cold-blooded and tireless pursuit of this aim, he must be prepared both to die himself and destroy with his own hands everything that stands in the way of its achievement . . . If he is able to, he must face the annihilation of a situation, of a relationship or of any person who is part of this world – everything and everyone must be equally odious to him. (Nechaev 1989: 4–7)

Given the exemplary misanthropy of Nechaev's text one might be surprised to find that it has had a persistent presence in radical cultures: Lenin expressed admiration for the tenets of the *Catechism*; it was until relatively recently accepted as part of the cannon of revolutionary anarchism as a work once thought to have been co-authored with Bakunin,

continuing to share a number of features with Bakunin's formulation of struggle and organisation; and it was popular among, and published and distributed by, the Black Panther Party, having some presence in the Panthers' formulation of 'revolutionary suicide' (Kelly 1982: 267; Blissett and Home n.d.; Hilliard and Cole 1993; Newton 1974: 5). These direct appreciations of the text betray a sense in which its model of passional struggle articulates, albeit in exaggerated form, an enduring property of the militant diagram.[3]

In order to examine the tangle of militant matters and functions further it is instructive to consider the operation of the militant machine in a concrete manifestation. I want to explore its animation in the Weatherman organisation, a useful case because of the special emphasis the group placed on the militant transformation of subjectivity and the way the diagram of militancy here articulates and draws a consistency from diverse social fields and problematics, notably countercultural styles of living, Maoist approaches to collectivity and struggle, anti-racism, drug use, open sexuality and guerrilla ideology.[4] That Weatherman is currently the subject of some interest – with the recent publication of a number of critical histories, a collection of communiqués and documents, the memoir of a key figure, more than one novel and an Academy Award-nominated feature documentary – also suggests it for consideration, especially since, as Jesse Lemisch (2006) notes, there are tendencies in the appreciation of the organisation that would fashion it within a critically unproductive, linear or generational narrative of a generic leftist resistance. Rather than offering an icon of revolutionary struggle, Weatherman is more useful for the possibility it allows for an exploration of the sometimes highly problematic dynamics and affects that can pass for manifestations of communist subjectivity.

A core dynamic of the militant machine is the relation between inclusion in the group and commitment to that which characterises the group's uniqueness. In both Guattari's account of the 'field of inertia' of Bolshevism and Nechaev's *Catechism*, the revolutionary organisation functions as a cut with the social and as a means to consolidate and intensify its particular mode of activity, an activity that in turn secures the individual's subjective investment in, and formation through, the organisation. In the case of Weatherman, the mode of activity and the originality of the group was constituted through a particular conception of militant struggle.[5] Framed as anti-imperialist action against the war in Vietnam and the repression of the black community in the US, militancy was characterised by two integrated aspects: the attempt to 'Bring the war home!' under the logic of opening up 'two, three, many Vietnams'

in the fabric of US imperialism; and self-sacrifice or betrayal of the white-skin, bourgeois privilege that imperialism conferred on North American whites (including to a large extent the white working class). Militancy thus exhorted a flight away from bourgeois subjectivity toward a certain becoming with the Vietnamese and US blacks. Yet this was a strange becoming, one not constituted through the drawing of situated relations and projects but through the mimicry of a particular military practice (in what was clearly a very different context to the war situation of Vietnam) and the resultant experience of repression. In discussing Weatherman's 'Days of Rage',[6] Shin'ya Ono expresses something of the kernel of this approach: 'We began to feel the Vietnamese in ourselves. Some of us, at moments, felt we were ready to die' (Ono 1970: 241).

Framed in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, this militant sacrifice of the bourgeois self was Weatherman's passional point of subjectification and offered the vector of its line of flight: 'If you believed something, the proof of that belief was to act on it. It wasn't to espouse it with the right treatises or manifestos. We were militants . . . *Militancy was the standard by which we measured our aliveness*' (Bill Ayers, cited in Varon 2004: 87). This vector was characterised by the impossible limit of truly becoming Americong, of experiencing the full weight of the repression of the US black working class, of fully escaping white subjectivity through militarisation. Militancy thus posed not only a moral standard against which revolutionary commitment would be assessed, but a kind of 'quasi-spiritual test' (as one pro-situationist critique of Weatherman put it), a test premised on the purification of subjectivity that could only be found through an ever-renewed and ever-intensified struggle whose limit was constituted ultimately by a preparedness for death (Point-Blank! 1972: 36).[7] Such was the force of this vector of militancy that it could be affirmed by Weatherman – in a striking resemblance to Nechaev's image of revolutionary passion and exemplifying Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the characteristic delusion of the passional regime – as a monomania; as Mark Rudd declared at the Flint 'War Council': 'I'm monomaniacal like Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick*. He was possessed by one thought: destroying the great white whale. We should be like Captain Ahab and possess one thought – destruction of the mother country' (cited in Jacobs 1997: 85).[8]

What becomes clear in this articulation is that the efficacy of struggle, the possibility of effective intervention in the social, is subordinated to, or equated with, the militant construction of subjectivity.[9] Through a betrayal or sacrifice of the bourgeois self, Weatherman came to constitute precisely the self (bolstered through the group subject of the organisation)

on its passional line of flight as the locus and guarantor of political truth. This truth was manifest through a set of techniques by which the passion of struggle was played out across the body of the militant. Most singular was the activity, transposed from Chinese Maoism, of collective 'criticism/self-criticism'. In criticism sessions that might last for hours or days, Weather collectives would challenge and confess weaknesses in individual commitments to struggle, tactical mistakes, emotional investments, preparedness for violence, racist inclinations, sexual orientations, aesthetic preferences and so on. Blunt though it could be, criticism was a technology of collective access to, and modulation of, the myriad psychic, cognitive and affective territories and refrains of the self; put another way, it generated an open field of points of passional betrayal. Sessions may be directed at a particular problem for the group but would tend to focus on an individual member, each of whom – important for the weaving of a passional bond – would at different times experience the subject positions of accuser and confessor. While for the Chinese Communist Party, at least in the period before the Cultural Revolution, criticism or 'inner-Party struggle' was primarily a formal procedure for externalising offending acts and developing a redemptive integration of individuals with the organisation (Dittmer 1973), in Weatherman criticism took subjectivity directly as its object. The core purpose, as Susan Stern makes clear in her autobiographical account of the Seattle Weather collective, was to breakdown and remake the self:

> The key to the hours of criticism was struggle . . . To purge ourselves of the taint of some twenty-odd years of American indoctrination, we had to tear ourselves apart mentally . . . With an enthusiasm born of total commitment we began the impossible task of overhauling our brains . . . Turn ourselves inside out and start all over again . . . The process of criticism, self-criticism, transformation was the tool by which we would forge ourselves into new human beings. (Stern 1975: 94, 96)

In accord with the impossible standard of militancy, even the most ferocious criticism could be justified in these sessions as part of the process of self-transformation. Indeed, a readiness both to enact brutal critique against another and to offer up in cathartic confession one's worst character traits were markers of revolutionary *vitality*, a preparedness to live the necessary betrayals of subjectivity and personal attachment that militancy required.[10] Ayers thus describes the process as a 'purifying ceremony involving confession, sacrifice, rebirth, and gratitude' (Ayers 2001: 154). The net effect of these sessions was of course that further commitment to struggle and investment in Weatherman was a means to absolve

or defer the ever-returning failings of subjectivity that criticism/self-criticism revealed.

Following this manner of constituting the collective body of the militant, the Weather organisation also developed a practice of enforced anti-monogamy. While anti-monogamy had an important place in feminist critique of the role of monogamy and marriage in patriarchy (Stern 1975: 191), its articulation in the militant diagram was such that its dominant function in Weatherman was to counteract the detrimental effects that monogamy could present to the intensification of collectivity.[11] 'If monogamy was smashed, so the theory went, everyone would love each other equally, and not love some people more than others. If everyone loved each other equally, then they could trust everyone more completely' (Stern 1975: 114). While Stern frames collectivity here in terms of 'love', she is especially attentive to the way that monogamy was seen as an obstacle to the full pursuit of criticism/self-criticism, the desiring-field proper to Weatherman's passion. The critique of monogamy was thus a common focus for these sessions; Stern mentions one occasion where a monogamous couple were subject to two days of criticism after having been encouraged to ingest LSD (Stern 1975: 197).

If monogamy was a bar to collectivity, the rotation of sexual partners and group sex – apparently known as 'wargasm' – was seen as its libidinal complement (Stern 1975: 175).[12] Mark Rudd argues in his unpublished memoir that, 'since sex was the ultimate intimacy in human relations, we were building political collectives bonded with this intimacy among all members, not between monogamous couples' (*The Weather Underground*). It is clear, however, that such sexual affinity was articulated within the general economy of Weatherman's passion, hence the common dovetailing of sexual activity with criticism/self-criticism. Other techniques for the self-constitution of militant investment in action included the 'gut check', the practice of psyching-up oneself and others in readiness to face or commit violence as an overcoming of perceived cowardice, racism, privilege or lack of revolutionary commitment in the face of the continued oppression and death of US black peoples and the Vietnamese. It was in such moments of subjective 'breakthrough', approached through an immanence with the foundational violence of capitalist society, that Weatherman found a kind of revelatory truth, one that marked the 'exemplary' position of the organisation in pushing beyond what they saw as the left's conventional fear-bound and half-hearted opposition that pre-empted its own defeat (Ono 1970: 254).

One need also be attentive to how the configuration of militancy works through linguistic and symbolic form. As I noted above, in discussing the

characteristics of Bolshevism Guattari draws attention to its particular signifying regime. This regime is characterised by the transformation of the situated statements of central figures and organisational bodies into dogma and stereotypical formulae, whose repetition as refrains of the organisation function as dominant utterances to construct a field of authority and police divergence. Ayers conveys something of this: 'We began to speak mostly in proverbs from Che or Ho. Soon all we heard in the collectives was an echo' (Ayers 2001: 156). The reduction of political language to dogma is aided by, and contributes to, the relation that the militant diagram draws between theory and action. Rather than see critical reflection and conceptual production as a constitutive part of practical engagement with the world, struggle tends to be presented in a dichotomous relation to thought, 'Mere words . . . mere ideas' (Ono, cited in Varon 2004: 89). The possibility of struggle informed by and inflected through thought is thus passed by in favour of an affirmation of the importance of 'doing something'. Once divorced from the realm of critical reflection and transformed into dogma and cliché, language can flip over to the other side of the dichotomy to circulate in its reductive echolalia as a mechanism for the intensification of struggle. Deleuze and Guattari are attentive here to the place of the word and a certain monotheism of the book – 'the strangest cult' – in the postsignifying regime of signs, as the book becomes the body of passion, extracted from its outside, elevated from critique and entwined with subjective flight (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 127). This militant trait was especially apparent in the Cultural Revolution, where 'Mao Zedong Thought' – articulated as a cosmic truth and embodied most characteristically in the little red book of quotations – had a clear function as immortal substance, nourishment and energiser of a passional struggle that was to transcend individual mortality:

> The thought of Mao Tse-tung is the sun in our heart, is the root of our life, is the source of all our strength. Through this, man becomes unselfish, daring, intelligent, able to do everything; he is not conquered by any difficulty and can conquer every enemy. (From a 1966 People's Liberation Army newspaper, cited in Lifton 1970: 72)

Weatherman was of course a rather different entity to the Cultural Revolution and constructed little of the latter's highly complex vectoral semiotic components. Nonetheless, the organisation was keenly aware of the militant power of words, even if the language now seems only shrill and bombastic (Raskin, in Dohrn et al. 2006: 128). Jeremy Varon draws attention to this aspect of Weatherman when he writes, 'Its crude talk of

vilifying "pig Amerika", triumphant slogans, and speeches like those made at the Days of Rage all aimed at strengthening the resolve of its members to use militant action to accomplish what words alone could not' (Varon 2004: 89). Moreover, he argues that Weatherman text and image – in particular its aesthetic forms of collage and cartoon – worked to 'de-realize', and hence accelerate, the group's confrontation with the state.

This mode of militant semiotics, then, is not confined to words, but subtends gesture, phoneme, tone and image; as Guattari argues, 'It's a whole axiomatics, down to the phonological level – the way of articulating certain words, the gesture that accompanies them' (Guattari 1995: 58). One might hence perceive the militant semiotic of Weatherman in operation not only within, for instance, Bernardine Dohrn's infamous invocation of the Tate-LaBianca murders by the Manson gang – 'Dig it; first they killed those pigs, then they ate dinner in the room with them, then they shoved a fork into pig Tate's stomach. Wild!' (Dohrn, cited in Varon 2004: 160) – and the adoption at Flint of a three-fingered salute in the fashion of a fork, but also in the circulation of images of Ho Chi Minh and the North Vietnamese flag, the manner of holding the rostrum, the hard-hat worn at militant actions and disseminated as an iconic image of Weatherman's extremism, even, if one allows for unintended co-production with the FBI, in the facial formations of the widely distributed 'Wanted' posters.

It is at this level of the iconic image that the seductive aspect of a militant group like Weatherman is manifest in wider environments. The composition and circulation of images, styles, sentiments and gestures is certainly a key element of the constitution of the affective texture of all political milieux. In this context, and drawing a relation to the US group that was most influential on Weatherman and its self-representation, Guattari's (1996a) comments on Genet's account in *Prisoner of Love* of the 'image function' of the Black Panther Party (BPP) are instructive. In Guattari's reading, the style and comportment of the Panthers performed as part of a rich enunciative texture and a complex psychic formation that had especial generative power for black communities in politicising cultural and phenotypical traits, and in developing an experimental image and practice of black resistance and cultural expression – while simultaneously haunting and disquieting majority Whiteness. While of considerably less significance than the BPP and working with a rather different repertoire of styles and stratifications, the image function of Weatherman (the 'Weather-myth' as Ayers (in Dohrn et al. 2006: 24) refers to it) also worked to compose an imaginary and affective field of

resistance to US imperialism – and one patterned and inflected by a wider pop- and counter-cultural set of forms and vocabularies – that could perhaps have been constitutive of progressive political effects beyond those determined by Weatherman's particular practice.

In raising this possibility, however, one needs to be attentive to the way such images can produce a spectacle of revolution that is easily commodified by – or co-produced with – news media and culture industries and consumed in the politically unproductive manner of an imaginary identification with an icon of resistance. This would seem to have been a prominent feature of the cultural appreciation of the 1970s guerrilla, whether as an alienable unit of consumer style in the 'Prada-Meinhof' mode (Connolly 2002) or, as Bruce LaBruce irreverently dramatises in *The Raspberry Reich*, a repertoire of radical postures. While it is possible to unsettle or exceed spectacular forms of circulation and consumption – as Stephen Zepke reminds me, media modulation is more complex than a simple game of resistance and recuperation[13] – one still needs to be attentive that the affective charge that may emerge from engagement with these images does not reproduce the militant moods and functions articulated in them; even in the existential richness and political intensity of the Panthers' iconography was interwoven a highly suspect militarised and patriarchal figure of militancy (Carr 1975; Doss 2001).[14]

It is a central paradox of militancy that as an organisation constitutes itself as a unified body it tends to become closed to the outside, to the non-militant, those who would be the basis of any mass movement. Indeed, to the degree that the militant body conceives of itself as having discovered the correct revolutionary principle and establishes its centre of activity on a moral basis as an adherence to this principle, it has a tendency to develop hostility to those who fall short of its standard. Weatherman resolved this paradox by investing revolutionary agency in the anti-imperialist struggles of the global South, notably the Vietcong, and the movements of black revolutionary struggle in 'the internal colony', especially the Black Panther Party (Ashley et al. 1970). In this arena of agency, the substitution of Weatherman's own exemplary action for a domestic white working-class movement freed it up to exist in splendid isolation and in contempt for the mass of white America (Varon 2004: 93, 166).[15]

Ultimately cut-off from the possibility of engaging with wider social strata by these techniques, Weatherman was driven into the logical extension of an intensified militancy closed in upon itself and developed 'the politics of full alienation' (as one member put it to Stern, in the

affirmative) in the movement to a clandestine, underground organisation: 'Going underground was not just a wild gambit for me. It was all that was left before death' (Stern 1975: 240). Ayers characterises the build up to this phase of the movement in a fashion that foregrounds the self-devouring tendencies of militant passion (no doubt with a retrospective awareness of the impending New York townhouse bombing[16] that was to act as something of a break in Weatherman's militant line of flight):

> It was fanatical obedience, we militant nonconformists suddenly tripping over one another to be exactly alike, following the sticky rules of congealed idealism. I cannot reproduce the stifling atmosphere that overpowered us. Events came together with the gentleness of an impending train wreck, and there was the sad sensation of waiting for impact. (Ayers 2001: 154)

In order to approach the possibility of a political practice beyond militancy I want in the remainder of this paper to consider some contours of an a-militant diagram, or dispersive ecology of composition. To do this I will confine the discussion to the relation between the political group and that which lies outside it, what might be known by militant assemblages as 'the masses' – as Guattari implies, it is on this axis that the question of an 'other machine' beyond that of the militant should be posed (Guattari 1984: 190). To this end it is instructive to return to Marx's comments on the party in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Given the dominant twentieth-century image of political Marxism, this text has very little to do with the kind of party one might expect. It sets up a 'Manifesto of the party itself' to counter the bourgeois 'nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism', but the party is not announced as a distinct (much less, timeless) organisational form or programme (Marx and Engels 1973: 31):

> The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.
>
> They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.
>
> They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.
>
> The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only:
>
> 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality.
>
> 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole . . .

> In short, the Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things. (Marx and Engels 1973: 79, 98)

The party, then, is a problematic not of an external vanguard or an exemplary militant subjectivity but 'of the proletariat as a whole', or, as Marx puts it in the Provisional Rules of the First International, of the 'working classes themselves' (Marx 1974: 82). Though the party seeks to forward certain modes of thought and community – notably, as developed in the *Manifesto*, internationalism and the critique of capital – Marx is at pains to stress that it is not a concentrative articulation, but a dispersive one, invoking less a coherent collective subjectivity than a diffuse plane of composition. The party is stretched across the social, dependent upon social forces and struggles for its existence or its substance, and, in an anticipatory and precarious fashion, oriented toward social contingencies and events. As Badiou argues – if to use his work in this context is not to deform it too far – not only is it the case that 'For the Marx of 1848, that which is named "party" has no form of bond even in the institutional sense', but 'the real characteristic of the party is not its firmness, but its porosity to the event, its dispersive flexibility in the face of unforeseeable circumstances' (Badiou 2005: 74, 75). Moreover, inasmuch as this formation is immanent to the manifold arrangements of capitalist social production, a production that is fully machinic ('this automaton consisting of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs'), it allows for processes of alliance and invention beyond those of an abstract humanity (Marx 1973: 692).

The question arises from this articulation as to the possible form a revolutionary organisation might take if it is to exist only immanently to diffuse and emergent social production and struggle. This has been a persistent problem for left communist currents that have sought to develop a mode of organisation that breaks with that of the militant subject and the external vanguard. For those associated with the Italian communist left, the question has been approached through a reading of Marx's remarks on the party in terms of a distinction drawn between the 'historical' and the 'formal' or 'ephemeral' party, where the former is essentially the force of distributed proletarian struggle in and against capital, and the latter the various organisational manifestations or expressions of this (Marx n.d.; Antagonism 2001; Camatte n.d.). Given the variable nature of struggle over time there is no necessary continuity of a formal party.[17] Indeed, in times when agitation is on the wane, attempts to constitute revolutionary organisations become counterproductive, not least

because they substitute organisational coherence and continuity for diffuse social struggle as the object of communist politics (this, as part of maintaining global conditions conducive for the survival of the Soviet economy, having been a key role of the Communist Party). As such, outside of periods of struggle resistance to group formations becomes a positive trait of communist politics; for François Martin, 'The dissolution of the organizational forms which are created by the movement, and which disappear when the movement ends, does not reflect the weakness of the movement, but rather its strength' (Dauvé and Martin n.d.: 57). The point is made from a more practical angle by one of the French post-'68 radical journals, *Cahiers du Forum-Histoire*:

> At risk of displeasing the 'paleo-Leninists' among us, is the permanence of an 'organized' structure really the principal objective and primary condition for political pertinence? Maybe it's the opposite. Shouldn't a 'structure' give way as soon as possible, as soon as it has ceased to fulfill a positive function and risks becoming an end in itself, devouring people and their energy? . . . To know when to stop is not necessarily admitting failure or powerlessness – quite the contrary! (Ahmad and Dominique, cited in Ross 2002: 137)

This communist critique of militant formations is developed furthest by Jacques Camatte and Gianni Collu (1995) in their 1969 open letter 'On Organization' (which marked the withdrawal of the group around the journal *Invariance* from the post-'68 groupuscule milieu) where the argument is made that all radical organisations tend toward a counter-revolutionary, 'racket' form, operating like anti-inventive points of attraction and solidification in social environments. In a critique that bears comparison with Guattari's account of Bolshevism, Camatte and Collu argue that the radical group is the political correlate of the modern business organisation, orchestrating patterns of identity and investment appropriate to a capitalism that – in what is an early adoption of the category of 'real subsumption' – has disarticulated sociality from traditional forms of community and identity. Operating through a foundational and ever-renewed demarcation between interior and exterior, the group coheres through the attraction points of theoretical or activist standpoint and key members (themselves constituted as such through intellectual sophistication, militant commitment or charismatic personality) and the motive forces of membership prestige, competition for recognition and fear of exclusion. The effect is to reproduce in militants the psychological dependencies, hierarchies and competitive traits of the wider society, constitute an homogeneous formation based on the equivalence of its members to the particular element that defines it, and mark a delimiting

separation from – and, ultimately, a hostility to – the open manifold of social relations and struggles, precisely that which should be the milieu of inventive communist politics. Importantly, the problem is not at all one of the relative formality of the group; these tendencies may well be found at the extreme in 'unstructured' aggregations or 'disorganisations', where informal inter-subjective relations take primacy.[18]

Some of these aspects of militant group-formation have been seen above in Weatherman, but the pertinent point here is the way Camatte and Collu seek to develop a way out from the organisation. In opposition to the centripetal dynamics of the group-form and its subjective correlate the militant, Camatte and Collu assert that communist practice is necessarily characterised by a refusal of all group activity, a kind of warding-off of the dominant social tendency toward group formation. They insist that this is not merely a retreat into an individualist position – a locus of composition no less able to accrue prestige and authority in opposition to dispersive social struggle[19] – since the critique of the group corresponds to its own kind of subjective unworking in the 'revolutionary anonymity' that Camatte and Collu borrow from Amadeo Bordiga,[20] as signalled by their text's opening quotation from Marx:

> Both of us scoff at being popular. Among other things our disgust at any personality cult is evidence of this . . . When Engels and I first joined the secret society of communists, we did it on the condition *sine qua non* that they repeal all statutes that would be favorable to a cult of authority. (Marx, cited in Camatte and Collu 1995: 20)

In place of the group and the individual – and in line with the account of the party above – the basis of composition becomes a direct relation with social forces: 'The revolutionary must not identify himself [*sic*] with a group but recognize himself in a theory that does not depend on a group or on a review, because it is the expression of an existing class struggle' (Camatte and Collu 1995: 32–3).

Camatte and Collu's anti-voluntarist subtraction of agency from communist minorities certainly introduces an intriguing aspect to the problematic of political subjectivity, accustomed as one is to the 'racketeerist marketing' that is the normal mode of self-representation of political aggregations. But notwithstanding the importance of this manoeuvre, as it plays out in line with a common dilemma for left communist groupings – whose opposition to the Leninist party can result in a resistance to any form of intervention for fear of directly or indirectly introducing anti-inventive dynamics and leadership models into proletarian formations – it is only a partial solution to the problem of militancy (Dauvé

and Martin n.d.: 63–6). For outside a period of agitation, Camatte and Collu leave communist minorities in a rather anaemic position with little possibility of political composition other than the development of theory and the maintenance of a small network of informal relations between those engaged in similar work.

Deleuze and Guattari's approach to the problem of the group and its outside shares much with that of Camatte and Collu, not least in their own 'involuntarism', an important Deleuzian mechanism in opening a breach with received political practice and authority and orienting toward the event (Valentin 2006; Introduction to this volume). But out of this shared problematic emerges a more productive sense of the terrain of a-militant composition. In his preface to *Anti-Oedipus* Foucault rightly draws attention to the way the book invited a practical critique or a political pragmatics of militant organisations and subjectivities:

> I would say that *Anti-Oedipus* (may its authors forgive me) is a book of ethics, the first book of ethics to be written in France in quite a long time (perhaps that explains why its success was not limited to a particular 'readership': being anti-oedipal has become a life style, a way of thinking and living). How does one keep from being fascist, even (especially) when one believes oneself to be a revolutionary militant? (Foucault, in Deleuze and Guattari 1983: xii)

Unlike with Camatte and Collu, however, this practical critique of militancy is characterised not by a withdrawal from groups as such. It initially takes the form of an analytic of groups and a certain affirmation of the 'subject group' as a mode of political composition oriented toward innovative collective composition and enunciation, and open to its outside and the possibility of its own death – in contrast to the 'subjugated group', cut off from the world and fixated on its own self-preservation (Deleuze 2004). Yet this formulation, useful though it is in the analysis of group dynamics, is perhaps still too caught up with activist patterns of collectivity and voluntarism (Guattari 1995: 31). As Deleuze and Guattari's project unfolds, the model of the subject group thus loses prominence in favour of an opening of perception to, and critical engagement with, the multiplicity of groups – or, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, assemblages or arrangements – which compose any situation, following their notion that 'we are all groupuscules'. Guattari thus states in a 1980 interview:

> At one time I came up with the idea of the 'subject-group'. I contrasted these with 'subjected groups' in an attempt to define modes of intervention which

> I described as micro-political. I've changed my mind: there are no subject-groups, but arrangements of enunciation, of subjectivization, pragmatic arrangements which do not coincide with circumscribed groups. These arrangements can involve individuals but also ways of seeing the world, emotional systems, conceptual machines, memory devices, economic, social components, elements of all kinds. (Guattari 1996b: 227–8)

In this conception there is, then, a clear disarticulation of political practice from the construction of coherent collective subjectivity, or a strong critique of groups, but in a fashion that bypasses the anti-group position with an orientation toward the discontinuous and multi-layered arrangements that traverse and compose social life. Crucially, the associated political articulations – 'ecologies' or 'cartographies' in Guattari's later writings – are machinic in nature. They include, and may be instigated by, material and immaterial objects – technological apparatus, medias, city-environments, images, moods and atmospheres, economic instruments, sonorous fields, landscapes, aesthetic artefacts – as much as human bodies, subjective dispositions and cognitive and affective refrains. As such, they are open to political analysis, intervention and articulation through tactical, sensual, linguistic, technical, organisational, architectural and conceptual repertoires. It would certainly be a mistake to see this ecological orientation as a retreat from a passional practice – if *Anti-Oedipus* suggests an anti-fascist ethics, *A Thousand Plateaus* is precisely concerned with the exploration of modes and techniques of intensive composition, often of a most experimental and liminal kind. This is a passion, however, that arises not in a subjective monomania carved off from its outside, but from situated problematics and alliances that are characterised by a deferral of subjective interiority and a dispersive opening to the social multiplicity and its virtual potential (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 134). This is how one can understand Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) affirmation of 'becoming imperceptible' – of drawing the world on oneself and oneself on the world – as a political figure; it is not a sublime end-point of spiritual inaction, but the immanent kernel of a-militant political composition.[21]

Given the dominance in twentieth-century political culture of visual representations of the heroic militant it is important to note that aspects of this ecological or cartographic approach to political practice are evident in the aesthetic expressions of political bodies, from the anecdote that the orientations of Italian *Operaismo* were such that the bedroom walls of activists saw the substitution of diagrammatic maps of the FIAT Mirafiori plant for the iconic images of Mao and Che Guevara (Moulier 1989: 13), to Bureau d'Études (2004) who – mindful of the dangers of the conventional signs of

militant aggregation such as the flag and the raised fist, symmetrical with the images of national sovereignty as they can be – have developed a political and pedagogical ecology of map-making (see utangente.free.fr). One can also see an exploration of some of these themes in contemporary problematisation of activist practice. A most striking instance is the Argentinian grouping Colectivo Situaciones (2005) whose figure of 'militant research' evokes a knowledge/practice that works without subject or object through an immanent appreciation of encounters, problems and situations, and in a fashion that is particularly attentive to the dangers of transcendent models of political subjectivity and modes of communication. The problematic of a dispersive political practice is raised too in the Luther Blissett and Wu Ming projects, concerned as these 'multiple name' formations have been with a disarticulation of modes of seduction, style and mythopoesis from the author-function and its associated property regimes (see www.wumingfoundation.com). But these formations lead to questions of composition that are best approached through an appreciation of their particularity and that move beyond the specific problem of this paper, the critique of the militant.

To conclude, one can discern in Deleuze and Guattari's work an identification of, and a response to, the problem of militant subjectivity. This response posits a deterritorialisation of the self that develops not from a concentration in militant passion (as one finds in Weatherman) or a surrender to revolutionary inaction (the danger that haunts Camatte's critique of organisation) but from the condition of being stretched across the social in a diffusion and critical involution in the aesthetic, technical, economic, semiotic, affective relations of the world. In resonance with Marx's understanding of the party, this suggests not a serene unanimity but a complex, intensive and open plane of composition. This is not, of course, an actualised politics or programme; it is better seen as the first principle of an a-militant, communist diagram. The political aggregations, functions and expressions that animate and enrich this diagram may configure environments of a directly insurrectionary nature,[22] but they would be so as the collective and manifold problematisation of social relations and events, not as the autonomous creations of militant organisations acting like 'alchemists of the revolution' (Marx and Engels 1978: 318). For it is in the multiple and diffuse social arrangements and lines of flight that political change emerges and with which political formations – in their 'dispersive flexibility' – need to maintain an intimate and subtle relation if they are not to fall into the calcified self-assurance of militant subjectivity. Deleuze's warning about the danger of marginality has pertinence here too:

> It is not the marginals who create the lines; they install themselves on these lines and make them their property, and this is fine when they have that strange modesty of men [*sic*] of the line, the prudence of the experimenter, but it is a disaster when they slip into the black hole from which they no longer utter anything but the micro-fascist speech of their dependency and their giddiness: 'We are the avant-garde', 'We are the marginals.' (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 139)

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Notes

1. The diagram or abstract machine – that which governs the articulation and distribution of matter and function – is not an ideal type, infrastructure or transcendent Idea but a non-unifying immanent cause that is coextensive with the concrete assemblages that express it. These assemblages, in their divergent manifestations and unexpected conjunctions, in turn fold back on the diagram, both confirming and modifying its abstract imperatives. As such, even as one sees a regularity of function across its iterations, the diagram is in principle an unstable force of change. For a full elaboration of the concept of the diagram as it is used here, see Deleuze (1988: 23–44).
2. Aileen Kelly notes that Nechaev's *Catechism*, which was publicly revealed during the trial of some of Nechaev's followers for the murder of one of their number, was understood in government and popular opinion as marking the arrival of a 'new type of revolutionary' (Kelly 1982: 267).
3. As one contemporary example, Sian Sullivan (2005) makes an insightful critique of certain activist sentiments and dispositions in the anti-globalisation movement that she sees resembling Nechaev's formulations. Without discounting the evident particularities and differences, there are also clear resonances between jihadi formulations of struggle such as found in Sayyid Qutb's *Milestones* and those of Nechaev (Straus 2006). To avoid subsuming real divergent traits, this might be approached less as a jihadi expression of (anti-)modernity's 'vanguard ideal', as Retort (2005) characterises the resemblance between Islamist militancy and Leninism, than through the place and particular articulation of the passional regime of signs in such politico-religious militant formations.
4. Weatherman emerged from the 1969 position paper by Ashley et al. (1970) that took its name from Bob Dylan's 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' as the most militant wing of the anti-Vietnam war movement, initially as a faction within the

mass organisation Students for a Democratic Society but soon as an independent and then underground group, when it came to be known as the Weatherman Underground and, later, the gender-neutral Weather Underground Organisation, disbanding in 1976. I am discussing the brief, pre-underground period of Weatherman.

5. Shin'ya Ono (1970) isolates three points of Weatherman's originality, concerning the centrality of anti-imperialism/anti-racism, the urgency of preparing for militant armed struggle, and the necessity of revolutionary collectives that demand transformation of the self through struggle.
6. Weatherman's 'Days of Rage' action in Chicago in October 1969 aimed at direct physical confrontation with the police and the destruction of property in order to encourage the subjective 'breakthrough' necessary for the establishment of a white revolutionary force and to set an example for the wider movement. The orientation of the event and its relation to Weatherman's understanding of militarised and self-sacrificial militancy is clear in Ono's retrospective account:

   > We frankly told people that, while a massacre was highly unlikely, we expected the actions to be very, very heavy, that hundreds of people might well be arrested and/or hurt, and, finally, that a few people might get killed. We argued that twenty white people (one per cent of the projected minimum) getting killed while fighting hard against imperialist targets would not be a defeat, but a political victory . . . (Ono 1970: 251)

   While the brutality of the policing of the black population cannot be blamed on Weatherman, it is perhaps an indication of the misguided nature of such approaches to revolutionary solidarity that after the street fighting with Weatherman the police invaded the black inner city and killed two young people (Hilliard and Cole 1993: 258).
7. Weatherman of course operated in a particular socio-historical environment. If militancy had its own momentum and dynamic properties, the horror of the war in Indochina and the brutalisation of black North Americans, most publicly the police assassination of the Black Panther Party's Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, fed Weatherman's passion – Mark Rudd talks of the knowledge of the war as having been 'too great to handle' and something he was aware of 'every second of my life' (*The Weather Underground*) – and was to a considerable extent the guarantor against its consummation. The relation of Weatherman's actions to the overwhelming affect of powerlessness induced by the war exemplifies Deleuze and Guattari's point that active monomania might loosely correspond with (and, hence, be a particular political concern for) peasant and working-class formations – 'a class reduced to linear, sporadic, partial, local actions' – as against an association of ideational paranoia with the bourgeoisie – 'A class with radiant, irradiating ideas (but of course!)' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 121).
8. The 1969 Flint 'War Council' was the last, and somewhat frenzied, public gathering of Weatherman before its move underground.
9. I want to be clear that it is in relation to this question of effective or productive communist politics – and not abstract or social democratic critique of 'violence' or 'extremism' – that the problems of militancy are assessed in this paper. It hardly needs saying that given the mundane brutality of capitalism, let alone the war in Indochina, a critique of Weatherman at the level of its 'violence' *per se* would be somewhat wrong-headed.
10. Stern's narrative is punctuated by sometimes quite harrowing accounts of these criticism sessions; see especially Stern (1975: 162–76).

11. It is very clear that feminism had a complex and important presence in the organisation and that the 1970s guerrilla more widely had a strong feminist component – Jamieson's (2000) interviews with female members of the Red Brigades are fascinating on this point. My argument is that the militant diagram articulates feminist and other political and cultural elements in a manner that tends to further its own imperatives, albeit that these elements so articulated will also have progressive effects for women in militant groups, and on the margins of core militant functions.
12. While it was not enforced, Stern notes that her collective at one point drew up a sleeping schedule to rotate sexual partners (Stern 1975: 115). She also recounts an experience of sexual violence justified on this basis, and it is clear from her account that the orchestration of sexual encounters by those in leadership positions played a part in the modulation of power relations within and between collectives (Stern 1975: 168–9).
13. I am minded here of how Wu Ming (2005) work with the singular style and roving iconic affect of Cary Grant in relation to the problem of communist mythopoesis. See Simon O'Sullivan (2005) for an inventive exploration of the Red Army Faction in related terms, and in this vein *The Raspberry Reich* itself is more than just a parody of radical chic – thanks to Felicity Colman for recommending the film.
14. It is in relation to these issues and problems that one might approach Guattari's apparent endorsement of Weatherman in his working papers for *Anti-Oedipus* (Guattari 2006: 175). Guattari offers a more complex engagement with the blockages, affects and mass-media manipulations of the 1970s guerrilla in his essay on the film *Germany in Autumn* (Guattari 1996b: 181–7).
15. While the Weather organisation vacillated on its relationship to the white working class, especially to white youth, they were apparently capable of the almost farcical extreme of debating the ethics of killing white babies in order to reduce the number of future oppressors (Varon 2004: 159).
16. Three members of Weatherman were killed in March 1970 when bombs they were preparing accidentally detonated, completely destroying a town house in Greenwich Village. These were the only deaths caused by Weatherman, though the devices being constructed included nail bombs intended for a non-commissioned officers' dance. Ironically, the town house explosion precipitated both the planned movement underground and the end of the particular approach to militancy that necessitated this movement, albeit an end that worked itself out over a number of years.
17. Against the accusation of 'inactivity' and 'doctrinaire indifference', see Marx's (n.d.) positive evaluation of his non-involvement in political associations after the collapse of the Communist League (and before the establishment of the First International).
18. Jo Freeman (n.d.) makes the classic analysis of the power dynamics of 'structureless' organisations, and a critique of the racket-like aspects of contemporary 'open' activist communities has been made by Andrew X (1999) and J. J. King (2004).
19. Clearly, the black holes of political thought and practice are not limited to the group form. For a typology of some of these – including 'the activist ideologue', 'the theoreticist' or 'anti-activist' and 'the academic' – and their attendant seductions, see Aufheben (2007).
20. Camatte and Collu contrast their mode of anonymity with its dispersive tendencies to that of the racket form, where individual anonymity is coterminous with group identity and doctrinal monolithism. Bordiga's position on anonymity is put, with typical intransigence, thus:

> It is the attribute of the bourgeois world that all commodities bear their maker's name, all ideas are followed by their author's signature, every party is defined by its leader's name . . . Work such as ours can only succeed by being hard and laborious and unaided by bourgeois publicity techniques, by the vile tendency to admire and adulate men. (Bordiga, cited in Camatte 1995: 175)

21. I have approached some of the many subsequent questions about the nature of such composition – in relation to situated points of emergence, styles of expression, forms of organisation and relations to capital – through the Deleuzian figure of 'minor politics' in Thoburn (2003a, 2003b).
22. It is indeed precisely the question of an effective revolutionary breach in the social field that is the broader problem that Guattari's (1984) essay on Leninism grapples with and that is the basis, for instance, of Deleuze (2004) and Guattari's (1984) interest in the modes of transference put into play in the institutional apparatus of the 22 March Movement in May 1968.

Chapter 6

Bourgeois Thermodynamics

Claire Colebrook

One way of thinking about the ways in which poststructuralist thought has contributed to political theory, and perhaps the experience of politics itself, is to consider thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault as having extended and radicalised Kantian anti-foundationalism. The Kantian 'Copernican turn' not only precludes the subject from making claims regarding things in themselves, resulting in a humility that concedes that we can only know the world as it is given through the relation we bear towards it (Langton 1998). Kantianism also places the subject of politics under erasure. We cannot study human nature and then prescribe either specific moral norms or even a certain mode of political formation (Rawls 1980). We could not, for example, make a claim along the line of contemporary neo-Aristotelianism and argue that it is precisely because we are social, linguistic, self-forming and emotional beings that we need a polity that is grounded in tradition, aware of human frailty and partiality, or conducive to narrative coherence (Taylor 1989; Nussbaum 2006). In its ideal form Kantianism would break with positive conceptions of the good and would argue for a purely formal politics.

In its poststructuralist radicalisation one could contest the extent to which such an avowedly critical, post-metaphysical or anti-foundational politics is possible. One way of reading Derrida's critique of the politics of liberalism would be to look at the ways in which the supposed break from all positive norms and figures of man must nevertheless require some exemplarity or figure from which the humanity that gives itself its own end can be thought. In 'Economimesis' Derrida looks at the ways in which the Kantian subject who has liberated himself from positive and natural determinations must draw a strict border between the mouth of pathological pleasure, and the mouth of taste which can speak and judge for any subject whatever (Derrida 1981). In *The Politics of Friendship*

Derrida contests the notion of brotherly recognition which would liberate itself from the partial attachments of the private sphere, arguing that such a notion of man as a being of pure recognition – a political being who can establish the polity without being indebted to this or that specific norm or body – maintains the metaphysics of logocontrism, in which there has always been a subject who actively gives himself an other through whom he can return to recognition and auto-affection (Derrida 1997). In *Specters of Marx* the irreducibility of the debt, the impossibility of ever becoming the post-metaphysical subject who has no law other than the law he must give himself, is expressed through the notions of haunting, spectrality, ghosts and mourning (Derrida 1994). Such notions perturb both the Kantian subject who in acknowledging his distance from any natural law or determination must give a law to himself *and* the Marxist project of exorcism. For while the very notion of ethics and responsibility requires us to acknowledge the weight of the past and the ways in which we live our present through received and constituted systems of representation (or ideology), the idea that we could internalise and own all those alienated and reified technologies (including language) must deny the necessary condition of haunting. In order for any subject or experience in the present to *be*, or to be lived as here, now, present and existing, we also require some degree of death, haunting or non-being. The self can be a self, can recognise systems as reified, alien or inhuman, only with a notion of the proper. But the proper, in turn, is only established through a marking out or determination of the same – and thereby requires some form or repeatability which is necessarily at odds with the putative pure spontaneity of subjective self-constituting life.

Derridean politics has, therefore, yielded a number of Kantian and post-Kantian imperatives. First, if it is the case that a subject and a polity are only possible through some process of iterability then we have to move beyond a Kantian notion of *self*-constitution and autonomy to complicated responsibility: acting for the sake of a justice, democracy or friendship that is indicated by the signs we have for such events, but which – *as events* or ruptures with the already given – can never be reduced to a term within our conceptual economy. Second, while we may acknowledge that justice – *if such a thing is possible* – can only exist as a promise that opens the polity beyond its already constituted relations, we also need to bear a more complex and imbricated sense of the past. The debt to the past and the sense in which we are always already haunted cannot be reduced to an archive of events or a historical narrative which would render us more self-aware. For the past *haunts* the present to the extent to which it operates without history, narration or

consciousness. This would fundamentally alter the politics of apology and forgiveness (Derrida 2001). Saying sorry for a past that is not our own is one way of acknowledging that while we may not have made the decision for which we are asking forgiveness, we are nevertheless contaminated by and indebted to the archive in which acts of violence have been inscribed. We would need to draw a distinction, then, between those modes of politics that added to Kantian liberalism an imperative to self-awareness and self-consciousness regarding culture and traditions, and the poststructuralist mode of politics that insists that we cannot know, internalise or reduce the past to some fully given archive, for there are potentialities in the past that will never be fully explicated, and will always demand future thought.

Derridean politics would be at once a critique of Kantian anti-foundationalism, for it would insist that even those notions which Kant regarded as post-metaphysical and purely formal – autonomy, giving a law to oneself, recognition of others as ends in themselves – still harbour certain metaphysical commitments, such as the privileging of self-fathering, activity and disembodied brotherhood. At the same time Derrida would extend the spirit of the Kantian enterprise by insisting that our richest political concepts of justice, democracy and forgiveness cannot be given or exhausted as terms within our political frame of reference but can only act as irritants or ghosts which would trouble the present and open our horizons to what has not yet been actualised, thought or lived.

Another way of thinking about the nature of poststructuralist politics as a post-Kantian endeavour would be to follow a suggestion made by Michel Foucault in *The Order of Things* where he includes Kant within a specifically modern episteme dominated by the question of life and the problem of man as a political animal (Foucault 1971: 162). Like Derrida, though in different ways, we can see Foucault as accepting the manifest aim of Kantian politics – to free the polity from concepts of a human nature from which positive norms might follow – while nevertheless identifying the Kantian legacy as thoroughly entwined with bio-politics. For it is precisely man's status as 'empirico-transcendental' that enables 'life' to function as a normalising horizon (317). If we follow through the manoeuvres of the Kantian critical project we can see that man as a political animal is acknowledged to be explicable according to general laws of life that would have less to do with a specifically *human* nature or rationality – and so distinct from Aristotle's claim that man is a *politikon zoon* – and more to do with life in general (308). Man is no longer that privileged being who represents the order of the world, blessed as he is with a reason that can read the book of nature; he is now the outcome

of a process of evolving life. It is that process of life that also explains man's linguistic and political being. Man speaks because his physical needs require him to enter into relations with others, thus necessitating communication. Language is not a representation of a prior order, but a temporally developing form that yields order (290). Politics, similarly, can now be traced back to general imperatives of existence; man enters into relations of exchange in order to render his ongoing existence more efficient. If it had been possible in the eighteenth century to study *wealth*, or those systems which enable the exchange of goods in an otherwise stable polity, it is now possible to study *labour*, by examining the ways in which political relations arise from the quantification, technologisation and systematisation of working bodies and commodities. The transcendental subject of Kantian liberalism is that being who recognises his status as an empirical subject, bound up with living processes, but who can also – precisely through that recognition – posit the public sphere of speech and communication as a reflection upon, and mediation of, the relations we bear to life. Bio-politics is at one and the same time the increasingly managerial attitude adopted toward man as a living being, and the distinction of man as a legislator in relation to his corporeal life. It is the concept of life, and the concomitant study of man as a member of populations, that allows a certain actuality – man as studied through the social sciences – to yield a political imperative. We may always be bound up with living processes, never capable of attaining that pure, self-constituting and transcendental subject of Kantian ethics, but we can nevertheless bear a social and political relation to those living processes. Speech and language would function as systems that empirically emerge from the imperatives of biological life but which, once constituted, allow for a liberal domain of communication and consensus in relation to that originating life (290).

Foucault's own response to the critical political project is twofold. In a Kantian manner, and at various points throughout his corpus, Foucault turns to experimentation (Foucault 1984). (His second, related, strategy concerns the materiality of language.) Experimentation – in contrast to the transcendental subject who in representing life to himself becomes a self-governing legislator – recognises the opacity and positivity of the body, its pleasures and the norms within which the self creates a relation to itself. There is not a pure self of auto-affection and self-becoming so much as a series of relations through which any body negotiates its self and its world, constituting itself *as a self* through practices. Foucault's critique of the repressive hypothesis in modern sexuality does have its demystifying side insofar as it argues that the inner sexual being we seek

to liberate through processes of monitoring is actually effected through practices of self-knowledge, practices that thereby continue and intensify a modern power structure of internalised discipline (Foucault 1979). But the critique of sexuality also has its positive side in the distance it effects from modern bio-power. Bio-power is premised upon the continuity of man's biological being with his social and political relations, regarding the latter as an expression and negotiation of the former. Foucault's subject concerned with a *care* of the self does not bear a relation of knowledge towards its own being (Foucault 1990). On the contrary, the self is not a substance to be known so much as a technology: a repeatable practice that modifies through time according to varying encounters and problems. Experimentation in Foucault's sense of enlightenment needs to be distinguished from notions of radically ungrounded and arbitrary self-production in some existential sense, where the self is *nothing* other than the distance it effects from positive being; for experimentation is an ongoing encounter with norms, relations, one's body and others. Power should be considered as the 'power *to* . . .' actualise certain events, rather than power *over*, where the self would be nothing other than its force of will, decision or self-constitution (Patton 1998). Experimentation might appear at first as a local strategy for the self but it would have concrete political implications. If poststructuralist political theory often looks like another form of liberalism – in the absence of foundation one must give oneself a law, and in the absence of a norm of humanity one must give oneself an identity – Foucault's nuanced approach to experimentation, like Derrida's critique of auto-affection, troubles the notion of democratic *self*-constitution. There would always be forces and potentialities beyond the will of the subject, beyond expressive and purposive life. The antithesis or antidote to modern power would not be a radical break with all bodily life, a freeing of the subject as pure decision from all positivity and embodiment. On the contrary, it would challenge the break presupposed by bio-power: that we have a bodily life that can be known, quantified, managed and understood as the condition for our political existence, set in opposition to the subjective, linguistic and communicative relations through which we know our empirical being. Democracy would not be modelled on a self that turns back to reflect upon and master his own distinct physical existence, but would need to have a more complex notion of imbricated, distributed, positive and productive power.

Experimentation, then, overturns the notion of the self-authoring subject, the self-constituting polity and – most importantly – the notion of man as a being whose mode of existence is given through the general

processes of life which in turn allow him to adopt a distanced critical and reflective relation to that life. Similarly, for Foucault, language is not the medium through which man represents an order of the world already given; nor is it the expressive medium of communication through which subjects establish a collective, communicative polity. In *The Order of Things* Foucault argues that it is in the nineteenth-century experience of literary language, where language is experienced according to its own 'shining' not yet reduced to the being of man, that we break with the normalisation of modernity (338). In his book on Foucault it is this valorisation of literary language which Deleuze delimits and surpasses with his own suggestion for a new future and a new understanding of history (Deleuze 1988: 131). If it is the case that our relation to history and politics is to be primarily *critical*, disrupting notions of a natural foundation or life from which we might read man's proper political being, then it is (for Foucault) literary language that introduces an altogether different, distinct and difficult network of relations interrupting and disturbing the democratic ideal of transparent self-constitution. Anyone with a cursory understanding of Deleuze would not be surprised with the accompanying manoeuvres that Deleuze introduces in his suggestion that we should go beyond Foucault's description of the power of literary language. Foucault remains too Kantian and dualist, Deleuze suggests, in his primarily critical mode of politics. By focusing on experimentation and the positive disruptions of a language which is always other than ourselves, Foucault refuses to go beyond a politics of disruption of constituted and normalising relations, refuses to go beyond power as the distribution of relations within which we act, and refuses to ask the question of genesis or the emergence of relations. Deleuze argues that just as Foucault placed literature beyond the finitude of man – where language would be the 'fold' which allowed man to relate to his own constituted being – so we should free life from biology and labour from economics. This would take us beyond the 'fold' to the 'superfold'; instead of 'man' who related to his own finite being we would confront forces beyond anthropologism.

This critical relation to Foucault would explain why, in *A Thousand Plateaus,* Deleuze and Guattari set the term desire in contrast with Foucaultian power; for desire insofar as it is understood as the way in which a body or power creates and produces a relation towards what is not itself focuses on the genesis of systems, not on the permutation of systems. Further, it is also not surprising that in his charting of Foucault's own history of man, life and knowledge Deleuze goes beyond literary language – or the estrangement of the subject from his supposed means

of expression – to the radically futural silicon (Deleuze 1988: 131). Life would be liberated from the organism, the self and the speech and would now need to be thought in terms of relations, connections, creations and syntheses that are distinct from any organised body.

In terms of a Deleuzian political theory we might expect to move away from a critical politics that would consider the terms through which we understand political debate – Derrida's 'justice to come' or 'democracy to come' – and away from a complication of the subject – such as Foucault's critique of enlightenment self-governance – and even away from a purely formal politics such as Alain Badiou's description of the political procedure as the subject's fidelity to a truth that would be a negation of the existing political measure (Badiou 1999). Instead we would be given a positive, empirically grounded theory of the emergence of political structures: what John Protevi has referred to and formulated as 'political physics' (Protevi 2001) or what Manuel DeLanda has created as a theory of social assemblages (DeLanda 2006). Such a politics would take its lead from Deleuze's criticism of the grounding of political analysis on the political agent and its intentionality in favour of a micropolitics in which we paid attention to those forces and powers that exist below the thresholds of conscious communication and intent, and that are distributed beyond the decisions of the willing and self-effecting psyche. There is, however, another suggestion in Deleuze's corpus as to how we might think about politics. *Difference and Repetition* obviously has ethical implications, both implicitly in its criticism of the presuppositions of good sense, common sense and recognition, and explicitly in the move in the final chapters of the book to an 'ethics of intensive quantities', which Deleuze regards as a *risk* (294). The risk of this ethics would lie at its remaining at the ethical level alone, providing a milieu for the bourgeois subject without leading to a politics and thinking. In the final chapter, 'Asymmetrical Synthesis of the Sensible', Deleuze picks up the earlier metaphysical notion of good sense – where good sense had been defined as the organisation of all experience in relation to a single and coherent object to be experienced by a unified subject – and relates this presupposition directly to bourgeois ideology, and to thermodynamics. I am going to quote the passage at length and then explore the many implications it holds for political theory:

> Good sense is by nature eschatological, the prophet of a final compensation and homogenization. If it comes second this is because it presupposes mad distribution – instantaneous, nomadic distribution, crowned anarchy or difference. However, this sedentary, patient figure which has time on its side corrects difference, introduces it into a milieu which leads to the

> cancellation of differences or the compensation of portions. It is itself this 'milieu'. Thinking itself to be in between the extremes, it holds them off and fills in the interval. It does not negate differences – on the contrary: it arranges things in the order of time and under the conditions of extensity such that they negate themselves. It multiplies the intermediates and, like Plato's demiurge, ceaselessly and patiently transforms the unequal into the divisible. Good sense is the ideology of the middle classes who recognise themselves in equality as an abstract product. It dreams less of acting than of constituting a natural milieu, the element of an action which passes from more to less differenciated: for example, the good sense of eighteenth-century political economy which saw in the commercial classes the natural compensations for the extremes, and in the prosperity of commerce the mechanical process of the equalisation of portions. It therefore dreams less of acting than forseeing, and of allowing free reign to action which goes from the unpredictable to the predictable (from the production of differences to their reduction). Neither contemplative nor active, it is prescient. In short, it goes from the side of things to the fire: from differences produced to differences reduced. It is thermodynamic. In this sense it attaches the feeling of the absolute to the partial truth. It is neither optimistic nor pessimistic, but assumes a pessimistic or optimistic tint depending on whether the side of fire, which consumes everything and renders all portions uniform, bears the sign of an inevitable death and nothingness (we are all equal before death) or, on the contrary, bears the happy plenitude of existence (we all have a chance in life). (Deleuze 1994: 283–4)

Before exploring what such a diagnosis of bourgeois ideology might mean for the present, we can consider and tabulate the linkages and conceptual events effected in this passage. First, good sense is eschatological. The notion of a final revelation or disclosure is tied to the presupposed ontology of good sense, whereby all our experiences, affects, perceptions and feelings can be seen as directed towards some object of which those experiences would be predicates or effects. There must be some independent presence beyond the flux of experience, some selfsameness, which we come to know through a diversity of experiences but which are all experiences *of* this one world. Any seemingly singular, aberrant, disruptive, violent or divergent experience would need to be rendered coherent or explicable in relation to one extended, homogeneous and therefore divisible world. Why is such a notion political? Why is good sense and the orientation towards an object beyond experience the constitution of a milieu rather than an action? One way we can understand this is to think of consensus and pragmatist notions of political procedure. By insisting that all our experiences are experiences *of* some necessarily presupposed objective world – a world that is not reducible to experience

but only known through experience – and by insisting that it would make no sense or be a 'performative contradiction' (Apel 1998) to speak about a world that was not essentially 'there' in the same form for others, pragmatist and discursive models of politics effect a milieu. Politics is modelled on consensus, conversation, ideal speech situations, intersubjective communication, recognition *and* – precisely because the model is eschatological – the deferral of action. For if it is the case that we must at one and the same time assume a presence beyond our experiences that can only be given through the diversity of experience, our knowledge practices must be oriented to an ultimate objectivity that can essentially never arrive.

Democracy would then be understood as a suspended, deferred and *necessarily partial* and incomplete attitude to the world; democracy would be essentially poised between 'on the one hand' and 'on the other hand': 'Good sense essentially distributes or repartitions: "on the one hand" and "on the other hand" are the characteristic formulae of its false profundity or platitude' (Deleuze 1994: 282–3). On the one hand we must acknowledge indigenous rights and specific cultural traditions, aware that we cannot adopt a position that attains a view from nowhere outside all determinate norms. On the other hand, that very recognition of diversity and the specificity of traditions allow us to enact a universal or at least cosmopolitan conversation where we can open up local traditions to the claims of human rights, equality, fairness and humanity in general. Indeed, one could argue that remaining at the level of diversity – allowing each culture, ethnic tradition or political grouping to retain its self-enclosed understanding – would be thoroughly in accord with the logic of capitalism, allowing difference to circulate as the difference *of* one underlying expressive humanity, never allowing that humanity to express itself in a unified form opposed to the quantifying system of capital. Thus democracy, understood from the point of view of good sense – that is, a world that is given only through competing and partial perspectives which are nevertheless all perspectives *of* this one common world – would seem to yield two critical responses. One could *either* say that democracy could never be presented, and that it remains necessarily deferred: not a regulative Idea, such that while we have a proper goal of democracy we never meet it in practice, but a concept whose meaning cannot be presented even ideally (Derrida 1995: 83; 2005: 82). *Or* one could argue that the idea of democracy must break from fragmented and quantified partial perspectives and present itself not as some transcendent *ideal* distinct from humanity but as nothing other than humanity *in act*, as the capacity for every human being as an imagining, living and

labouring body to free itself from all external and imposed systems of relations and recognise itself as nothing other than a capacity to create relations (Hardt and Negri 2000). In both cases it is not action as such but the creation of a milieu which is foregrounded. In order to contrast Deleuze's own suggestion for a positive and active politics to this ideology of good sense it is perhaps best to pick up one of the clearest sentences in *Difference and Repetition*, 'It is thermodynamic.' How could an ideology be thermodynamic? The beginning of an answer lies in the suggestions that precede this statement, which also concern the relation between science and philosophy.

The context of Deleuze's own criticism of the relation between science and philosophy, and the politics it brings in train, is the discussion of intensive quantities, a notion Deleuze wants to defend against Henri Bergson's dismissal of the concept as illegitimate (Bergson 1971). The concept is illegitimate, Deleuze concedes, as long as we understand intensities and quantities according to a thermodynamic model, and we do that when philosophy takes an uncritical or insufficiently transcendental relation to scientific models (Deleuze 1994: 282). There are two critical strands to Deleuze's objection to thermodynamics, the first of which looks forward to the outline of capitalist axiomatics in *Anti-Oedipus*. We can think of flows, relations, communications and even experience in terms of one plane of energy which is then distributed in diversity. As *Anti-Oedipus* makes clear, in capitalism there is no longer a deterritorialised point from which the social world is governed or from which being is understood – no body of the king that would give order to being. Being orders itself through distribution; the body without organs or the plane across which beings are distributed is capital. Capitalism is cynicism, the refusal of any external measure. One way to understand this is through the quantitative model of energy, where flows of labour and desire would be regulated in a general economy of more and less. Metaphysically, the subject's relation to this world of energy would require syntheses of various experiences into an ordered world (Deleuze 1994: 282). Politically, it would require an ideal model of consensus, understanding and communication. *Intensity* would be a crucial notion in this economy of more or less, if we understood intensity to mean the trading off of various qualities against each other. In today's terms, quite simply, we could think of this as the difficult decisions we make when we weigh civil liberties, rights and freedoms against measures taken for security, the protection of democracy and equality – with the good bourgeois citizen aiming to understand the right balance (say) between allowing a maximisation of freedom alongside measures taken to ensure equality (such

as affirmative action interventions, or procedures aiming to protect local and minority practices). The first critical objection Deleuze has to such a model is that it has already begun from intensity as the distribution of qualities: as 'more or less' equality or 'more or less' freedom.

The thermodynamic model is that of a single energy distributed into diverse qualities. The two models of such an understanding in metaphysics would be a certain Freudian understanding of the libido, where the death drive is an aim to return to a zero state of energy (in contrast with a certain equilibrium or stable state of the ego) *and* Bergson's criticism of intensive quantities. For Bergson, intensities cannot be calculated or measured, or seen as comparable to each other, whereas we can take a spatial or extensive measure and double or divide it without altering what it is, intensive quantities cannot be understood as parts of each other. The difference between, say, middle C on the piano and the same note an octave higher may be explained by locating the origin of this aural experience in sound waves, but of course the lower note is not contained in the higher (playing the note on two pianos does not yield a doubling of pitch, nor simply a doubling of volume – an orchestral section of violins is not a soloist multiplied thirty times). Or, to think of the notion politically and ethically, there is a common-sense objection to quantification in the case of distinct human lives; we would not unthinkingly sacrifice one innocent child's life if we knew that a parsing out of its organs would save ten other children through transplants. One way to explain this common-sense objection is to insist that we do have an intuitive sense of irreducible qualitative difference, which may not be able to be explained in our utilitarian moral theories but which nevertheless gives the lie, or contradicts, those theories. On the one hand we do aim to maximise and preserve all life, while on the other hand we recognise that lives are not reducible to measurement. Bergson's objection to intensive quantities – measuring experientially irreducible durations to equivalent units – is that it negates *spirit*, or that aspect of life which far from maintaining itself as the same through time exists as a continuous discharge of creative energy. The thermodynamic model (against which Bergson directs his own critique) imagines a pool of given energy, the distribution of which is the aim of political management. Bergson's objection is legitimate as long as we understand quantities as quantities *of* some underlying energy; he is right to object that such a notion cannot apply to qualitative difference. This brings us to the second strand of Deleuze's objection, which is positive, and which insists that intensive quantities should not be understood as amounts of some distinct quality but as differences of force which create thresholds and

interactions *from which* differences in quality are effected: 'The expression "difference of intensity" is a tautology. Intensity is the form of difference in so far as this is the reason of the sensible . . . we know intensity only as already developed within an extensity, and as covered over by qualities. Whence our tendency to consider intensive quantity as a badly grounded empirical concept, an impure mixture of a sensible quality and extensity, or even of a physical quality and extensive quantity' (Deleuze 1994: 281).

Deleuze argues that thermodynamics established a specific relation whereby philosophy simply took on a model of thinking from the sciences, even though the science of intensities itself did not have such a reductive understanding (282). Where we can begin to cash this out politically is at the level of micropolitics. Should we really be thinking of a contradictory relation between freedom and security – the self whose rights and modes of self-determination must be measured against its relation to others and an overall social body of protection and stability – *or* is it possible to consider what Deleuze refers to as an 'ethics of intensive quantities'? Here one considers not the more or less of qualities but how qualities emerge from the creation of series and the coupling of forces; we experience intensities as intensities *of* this or that quality, but this is because by the time the intensity unfolds – through the time of the intensity's unfolding – it is given as extended and spread out as this specified divisible quality. To put this in concrete and more political terms we can imagine an ethics of intensive quantities that tried to understand the emergence of felt quantities – intensities – in terms of their genesis. How do the passions of bodies – all bodies, not just human and organic bodies – reach thresholds of intensity such that they can be experienced as qualities? What couplings of series produce intensive quantities? This would then shift us from a politics of prescience to action. We would shift the point of view of politics away from the judging subject to the intervention in micropolitical events. Rather than begin from 'man' as the subject of politics, we might approach becoming-woman: for this idea would include becoming – or the souls and perceptions from which we are composed – but would not reduce that becoming to the events that make up a subject who is recognisable in advance ('man').

Consider the problem of false consciousness, which is perhaps brought to the fore in feminist politics more than any other domain. (This problem connects in turn with many other problems within feminist politics, such as female genital mutilation where the critical feminist voice must at once respect the local autonomy of women at the same time as

aiming for a broader understanding of well-being and personhood that would resist such practices.) Here, we have a classic motif of 'on the one hand' and 'on the other hand'. On the one hand, feminist politics does not appear to make sense unless it can look at the condition of women as they are and argue that things ought to be otherwise. Such a claim must go beyond a liberalist discourse of decision. Even the earliest forms of liberal feminism, such as those of Mary Wollstonecraft, saw the *vindication* of women's rights as going beyond allowing women as they are to be free to enter the political arena and required that women also become aware of the constitution of their condition *as women* – become aware of the ways in which their affective and physical personalities had been weakened by gender relations. The standard liberalist and postcolonial responses to the relation between feminist criticism's appeals to liberation and feminism's equal wariness of paternalism has been one of negotiation and conversation. One cannot have a critical position beyond cultures and constituted feminist subjects, so the only political manoeuvre can be one of ongoing deliberation and an appeal to future possibilities. On the one hand we are aware that 'woman' has been a subordinating, essentialising and restrictive term; on the other hand, one can use this term strategically, ironically or critically. It is here that we might bring in the much vaunted notion of becoming-woman, and relate it to the ethics of intensive quantities and micropolitics. Instead of considering women as a group (an extensive multiplicity) that is diversely distributed (white western women, working-class Hispanic women, Indigenous Australian women, and so on), it is possible to see becoming-woman as an intensity that is only known as it is extensively distributed (in all these groupings) but which would – considered transcendentally and genetically as the potentiality from which 'woman' is constituted – disrupt a politics of negotiation in favour of action. Such action would begin with refusal: a lack of respect, recognition and diversity in favour of the Idea of woman. Could we imagine, beyond all these constituted feminist subjects positioned within given cultures and in relation to the ideal of democratic, liberal and reasoning man, a political subject whose being is not already given? Whereas traditional mobilisations of false consciousness would oppose women as they are (constituted through various practices of 'femininity') to women as they ought to be (thereby appealing to a proper subject of enlightened self-interest, a subject aware of its proper state of flourishing and self-definition), an ethics of intensive quantities would actively intervene in those micropolitical processes from which both men and women emerge as diversified groupings. How would this come about?

Again, taking our cue from *Difference and Repetition* (although the argument occurs throughout Deleuze's corpus in the motif of counter-actualisation) we can begin to think of this mode of political action through art which, far from being a compensating aestheticism, can be considered as a 'pedagogy of the senses'. And this is where we might also draw the distinction between Foucault's indication that it is literary language after the nineteenth century that opens a space beyond 'man' and Deleuze's ethics of intensive quantities. Foucault's work suggests that it is in the standing alone of literary language, liberated from narrative and voice, that we break with the image of expressive and representing man; this would also, for Foucault, be a break with the normalising humanism of bio-politics in which man as a living being also constitutes himself as a communicating and legislating animal through language. In his book on Francis Bacon Deleuze refers to the 'northern line', picking up an idea he had articulated in *Difference and Repetition* as the 'abstract line' (345) and in *A Thousand Plateaus* as the 'feminine line'. Such a line is *neither* a representation of some object viewed from the point of view of a feeling subject *nor* a line of pure abstraction that would delineate ideal, geometric or abstract forms. Instead it is a line that follows and explores a potentiality of variation. Such a line, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, can be called the 'feminine line' because – like 'becoming woman' – it is released from already constituted relations and from a point of view that is folded around the organised body. Whereas the lines of classical art produce a perspectival plane that allows the eye to see a framed scene folded around the moving and acting body, the feminine line is not yet an objectified plane for an active and judging subject. Nor is the line freed from the body and affect altogether. We move beyond both the subject/object model of classical representation – line as the delineation of a world to be observed – towards the creation of differences or distinctions that are not yet differences between one body and another, or differences *of* the intensity of a quality. Art would approach the becoming-imperceptible of the degree zero of infinitely small differences to the unfolding of qualities.

As an example we might consider the poetry and visual art of William Blake, who was also one of the great thinkers of both energy and contraries (as opposed to contradictions, which preclude action). At the visual level Blake's engraving method, in which each engraved plate was coloured separately, precludes a clear distinction between lines that represent objects and lines that flow as decorative borders or lines that mark out letters to be read by the eye subordinated to the speaking voice. His plates consist of bodily figures, sometimes characters in his poetry

sometimes not, and these bodies in turn are traced out in lines that often 'take off' from the engraved musculature to become borders, or flow out into wings or plants. Such a use of line can be considered as *radically intensive*, for the amount of order varies such that lines are sometimes lines of representation, sometimes free lines of variation and sometimes lines of inscription and signification. The eye that views these plates is at one and the same time an eye that reads (when those lines form letters), an eye that views (when those lines form bodies) and an eye that feels (when the eye follows the pressures and resistances of the engraved work on the plate, becoming what Deleuze refers to as 'haptic'). The same insubordinate use of line and energy occurs in the poetry. Sometimes the words are spoken dialogue, sometimes prophetic declarations but frequently the poetry moves between the constative and performative to the *sonorous*, in which the words are no longer signs of some sense but approach the condition of sound. We can distinguish Blake's haptic use of sound, where the reading voice struggles to pronounce and inject propulsive rhythm into the inscribed lines of poetry, from poetry's standard use of musicality (the system of recognisable prosody).

Blake produces a play between the voice that speaks in terms of sense – commanding, proposing, prophesying, judging – and a voice that becomes sensible. Blake does not allow the voice to become pure sound, nor does he foreground rhythm, assonance, rhyme or meter. There is a prosody in meaningful speech – a rising inflection for a question, a deepening of pitch for a command, an increase of volume for a warning. This differs from music, which may bear its own semantic system (so that it happens to be the case that we associate minor keys with sadness or imperfect cadences with hymn tunes). In addition to approaching the condition of the sonorous, or sound itself liberated from signifying relations, Blake's poetry is also haptic in presenting the resistance of verbal material. This appears most evidently in his use of highly idiosyncratic and almost clumsy or inarticulable names, such as the following passage from *Milton* which combines the declarative force of prophecy with semantic vagueness:

> To measure Time and Space to mortal Men, every morning.
> Bowlahoola & Allamanda are placed on each side
> Of that Pulsation & that Globule, terrible their power.
> But Rintrah & Palamabron govern over Day & Night
> In Allamanda & Entuthon Benython where Souls wail:
>
> (Plate 30, lines 25–9)

It is as though we have the sound and grammar of prophecy and message – *that there is prophecy* – without the sense or meaning of that prophetic

tone. Throughout Blake's later prophecies the moral valency of voices is undecidable, and this because he uses the prosody and intonations of despair, rage or lamentation, coupled with a language that frequently refuses reference. The voice does not convey formal or ideal sense; the listener can feel the rage in the voice. If the haptic in visual art is the capacity for the viewing eye to see the touch of the hand on the canvas (or in Blake's case the pressure of the burin on the plate, and the layering of colour on the line), then the haptic in poetry is the capacity for the ear to feel the force of the body.

Where Blake's work is interesting politically at the manifest or semantic level – for he was at one and the same time the great poet of liberation and revolution as well as expressing reactive anti-populist and misogynist views – is precisely in its connection with the formal or expressive level. For such a disjunction between form and content opens up both a space for political reading, in which one is compelled to address the unfolding of terms and affects that produces a semantic space, and for an ethics of intensive quantities. Blake, like so many other cultural icons, has always already entered the political arena: both explicitly in the hymn 'Jerusalem' and implicitly in phrases such as 'dark Satanic mills' which circulate in cultural and political discourse. Blake is just one example of the ways in which the affective and communicative space of political dialogue appears as an extensive multiplicity – of bodies, qualities and terms in relation – but which can, and should, be interrogated according to its intensive emergence. One would risk an ethics of intensive quantities if one simply felt that art would defamiliarise our everyday categories and lead directly to a renewed political vision. Deleuze's task of micro-politics and counter-actualisation demands *both* a reading of those thousand tiny perceptions and affects from which the 'man' of good sense and common sense is composed – a 'nervously optimistic' approach to art, as he terms it in his book on Bacon – *and* a refusal to subordinate those divergent intensities into a single subject of judgement. One would, then, no longer ask whether a work of art expressed sound political principles, with art acting as a preliminary for action, but would look at art as itself an event, in its capacity to decompose the subject of judgement. One would no longer aim for democracy as an intersubjective domain of ideal consensus and recognition, but for a world no longer perceived in terms of a single plane of energy distributed by finite cognition.

Returning to the concrete politics of feminist activism one might say that such an ethics of intensive quantities would be oriented towards acting and intervening in the creation of affects and perceptions, and

would not demand positive images of women; nor would it consist in a parody or ironic use of ideals of the feminine. Instead, it would begin from becoming-woman, understood as a new type of political being. Not a mind that orders divergent perceptions into a unified synthesis oriented towards recognition, but a political actor open to that which has not had its value or sense calculated in advance. Feminist critique would not entail the liberal-minded feminist appealing to her oppressed sisters' better judgement; it would instead regard becoming-woman as the site from which all those divergent, disruptive and incommensurable affects might be encountered.

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Chapter 7

The Age of Cynicism: Deleuze and Guattari on the Production of Subjectivity in Capitalism

Jason Read

Gilles Deleuze argues that Spinoza's assertion 'we do not know what a body can do' functions as a 'war cry' cutting through the conceptual divisions of soul, mind and consciousness, defining a new concept of power, philosophy and subjectivity (Deleuze 1990: 255). Deleuze's assertion suggests, albeit obliquely, that works of philosophy can be interpreted through not just their central insight or main points, but their 'war cry', the formulation that expresses the battle they wage against other philosophies and conceptions of the world. The 'war cry' or slogan (as in *mot d'ordre)* that could be used to sum up Deleuze and Guattari's two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* is 'desire belongs to the infrastructure' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 348/416).[1] With this phrase Deleuze and Guattari reject any dualisms or hierarchies, between the mental and the material, subjective and objective or social and libidinal, that would make either the subjective an effect of the material (as in most Marxisms) or the social an effect of the libidinal (as in psychoanalysis). In the first volume, *Anti-Oedipus*, this assertion is the basis of the polemics against psychoanalysis: for psychoanalysis desire and its anxieties are necessarily mediated through the family, which provides both their cause and condition of intelligibility. This assertion of the immanence of desiring production to social production, or, in the terms of *A Thousand Plateaus*, machinic assemblages of bodies to collective assemblages of enunciation, persists throughout the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, becoming a central philosophical assertion as many of the polemics against psychoanalysis of the first volume are left by the wayside (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 89/113).[2] Deleuze and Guattari's particular position is a refusal of the mediations or levels that relate and separate the economy from subjectivity. It is an assertion of what Paolo Virno calls 'immediate coincidence'. As Virno writes in a passage that could be applied to Deleuze and Guattari:

> What is involved here is the conceptualization of the field of *immediate coincidence* between production and ethics, structure and superstructure, between the revolution of labour process and the revolution of sentiments, between technology and emotional tonality, between material development and culture. By confining ourselves narrowly to this dichotomy, however, we fatally renew the metaphysical split between 'lower' and higher, animal and rational, body and soul – and it makes little difference if we boast of our pretensions to historical materialism. If we fail to perceive the points of identity between labour practices and modes of life, we will comprehend nothing of the changes taking place in present-day production and misunderstand a great deal about the forms of contemporary culture. (Virno 1996a: 14)

Hints of this 'immediate coincidence' can be found in be found in Marx's own writing, most notably in the polemics of *The Communist Manifesto*. The broad impassioned tones of Marx's manifesto assert a connection between the capitalist mode of production and a particular ethos, a particular social logic and subjectivity. In the *Manifesto* this connection is direct, immediate, it does not pass through the superstructures of politics, law and ideology. For Marx, at least the Marx of the *Manifesto*, the specificity of the capitalist mode of production, its specific temporality, sociality and way of life, is to be found in its revolutionary nature, its destruction of all previous traditions, hierarchies and values. 'Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones' (Marx and Engels 1978: 476). The strength of Deleuze and Guattari's writing is that it extends and deepens this assertion of a particular capitalist ethos or production of subjectivity, extending it from a polemic to a philosophical assertion and method. In doing so they are able to address, and even answer, problems that undermine contemporary Marxism: namely, the persistence of capitalism, the collapse of the working class as an antagonist form of subjectivity and the return of seemingly outmoded beliefs and subjectivities.

From Codes to Axioms

While the immediate coincidence of production and desire bears a superficial relationship to the polemics of the *Manifesto* it would seem to contradict the rest of Marx's writing. Most notably it contradicts the model of base and superstructure, which places ideology, beliefs, desires and subjectivity on top of, and thus dependent on, material transformations in the realm of production. However, Marx's writings offer other models for thinking about the connection of production and subjectivity, most

notably the notebooks collected in the *Grundrisse* known as 'Pre-capitalist Economic Formations'. Marx's dominant philosophical concern in these notebooks is the nature and the ground of the difference between capitalism and pre-capitalist modes of production: to grasp the unique and singular nature of capitalism. Although this is by no means Marx's only concern, the notebooks also trace the genealogy of the capitalist mode of production through the breakdown and collapse of the previous modes of production. Moreover, in this text Marx advances an expansive theory of the mode of production, one that does not limit the mode of production to a particular technical or economic manner of producing things, but understands a mode of production to constitute a particular form of life. Every *mode of production* is inseparable from a *mode of subjection*, which is not added on as a supplement or a simple effect, but immanent and necessary to its existence.[3] This general philosophical point does not only apply to the pre-capitalist modes of production, which are so clearly oriented towards reproducing a particular form of existence (as Marx reminds us, the question in ancient Greece was 'which mode of property creates the best citizens?'), but to capitalism as well, in which it would appear that the *reproduction* of way of life is entirely secondary to the *production* of surplus value. Capitalism too must reproduce particular forms of subjectivity, particular forms of technological competence and political subjection, but it must do so while simultaneously breaking with the past. As Marx writes: 'The advance of capitalist production develops a working class which by education, tradition and habit looks upon the requirements of that mode of production as self-evident natural laws' (Marx 1977: 899). It is because of the peculiar way in which the notebooks on pre-capitalism articulate the intersection between production and subjectivity that they provide the theoretical backdrop for Deleuze and Guattari's examination of the affective politics of capitalism.

For Marx the specifically pre-capitalist modes of production (Asiatic, Ancient and Feudal) are necessarily conservative in that they have as their specific goal the reproduction of a particular form of property and a particular social relation. Reproduction of a social relation is also reproduction of a particular form of subjectivity. What characterises the different pre-capitalist modes of production is not just their intrinsically conservative nature, but also that subjectivity is inseparable from its collective social conditions. The subject is not exposed to whatever existence he or she can get in exchange for his or her labour power as in capitalism, but is embedded in cultural, technical and political conditions that he or she in turn works to reproduce. These conditions are what Deleuze

and Guattari call 'codes'. Codes can be thought of as tradition, or prescriptions and rules bearing on the production and distribution of goods, prestige and desire. As such they are inseparable from a particular relation to the past – a relation of repetition. With codes actions and desires in the present are immediately related to the past, to an inscription of memory, 'this is how things are done, how they have always been done'.

The codes become part of the 'inorganic body' of the individual in precapitalist modes of production, that is conditions of production and reproduction of subjectivity that constitute a kind of second nature. Marx defines the inorganic body as follows:

> These natural conditions of existence, to which he relates as to his own inorganic body, are themselves double: (1) of a subjective and (2) of an objective nature. He finds himself a member of a family, clan, tribe, etc. – which then, in a historic process of intermixture and antithesis with others, takes on a different shape; and as such a member, he relates to a specific nature (say, here, still earth, land, soil) as his own inorganic being, as a condition of his production and reproduction. (Marx 1973: 490)

The first model of the 'inorganic body' is the earth itself as the original condition of all production; it is 'primitive, savage unity of desire and production' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 140/164). However, Marx's general formula of 'Pre-capitalist Economic Formations' stresses that this 'divine presupposition of production' can realise itself in different ways, appearing first as the earth, then the primitive community, or even the Asiatic despot (Marx 1973: 472). It is this displacement, or, more accurately, deterritorialisation, that forms the basis of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the full body, or the body without organs. What Deleuze and Guattari stress is the connection between production and the unproductive, or anti-productive, element that falls back onto production appropriating the forces of production. As Deleuze and Guattari write:

> . . . the forms of social production, like those of desiring production, involve an unengendered non-productive attitude, an element of anti-production coupled with the process, a full body that functions as a *socius*. This socius may be the body of the earth, that of the tyrant, or capital. This is the body that Marx is referring to when he says that it is not the product of labour, but rather appears as its natural or divine presuppositions. In fact, it does not restrict itself merely to opposing productive forces in and of themselves. It falls back on [*il se rabat sur*] all production, constituting a surface over which the forces and agents of production are distributed, thereby appropriating for itself all surplus production and arrogating to itself both the whole and the parts of the process, which now seem to emanate from it as a quasi-cause. (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 10/16)

Every society, or form of social production, has an aspect that appears as the condition, or cause, rather than the effect of the productive relations, the desires and labours of society. Paradoxically, this 'quasi-cause' appears to be a cause of production, because it is itself not productive, or, more precisely, is 'anti-productive'. It appropriates the excessive forces of production, distributing some for the reproduction of society and wasting most in excessive expenditure (such as tribal honours, palaces and ultimately war). As Marx argues the Asiatic despot appears to be the cause, and not the effect, of the productive powers of society, the massive public works, such as irrigation, that define the 'Asiatic mode of production' for Marx: it appropriates for itself the productive powers of society.

Each of the pre-capitalist modes of production is constituted by a fundamental misrecognition, what is produced by the labour of the community appears as its precondition, as an element of divine authority. This misrecognition stems from a fundamental difference, a basic gap, between production, and the recording, or representation, of production. 'Production is not recorded in the same way that it is produced' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 12/18). Deleuze and Guattari thus utilise Marx's theory of pre-capitalist economic formations to intervene within the general question of ideology, the way in which societies reproduce themselves through a fundamental misrecognition of their constitutive conditions. What Deleuze and Guattari draw from Marx is less a theory of ideology in which a particular class or group disseminates particular ideas than a theory of 'fetishism' in which a society, a particular mode of production, produces its own particular form of appearance, its apparent objective movement.[4] Marx argued that the commodity as fetish obscures the conditions of its production in a dazzling display of its value. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of a 'socius' is thus close to what Louis Althusser refers to as 'the society effect'. As Althusser writes:

> The mechanism of the production of this 'society effect' is only complete when all the effects of the mechanism have been expounded, down to the point where they are produced in the form of the very effects that constitute the concrete, conscious or unconscious relation of the individuals to the society as a society, i.e. down to the effects of the fetishism of ideology (or 'forms of social consciousness' – *Preface* to *A Contribution* . . .), in which men consciously or unconsciously live their lives, their projects, their actions, their attitudes and their functions as *social*. (Althusser and Balibar 1970: 66)

What Deleuze and Guattari stress is that this 'effect', or what they term 'the recording of production', must also be thought as productive: it is

not only an effect, it produces effects as well. Most importantly, what is produced by such effect is the obedience, the belief and desire, necessary to the functioning of the particular mode of production.

Deleuze and Guattari's interpretation of Marx's theory of pre-capitalist economic formations and subsequent rewriting of a theory of the production of subjectivity attaches an almost disproportionate emphasis on the Asiatic mode of production. This is in part due to what Jean-Jacques Lecercle calls Deleuze and Guattari's 'displacement' of Marxism, viewing his theory of the mode of production from its 'most eccentric element': the only one situated outside of Europe, identified by a geographic place rather than a historical period, and consequently the cause of much controversy within Marxism (Lecercle 2005: 42). Deleuze and Guattari use this infamously allusive and problematic element of Marx's theory to address a famous omission of Marx's philosophy: the state. Deleuze and Guattari do not offer so much a theory of the state, an enterprise they dismisses as tautological, but a series of relations through which to consider the state (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 427/532). First, and this is something that Deleuze and Guattari borrow directly from Marx, the state, or the despot, comes into existence as something that subordinates preexisting communities, clans and groups. It makes these diverse points 'resonate' by relating them to a central institution or structure (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 433/539). Étienne Balibar has offered what could be considered an illustration of this relation of resonance:

> States cannot become *nation-states* if they do not appropriate the sacred, not only at the level of representations of a more or less secularized 'sovereignty,' but also the day-to-day level of legitimation, implying the control of births and deaths, marriages or their substitutes, inheritance and the like. States thus tend to withdraw control of these functions from clans, families, and, above all, churches or religious sects. (Balibar 2003: 20)

In other words, the state overcodes the existing codes and values, becomes the central term around which their meaning gravitates. 'The essential action of the State, therefore, is the creation of a second inscription by which the new full body – immobile, monumental, immutable – appropriates all the forces and agents of production; but this inscription of the State allows the old territorial inscriptions to subsist, as "bricks" on the new surface' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 198/235). Secondly, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the concept of the state is formed all at once, not gradually, hence their interest in ancient despotisms and the archaeological evidence for complex bureaucracies and systems of taxation in the ancient world (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 217/257).[5] The

state is not one institution among others, developing gradually over time, but an idea if not ideality itself, thus '. . . giving evidence of another dimension, a cerebral ideality that is added to, superimposed on the material evolution of societies, a regulating idea or principle of reflection (terror) that organizes the parts and the flows into a whole' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 219/259). This leads to one of the most difficult but also persistent elements of Deleuze (and Guattari's) thought, the mutually reinforcing connection between thought and the state, in which thought, or philosophy, borrows its model from the state ('a republic of free spirits whose prince would be the idea of the Supreme being'), and in turn the state is legitimated by thought ('the more you obey, the more you will be master, for you will only be obeying pure reason, in other words yourself . . .') (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 376/466).[6] Deleuze and Guattari's political thought is situated between capital and the state, which are both abstractions, processes of deterritorialisation, that nonetheless have very different concrete affects in the realm of politics and subjectivity.

In the pre-capitalist modes of production productive activity is subordinated to reproduction: all productive activity aims to reproduce the community, the codes and the relations of subordination. Capitalism can be partially defined by the liberation of production from such demands of the reproduction of a particular form of life. In capitalism production does not aim at anything other than itself, than the production of more capital, or insofar as it does produce something other than itself what it produces is abstract, purely quantitative. Capitalism does not have a particular organisation of desire, a particular code or social organisation as its historical presupposition. Its only presupposition, as Marx demonstrated, is the encounter between, on the one hand, a multitude of individuals who have only their labour power to sell, and on the other, a flow of money free to purchase labour power. In each case the constitution of these two flows of bodies and money presupposes the breakdown of codes. A breakdown of the codes that anchored labour to any community, tradition or hierarchies of knowledge (as in the guilds or feudalism), as well as a breakdown of anything that links money to specific places and uses, to a restricted economy of prestige. 'Hence capitalism differentiates itself from any other *socius* or full body, inasmuch as capital itself figures as a directly economic instance, and falls back on production without interposing extra-economic factors that would be inscribed in the form of a code' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 249/297). Labour and wealth have become deterritorialised, have become stripped of any code that would tie them to any determinate relation to the past. Rather than coding the various practices and desires constitutive of the society,

capitalism functions by setting up quantitative relations between the two flows, labour and capital, establishing as axiomatic an equivalence between a particular amount of labour time and a particular amount of money. Axioms are distinct from codes in that they do not require belief in order to function. Axioms relate to no other scene or sphere, such as religion, politics or law, which would provide their ground or justification (Jameson 1997: 398).[7] Axioms simply are, they lay down a particular formula, a particular system of equivalences, and this cannot be argued with – it is only possible to add new axioms to the system. In order for capitalism to function one does not need to believe in anything, *even in it*, one only needs to act in accordance with the quantitative flows, selling one's labour etc. Capitalism is a revolution at the mode of subjection as well as the mode of production, a revolution that appears as liberation, a rupturing of the old codes and the death of the despot. Part of Deleuze and Guattari's project is to reveal the new forms of constraint in this revolution, that is the way in which capitalism continually reterritorialises what escapes it.

The Age of Cynicism

Capitalism does not tarry with belief, with codes and traditions, it operates through the abstractions of money and labour, which are all the more effective in that they are not believed or even grasped. This does not mean that capitalism is absolutely indifferent to the forms of existence, the desires and affects of those who live and work in it. Like every mode of production capitalism must produce its subjects, the workers and consumers, or rather individuals who identify themselves as workers and consumers, in order to perpetuate itself. Its apparent indifference to the beliefs and desires of its subjects, its ability to tolerate everything, to turn every scandal and taboo into a commodity, must itself be seen as a kind of social subjection to capital. Deleuze and Guattari began to illustrate this, by suggesting that the gap that exists in capital between what one believes and what one does already carries with it a subjective and affective component. As they write:

> It is no longer the age of cruelty or the age of terror, but the age of cynicism, accompanied by a strange piety. (The two taken together constitute humanism: cynicism is the physical immanence of the social field, and piety is the maintenance of a spiritualized Urstaat; cynicism is capital as the means of extorting surplus labour, but piety is this same capital as God-capital, whence all the forces of labour seem to emanate.) (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 225/266)

Deleuze and Guattari are not simply offering a moral definition of cynicism, or a moralising critique; cynicism is a structural effect of a social system, a social machine, in which axioms replace codes. Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between code and axioms underscores one of Marx's central points about capitalism, that it is a form of power in which individuals are 'ruled by abstractions' rather than other individuals, as in the case of Feudalism (Marx 1973: 164). In *Capital* Marx underscores this point by taking on the voice of the worker in a lament against the impersonal nature of capitalist power. As Marx writes: 'You may be a model citizen, perhaps a member of the RSPCA [Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals], and you may be in the odour of sanctity as well; but the thing you represent when you come face to face with me has no heart in its breast' (Marx 1977: 343). In capitalism power is indifferent to intentions of its rulers. As an economic, political and cultural system it opens up a gap between intentions and effects, between piety and cynicism. Thus Deleuze and Guattari extend the point that Marx makes polemically, ultimately arguing that the defining characteristic of capital is not simply the difference between being ruled by individuals or abstractions, but that 'being ruled by abstractions' produces and presupposes its own particular form of subjectivity.

Deleuze and Guattari's invocation of a 'spiritualized Urstaat' against the 'immanence of the social forces' invokes Marx's early criticism of capitalism in 'On the Jewish Question'. As Marx agues the problem of the 'Jewish question' reveals the limitations of what he calls political emancipation. In political emancipation the state declares itself to be indifferent to matters of wealth, status and title, declaring everyone to be equal before the law. The emancipation of the individual from these distinctions is really the emancipation of the state from social distinctions; it washes its hands of the inequality of the social sphere, privatising inequality. As Marx is quick to point out, the distinctions of property, education, rank and ethnicity continue to matter in the social realm, in the realm of civil society, even after the state has declared them irrelevant. This leads to a splitting of the subject, and of existence, in which mankind lives as both a citizen, an equal participant in the ideology of collective life, and a member of civil society, unequal and concerned only with one's private self-interest. The matter for Marx is not how the state should recognise religion, but how the state is already 'religious', with all of the criticism that the world entails for Marx. As Marx writes: 'The political state is as spiritual in relation to civil society as heaven is in relation to earth' (Marx 1978: 34). As Peter Sloterdijk argues in the *Critique of Cynical Reason*, the backdrop of Marx's analysis is the emergence of

what he calls modern cynical consciousness, characterised by the combination of rigorous *cynicism of means*, a thoroughly instrumental consciousness in which everything is permissible in the name of self-interest, and an equally rigid *moralism of ends*, values which are clung to even tighter as they come into conflict with reality (Sloterdijk 1987: 192). The state, and with it the church, becomes the guarantor of ends, with the ideals of the citizen and the general good and means are left to the private realm, to the market of competing interests.

Marx's early critique of the state posits a division, a split between ideal and existence, mind and matter, mental and manual labour, with the exception that this is not a division between two classes, two groups, but a division that cuts internally – we all live as private members of civil society, pursuing our individual interests, and as citizens of the state, concerned with the general good. We are all cynics and pious. This theme of a fundamental division or splitting of the subject is continued through Marx's critique of commodity fetishism. In the act of exchanging and buying commodities what one focuses on is the concrete particularity of this or that commodity, its use or its image, but in the act of buying and selling what matters is not its particularity, but the abstract labour time necessary to its production. As Alfred Sohn-Rethel writes: 'The consciousness and the action of people part company in exchange and go different ways' (Sohn-Rethel 1978: 26). Or, to offer another example, we might know that money is just a social convention, but we cannot help but act as if it is the physical embodiment of value (Žižek 1989: 31). The fetish is not something we recognise, or something we are aware of; we do not purchase commodities because of exchange value, because of their abstract equivalences, but because of their particularity, their particular use, colour, taste, etc. The fetish character is what Sohn-Rethel calls a 'real abstraction' (Sohn-Rethel 1978: 20). What Sohn-Rethel details is a fundamental splitting of consciousness in capitalism between use, which is consciously recognised and private, and exchange, which is public and effective without being consciously recognised, a splitting that duplicates Marx's split between citizen and self-interested individual (as well as Deleuze and Guattari's split between cynicism and piety). Only the terms have been reversed: belief has become a private matter, attached to use, while publicly the only value that matters is price, exchange value. We may have our own particular values our own piety about the importance of books, organic food, etc. but that does not keep us from acting, in our quotidian existence, as if everything including labour power is exchangeable for everything else. Capitalism is a massive privatisation of desire. 'The person has become "private" in reality, insofar as he derives from

abstract quantities and becomes concrete in the becoming concrete of these same quantities. It is these quantities that are marked, no longer the persons themselves: *your capital or your labour capacity*, the rest is not important . . .' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 251/298). Thus the point where Sohn-Rethel and Deleuze and Guattari overlap (not to mention Žižek and Sloterdijk) is that they locate in Marx's analysis of the commodity form the schema of what could be called the political unconscious: the unconscious is not a bundle of drives in need of socialisation, but desires which are already organised by the practices and relations (what Deleuze and Guattari call flows) of capitalism (Deleuze 2004: 262).

For Deleuze and Guattari, cynicism like desire is directly a part of the infrastructure. It is this point that differentiates their analysis from the related pronouncements of Slavoj Žižek and Peter Sloterdijk. Cynicism is thus directly related to the 'real abstractions' of the commodity form and wage labour, which makes heterogeneous objects and activities interchangeable and thus equivalent. Capitalism begins with the encounter of two flows of abstractive subjective potential, the pure capacity of labour, and money, abstract wealth (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 452/565). This is what Marx calls 'formal subsumption', the imposition of the commodity form and wage labour over a pre-existing technical and social order. From this point capitalism 'concretises', transforms the technological and social conditions that it initially takes as given. This is what Marx calls 'real subsumption'. As Deleuze and Guattari write, citing once of Marx's more cryptic formulations: 'History proceeds from the abstract to the concrete' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 221/261). Capitalism transforms general knowledge of society into a productive force, liberating the various 'codes' that kept knowledge subordinated to different hierarchies and subordinating them only to the axioms of profit. 'Knowledge, information, and specialized education are just as much parts of capital ("knowledge capital") as is the most elementary labour of the worker' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 234/278). The real abstraction ceases to be the abstract flows of money and wealth, and becomes what Marx calls 'the general intellect', the general knowledge of society (Marx 1973: 706). Antonio Negri has emphasised the often overlooked connection between Deleuze and Guattari's writing and Marx's seemingly prescient description of a stage of capitalism in which knowledge and desire have become directly productive forces: a connection brought to light by the phrase 'desiring machine', which scrambles the divisions between man and nature, fixed capital and variable capital (Negri 1995: 93). Negri argues that underneath Deleuze and Guattari's prolific series

of neologisms, there is a description, even a 'phenomenology', of the present formation of capital in which the old division between man and machine can no longer account for the intersections between desire, machines and subjectivity that produce and circulate commodities and information.

Paolo Virno relates the transition from formal to real subsumption to a transformation of cynicism, a transformation that could be referred to as a deepening of cynicism. The abstractions of formal subsumption at least had to acknowledge the principle of equality. As Marx demonstrates in *Capital*, the fundamental rule of exchange is that equivalent is exchanged for equivalent, hence the riddle of the first part of the book: how is difference, surplus value, produced in a system based upon the exchange of equivalents? The answer is to be found in the hidden abode of production. Labour power is the non-equivalent, the commodity that produces more than it costs, that makes possible the exchange of equivalents. Even at the level of production, at the level of abstract labour power, however, capital posits equality in making the labour of diverse individuals, men, women, children, interchangeable. Behind the equality of exchange, the realm of 'freedom, equality, and Bentham', there is the equal capacity to be exploited (Marx 1977: 280). This is abstract labour. As Marx argues, capitalism, which is based upon the exploitation of homogeneous human labour, finds its religious form in Christianity, 'with its religious cult of man in the abstract' (Marx 1977: 72). The real abstractions of formal subsumption have the potential for subversion. This is lost as productive power turns to knowledge, to different programmes or paradigms, which are instrumentalised and subordinated to the search for profit. As Virno writes:

> The cynic recognizes, in the particular context in which he operates, the predominate role played by certain epistemological premises and the simultaneous absence of real equivalences. To prevent disillusion, he forgoes any aspiration to dialogic and transparent communication. He renounces from the beginning the search for an intersubjective foundation for his practice and for a shared criterion of moral value . . . The decline of the principle of equivalence, a principle intimately connected to commerce and exchange, can be seen in the cynic's behaviour, in his impatient abandon of the demand for equality. He entrusts his own affirmation of self to the multiplication and fluidification of hierarchies and unequal distributions that the unexpected centrality of knowledge in production seems to imply. (Virno 1996a: 24)

Formal subsumption was cynical and pious, producing a split between one's existence in the marketplace, subject to the axioms of capital, and one's 'private' existence, left to whatever piety or value one wanted to

cling to. In contrast to this the cynicism of real subsumption, of the productive powers of the general intellect, is a cynicism without reserve, in which every aspect of one's existence, knowledge, communicative abilities and desires becomes productive. In the terms of *A Thousand Plateaus* this could be described as a change from 'social subjection', in which an individual is subordinated as a subject to a higher unity, such as a machine, to 'machinic enslavement', in which a human being is reduced to a constituent part of a machine. Capitalism, at its initial stage, is identified with social subjection: workers are not slaves, or even feudal serfs, but are individuals, free to enter into any labour contract. This changes as knowledge and with it subjectivity in general become part of the productive process, As Deleuze and Guattari write:

> In the organic composition of capital, variable capital defines a regime of subjection of the worker (human surplus value), the principal framework of which is the business or factory. But with automation comes a progressive increase in the proportion of constant capital; we then see a new kind of enslavement: at the same time the work regime changes, surplus value becomes machinic, and the framework expands to all of society. It could be said that a small amount of subjectification took us away from machinic enslavement, but a large amount brings us back to it. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 458/572)

Cynicism is the point at which it is not just the world, but subjectivity, human existence itself, which is reduced to its market value. The struggle to maximise one's human capital, one's competitive advantage, replaces demands for equality.

Capitalist Majority

At this point Deleuze and Guattari's rewriting of the pre-history of capitalism seems for the most part to follow the general narrative of modernisation Marx outlines in the *Manifesto*, with one noticeable exception. History proceeds from pre-capitalist modes of production in which exploitation is coded over, mystified by traditions and belief that establish the tribe and the despot as necessary preconditions of production, to capitalism in which belief is no longer necessary, everything is expressible in the form of quantitative relations. '[A]ll that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind' (Marx and Engels 1978: 476). Deleuze and Guattari would appear to retain the basic narrative of this general history of demystification, only to have it end with a generalised

cynicism, in which exploitation comes to be a seen as a fact of life, part of the general human condition, rather than as the impetus for revolutionary awakening.

Cynicism is not capitalism's last word on the production of subjectivity, on social subjection. It is because exploitation in capital is stripped of any political or religious alibi, any meaning that would tie it to a determinant system of belief, that capitalism generates its own mystifications and illusions. What is 'mystified' is no longer some political or social relation that appears to be dominant, but the determining instance, the economy itself. Deleuze and Guattari follow Marx in recognising that money constitutes a massive reorganisation of desire, money is that object that has the potential to stand in for all possible objects – it becomes the universal object of desire. What capital loses in terms of belief it more than regains as an object of desire. Of course this restructuring of desire pre-exists capitalism emerging with the beginning of a monetary economy. Prior to capitalism, however, it manifests itself as a contradiction, a contradiction between money as the unqualified desire for any object whatsoever and money as quantitatively limited, as a finite amount of money. 'This contradiction between the quantitative limitation and the qualitative lack of limitation of money keeps driving the hoarder back to his Sisyphean task: accumulation. He is in the same situation as a world conqueror, who discovers a new boundary with each country he annexes' (Marx 1977: 277). With the formation of capitalism the contradiction of hoarding is displaced, it is no longer necessary to decide between spending and saving, since capitalism can be defined by the formula 'spending in order to accumulate'. This only displaces the contradiction, however, to the point where it is no longer a contradiction between two different dimensions of money, a qualitative lack of limit and quantitative limit of money, but of two different functions of money within capitalism: money as capital, as means of investment, and money as wages, as means of consumption. According to Deleuze and Guattari: 'Measuring the two orders of magnitude in terms of the same analytical unit is a pure fiction, a cosmic swindle, as if one were to measure intergalactic or intra-atomic distance in metres and centimetres. There is no common measure between the value of enterprises and that of the labour capacity of wage earners' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 230/273).

Deleuze and Guattari follow Suzanne de Brunhoff in arguing that money is not simply a quantity, a unit of measure, but a complex relation that cuts across different relations of credit, finance and speculation, and the axioms of their relations (de Brunhoff 1976: 90). Money is not a measure, a simple quantity, but heterogeneous phenomena encompassing

ancient (means of payment) and new (financial speculation) functions. While de Brunhoff focuses on the critique of the quantitative theory of money, Deleuze and Guattari focus on the effects the idea of money, money or capital as quasi-cause have on subjectivity. The fact that this gulf, the gulf that separates wage earners and capitalists, is effaced by the same object and symbol, by money, has very definite and divergent effects. First, it is the condition for the incorporation of desire into capitalism. Money extends the illusion that we all participate in the system as equals; the dollars you and I earn are the same dollars that the wealthy invest to make billions. It makes it appear as if the dollars that we carry in our wallet are made of the same substance as the money that is capital. The difference between rich and poor, exploiters and exploited, is not coded in language of blood, honour or race, it is expressed as a purely quantitative difference. Thus it is possible to believe that only a few dollars more will enable one to cross the line, to invest, to become rich. Capital does not spread the wealth, only the idea that we all could become wealthy.

The system of axioms is much more flexible than a code. These axioms effectively do away with the proletariat as a class which 'has nothing to lose but it chains', adding a few stock options here, readily available consumer credit there, or even 'individual social security' accounts, all of which produce investments of desire without changing the basic relations of production. 'You say you want an axiom for wage earners, for the working class and the unions? Well then, let us see what we can do – and thereafter profit will flow alongside wages, side by side, reflux and afflux' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 238/283). Deleuze and Guattari do not deny the fact of exploitation, but argue that exploitation in itself is insufficient to account for the production of subjectivity in capital. The axioms of capital reintegrate the subjectivity of the working class: as Maurizio Lazzarato argues, worker's are exploited insofar as they sell their labour to capital, but they are also investors, investors through pension plans and stock options (Lazzarato 2004: 241). As Lazzarato states, following Deleuze and Guattari, the 'working class', or those that sell their wage labour, have been incorporated in the capitalist 'majority'. The majority is not defined numerically but by the way in which a particular form of existence becomes the norm. 'Majority implies a constant, of expression or content, of expression or content, serving as a standard measure by which to evaluate it' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 105/133). In the case of capitalism investing becomes the norm of economic participation; for example, the stock market, and not wages, becomes the standard through which the economy is evaluated, regardless of the fact that it does not benefit everyone. Thus, in capitalism, 'Desire of the most

disadvantaged creature will invest with all its strength, irrespective of any economic understanding or lack of it, the capitalist social field as a whole' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 229/272). What capitalism loses in terms of belief by 'decoding' all of the hierarchies of authority and prestige, reducing them to the purely quantitative calculation of payment, it more than regains in the form of 'investment' of desire. Desire directly invests in the flows and fluxes of capital, and it is at this level, at the level of the most quotidian and economic relations and not exclusively at the level of ideology or the superstructure that we should look for the production of subjectivity in capital.

The deterritorialisation of desire in capitalism, as much as it makes possible a strong identification between the desire of the individual and the capitalist system, also continually threatens it. In giving up belief, in giving up the coding that constitutes pre-capitalist societies, capitalism gives up a great deal of control. It is a system that seems to make everything, every desire, possible. It continually produces new desires while at the same time limiting the possibility for the actualisation of those desires. This is a problem that the other modes of production do not have to contend with since the distance that separates wealth and poverty is always coded, or over-coded, by symbolic economies of prestige, honour and tradition.[8] In capitalism all of these codes have been decoded, or deterritorialised, ripped from their moorings in practices and beliefs by the flows of money and abstract labour. Desires for freedom and equality circulate along with money and abstract labour as their bothersome after-images. Money and the wage make it possible to fight for not just the specific conditions of one's existence, but anything one desires; moreover, the abstract and indifferent labour that capital requires is inseparable from a new sociality of flexibility and cooperation. As capital turns to the productive power of science, knowledge and communication, it must deterritorialise these powers as well, decode the structures which keep them locked in particular locales (such as the university, or intellectual copyright) making them part of the general knowledge of society, that is 'common' (Virno 2004: 37). Deleuze and Guattari's critique of capitalism focuses not on the contradictions of capital, but its lines of flight: in this case, forms of aesthetic and scientific experimentation that open up new ways of perceiving and feeling.[9] Deterritorialisation threatens capitalism as much as it nourishes it.

It is against the backdrop of this threat that we can understand capitalism's most potent form of subjection, beyond the cynicism of privatised belief and the stimulation of desire by money. Capitalism does not just 'decode' the old beliefs and traditions, wash them away in the 'cold

water of egotistical calculation', it continually resuscitates them, gives them new life. As Deleuze and Guattari write:

> Civilized modern societies are defined by processes of decoding and deterritorialization. But *what they deterritorialize with one hand, they reterritorialize with the other*. These neoterritorialities are often artificial, residual, archaic; but they are archaisms having a perfectly current function, our modern way of 'imbricating,' of sectioning off, of reintroducing code fragments, resuscitating old codes, inventing pseudo codes or jargons . . . These modern archaisms are extremely complex and varied. Some are mainly folkloric, but they nonetheless represent social and potentially political forces . . . . Others are enclaves whose archaism is just as capable of nourishing a modern fascism as of freeing a revolutionary charge . . . Some of these archaisms take form as if spontaneously in the current of the movement of deterritorialization – Others are organized and promoted by the state, even though they might turn against the state and cause it serious problems (regionalism, nationalism). (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 258/307)

Deleuze and Guattari insist that the process of deterritorialisation, the breakdown of codes and traditions by the abstract quantities of labour and desire, is inseparable from a process of reterritorialisation. For Deleuze and Guattari modernisation is always uneven, reviving antiquated beliefs and political forms, 'archaisms', as some melt away. This is not due to some grand conflict of cultures (Jihad vs. McWorld), as some political analysts claim, or some internal conflict between the global scale and lightning pace of contemporary culture and our necessarily tribal and patriarchal minds, as some socio-biologists claim, but is between two sides of capitalism itself. It is a conflict between capitalism's tendency to create new desires, new needs, new experiences and possibilities, and the tendency to subordinate this potential to the overarching need of maintaining and reproducing the existing distribution of wealth and property. This conflict animates the relation between capitalism and the state. Capital by definition is global; this is necessary to its very reproduction. No less necessary to the functioning of capital is the state. 'The internationalism of capital is thus accomplished by national and state structures that curb capital even as they make it work; these archaic structures have genuine functions' (Deleuze 2004: 196). The state is the ultimate archaism, in fact Deleuze and Guattari argue that the modern state is nothing less than the ancient despot brought back to life. It is revived, but with an important difference, it no longer stands above society, overcoding the various social collectivities. Now it is the state that produces and reproduces the necessary dimensions of code, of social subjection, which counteract and make possible deterritorialised flows of

subjectivity necessary to capitalism, the state is a model of realisation for capital. 'Social subjection proportions itself to the model of realization, just as machinic enslavement expands to meet the dimensions of the axiomatic that is effectuated in the model' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 459/ 572). What Deleuze and Guattari insist on – and this makes up the heart of the idea of reterritorialisation – is that capitalism produces subjectivity, not in spite of its disruptive cultural and political force, but through it. Modern subjectivity is split between axioms and codes, machinic enslavement and social subjection, between cynicism and piety, between the past and the future. Deleuze and Guattari's insistence on the 'immediate coincidence' of subjectivity and production makes it possible to see this split as a political division, a division between capital and the state, rather than an existential division, between the meaninglessness of capital and the search for some meaning in tradition.

Conclusion

Deleuze and Guattari's articulation of the historical and cultural logic of capitalism through such concepts as code, axiom, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, concepts which often appear daunting, even incomprehensible, is oriented towards dismantling an entrenched set of oppositions, between economy and affect, subjectivity and objectivity, and base and superstructure. It is in undoing these oppositions, recognising the way in which 'desire is part of the infrastructure', that Deleuze and Guattari argue it is possible to grasp the realities of the present. These realities include the persistence of capitalism long past the date that its social, political and ecological contradictions were to bring about its inevitable demise. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, we should look to understand the persistence of capital not simply on the side of the economy, examining the tendency of the rate of profit to fall and economic crises, but on the side of subjectivity, on the way in which capitalism captures not only labour power, but also desire and the imagination. Thus Deleuze and Guattari offer the starting point of what Paolo Virno calls a 'noneconomic critique of political economy' (Virno 1996b: 271), a critique which promises to make possible a way to understand what is most perplexing about the present, its tendency to be both 'behind and ahead of itself', that is the coexistence of the archaic and the modern (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 260/310). There are multiple examples of this from the current political scene in the United States, which presents itself as the search for a perfect synthesis between the 'new economy' of high speed digital transactions and the 'traditional values' of family, state and God to the resur-

gence of ethnic identities and hatreds (so called neo-tribalisms) in the face of a world order which purports to be 'global' and thus beyond nationalities and the nation state. This coexistence cannot be explained by looking simply at the economy, by studying the connection between underdevelopment and development, or by looking at subjective factors, alienation or the inevitable 'clash of civilisations'. It can only be grasped by examining the way in which the mode of production and the mode of subjection, desiring production and social production, intersect and affect each other. Finally, despite the fact that Deleuze and Guattari do not offer an explicit programme for a new political order, their method does suggest a new way of doing politics, one that focuses not simply on 'real' economic issues or cultural questions of recognition, exclusion and desire, but the point where the two intersect.

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Notes

1. Page numbers are given for English and then the French edition of *Anti-Oedipus*.
2. Page numbers are given for the English and then the French edition of *A Thousand Plateaus*.
3. On this point see my *The Micro-Politics of Capital: Marx and the Prehistory of the Present* (2003).
4. The theme of an 'apparent objective movement', or an illusion that is neither hard-wired in the structures of human consciousness, as in the Kantian aporias, or perpetrated by a knowing subject operating behind the scenes, but rather is produced by a particular social formation, runs throughout Marx's writing. It underlies the idea of ideology as an 'objective' illusion both produced and necessitated by the division of labour, specifically the division of mental and manual labour, and commodity fetishism as an 'objective' illusion produced by the pervasiveness of market relations. Étienne Balibar has argued that these two problems, the problem of ideology and the problem of fetishism, are perhaps two different problems. In the former, there is the combination of objective conditions such as the division between mental and manual labour and a subjective class point of view, the ideas of the ruling class, while in the latter, the fetish is objectively produced by the mechanisms of commodity production (Balibar 1995: 60). It is perhaps for this reason that while Deleuze and Guattari dispense with the notion of ideology and its corresponding ideas of false and true consciousness, they retain the term 'fetishism' to refer to this 'apparent objective movement'.
5. In his earlier writings Gilles Deleuze referred to this condition in which the state is formed all at once as Levi-Strauss's or, referring to the Crusoe situation of being stranded on a desert isle, Robinson's paradox. As Deleuze writes: 'Any society whatsoever has all of its rules at once – juridical, religious, political, economic; laws governing love and labor, kinship and marriage, servitude and freedom, life and death. But the conquest of nature, without which it would no longer be a society, is achieved progressively, from one source of energy to another, from one object to another' (Deleuze 1990: 49).
6. The problem of the image of thought first appears in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*. Although the state is not specifically mentioned, the defining char-

acteristics of state thought, most notably a presupposed universality ('everybody knows, no one can deny'), appear under the name of good sense (Deleuze 1994: 130). The idea that all thought, all philosophy, presupposes a particular image, a particular idea of what it means to think, also appears in Deleuze and Guattari's final co-authored book *What is Philosophy?*

7. Deleuze and Guattari's distinction can be read through not only Marx's text but also Althusser and Balibar's *Lire le Capital*. As Balibar argues in all pre-capitalist economic formations there is a temporal and spatial distinction between labour and the extraction of surplus. Thus in pre-capitalist modes of production the extraction of a surplus is always accompanied by a 'non-economic' instance determined as dominant (politics or religion) which renders visible and palpable the division between necessary and surplus labour, but in the capitalist mode of production this division is in some sense invisible. As Balibar argues, in capitalism the labourer works in the production process, and its temporality (the working day) and relations (such as the relation between the individual worker and capitalist) constitute lived experience, while the 'valorisation' process and its division between necessary and surplus labour never takes place in the lived present. In the capitalist mode of production there is no spatial or temporal division between necessary and surplus labour: thus in some sense, exploitation is invisible, or at least potentially invisible, taking place behind one's back (Althusser and Balibar 1970: 223).
8. As Immanuel Wallerstein argues: 'While privilege earned by inheritance has long been at least marginally acceptable to the oppressed on the basis of mystical or fatalistic beliefs in an eternal order . . . privilege earned because one is possibly smarter and certainly better educated than someone else is extremely difficult to swallow, except by the few who are basically scrambling up the ladder. Nobody who is not a yuppie loves or admires a yuppie. Princes at least may seem to be kindly father figures. A yuppie is nothing but an overprivileged sibling. The meritocratic system is politically one of the least stable systems. And it is precisely because of this political fragility that racism and sexism enter the picture' (Wallerstein 1991: 32).
9. Deleuze and Guattari would appear to argue, at least implicitly, that capitalism's lines of flight are primarily aesthetic and scientific rather than political. As they write: 'Why this appeal to art and science, in a world where scientists and technicians and even artists, and science and art themselves, work so closely with the established sovereignties – if only because of the structures of financing? Because art, as soon as it attains its own grandeur, its own genius, creates chains of decoding and deterritorialisation that serve as the foundation for desiring machines, and make them function' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 368/442). A similar argument underlies their later theory of 'nomadic thought': which takes science and art as its model.

Chapter 8

Deleuze, Materialism and Politics

Manuel DeLanda

For most of their history leftist and progressive politics were securely anchored on a materialist philosophy. The goal of improving the material conditions of workers' daily lives, of securing women's rights to control their bodies, of avoiding famines and epidemics among the poor: all of these were worthy goals presupposing the existence of an objective world in which suffering, exploitation and exclusion needed to be changed by equally objective interventions in reality. To be sure there was room in this materialism for the role of subjective beliefs and desires, including those that tended to obscure the objective interests of those whose lives needed improvement, but these were never allowed to define what reality is. The concept of 'ideology' may be inadequate for analysing these beliefs and desires, but it nevertheless captured the fact that there is a material reality with respect to which these subjective states should be compared.

Then everything changed. Idealism, the ontological stance according to which the world is a product of our minds, went from being a deeply conservative position to become the norm in many academic departments and critical journals: cultural anthropologists came to believe that defending the rights of indigenous people implied adopting linguistic idealism and the epistemological relativism that goes with it; sociologists, both social constructivist and ethnomethodologist, correctly denounced the concept of a harmonious society espoused by their functionalist predecessors only to embrace an idealist phenomenology; and many academic departments, particularly those that attach the label 'studies' to their name, completely forgot about material life and concentrated instead on textual hermeneutics. To make things worse this 'conservative turn' was hidden under several layers of radical chic, making it appealing to students and even activists pursuing a more progressive agenda.

It would take an entire book to document these claims in the detail that they deserve. In the space of this essay I can give but a single example, though one that perfectly illustrates the perverse nature of the conservative turn. The example is not backed by any systematic statistics: it is the product of an informal poll I have been conducting whenever I lecture in humanities departments. It concerns a book that, on the surface, should have given a big boost to materialist politics, Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. As is well known, in this book Foucault analyses a historical transformation in the means to enforce authority, a transformation that took place in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in organisations like prisons, schools, hospitals, barracks and factories. Although physical torture and confinement are sadly still very much with us, they were replaced in some parts of the population of organisations by subtler means of enforcement: the spatial partitioning of the architecture and the analytical distribution of human bodies to facilitate monitoring and control, the increased systematicity of observation and surveillance and the continuous recording in writing of every detail about performance and behaviour (Foucault 1979: 195–9).

Foucault breaks new ground with this book, even relative to his own previous work, by giving equal attention to the discursive and non-discursive practices of those in positions of authority in institutional organisations. A discursive practice is one that, as its name implies, produces a discourse: the discourse of criminology, of pedagogy, of clinical medicine, of scientific management (Taylorism). Discourses were, of course, the subject of Foucault's previous publications so it is not surprising that they are still important characters in this book. But a new set of practices is now added to those that produce discourse, practices that involve causal interventions on the human body: from torture and mutilation to subtler varieties of punishment, such as imposed physical exercise. Even the systematic keeping of records, a practice that involves writing and could therefore be considered discursive, is indeed non-discursive: it makes use of a logistical form of writing – keeping track of dosages and visits in hospitals, of daily behaviour and performance in schools and barracks, of the content of warehouses and raw materials used in factories – a type of writing that may serve as data for those who develop a discourse but that does not lend itself to endless hermeneutic rounds as real discourses do.

In my informal poll I have found that the majority of those humanities professors that are interested in Foucault consider torture, physical confinement, drilling and monitoring to be *discursive practices*: to them that is the achievement of Foucault, to have shown that many things that seem

physical and material are actually linguistic. This bastardisation of Foucault must not go unchallenged and his original distinction must be upheld. To put it in a nutshell: while pairing a certain category of crime, like stealing, with a certain category of punishment, like cutting off a thief's hand, is clearly a discursive practice, the actual act of mutilation is equally clearly a non-discursive one. The reduction of the non-discursive, to think of mutilation as a 'deconstruction of the body' as one clueless academic once remarked to me, is a symptom of a deep political conservatism hidden under radical chic.

Coping with the demographic challenge that entrenched the conservative turn in American universities is not the only one facing the left today. A more important challenge is to fix the shortcomings of the forms of materialism that are part of its tradition. When one asserts the mind-independence of the material world a crucial task is to explain the more or less stable identity of the mind-independent entities that inhabit that world. If this identity is explained by the possession of an atemporal essence then all one has done is to reintroduce idealism through the back door. Thus a coherent materialism must have as its main tool a concept of *objective synthesis*, that is of a temporal process that produces and maintains those stable identities. In traditional forms of materialism, those associated with Marxism, this concept was borrowed from Hegelian idealism but turned right side up, so to speak. The synthetic process in question was, of course, the negation of the negation, the synthesis of opposites. This concept was thought to apply not only to human affairs, the synthesis of new institutions in the cauldron of social conflict, but to also represent a general approach to the dialectics of nature itself. Unfortunately, an a priori concept of synthesis is bound to fail to capture all the different processes through which material form and identity are generated, even if it is turned on its head.

As part of his rejection of Hegelian dialectics, and of a broader rejection of negation as a fundamental concept, Gilles Deleuze introduced new ideas with which to conceptualise the temporal synthesis of objective entities. In his work with Félix Guattari, for example, he gave us the concept of a process of double articulation through which geological, biological and even social strata are formed. The first articulation concerns *the materiality of a stratum*: the selection of the raw materials out of which it will be synthesised (such as carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen and sulphur for biological strata) as well as the process of giving populations of these selected materials some statistical ordering. The second articulation concerns the *expressivity of a stratum*. Although in the heavily linguisticised century in which these ideas were written the

term 'expression' was synonymous with 'linguistic expression', in the theory of double articulation the term refers in the first place to material expressivity, that is to the colour, sound, texture, movement, geometrical form and other qualities that can make geological or meteorological entities so dramatically expressive. This second articulation is therefore the one that consolidates the ephemeral form created by the first articulation and that produces the final material entity defined by a set of qualities expressing its identity. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari:

> Each stratum exhibits phenomena of *double articulation* . . . This is not at all to say that the strata speak or are language based. Double articulation is so extremely variable that we cannot begin with a general model, only a relatively simple case. The first articulation chooses or deducts, from unstable particle-flows, metastable molecular or quasi-molecular units (*substances*) upon which it imposes a statistical order of connections and successions (*forms*). The second articulation establishes functional, compact, stable substances (*forms*), and constructs the molar compounds in which these structures are simultaneously actualized (*substances*). In a geological stratum, for example, the first articulation is the process of 'sedimentation' which deposits units of cyclic sediment according to a statistical order: flysch, with its succession of sandstone and schist. The second articulation is the 'folding' that sets up a stable functional structure and effects the passage from sediment to sedimentary rock. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 40–1; emphasis in the original)

There is, in fact, an error in the example given, sedimentary rock being produced by a process of 'cementation' (the gluing together of the sorted pebbles constituting the loose sediment) but it is quite easy to fix. Folding is, indeed, a second articulation but one operating at a different scale, that of folded mountain ranges (like the Himalayas), in which the first articulation is the statistical accumulation of many layers of sedimentary rock. We will see below that this is not the only place where Deleuze fails to make a distinction between strata operating at different scales. But the ease with which the correction can be made shows that the concept of a double articulation is robust against simple errors and, more importantly, capable of multiple variations that accommodate the complexity of actual strata. What really matters is not to confuse the two articulations with the distinction between form and substance, since both operate through form and substance: the first selects only some materials, out of a wider set of possibilities, and gives them a statistical form; the second gives these loosely ordered materials a more stable form and produces a new, larger-scale (molar) material entity. Deleuze and Guattari use a variety of terms to refer to each of these two articulatory

relations. Here I will stick to one pair: the first articulation is called 'territorialisation' and concerns a *formed materiality,* the second one 'coding' and deals with a *material expressivity*.

We can now summarise the idea of a double synthesis this way: all the entities that populate the world come into being through specific temporal processes that affect both their materiality and their (non-linguistic) expressivity. All identities are, in this sense, historical, as long as the word is used to refer not only to human history but to geological, biological and even cosmic history. This constitutive historicity implies that these mind-independent entities are objectively changeable: they may undergo destabilising processes affecting their materiality, their expressivity or both. In other words, they may be subject to processes of *deterritorialisation and decoding*. This is important in the context of human politics because it is the possibility of social change that is at stake here, as well as the historicity of all social institutions. Whatever one may think about the old historical and dialectical forms of materialism they at least got that right. Finally, there is the question of the role that language plays in all this. In the theory of double articulation the historical emergence of language is treated in a similar way to that of the genetic code. While before the rise of living creatures all expression was three-dimensional – the geometry of a crystal, for example, was what expressed its identity – genes are a one-dimensional form of expression, a linear chain of nucleotides, and this *linearisation* allows material expressivity to specialise. In Deleuze and Guattari's words:

> Before, the coding of a stratum was coextensive with that stratum; on the organic stratum, on the other hand, it takes place on an autonomous and independent line that detaches as much as possible from the second and third dimensions . . . The essential thing is *the linearity of the nucleic sequence* . . . It is the crystal's subjugation to three-dimensionality, in other words, its index of territoriality, that makes the structure incapable of formally reproducing and expressing itself; only the accessible surface can reproduce itself, since it is the only deterritorializable part. On the contrary, the detachment of a pure line of expression on the organic stratum makes it possible for the organism to attain a much higher threshold of deterritorialization, gives it a mechanism of reproduction covering all the details of its complex spatial structure, and enables it to put all its interior layers topologically in contact with the exterior, or rather with the polarized limit (hence the special role of the living membrane). (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 59–60; emphasis in the original)

Language emerges in a similar way except that its linearity is now temporal not spatial, involving a more intense deterritorialisation that makes

it even more independent of its formed materiality. This is what gives language the ability to represent all other strata, to translate 'all of the flows, particles, codes, and territorialities of the other strata into a sufficiently deterritorialized system of signs . . .' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 62). And this capacity to represent or translate all other strata is, in turn, what gives language, or more exactly language-based theories, their 'imperialist pretensions'. In other words, the linguistisation of world-views that took place in the twentieth century after the so-called 'linguistic turn', forming the basis for the rejection of materialism and the spread of conservative idealism, can be explained within the theory of double articulation as a result of the unique status of this specialised line of expression. Thus explained, the power of language can be accepted while the conceptual obstacle represented by its illegitimate extension circumvented.

Before discussing human politics one more conceptual obstacle needs to be removed. In its simplest form double articulation involves a relation between *spatial scales*: sedimentary rock, the final product in the example given above, has clearly a greater extension than the pebbles that serve as raw materials for its synthesis. Deleuze and Guattari refer to these two levels of scale as 'the molecular' and 'the molar'. These are terms used in physics, specifically thermodynamics. Temperature, for example, is a molar property of a body of water or air composed of a large population of molecules. That is, temperature is simply the average result of the molecules' kinetic energy, the energy they have by virtue of their movement. Thus the distinction between molecular and molar is similar to that between micro-properties and macro-properties. Deleuze and Guattari, though, warn us that 'it cannot be taken for granted that the distinction between the two articulations is always that of the molecular and the molar' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 41). Why? Because the two specialised lines of expression, genes and words, can operate at multiple scales simultaneously: genes are molecular, yet control cells, tissues, organs and even entire organisms and species; words are also molecular, but they operate at the level of persons, institutional organisations or entire government hierarchies. Leaving aside this exception for the moment we can think of the two articulations as operating at the micro and macro levels of scale respectively. Or to put it differently, double articulation is, in its simplest version, the process of *joining parts to yield a whole with properties of its own*. Since most component parts are smaller than the whole they compose, the part-to-whole relation is a relation between small and large scales.

So what is the conceptual obstacle just mentioned? Traditionally, those sciences that have the most relevance to politics have divided themselves

along micro–macro lines. For a while classical economics represented the micro side, the rational decision-maker, while classical sociology the macro side, society as a whole. Eventually, however, both fields diversified: micro-economics became supplemented by Keynes' macro-economics, dealing with molar quantities like gross national product, inflation and unemployment rates, while the macro-sociology of Durkheim and Parsons was challenged by phenomenologists in the 1960s and gave rise to several forms of micro-sociology, dealing with the effects of daily routine or the effects of stereotypes in shaping personal experience. But there is something deeply wrong with this treatment of the micro and the macro as absolute scales. A more adequate approach would be to treat them *as relative to a particular scale*. Persons are micro-entities if one is dealing with the community of which they form a part, but macro-entities if one is studying the molecular sensations and feelings out of which persons crystallise. Communities are macro-entities in relation to persons but they may become part of a larger whole, as when several of them are linked through alliances to form a social justice movement. In that case, a single community is a micro-entity while the entire coalition is a macro-entity. Persons can also be component parts of institutional organisations, that is organisations possessing an authority structure. In this case persons operate at the micro-level while the entire organisation works at the macro-level. But organisations can become parts of larger wholes, such as an industrial network of economic organisations or a government hierarchy of federal, state and local organisations. In this case, an industrial network or a federal government are macro-entities, while their component organisations are micro-entities.

Relativising the micro–macro distinction to specific scales removes the conceptual mistake of thinking there are only two levels of scale operating in social processes. Unfortunately, Deleuze himself tends to fall into this trap, moving too fast to the macro-level with concepts like 'the socius' or 'the social field'. My solution to this problem is to systematically exclude entities like 'society as a whole' from the theory: the largest entities, territorial entities like kingdoms, empires and nation-states, should be considered to be every bit as singular and unique as local communities and organisations. Individual territorial states are composed of micro-entities, such as individual provinces, that in turn have parts, individual regions with a definite cultural identity, that in turn have parts, individual cities and towns of different sizes. And there may be even larger entities, such as world-economies, that have territorial states as their component parts, but that are as concrete and historically unique as smaller social entities. In general, what needs to be excluded from a

materialist social ontology are vague, reified general terms like 'society' (or 'the market', 'the state', etc.). Only *hacceities* (individual singularities) operating at different spatio-temporal scales should be legitimate entities in this ontology (DeLanda 2006).

Let's examine some of these concrete social entities in more detail from the point of view of double articulation, starting with institutional organisations like prisons, hospitals, schools, barracks, factories and so on. These are, of course, the 'species' of organisations whose mutation during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was so thoroughly studied by Foucault. In his book on the subject Deleuze distinguishes the two articulations involved in the production of these social entities this way:

> Strata are historical formations, positivities or empiricities. As 'sedimentary beds' they are made from things and words, from seeing and speaking, from the visible and the sayable, from bands of visibility and fields of sayability, from contents and expressions. We borrow these terms from Hjemslev, but apply them to Foucault in a completely different way, since content is not to be confused here with a signified, nor expression with a signifier. Instead, it involves a new and very rigorous division. The content has both form and substance: for example, the form is prison and the substance is those that are locked up, the prisoners . . . The expression also has a form and a substance: for example, the form is penal law and the substance is 'delinquency' in so far as it is the object of statements. Just as penal law as a form of expression defines a field of sayability (the statements of delinquency), so prison as a form of content defines a place of visibility ('panopticism', that is to say, a place where at any moment one can see everything without being seen). (Deleuze 1988: 47)

Deleuze is here using an alternative terminology. Instead of a formed materiality he speaks of 'form and substance of content', and instead of a material expressivity he speaks of 'form and substance of expression'. In my own work I tend to use the former terminology because it has less of a linguistic flavour. Either way, Deleuze is distinguishing the two articulations roughly along the lines of the non-discursive (territorialisation) and the discursive (coding): it is non-discursive practices of surveillance and monitoring performed in buildings that are specifically designed to facilitate their routine execution that sort the raw materials (human bodies) into criminal categories; and it is discursive practices like those of criminologists and legal scholars that produce those very categories and the discourses in which they are embedded, giving prisons a more stable form and yielding the wider penal system. I have problems with this formulation, some of which can be traced to the question of an absolute use of the micro-macro distinction. For Deleuze and Foucault,

the visible and the articulable (that is, the linguistically articulable) define an 'age', that is a historical period defining a whole 'society'. Since I do not believe that such an entity exists independently of our minds – more exactly, *independently of our conceptions*, since strictly speaking no social entity would survive if minds disappeared – I cannot accept that conclusion. But as in the case of geological strata, the problem is relatively easy to fix.

The first thing that needs to be done is to define the two articulations so that they apply to every member of the population of institutional organisations, not just those that Foucault analysed. To put this differently, in addition to the prisoners processed by prisons, the students processed by schools, the patients processed by hospitals and so on, there is the staff that work in these organisations: not just guards, teachers, doctors, nurses, but the entire administrative staff. These are also material components of an organisation and, indeed, also subject to surveillance, even if to a lesser degree. Many other organisations, from bureaucracies to large churches, share this administrative staff, but do not have a separate set of bodies to confine and monitor. What all these organisations do have in common is possession of an *authority structure*. Authority has two aspects: legitimacy and enforcement. Foucault focuses on the latter in an effort to go beyond the problematic of legitimacy. But however important it was for his work to stress enforcement practices, practices of legitimisation must also be taken into account. Roughly, it is practices of enforcement – including not only visibilties, that is, surveillance, but also the keeping of biographical records and the disciplining of bodies – that constitute the first articulation, while practices of legitimisation perform the second articulation.

In addition to looking at the population of organisations as a whole, we must keep separate those aspects of expressivity that are linguistic or discursive and those that are not. Deleuze sometimes writes as if the emergence of the genetic code had replaced all three-dimensional expressivity in organic creatures, but this is clearly wrong. Not only are the bodies of animals and plants as expressive of their identity as the geometric structure of a crystal, but when genes are complemented with a nervous system capable of learning, animals may find novel ways of expressing themselves. Deleuze and Guattari recognised this in their analysis of territorial animals, animals in which behaviour has become decoded (that is, it has ceased to be rigidly genetically determined) and which use colour, sound, smell, posture, silhouette and many other expressive means to create their territories (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 315). Similarly, he sometimes writes as if the emergence of language had

made all human expression linguistic, but in his work with Guattari he stresses the importance of the expressivity of the human face (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 61). I would go even further and include the non-linguistic expressivity of all human behaviour.

Keeping linguistic and non-linguistic expression separate helps to understand questions of legitimacy. If Michel Foucault can be considered the first thinker who correctly conceptualised enforcement practices, Max Weber is certainly the one that gave us the best conceptualisation of practices of legitimisation. He argued that in an organisation in which human activity is subject to *imperative coordination* purely coercive measures and material benefits (e.g. wages) are not sufficient to stabilise authority. In addition, those who obey must believe in the legitimacy of those commands, or more exactly in *the legitimacy of the claims to authority expressed* by those commands. Since Weber considered legitimacy an important source of voluntary submission to commands he classified types of authority in organisations accordingly. Imperative coordination of social activity can occur, according to this classification, in a continuum of forms defined by three 'ideal types' and their mixtures.

One pole of the continuum is defined by the extreme case of a perfectly efficient bureaucracy, in which a complete separation of position or office from the person occupying it has been achieved, and in particular in which a sharp separation of the incumbent from the resources connected to a position has been effected (Weber 1964: 331). In addition, the sphere of the incumbent's competence must be clearly defined by written regulations, some of which specify technical rules the application of which may demand specialised training. The official examinations which test incumbents for these technical capacities further solidify the separation of position and occupant. Finally, the positions or offices must form a clear hierarchical structure in which relations of subordination between positions (not persons) are clearly specified in writing, that is in some form of legal constitution. Weber refers to this ideal type as 'rational-legal' to capture both the constitutional and technical aspects of its order. In this case, obedience is owed to the impersonal order itself, that is legitimacy rests on a belief in both the legality and technical competence of claims to authority (Weber 1964: 328–36).

Another ideal pole defining the continuum of authority forms is the 'traditional type' in which a clear separation between offices and incumbents does not exist. To begin with, obedience is owed to the person occupying a position of authority justified in terms of traditional rules and ceremonies assumed to be sacred. While custom defines the extent of authority of the chief there is also a sphere of personal prerogative within

which the content of legitimate commands is left open and may become quite arbitrary. As Weber says, 'In the latter sphere, the chief is free to confer grace on the basis of his personal pleasure or displeasure, his personal likes and dislikes, quite arbitrarily, particularly in return for gifts which often become a source of regular income' (Weber 1967: 348). Finally, the third ideal pole of the continuum involves imperative coordination in which neither abstract legality nor sacred precedent exist as sources of legitimacy. Routine control of collective action on either basis is specifically repudiated by an individual who is treated by followers as a leader by virtue of personal charisma. In reality, the continuum defined by these three ideal types will tend to be populated by organisations displaying a mixture of these characteristics: a bureaucracy led by a charismatic elected official, or a bureaucracy in which written rules that used to be means to an end have become ends in themselves, that is have become ritualised (Weber 1967: 359).

While some aspects of legitimacy are clearly linguistic, the sacred texts of a tradition or the written constitution of a bureaucracy, others involve non-linguistic expressivity. When legitimacy is produced by effective problem-solving, a display of incompetence – as when a bureaucratic agency in charge of disaster relief shows itself to be incapable of rescuing the victims of a flood – directly translates into a loss of legitimacy. If legitimacy emanates from charisma, then strong character must be displayed by a leader in every eventful situation. And even in the case of traditional legitimacy, in which all rituals and ceremonies may be coded in sacred writings, their performance will typically make use of colour, smell, dance and song. More importantly, every time a command is given within an authority structure of any type the very fact that people obey it without question expresses, in a behavioural way, the legitimacy of that authority. For the same reason, any act of disobedience expresses a challenge to that authority even if it's carried out in silence. It is for that reason that such acts must be punished, that is that the authorities must make an expressive example of the disobedient person. On the other hand, the punishment itself – ranging from torture to physical exercise, as when a soldier is punished by forcing him to do a hundred push ups – is part of the first articulation, that is it is an enforcement practice.

In conclusion we may say that an institutional organisation is territorialised to the extent that the human bodies that compose it have been sorted out into the ranks of a hierarchy. The more centralised the hierarchical authority, the sharper its ranks are defined, the more territorialised the organisation is. The degree of territorialisation also increases the more obvert the interventions on the human body are. Thus an organisation in

which torture and indiscriminate confinement are the main means of enforcing authority is more territorialised than one in which enforcement has become more diffused, relying on less obvert forms like daily drill, inconspicuous monitoring, behind the scenes record-keeping. The second articulation involves both the discourses produced in these organisations (whether they are merely legitimising narratives or formal knowledge used to perfect enforcement practices) as well as the ways in which their practices are coded, from written regulations and rationalised daily routines to ritualised behaviour and ceremonial dress. The more these routines and rituals are rigidly specified in writing the more coded the organisation may be said to be. Foucault emphasised the fact that modern organisations had a double origin, that is each of the two articulations had a separate historical source. The two articulations converged in the Napoleonic state the foundations of which, as Foucault writes,

> were laid out not only by jurists, but also by soldiers, not only counselors of state, but also junior officers, not only the men of the courts, but also the men of the camps. The Roman reference that accompanied this formation certainly bears with it this double index: citizens and legionnaires, law and maneuvers. While jurists or philosophers were seeking in the pact a primal model for the construction or reconstruction of the social body, the soldiers and with them the technicians of discipline were elaborating procedures for the individual and collective coercion of bodies. (Foucault 1979: 169)

If this analysis is correct then it is clear that we must go beyond Deleuze's 'visibilities and sayabilities'. While this way of framing the problem may be useful for *epistemological purposes* – highlighting as it does the role played by certain organisations in making visible certain aspects of human behaviour (symptoms, predispositions, liabilities) and allowing their discursive articulation – it is much less useful for political purposes, that is for the purpose of changing the way in which imperative coordination of human activity is carried out in organisations. In particular, understanding the double historical source of legitimacy and enforcement in the rational-legal form, jurists and soldiers, is crucial for any political undertaking that attempts to bring real change. But above all, what is crucial for politics is to situate the analysis at the right level of scale. That is, we should avoid the mistake of thinking that we have discovered the essence of 'disciplinary society' when all we have achieved is figuring out how certain practices of enforcement propagated through a population of organisations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Let me give one more example of how to apply this extended version of the double articulation theory to other social entities such as local

communities. Communities may exist in well defined spatial locations (a small town, an ethnic neighbourhood) or be geographically dispersed. The latter deterritorialised condition becomes possible thanks to long-distance communication and transportation technologies, from a regular postal service, to telegraphs, telephones and the Internet. In this sense, these technologies can be said to be deterritorialising. The degree of territorialisation of a community can be measured by the density of the connections that define its networks of kin and friendship. A high-density network is one in which, roughly, the friends of my friends know the friends of everyone else's friends. In such a community word of mouth travels fast, particularly with regard to news about unfulfilled promises, unpaid debts, unreciprocated favours and more generally dishonoured commitments. The speed with which reputational information spreads, coupled with informal means of punishment like ostracism, makes dense social networks into efficient enforcement mechanisms for local norms. Such communities will tend to be highly territorialised and have a well defined identity. We can say that the community itself sorts people into insiders and outsiders, and the insiders into those with good and bad reputations, and that this selection and statistical ordering constitutes the first articulation. The second articulation involves expressions of solidarity. Solidarity may be expressed verbally, in speeches directed to a community, but it is expressed more clearly by actual behaviour, such as providing physical help or emotional support when it is needed. This form of behavioural expressivity may, of course, be captured in language, in expressions like 'actions speak louder than words', but the very content of these verbal expressions reflects the fact that solidarity cannot be separated from behaviour. On the other hand, language does play a role in the storage of a community's memory, in the form of stories of resistance to authority or of conflict between communities, and these stories are clearly a component of the second articulation (Tilly 2002: 28–9).

The degree of solidarity in a community is clearly important in determining the extent to which it may be mobilised for political purposes. Social justice movements, particularly before the rise of long-distance communication technologies, depended on such internal solidarity to create coalitions of communities. These alliances were crucial from the moment expressions of political dissent were transformed in the eighteenth century from machine breaking, physical attacks on tax collectors and other forms of direct action, towards the very different set of displays characteristic of today's public demonstrations. This is a change in what the historical sociologist Charles Tilly calls 'repertoires of contention':

the sets of performances through which collective actors express their claims to political rights. These expressive repertoires changed dramatically during the Industrial Revolution, to include 'public meetings, demonstrations, marches, petitions, pamphlets, statements in mass media, posting or wearing of identifying signs, and deliberate adoption of distinctive slogans' (Tilly 2002: 90). Through these novel means a social justice movement could express that it was *respectable, unified, numerous and committed*, in short that it was a valid collective maker of claims in the eyes of both its rivals and the government.

No doubt the possession of these properties by a coalition may be expressed by using language. Publishing a statement about the quantity of supporting members will express numerousness but to the extent that these verbal statements can be exaggerated assembling a very large crowd in a particular place in town will express numerousness more dramatically. Similarly, respectability will be more convincingly expressed if a large crowd manages to stage a peaceful and ordered demonstration. The degree of unity in a coalition can easily be expressed verbally, but for that very reason it will be expressed more forcefully by concerted action and mutual support. But to whom are these dramatic, forceful, convincing claims being expressed? Since these are expressions of specific political claims, such as claims to specific rights (the right to collective bargaining, to vote, to assemble), the intended audience is typically the governmental organisations that can grant these rights. As Tilly puts it:

> Claim making becomes political when governments – or more generally, individuals or organizations that control concentrated means of coercion – become parties to the claims, as claimants, objects of claims, or stake holders. When leaders of two ethnic factions compete for recognition as valid interlocutors for their ethnic category, for example, the government to which interlocutors would speak inevitably figure as stake holders. Contention occurs everywhere, but contentious politics involves governments, at least as third parties. (Tilly 2002: 12)

On the other hand, the same solidarity that can make communities politically mobilisable and increase their bargaining power relative to government organisations can also create political problems within them. In particular, conflict between different communities has the effect of exaggerating the distinction between 'us' and 'them', sharpening the boundaries between insiders and outsiders and increasing the degree of territorialisation beyond what is needed for solidarity within a coalition. In other words, inter-community conflict increases the degree to which

members of a community police its borders, not only the physical boundaries of a neighbourhood or small town, but the behaviour of other members. This tends to promote conformity and internal homogeneity of beliefs and values, resulting in practices of social exclusion and on the placing of heavy constrains on members' scope to be different (Crow 2002: 128–9). What this shows is that what can be a good thing at one scale, the scale of coalitions of communities, may have negative political side effects at a smaller scale.

Nowhere is the need to keep scale distinctions firmly in mind more evident that when tackling political economy. In particular, we have become used to speak of a 'capitalist society' (or the 'capitalist system'). Deleuze and Guattari add a new twist to this tired concept by moving from the stale 'mode of production' conception to one in terms of an axiomatic of decoded and deterritorialised flows. The point of the term 'axiomatic' is to create a contrast with the relatively fixed coding performed by government organisations that derive legitimacy from a tradition: fixed codes of behaviour and dress for different social classes; fixed laws based on ancient writings; fixed repertoires of technology kept closed by fear of innovation and so on. An axiomatic is, in the field of logic and mathematics, a small body of self-evident truths from which an infinite number of true theorems can be derived. Similarly, the 'capitalist system' is here conceived as capable of deriving an infinite number of new entities – new technologies, customs, fashions, financial instruments – all of which can be made compatible with the overall system (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 454–5).

There is no doubt that the commercial revolution that swept Europe from the thirteenth century on, and the even more intense Industrial Revolution that started in the eighteenth, had deterritorialising and decoding effects of all kinds. But the question is: what social entities underwent these deterritorialisations and decodings? Clearly, only social entities that actually exist can be so affected so the question becomes: is there such a thing as 'the capitalist system'? Deleuze and Guattari, for whom the Marxist tradition was like their Oedipus the little territory they did not dare to challenge, would say 'yes'. But for that very reason they can't be trusted in these matters. So who can we trust? Those economic historians that are the true experts on the subject and that are not bound by allegiance to a tradition. Fernand Braudel, for example, says that 'We should not be too quick to assume that capitalism embraces the whole of western society, that it accounts for every stitch in the social fabric' (Braudel 1986: 630). And he goes on to say that

> if we are prepared to make an unequivocal distinction between the market economy and capitalism . . . economic solutions could be found which could extend the area of the market and would put at its disposal the economic advantages so far kept to itself by one dominant group of society. (Braudel 1986: 632)

What Braudel is arguing here is that there have been two economic dynamics in the west ever since the first commercial revolution: wholesale was never like retail (until the second half of the twentieth century) and large industrial production had nothing to do with small-scale industry. In other words, he is redefining the word 'capitalism' to mean 'big business'. Personally I do not think that redefinitions are very useful, particularly with terms like 'capitalism' that are so entrenched in our discursive practices. But leaving questions of language aside, what Braudel is arguing here is that in the population of economic organisations we can make a distinction between those that due to their large scale can exercise economic power and those that can't. This locates one of the relevant scales at which deterritorialisations and decodings take place. A typical industrial firm that generates wealth through economies of scale is deterritorialised in a variety of ways. It most likely has the legal form of a joint stock corporation, that is an organisational structure in which control of day-to-day operations has been separated from ownership: managers, who move freely from one corporation to another, exercise control, while ownership is dispersed through many stockholders. This is in stark contrast with small firms run by an entrepreneur who is both the owner and the one who supplies direction for the firm. Large scale also allows corporations to internalise a variety of economic functions either through vertical integration (buying its suppliers or distributors) or horizontal integration (buying firms in different areas). Internalisation, in turn, gives these large firms geographical mobility by making them self-sufficient: they can relocate factories and headquarters to any part of a nation-state that offers them lower wages and taxes. Today, of course, this mobility has become global, an even more intense deterritorialisation. Small firms, particularly those that exist in networks and depend on the agglomeration of talent in a particular geographical area, do not have this mobility (DeLanda 2006: 80–2).

But Braudel also points to other social entities, operating at different scales, that can also be said to have undergone deterritorialisations: cities. Cities can be classified in many different ways but a relevant classification for present purposes is between landlocked cities that act as regional capitals – some of which later in the millennium went on to become national capitals – and those that are maritime ports and act as

gateways to the outside by participating in international trade. A landlocked regional capital like Paris, Vienna or Madrid tends to become territorialised by attracting migrants from throughout the region (and later on from throughout the nation) and slowly distilling a unique regional culture, and hence a well defined identity. Maritime gateways like Venice, Genoa or Amsterdam, on the other hand, do not acquire a sharp cultural identity since they mix and match elements from a variety of alien cultures with which they come into regular contact. In other words, maritime ports are less coded than landlocked capitals. Economically, while landlocked capitals were constrained until the nineteenth century by the slowness of terrestrial transportation, maritime gateways had access to the much greater speed of sea transport and early on created networks with each other through which everything – goods, money, people, news, contagious diseases – moved faster. It was these deterritorialised and decoded cities that were the birthplace of capitalism, properly redefined (DeLanda 2006: 108–11).

Finally, we can observe a variety of deterritorialising and decoding effects at many other scales, from individual persons and individual communities to individual nation-states. Communities, as I pointed out above, increase in territorialisation when the density of their social networks is high. Hence, anything that decreases density will deterritorialise them. One of these density-reducing factors is social mobility, a factor that became more and more important as middle classes increased in numbers. To the extent that the forms of movable wealth (money, debt in paper, stocks) increased in their circulation relative to those that were immovable (land), there were increases in social mobility in many communities. Affordable long-distance transportation and communication technologies also acted as deterritorialising forces.

I could add many more examples that both confirm Deleuze and Guattari's hypothesis while at the same time showing how inadequate it is to ascribe those deterritorialisations and decodings to the 'system as a whole'. There is more going on here than simply ontological clarification. Politically it is impossible to effect any real social change if the targets of one's interventions are non-existent entities. While social justice movements tend to be very concrete in their goals, extracting specific rights from government organisations, protest movements can loose sight of the concrete. Sometimes, as in the case of protesting an ongoing war, their goal can be very concrete even if it is over-moralised and under-theorised. But when the target of their protests is some vague generality, such as 'the global capitalist system', they do not have a chance at being effective in their interventions, even if they use the same

means as those created by social justice movements. And when many of the participants in these protest movements have become linguistic idealists, for whom there is no distinction between what actually exists and what we discourse about, then the lack of real targets becomes unproblematic, since they believe there are no real targets at all. As they say, 'everything is socially constructed', not materially but in phenomenological experience. Unfortunately much of the left today, particularly within humanities departments in universities, has become prey to this double danger: abandoning materialism while at the same time politically targeting reified generalities (Power, Resistance, Capital, Labour). A new left may yet emerge from these ashes but only if it recovers its footing in a mind-independent reality and if it focuses its efforts at the right social scale. This is where philosophers can one day make a difference.

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Chapter 9

Becoming-Democratic

Paul Patton

Deleuze often refers to his work with Guattari as philosophy and sometimes even as political philosophy. Yet the normative questions about the justification, nature and limits of political power that have preoccupied canonical figures in the history of political philosophy are largely absent from their collaborative writings. They only discuss the institutional forms of political power in passing and always from the perspective of a global theory of society founded upon concepts of desire, machinic processes and forms of assemblage. They are less interested in the justification or the capture of State power than in the qualitative changes in individual and collective identity that occur alongside or beneath the public political domain. Against the background of their commitment to social theory and their preference for minoritarian movements defined in opposition to majoritarian forms of social control, it is surprising to find the concept of 'becoming-democratic' included alongside 'becoming-revolutionary' as one form of contemporary resistance to the present (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 113). In effect, as I will argue, the appearance of 'becoming-democratic' in *What Is Philosophy?* represents a new turn in Deleuze and Guattari's political thought. It renders explicit the reliance upon some of the political values that inform democratic constitutional politics that was implicit in their earlier work. As such, it does not imply any fundamental rupture in their approach to philosophy or to politics. The first two sections of this paper will argue for this diagnosis via an examination of their concepts of philosophy and the political. In the final section I will draw upon elements of their earlier political philosophy to offer a more comprehensive account of what they might mean by 'becoming-democratic'.

The Political Vocation of Philosophy

What Is Philosophy? outlines a conception of philosophy with an overtly political vocation. Philosophy is defined as the creation of concepts, where the creation of concepts 'in itself calls for a future form, for a new earth and people that do not yet exist' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 108). Clearly, this is a stipulative definition that applies to some but not all historical and existing forms of philosophy. On this account, philosophy is above all a way of acting upon our experience of the world. It 'summons' or helps to bring about new earths and new peoples by virtue of its inherently 'deterritorialising' impulse and the resultant critical or 'untimely' relationship towards its historical context. Deleuze and Guattari describe the emergence of philosophy as the result of a synthetic and contingent encounter between Greek society and the plane of immanence of thought. This encounter gave rise to a specific kind of thought, defined in terms of its affinity with absolute as opposed to relative deterritorialisation. Relative deterritorialisation concerns the historical relationship of things to the territories into which they are organised, including the manner in which these territories break down and are transformed or reconstituted into new forms. Absolute deterritorialisation concerns the a-historical relationship of things and states of affairs to the virtual realm of becoming or pure events that is imperfectly or partially expressed in what happens. It is because it creates concepts that express pure events or 'becomings' – to become, to order, to capture, to revolt, etc. – that philosophy is inherently critical of the present in which it takes place. To characterise existing bodies and states of affairs in terms of such philosophical concepts is to re-present them in thought as the expression of 'pure events'. We thereby 'counter-actualise' them in the sense that we are able to see them differently or to see them as they might become rather than as they currently are. In this manner, new concepts function as conditions of change by informing the deterritorialisation of existing structures and their reterritorialisation or the emergence of new ones.

Philosophical criticism of this kind is only effective to the extent that it connects the absolute deterritorialisation expressed in the concept with the forces of relative deterritorialisation already at work in the relevant field. When this occurs, philosophy 'becomes political and takes the criticism of its own time to its highest point' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 99). When the absolute deterritorialisation expressed in concepts connects with forms of relative deterritorialisation in the historical milieu, philosophy achieves its political vocation and becomes utopian, where this means 'absolute deterritorialisation but always at the critical point

at which it is connected with the present relative milieu' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 100). Because capitalism is both the prevailing form of capture of economic, social and political processes and the most pervasive force of deterritorialisation in our time, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that philosophical concepts are critical of the present to the extent that they 'connect up with what is real here and now in the struggle against capitalism' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 100). There is no presumption of any end state to be achieved as a result of this struggle. Deleuzian philosophy is not utopian in the sense that it posits an ideal, such as Kant's kingdom of ends (Kant 1996: 87). It does not set out the principles of a just society in the light of which we might identify the shortcomings of existing societies, such as the 'just constitutional regime' that Rawls takes to be the object of political endeavour (Rawls 2005: 93). Rather, it creates concepts that can inform our perception and therefore our actions. In particular, the utopian aspiration of philosophy requires the diagnosis of the forms of relative deterritorialisation at work in the present.

Deleuze and Guattari mention two such 'actual becomings' in our present: 'a becoming-revolutionary that, according to Kant, is not the same thing as the past, present or future of revolutions' and a 'becoming-democratic that is not to be confused with present constitutional states' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 112–13). In these terms, we can see the normativity of their later political philosophy as defined by the relation between becoming-revolutionary and becoming-democratic. Neither concept specifies a determinate, future state of affairs that we should strive to bring about. Instead, they both express an open-ended and immanent utopianism. In each case, the concept remains irreducible to its particular historical incarnations. Deleuze follows Kant in distinguishing the bloody events that took place in Paris in 1789 from the concept of revolution (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 100).[1] In the same manner, the 'pure event' of democracy is both expressed in and betrayed by its actual historical manifestations. The 'enthusiasm' with which European peoples embraced the concept of revolution at the end of the eighteenth century was inseparable from the idea of a constitutional State that embodied the equality of all (men). Subsequent revolutions have been carried out in the name of more comprehensive conceptions of equality, freedom and democracy. In many cases, democratic movements have played a significant role in struggles against capitalism. Becoming-democratic therefore points towards future as yet unrealised forms of democracy, but also reminds us that there is no definitive form that will ever arrive. Like all the concepts that philosophy invents or reinvents in

order to counter-actualise the present, it enables us to perceive the world differently. What philosophy provides is not the concept of an actual or potentially existing democracy, or the concept of a successful revolution, but rather 'the contour, the configuration, the constellation of an event to come' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 32–3).

The Political in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*

While Deleuze and Guattari outline the political vocation of philosophy, they do not provide an account of the political as a specific object or modality of thought. Despite Deleuze's suggestion that '*Anti-Oedipus* was from beginning to end a work of political philosophy,' this book considers political institutions only from the perspective of a universal theory of society and history (Deleuze 1995: 170–1). The treatment of the political domain resembles that of Marx, except that it is undertaken from the perspective of desire rather than the social organisation of production: 'The truth of the matter is that social production is purely and simply desiring production itself under determinate conditions . . . There is only desire and the social, and nothing else' (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 29). The specifically political organisation of society plays no independent role in their social theory since it is treated as continuous with the coordination and control of flows of matter and desire in non-state societies governed by the territorial machine with its systems of alliance and filiation. Deleuze and Guattari present the state as a new mechanism of alliance rather than as the embodiment of any ideal treaty or contract on the part of its subjects (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 195). It appeared in human history in the form of the different kinds of despotic machine, each with their own mechanisms of overcoding, before becoming subordinate to the 'civilised machine' that is global capitalism. The Territorial, Despotic and Civilised social machines are treated only as different regimes of coordination and control of the local machines that constitute individual, familial and social life. There is no discussion of the norms that regulate modern political life, only the normativity inherent in the typology of desiring machines as embodying either the paranoiac, reactionary and fascistic pole of desire or the schizoid revolutionary pole (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 366). Schizoanalysis as a theory and a practice of desire proposes neither a political programme nor a project for a future form of society. At most, it offers a conceptual apparatus within which to pose questions about social investments of desire, the ways in which it can become complicit in its own repression and the ways in which it might sustain creative or revolutionary social processes.

A Thousand Plateaus is no more concerned with the nature, justification or critique of specifically political institutions and practices than was *Anti-Oedipus*. Instead, it broadens and generalises Deleuze and Guattari's social ontology so that it becomes a general theory of assemblages or multiplicities and the manner in which these are expressed throughout human history. The last vestiges of Marxist teleology are removed from their universal history so that:

> We no longer have to follow, as in *Anti-Oedipus*, the traditional succession of Savages, Barbarians, and Civilized Peoples. Now we come face to face with coexisting formations of every sort: primitive groups, which operate through series, through an evaluation of the 'last' term, in a bizarre marginality; despotic communities, which on the contrary constitute groups subjected to processes of centralization (apparatuses of State); nomadic war-machines, which will be unable to lay hold of the State without the State in turn appropriating a war-machine which it did not originally possess; the processes of subjectivation at work in State and warrior apparatuses; the convergence of these processes effected in capitalism and in its corresponding States; the modalities of revolutionary action; and the comparative factors, in each case, of earth, territory and deterritorialization. (Deleuze 2006: 310–11)

These concepts and the underlying open system of their construction allowed Deleuze and Guattari to undertake certain kinds of critical engagement with traditional Marxist social and political thought. As in *Anti-Oedipus* they draw attention to the manner in which the combination of deterritorialising as well as reterritorialising processes under capitalism means that it continually approaches only to reconfigure its own limits. They offer new ways of understanding the conditions and processes of social change, for example by suggesting that it is not class conflict but movements of deterritorialisation and lines of flight within a given social field that provide the impetus and direction for change. In contrast to traditional Marxist conceptions of revolution as the capture of State power by a privileged class, Deleuze and Parnet outline a concept of becoming-revolutionary where this encompasses the myriad forms of minoritarian-becoming open to individuals and groups (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 147).

This machinic ontology has a normative dimension in the sense that it presents a world of interconnected machinic assemblages, the innermost tendency of which is towards the 'deterritorialisation' of existing assemblages and their 'reterritorialisation' in new forms. The normativity embedded in this ontology accords systematic priority to minoritarian becomings over majoritarian being, to lines of flight over forms of

capture, to planes of consistency over planes of organisation, to smooth over striated spaces and so on. However, none of these deterritorialising processes provides grounds for unambiguous practical political orientation. In the evaluative schema of *A Thousand Plateaus*, nothing is good or bad in itself: 'it all depends on a careful systematic use . . . we're trying to say you can never guarantee a good outcome (its not enough just to have a *smooth space*, for example, to overcome striations and coercion, or a *body without organs* to overcome organizations)' (Deleuze 1995: 32).[2]

Deleuze and Guattari do not directly address the normative principles that inform their critical perspective on the present, much less the question how these might be articulated with those principles that are supposed to govern political life in late capitalist societies. As a consequence, their machinic social ontology remains formal in relation to actual societies and forms of political organisation. The political differences between liberal democratic, totalitarian and fascist States are mentioned only in passing in the course of their analysis of capitalism and present-day politics as a process of axiomatisation of the social and economic field. They do not deny but neither do they argue for the importance of the rule of law and basic civil and political rights such as freedom of conscience and freedom of association. They insist on the importance of struggle over particular axioms such as those involving welfare, unemployment benefits and forms of regional and national autonomy, but they offer no normative theory in support of the redistribution of wealth or the establishment of differential rights for cultural or national minorities (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 461–73).

Deleuze's Normative Turn

Read in the context of Western Marxism during the 1960s and 1970s, Deleuze and Guattari's failure to engage directly with the political values and normative concepts that are supposed to inform the basic institutions of modern liberal democracies is not surprising. Their political philosophy pre-dates widespread understanding and acceptance of the ways in which Marx's critique of capitalist society is bound up with concepts of distributive justice, as it does the efforts to identify the relevant principles of justice that occurred under the impact of so-called analytic Marxism in the course of the 1980s.[3] Since then, the English speaking world has seen numerous attempts to combine Marxist social theory with the normative principles informing varieties of left-liberal political theory.[4] While these developments had little impact upon French thought, there was a similar

normative turn in France during this period. *What Is Philosophy?* along with Deleuze's comments in interviews and other occasional writing during the 1980s marks a significant shift towards positive engagement with the institutions and implicit political values of modern liberal democracy. Two concepts in particular signal the beginnings of a normative turn in his later political writings: rights and democracy.

In a series of remarks in interviews during the 1980s, Deleuze criticises the renewed interest in human rights for the manner in which these are represented as 'eternal values' and 'new forms of transcendence'.[5] At the same time, he makes it clear that he is not opposed to rights as such but only to the idea that there is a definitive and a-historical list of supposed universal rights. He argues that rights are not the creation of codes or declarations but of jurisprudence, where this implies working with the 'singularities' of a particular situation (Deleuze 1995: 153). He returns to the question of rights and jurisprudence in his *Abécédaire* interviews with Claire Parnet recorded in 1988.[6] Here, he affirms the importance of jurisprudence understood as the invention of new rights, along with his own fascination for the law:

> To act for freedom, becoming revolutionary, is to operate in jurisprudence when one turns to the justice system . . . that's what the invention of law is . . . its not a question of applying 'the rights of man' but rather of inventing new forms of jurisprudence . . . I have always been fascinated by jurisprudence, by law . . . If I hadn't studied philosophy, I would have studied law, but precisely not 'the rights of man', rather I'd have studied jurisprudence. (*L'Abécédaire, G comme gauche*)

In his 1990 interview with Negri, 'Control and Becoming', Deleuze reaffirms the importance of jurisprudence as a source of law with reference to the question of what rights should be established in relation to new forms of biotechnology (Deleuze 1995: 169). His suggestion that these should be determined by 'user groups' implies acceptance of the democratic idea that those most affected by a particular decision ought to play a role in making it (Shapiro 2003: 52). The very concept of rights implies a rule of law and the enforcement of limits to the degree to which citizens can interfere with the actions of others. Conversely, certain kinds of action on the part of all citizens will be protected by law. Kant's universal principle of right provides one influential formulation of the underlying idea, namely that 'any action is right if it can coexist with everyone's freedom in accordance with a universal law' (Kant 1996: 387).

There is nothing non-natural or idealist about such bases of rights, nor any incompatibility between supposing that there are such rights and

conceiving of social relations as relations of power. Nietzsche provides a naturalistic framework for thinking about rights in defining them as recognised and guaranteed degrees of power (Nietzsche 1997: 67). Although he discusses the origin of rights primarily in relation to the rights of those in unequal power relations with others, Nietzsche's definition applies equally to the rights of citizens in a democracy where power is exercised over every citizen in the name of all. Rights would then be the 'degrees of power' that all citizens are willing to leave to themselves and their co-citizens. Moreover, in the ideal case of a society that is effectively democratic and self-governing, the rights guaranteed for all citizens would not be the result of a simple modus vivendi but would derive from publicly endorsed opinions about what is right and just. It would be up to the society concerned whether or not it chose to enshrine those rights in a constitution or other founding legal document, but some system of basic rights would be required in order to establish the framework within which democratic decision-making and a rule of law could operate. Within this framework, it would be open to the courts to develop jurisprudence in particular ways in response to circumstances or new social or technological developments. It would even be open to citizens to reconsider the basic rights themselves in the light of changes to the collective view of what was fair or just. In this manner, Deleuze's endorsement of jurisprudence and the creation of rights is entirely consistent with his opposition to transcendence. However, as I will argue below, it also implies taking into consideration certain kinds of opinions or normative judgements, namely those that Rawls would call the 'settled' or 'considered convictions' of the people concerned (Rawls 2005: 8).

Deleuze and Democracy

'Democracy' is a complex concept that has many components, including concepts of equality, consent, involvement in the determination of the collective will and majority rule. Derrida points to its historical affiliation with concepts of friendship (Derrida 1997). With reference to contemporary discussions, we can distinguish between broader philosophical and more narrow and technical senses of the term. In the technical sense, 'democracy' refers to a form of government in which the governed exercise control over governments and their policies, typically through regular and fair elections. Contemporary liberal democracies purport to be democratic in this sense. They ensure equal rights to effective participation in political processes, but also set limits to what

majorities can decide by protecting basic civil and political rights and ensuring the maintenance of a rule of law. In the broad philosophical sense, 'democracy' refers to an egalitarian political society without privileges of class or caste and in which no person's life, beliefs or values are inherently worth more than those of anyone else. Such a political society is an association of equals in which there is no justification for the exclusion of individuals or groups from the widest possible system of basic civil and political liberties, nor any justification for the arbitrary exclusion of particular individuals or groups from the benefits of social and political cooperation. These two senses of democracy are not unrelated and the connections between them run in both directions. However, it is the conception of individuals as of equal moral worth that is fundamental. While this implies a form of government in which individuals have an equal voice on matters of public concern, it leaves open a range of possible institutional forms of democratic government.

Democracy is also inextricably tied to the concept of opinion. Democratic politics is inseparable from the play of conflicting opinions in order to determine a collective will as the basis for laws and public policy. Because it is played out in the space in between the orientations or opinions of particular individuals or groups, it is a politics of pure immanence, a politics without foundation. Philippe Mengue suggests that this space of public debate can be characterised in Deleuzian terms as a properly political or 'doxological' plane of immanence even though Deleuze does not provide any such theory of political reason as a specific form of thought irreducible to philosophy, science or art (Mengue 2003: 45–57; 2006: 266–8). What are produced on this plane are not concepts, percepts or affects but 'solidarity and consensus regarding what is to be done here and now' (Mengue 2003: 52). The formation of such consensus or 'right opinion' can be understood as a more or less regulated process of the deterritorialisation of opinions, expert advice, interests and values and their reterritorialisation on a particular conception of the public good.

Mengue is undoubtedly correct to point to the importance of this kind of specifically political reason for democratic politics. However, the space of democratic politics requires more than just the unregulated play of conflicting opinions. Without a constitutional form and procedures within which the play of opinions can be resolved, the result would be an unstable form of democracy. Constitutional principles of right are necessary to protect individuals and minorities against majority opinions. In Rawlsian terms, the normative framework of democratic politics is provided by the political conception of justice that ultimately rests

upon the considered convictions of the relevant people or peoples, their institutions and traditions of interpretation, and on the overlapping consensus which supports this political conception across the diverse conceptions of the good among them. The political conception of justice is immanent in the sense that it is derived from no higher source of authority. It is historical in the sense that it is subject to change as the considered convictions of the people change.

Deleuze and Guattari also draw a distinction between everyday opinions on matters of current concern and the kinds of opinion about what is right, fair or just that underpin the institutional structure of democratic politics. They point out that we live in a world in which there is no universal democratic state but only particular democratic states, the contours of which are determined in part by the philosophical or 'nationalitarian' opinions of a given people (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 102–4). The opinions expressed in the political and legal institutions of a given people, their conceptions of right and their practical philosophy will determine the national characteristics of their thought and the manner in which democratic ideals find expression. To the extent that modern philosophy is reterritorialised on the idea of the democratic state, this will always be modulated by the features of the 'nationalitarian' philosophy concerned:

> In each case philosophy finds a way of reterritorializing itself in the modern world in conformity with the spirit of a people and its conception of right. The history of philosophy therefore is marked by national characteristics or rather by *nationalitarianisms which are like philosophical opinions*. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 104 emphasis added)

These philosophical opinions will condition the institutional and constitutional structure of particular national forms of democracy. Opinions about the natural hierarchies of race, sex and class have long influenced the procedures and distribution of basic political and civil rights in otherwise democratic societies. As such, they constitute one kind of constraint upon the institutional actualisation of democratic ideals in a given historical milieu.

Deleuze and Guattari point to a second kind of constraint on democratisation in the present that follows from the requirements of global capitalism. They argue that there is no universal democratic state because 'the market is the only thing that is universal in capitalism' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 106). To the extent that modern democratic states function as models of realisation of the immanent axiomatic of global capitalism, they are constrained by their subordination to the requirements

of this system. As a result, not only do modern democratic states fail to live up to their egalitarian promise, but they are also compromised insofar as they are direct or indirect beneficiaries of the actions of dictatorial states. Their subordination to the global axiomatic of capital also implies that the protection of the fundamental equality and security of citizens in the form of human rights amounts to adding axioms that coexist alongside other axioms, 'notably those concerning the security of property' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 107). These property rules do not so much contradict the basic rights of individuals as suspend their operation in certain contexts. Thus, when basic political rights coexist alongside private property in large-scale means of production and the absence of publicly financed elections, they do not have the same value for all citizens. Similarly, when private property in the means of production exists alongside the absence of mechanisms to provide minimal healthcare, housing or education, the basic welfare rights of the poor are effectively suspended. Considerations such as these support Deleuze and Guattari's assertion that 'Rights can save neither men nor a philosophy that is reterritorialized on the democratic State. Human rights will not make us bless capitalism' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 107).

Extremes of poverty and oppression are not the only manifestation of the subordination of democratic life to the requirements of capital. There is also 'the meanness and vulgarity of existence that haunts democracies' as this is expressed in the 'values, ideals and opinions of our time' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 107–8). This is an important part of the reason why 'our democracies' do not provide optimum conditions for resistance to the present or the constitution of new earths and new peoples. The consensus of opinions in these societies all too often reflects 'the cynical perceptions and affections of the capitalist' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 108, 146). The highly critical remarks about present forms of democracy scattered throughout *What Is Philosophy?* and Deleuze's interviews from this period have lead some readers to conclude that he is hostile to democracy.[7] However, the prevalence of opinions reflecting the cynicism of capital is a reason to be critical of existing democracies rather than the concept of democracy as such. Deleuze's criticisms of the role of the media and the kind of opinion that circulates in place of informed public deliberation imply that more genuinely democratic forms of public political reason are both possible and desirable.

The call for resistance to the present state of affairs in capitalist and democratic societies in the name of democracy that we find in *What Is Philosophy?* is not without precedent in Deleuze's writings. His 1979 'Open Letter to Negri's Judges' took issue with aspects of the legal

procedure surrounding the charges, with the role of the media and with the failure to respect the ordinary logical principles of reasoning in the examination of evidence. The letter began with the claim that the principles at stake are of importance to all democrats and throughout Deleuze writes as one 'committed to democracy' (Deleuze 2006: 169). Nevertheless, at first glance, 'democracy' seems an implausible concept in the light of *A Thousand Plateaus*, where Deleuze and Guattari define 'becoming' as minoritarian and insist that: 'There is no becoming-majoritarian; majority is never becoming. All becoming is minoritarian' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 106). Surely democracy is a matter of majority. How is it then possible for them to embrace 'becoming-democratic' as a form of resistance to the present?

Becoming-Democratic

The call for resistance to the present in the name of becoming-democratic must be understood in the light of philosophy's unending struggle against opinion (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 203). The task of philosophy, however, is to engage with philosophical rather than everyday opinions. With regard to the politics of liberal democratic societies, philosophy partakes in this struggle by challenging the 'considered' opinions that determine the nature and limits of public reason. That is why, in the brief exergue to *Negotiations*, Deleuze presents philosophy as engaged in a 'guerilla campaign' against public opinion and other powers that be such as religions and laws (Deleuze 1995). In other words, the political vocation of philosophy calls for critical engagement with existing opinions about what is just or acceptable. In his interview with Negri, Deleuze suggests that philosophy provides a way of responding to what is intolerable in the present (Deleuze 1995: 171). This raises the interesting question: in virtue of what does a particular state of affairs become intolerable? If we accept that the contours of the intolerable will be historically determined by the mechanisms through which we are governed and by the ideals and opinions expressed in the prevailing political culture, then there is every reason to think that there is no definitive escape from the intolerable. As Deleuze comments in his discussion of control societies, there is always a conflict within systems of power between the ways in which they free us and the ways in which they enslave us (Deleuze 1995: 178).

In democratic societies, responding to the intolerable will inevitably engage with elements of the political normativity through which they are governed. The complex concept of democracy ties together a number of

the political norms at the heart of modern political thought. Different forms of democratic political society amount to determinate actualisations of this concept, while many forms of resistance within such societies will draw upon elements of democratic political normativity to suggest ways in which the injustice of existing institutional forms of social life might be removed. In this manner, the concept of 'becoming-democratic' serves the political vocation of philosophy as Deleuze and Guattari define it: becoming-democratic is a means to counter-actualise what passes for democratic society in the present. Philosophy pursues or supports processes of becoming-democratic when it challenges existing opinions about what is acceptable, right or just with the aim of extending the actualisation of democracy within contemporary societies.

In principle, there will be as many ways of becoming-democratic as there are elements of the concept of democracy. In practice, philosophy can only effectively advance the becoming-democratic of a given political society when it engages with deterritorialising movements that rely upon actualised or actualisable elements of democratic political normativity. Minoritarian-becomings are one source of such movements. With regard to the minoritarian orientation of 'becomings' and their relation to majoritarian politics, we should note that democracy is exclusively a matter of majority only in a relatively simplistic and numerical sense. It is majoritarian insofar as majority vote is the mechanism through which the will of the people is typically determined. However, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minority was always defined in terms of quality rather than quantity. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they point to the existence of the 'fact' that the adult, white, heterosexual, European *et cetera* male occupies the position of majority, not because he is more numerous than children, non-whites, homosexuals or women, but because he forms the qualitative standard against which these others are measured (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 105). The existence of such a standard presupposes the exercise of power over women, children, non-whites and other excluded groups: 'Majority assumes a state of power and domination, not the other way around' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 105). At the same time, they point out that this 'fact' is a kind of fiction that represents no one in particular. It is the public figure of the majority in a qualitative sense that must be contrasted with the 'becoming-minoritarian of everybody,' understood as the creative potential of individuals or groups to deviate from the standard (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 106). Becoming-minor expresses the sense in which individuals and societies never entirely conform to the majoritarian standard but exist in a process of continuous variation.

To the extent that the rights and duties of citizens at any moment are based upon the majoritarian 'fact' of the society concerned, there is also a qualitative sense in which democracy is majoritarian. Democracy has always relied upon the principle of majority rule but the prior question 'majority of whom' has always been settled in advance and usually not by democratic means. 'Majority' here does not refer to the quantitative majority of those counted but to the qualitative majority of those among the population at large who are considered fit to be counted. In these terms, for example, Kant distinguished active from passive citizens on the basis of their independence from others in gaining their livelihood (Kant 1996: 458). On this basis, children, indentured servants and women will only be passive citizens, excluded from participation in the law-making role of the active subjects of a democratic republic. By the same token, however, there is a sense in which minoritarian-becoming is bound up with the transformation of the majoritarian subject of democracy. A constant source of conflict in democratic nation-states ever since their inception has been the struggle to broaden the base of those who count as citizens and thus enjoy full access to the entire range of basic legal and political rights. These struggles amount to the subjection of the majoritarian standard to various kinds of minoritarian becoming. These have given rise to a succession of measures to extend the scope of the standard and thereby broaden the subject of democracy: for example, by extending the vote to women and other minorities, or by changing the nature of political institutions and procedures to enable these newly enfranchised members to participate on equal terms. Efforts to achieve political representation of women in proportion to their numbers in the population are ongoing in most European countries, despite their having been enfranchised for the better part of a century. Efforts to change the nature of public institutions in ways that both acknowledge and accommodate differences in relation to sexual preference, physical and mental abilities, and cultural and religious backgrounds are also ongoing in many democratic societies. In this sense, minoritarian becomings provide one important vector of 'becoming-democratic' in contemporary societies.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari clearly adopt the political perspective of minoritarian-becoming, insisting that the power of minoritaries 'is not measured by their capacity to enter into and make themselves felt within the majority system' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 471). By their nature, processes of minoritarian-becoming will always exceed or escape from the confines of any given majority. They carry the potential to transform the affects, beliefs and political sensibilities of a population in ways that amount to the advent of a new people.

Moreover, to the extent that a people is constituted as a political community, the transformations it undergoes will affect its conceptions of what is fair and just and therefore the nature of the rights and duties attributed to the new majority. Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge the importance of efforts to enlarge and transform the character of the majority when they affirm that 'molecular escapes and movements would be nothing if they did not return to the molar organizations to reshuffle their segments, their binary distributions of sexes, classes and parties' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 216–17).[8]

Another kind of becoming-democratic arises from a conflict that has been present ever since the introduction of modern democratic government, namely the coexistence of formally equal rights alongside enormous disparities of wealth and material condition. The history of modern democracies has been in part a history of struggle to reduce material inequality and to ensure that the basic rights of citizens have at least approximately equal value for all. Deleuze alludes to this ongoing problem in his interview with Negri when he contrasts the universality of the market as a sphere of exchange of commodities and capital with the manner in which it generates poverty as well as enormous wealth and distributes these unequally. The benefits of market economies are not universally shared and inequalities of condition are handed down from generation to generation in direct contravention of the principle that all are born equal. The same principle of equality with regard to material condition underpins Deleuze's response to the question put to him by Claire Parnet: 'What does it mean to be on the left?' First, he says, it's a matter of perception. Those who live in the comparative wealth of a relatively privileged first-world country, and who are not on the left, perceive problems of inequality and injustice from the perspective of their own unsustainable position of privilege: they ask 'what can we do to make this situation last?' By contrast, those on the left perceive the situation from the perspective of those farthest from their centre of privilege. These people 'know that it cannot last, that it's not possible, [the fact that] these millions of people are starving to death, it just can't last, it might go on a hundred years, one never knows, but there's no point kidding oneself about this absolute injustice'. Those on the left know that such problems must be dealt with, that the problem is not to find ways to maintain the privileges of Europe but of 'finding arrangements, finding world-wide assemblages' which address these problems.[9] Deleuze here assumes an egalitarian and even cosmopolitan perspective on matters of distributive justice. Pointing out the unjust distribution of wealth and poverty that results from existing assemblages of production, distribution and

redistribution is another way of attempting to render intolerable that which is widely tolerated. It thereby seeks to encourage a further dimension of becoming-democratic in the society at large.

The second part of Deleuze's definition of what it means to be on the left is his claim that this is a matter of becoming-minoritarian as opposed to being majoritarian. It is a matter of knowing that the majority is an abstract and empty representation of an ideal identity that is linked to particular systems of power and control and of knowing that there are minoritarian becomings in which everyone can be engaged and which have the power to disrupt and transform these systems. As we noted above, the transformations in a people brought about by different kinds of minoritarian-becoming will affect its conceptions of what is fair and just. To the extent that these form the basis of the political conception of justice reflected in its constitution (in the broadest sense of the term) and in its basic structure and institutions, they provide a crucial motor of efforts to remove injustice.

The two vectors of becoming-democratic identified above directly confront the two kinds of limitation on the actualisation of democracy in the modern world: the struggle against the arbitrary nature of the qualitative majority challenges the weight of nationalitarian political and philosophical opinion, while the struggle against unjust inequality of condition challenges fundamental elements of the capitalist axiomatic. The different kinds of minoritarian-becoming that give rise to movements to reconfigure the subject of democracy, such as the struggle for equal representation of women or for equal rights for homosexual partners, encounter varying degrees and kinds or resistance depending upon the details of nationalitarian opinion in each case. Efforts to achieve a more equitable distribution of primary social goods encounter resistance sustained by other axioms of the capitalist axiomatic. In both of these ways, the concept of becoming-democratic points toward the deterritorialisation of existing democracies and their reconfiguration in new social and political forms.

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Notes

1. Deleuze and Guattari refer to Kant's discussion of this in *The Contest of Faculties*, Part 2, section 6, and to commentaries on this text by Foucault, Habermas and Lyotard (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 224 n.13).
2. For further comment on the paradoxical normativity of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts in *A Thousand Plateaus*, see Patton (2006a: 289–94).
3. For a comprehensive survey of the debate over Marx and justice, see Geras (1985). For an introduction to some of the varieties of 'analytic' Marxism, see Kymlicka (2002: 166–207).
4. For example, Peffer (1990, 2001).

5. See his conversations with Antonin Dulaure and Claire Parnet, published in *L'Autre Journal*, 8 (October 1985), and with Raymond Bellour and François Ewald, published in the *Magazine Littéraire*, 257 (September 1988), in Deleuze (1995: 121–55). I discuss Deleuze's remarks and his criticisms of the enthusiasm for human rights in Patton (2005a: 58–60 and 2005b: 404–6). See also Smith (2003: 314–15).
6. *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze avec Claire Parnet* is unpublished in literary form but available on video cassette (1996) and CD-Rom (2003) from Vidéo Editions Montparnasse. These remarks are from the section entitled 'G as in Gauche'. I am grateful to Charles J. Stivale for his help in translating them.
7. Mengue (2003: 43, 103); Thoburn (2003: 11). For discussion of these claims, see Patton (2005a, 2005b, 2006b).
8. Elsewhere, after reasserting the non-coincidence of minority and majority in the language of axiomatic set theory, they write 'this is not to say that the struggle on the level of the axioms is without importance; on the contrary, it is determining (at the most diverse levels: women's struggle for the vote, for abortion, for jobs; the strugggle of the regions for autonomy; the struggle of the Third World' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 470–1).
9. *L'Abécédaire*, *G comme Gauche*. See also Deleuze's comments about the 'absolute injustice' of the current unequal global distribution of wealth.

Chapter 10

Theorising European Ethnic Politics with Deleuze and Guattari

Janell Watson

Political developments since the 1990s have compelled more and more European intellectuals to confront questions of identity, ethnicity and minority rights, first in reaction to the often-violent nationalist demands in the former Eastern bloc, and more recently in debating the future of the expanded European Union, with its growing population of non-European ethnic minorities.[1] Although there is no consensus on whether or not 'Europe' needs an identity and what that supra-national identity might look like, there is wide agreement on the inappropriateness of three counter-models: the bloody nationalisms of Europe's own past, US multiculturalism and Eurocentrism (whether racial or cultural).[2] Some thinkers advocate a forth model, that of cosmopolitanism, while others point out that the modernist utopian dream of secular internationalism has not and will never come to pass, and that instead, even in the twenty-first century, as one policy advisor to Europe has put it, 'the seemingly old-fashioned notions of nationhood based on blood and belonging, and the right of the motherland to protect its kin, are alive and well and complicating bilateral relations in and around the European Union' (Kemp 2006: 103).

Those who think that Europe's increasingly numerous ethnicities and minorities should be offered a new kind of supra-identity couch this demand in a variety of terms. For example, in their 2003 newspaper appeal for European unity, Jürgen Habermas and his co-signatory Jacques Derrida use the notion of 'vision', calling for 'an attractive, indeed an infectious "vision" for a future Europe', but qualify this appeal with the caveat that the vision 'must be articulated from out of the wild cacophony of a multi-vocal public sphere' (Habermas and Derrida 2005: 7). The unifying 'vision' will somehow quiet down the 'wild cacophony', the unruliness that this phrase associates with the presence in Europe of multiple ethnicities. The key idea here is to find

an overarching perception/conception of Europe that can calm its cacophonous inhabitants. Also calling for a shared subjective stance toward Europe, British geographer Ash Amin argues that since the EU 'is becoming a place of plural and strange belongings', it needs a 'model of belonging . . . appropriate in an increasingly multicultural and multiethnic Europe' (Amin 2004: 2). Amin's and Habermas's characterisations of multicultural Europe define the problem as a divergence in individual subjective outlook, which needs to be made to converge. Imagining convergence through a common 'vision' casts cultural diversity in phenomenological terms, while proposing an encompassing 'belonging' places the emphasis in the realm of psychology. Both appeal to a shared sensibility, whether of perception or of feeling. This amounts to a sentimental search for one's own reflection in the cultural construct called 'Europe'.

Étienne Balibar calls into question such inwardly subjective approaches to matters of ethnicity and minority relations, cautioning that 'We are always narcissistically in search of images of ourselves, when it is structures that we should be looking for' (Balibar 2002: 100). By proposing a shift from 'images' to 'structures', Balibar moves from the level of interpersonal relations to social relations mediated by the state and its various apparatuses, and from daily life at the individual level to the level of EU policy and law. I agree with the suggestion that the search for 'images' – in other words, 'identity' – fails to capture a number of pressing problems in Europe, such as the legal and juridical status of immigrants, the growing gaps between the very rich and the rest, the chasms separating the quality of life in the First World from that in the Third World, the sources of labour and rights of labourers and even the future form of the state itself. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari likewise share Balibar's concern with the positioning of people in relation to institutions and the State (Balibar's 'structures', or 'strata' in *A Thousand Plateaus*), and see the focus on 'identity' (Balibar's 'images') as a trap to be avoided. In what follows, I will use Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of minorities in relation to the State in order to propose a non-identitarian approach to European ethnic politics.

There are at least three types of problem with the identity approach to difference: psychoanalytic, philosophical and political. From a psychoanalytic standpoint, Guattari rejects the standard notion of 'identity', convinced that it is an insufficient basis on which to construct a viable, liveable subjectivity, or 'existential territory' (Guattari 1996: 216). Deleuze criticises the dominant history of philosophy for its metaphysics of identity, which he associates with the stultifying, hierarchical regime of

representation, to which he opposes the powerful, creative potential of difference (Olkowski 1999). 'Identity' as a paradigm for social analysis has often been criticised on political grounds, by Deleuze, Guattari and many others. Deleuze and Guattari go so far as to argue that 'identity' functions as a tool of the State (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 361). It should certainly be acknowledged that identity does in some instances serve a positive political function in minority struggles against majority oppression, as many feminists and minority rights advocates have argued. Deleuze and Guattari agree, acknowledging that 'identity' (woman, black, homosexual, etc.) is sometimes necessary to conduct a politics (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 276; Guattari 1996: 215–16). However, and this is a key point in my own argument, problems arise when concern with identity overshadows much more directly political relationships between the state and its inhabitants, and of both with the vast marketplaces of global capitalism. I am not denying the importance or validity of identity questions, but am claiming that it is much more urgent to consider the political, economic, juridical and ethical dimensions of ethnic, cultural and minority politics in early twenty-first-century Europe.

Just as identity politics in the USA has been accused of displacing the politics of class struggle (Bramen 2002), so the focus on European identity may be a way to avoid talking about not only lingering racist and ethnocentric discrimination, but also and especially about access to the resources which states confer according to citizenship-based hierarchies (Gilroy 2005b: 16–17, 63). Discussions of class struggle in much leftist analysis, however, leave out questions of minorities. *A Thousand Plateaus* takes up the cause of ethnic, gender and sexual minorities, who are cast as oppressed under exploitative capitalist hierarchies. This focus on minorities corresponds well to the current socio-political struggles in Europe, where minorities of various sorts – the poor, women, the young, the homeless, refugees, migrants, undocumented residents – often suffer economic, social, juridical and political disadvantage. 'Ours is becoming the age of minorities', observed Deleuze and Guattari more than twenty-five years ago (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 469), anticipating what is now perceived to be a major dilemma for the further unification of Europe. Theirs is not an identity politics, however, because their use of the term 'minority' foregrounds not cultural differences (although these are not denied), but rather social stratification. This way of talking about minorities has little to do with identity.

Defining social stratification in terms of minorities does seem to replace a more traditionally Marxist emphasis on class struggle, even though Deleuze and Guattari clearly champion minorities in the spirit of

fighting capitalist oppression. If they show less sympathy for the stereotypical figure of the proletariat, 'the national Worker, qualified, male and over thirty-five' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 469; see also Deleuze 1995: 172), this may be attributed to a disillusionment with the French Communist Party and with France's largest, most powerful labour unions, who, according to Guattari, in the end serve as guarantors of the capitalist order, effectively preventing a proletariat-led revolution (Guattari 1984: 195–6). Stated otherwise, the party and unions have gone over to the side of the Majority, logistically if not ideologically. Meanwhile, many minority groups have been ignored by the labour apparatus, perhaps despite the latter's best intentions. In championing Minorities, Deleuze and Guattari reaffirm basic Marxist principles in their struggle against Majority domination.

I have been trying to show that Deleuze and Guattari use the notion of 'minority' in a peculiar way. Contributing to the peculiarity of this usage is their tendency to choose terms which juxtapose abstract concepts with actually existing entities. Therefore for the stake of clarity, from this point forward I will capitalise terms used as concepts. The Minority as a concept, for example, corresponds to no actually existing minority group, now or in the past. The same is true of the State as a concept as compared to actually existing states (Patton 2000: 109–10). Minority (capital M) and minorities (small m) do not necessarily coincide. 'It is important not to confuse "minoritarian," as becoming or process, with a "minority," as an aggregate or a state. Jews, Gypsies, etc., may constitute minorities under certain conditions, but that in itself does not make them becomings' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 291). This is because the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept 'Minority' designates not a mathematically smaller set, but rather a set of strategies and logics antithetical to the State axiomatic. The State is understood as an apparatus of organisation, capture and exclusion, which stratifies, polices, striates, codes/decodes, territorialises/detteritorialises, interiorises, counts, occupies, controls and regulates; it produces laws, feelings, identities, tools, workers and theorems (for a more extended definition, see Surin 1991). In contrast, in the conceptual universe of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Minorities, Nations, Peoples, Ethnicities and Races function as entities exterior to the State, which the latter must organise, capture or exclude. These Minority figures have positive properties of their own, and cannot be defined solely by negation. They are no less organised than States, but operate according to a different set of procedures, based on a logic of becoming, process, masses, multiplicity, line of fluctuation, nondenumerable (or fuzzy) sets, escape, flux and the calculus of probabilities (Deleuze and Guattari

1987: 469–70). 'Minority' is not a reactionary inversion but rather an opposition at once political and ontological, in the guise of 'becomings that can't be controlled, minorities constantly coming to life and standing up to' the State (Deleuze 1995: 152).

Majority and Minority are defined by their paradigms, not by numbers. Men, for example, are a majority but not because they outnumber women. Even when a Majority is actually larger in number, the Minority benefits from the 'power of the nondenumerable' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 470). This is why the Minority forms an uncountable flux or a mass, a fuzzy set rather than a countable set; its force comes from its ability to effectuate a becoming or draw a line of flight. 'Becoming' and 'line of flight' refer to the Minority's transformational paradigm, its own special power. This for me is one way to understand Minoritiarian Becoming. One would think that Minorities would want to become Majorities, either by joining the existing Majority or by becoming a new Majority. However, if this were to happen, according to *A Thousand Plateaus*, they would lose the special powers and abilities of the Minority. This is why women as 'non-men' and non-whites 'would receive no adequate expression by becoming elements of the majority', or by becoming, for example, 'a yellow or black majority' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 470). On the contrary, it is in the best interest of those among the Majority to open themselves up to that which only Minorities can do thanks to their becomings, lines of flight, multiplicities and so forth. Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari call for the opposite, the becoming-Minoritarian of the Majority: 'Non-white: we all have to become that, whether we are white, yellow, or black' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 470).

In a sense, those calling for a new European Identity are calling for a new super-Majority, an encapsulation of differences that would culminate in a newly re-imagined multi-ethnic Majority, to which the current majorities would welcome the present minorities, and to which the latter would wish to belong. This is the reverse of what Deleuze and Guattari call for, and if they are correct, then the search for an EU super-identity is perhaps a misguided strategy, since there may be good reasons to encourage minorities to remain Minorities. But are they really serious that we should all become Minorities? Again following the discussion in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the ultimate transformation that a Minority could initiate would be the dismantling of the very axiomatic of the Majority. One of the implications of the proclamation that 'ours is becoming the age of minorities' would be a global power shift in favour of the Minority paradigm:

> That is the situation when authors, even those supposedly on the Left, repeat the great capitalist warning cry: in twenty years, 'whites' will form only 12 percent of the world population . . . Thus they are not content to say that the majority will change, or has already changed, but say that it is impinged upon by a nondenumerable and proliferating minority that threatens to destroy the very concept of majority, it other words, the majority as an axiom. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 469; ellipsis in the original)

The real threat from the Minority is thus not multi-ethnic cacophony, nor a threat to Majority identity, but rather the bringing about of a paradigm shift that would do away with majority privilege by eliminating the very concept of Majority. Is the very concept of Majority indeed in peril in Europe? The loss of any 'mainstream' whatsoever would certainly prove to be more frightening to members of the current majority than the mere phenomenon of cultural commingling. Is it possible to conceive of a Europe without Majorities? Would the elimination of the Majority even be desirable? If the disappearance or even partial eclipse of the Majority would mean the creation of viable alternatives to global bourgeois capitalist consumerism, then this idea is worth exploring.

It is essential to proceed from here with extreme caution. Useful as Deleuzian concepts may be for mapping relations between states and minorities, adopting a concept like Minority and following it to the letter will not result in an ethical life, a point to which I will return at the end of this chapter. Concepts like Minority are, rather, tools of 'pragmatics or schizoanalysis', whose aim is not to make ethical judgements of what is 'good' or 'bad' 'by nature and necessarily', but rather to 'make maps and draw lines' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 227). Even though Minorities oppose the State, this does not mean that theirs is always the just cause, or even a libratory cause, for their logics of 'smooth space and the form of exteriority do not have an irresistible revolutionary calling' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 387). Merely impeding State formation will certainly not solve problems of oppression. I do not think that Deleuze and Guattari mean to eliminate the State in favour Minorities, because the stratifying State serves a necessary purpose. 'Is it not necessary to retain a minimum of strata, a minimum of forms and functions, a minimal subject from which to extract materials, affects, and assemblages?' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 270).

In order to begin thinking about the conceivability or desirability of a Minoritarian order to come, it will first be necessary to map Europe's current ethnic landscape onto the Deleuzo-Guattarian world model, which locates the Minority–State relation as one of exterior–interior, respectively. In fact, the State has two exteriors, such that 'one can't think

about the state except in relation to the higher level of the single world market, and the lower levels of minorities, becomings, people [*les gens*]' (Deleuze 1995: 152; 1990: 208). This three-part model thus maps an overlapping complex of human aggregates from highest to lowest levels: World – State – People. The world dimension exterior to the State includes not only the global market, but also 'commercial organization of the "multinational" type, or industrial complexes, or even religious formations like Christianity, Islam, certain prophetic or messianic movements, etc.' These 'huge worldwide machines branched out over the entire *ecumenon* at a given moment . . . enjoy a large measure of autonomy in relation to the States.' The exterior dimension of 'people' includes 'the local mechanisms of bands, margins, minorities, which continue to affirm the rights of segmentary societies in opposition to the organs of State power' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 360). It is worth noticing that here and throughout their writing, rather than speaking of the relationship of single persons or individuals to the State, Deleuze and Guattari refer to aggregates of people: Bands, Margins, Minorities, as well as Nomads, Peoples, Nations, Packs, Gangs, Migrants, Itinerants, Secret Societies. Even their Majority is a plurality of individuals. It is not a question of the 'individual' versus 'society', but rather of groups organised either against or in accordance with the logic of the State. Thinking in terms of multiplicities of people helps further lift the question of minority politics out of the realm of identity, which is an individualising phenomenon.

Although they posit three distinct levels, Deleuze and Guattari insist that 'the State itself has always been in a relation with an outside and is inconceivable independent of that relationship' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 360). States, worldwide Ecumenical formations and Peoples must be conceived of 'in terms not of independence, but of coexistence and competition *in a perpetual field of interaction*' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 360–1). The State cannot function without its exterior. Furthermore, not only do the three dimensions interact, but none of them in actuality exist in their pure conceptual form; rather, actually existing states, peoples and planetary phenomena are always mixed. Actual states borrow elements of Nomadism and Minority Becoming, while actual nomads and minorities at times must use strategies and mechanisms borrowed from the Majority and the State. 'This does not affect the purity of the concept, but introduces always mixed objects' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 420). This mixing does not, however, result in a synthesis, since dimensions such as molar–molecular and smooth–striated remain distinct. Actually existing entities operate across different dimen-

sions at different moments. This constant interaction and mixing is crucial in analysing the situation of the EU, in order to map its relations to its minorities.

The interacting, mixed quality of the World – State – People model becomes immediately apparent as soon as the concepts of Nation and State are applied to actually existing nations and states. The modern 'nation-state' is of course only one of several forms of the State. 'Nation' in its pure form, considered as exterior or at least peripheral to a State, would correspond to the dimension of People – whether a Minority or Majority. The dream of Nation and State coinciding in the nation-state has of course long been dismissed as an outdated utopia, but European integration is 'changing the meaning and scope of both state and nation, and the relationship between the two' (Keating 2006: 23). The EU's own status as a State is not yet entirely clear, given the absence of a constitution. Perhaps ironically, the Europeans, the very inventors of the nation-state, the state form which currently dominates the planet, may be facing the imminent demise of the nation-state and its replacement by a new state form to come. Will the EU become a supra-state, super-state, empire or federation? What will be its jurisdiction over its own member-states? What will be its relationship to other state entities situated amid world-wide movements of culture, goods and apparatuses of (in)security? The ambiguous status of the EU as a state in turn affects the status of the member-states. The many citizens who have voted against the EU constitution as well as Euro-sceptics among policy-makers understand that turning State functions over to the EU may reduce their nation-states to the status of mere minority nations. Furthermore, many nation-state members do function as minority members in relation to larger, more prosperous members; the twenty-seven nation-states of the EU are not equal players, politically, economically or culturally. Those among the newer members who only recently acquired independent nation-state status may prove to be even more resistant to Europe as a state, perhaps even 'awaken[ing] the nationalistic-conservative seeds of division' (Muschg 2005: 22).

The emergence of 'nationalistic-conservative' sentiments has often been attributed to clashing cultures. For example, following the clashing culture model in his response to Habermas, Andrzej Stasiuk paints a comical picture of 'Old Europe' (Donald Rumsfeld's phrase) invaded by a flux of 'wild, cunning, exotic' peoples from the 'new' Europe, predicting that the 'new tribes' of 'barbarians' from the east 'will completely shake up Europe' (Stasiuk 2005). The familiar spectre of identity and lifestyle differences should not be allowed to distract from the economic

and political disparities which separate 'old' from 'new' Europe. This 'us–them' model of old and new Europe is not only problematic because it essentialises, but more importantly it obscures problems of political and economic stratification among EU member-states. Within the emerging EU super-state there are nation-states which are in a minority position relative to the dominant 'core Europe', which consists of Germany, France and the Benelux countries, as defined in a highly influential 1994 policy paper from Germany's CDU party (Levy et al. 2005: xx–xxi). Habermas's most shocking and controversial suggestion was that this 'core Europe' will need to lead the way in endowing the EU with state-like qualities such as common defence and security policies (Habermas and Derrida 2005: 6).

Not only does the expanded EU of twenty-seven include minority nation-states, but in addition many if not most member-states include within them various minority nationalities. These include locally rooted peoples seeking varying degrees of governmental autonomy, or more recently immigrated peoples who may be either EU citizens or foreign nationals with various types of relationship to their home and host nations (McGarry and Keating 2006). I will return to the more recently immigrated groups below. Among the 'indigenous' European minority nationalisms, there exist organised but completely illegal oppositional groups, as well as recognised groups with a degree of legal governmental autonomy. Not all of these minority nationalisms would be considered Minorities in the Deleuzo-Guattarian sense. An actually existing nation considered independently from its state would be classified as a Minority only if it took the form of an exteriority vis-à-vis the state (as for example the relationship of the Basques, the Corsicans and the Turkish Cypriots to Spain, France and the internationally recognised Greek Cypriot government). If on the other hand the 'nation' enjoyed some political autonomy and/or a degree of administrative infrastructure (such as Scotland or Wales), then it would be located toward the State end of the State–Minority continuum. Turkish Cyprus would fall more toward the State end than the Basque region or Corsica, since at least one sovereign nation-state – Turkey – officially recognises its sovereignty. It is a matter of the degree of integration or assimilation of State ways. To cite another example from the history of the EU's new east, in studying the so-called ethnic conflicts in Eastern Europe and Eurasia immediately after the fall of communism, Charles King has found that what determined whether or not a given minority would undertake a violent independence movement depended not on the strength of their ethnic identity or animosity toward the majority ethnicity, but rather on the minority's

degree of 'territorial autonomy before the communist regime began to weaken, and on whether they had at their disposal institutional resources that could engender social mobilisation' (King 2006: 127). Once again, following Balibar, structures ('territorial autonomy', 'institutional resources') wield more political force than images (ethnic identity).

If, as I have proposed, it is useful to think of the individual nation-state members of the EU as corresponding to States, and their militant internal independent nationalist movements as Minorities, then it would follow from the World – State – People model that tensions among individual European nation-states, their belligerent minority nationalisms and the EU as a political entity are ingrained in the very logic of the three different levels of social organisation. This clash of logics suggests a response to the question that Tom Nairn would pose nearly two decades after *A Thousand Plateaus*: 'Why has globalisation engendered nationalism, instead of transcending it?' (Nairn 1997: 63). While one of the functions of the State is to control and channel popular rogue movements such as minority nationalisms, and while globalisation may seem to have made both state and nation obsolete, the model in fact suggests that the very logic of the State concept requires the coexistence of both a world-scale dimension like globalisation and an external opponent like a nationalist movement. Deleuze and Guattari's observation that 'ours is becoming the age of minorities' goes much further than this. They begin by noting the clamour of nationalisms already evident by 1980:

> Whether it be the infinite set of the nonwhites of the periphery, or the restricted set of the Basques, Corsicans, etc., everywhere we look we see the conditions for a worldwide movement: the minorities recreate 'nationalitarian' phenomena that the nation-states had been charged with controlling and quashing. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 470)

While, given the logic of the State's necessary interrelationship with an oppositional exterior, the rise of nationalism should not be surprising, the 'worldwide' dimension noted here does indeed signal a new development. There are the minority movements within (Basques, Corsican), but these constitute a 'restricted set'. They are joined by the 'nonwhites at the periphery' who form an 'infinite set' poised at Europe's borders but also at the borders of North America, Japan and the rest of the First World. Today, of course, non-whites make up powerful minority populations from within Europe. It is this mix of finite and infinite sets of minorities that pose a challenge to the contemporary nation-state and to the EU. To return to the question I raised earlier, could these minority movements, if joined together, snowball into a Minoritarian force that could

eliminate the Majority itself? This is not likely, given the mixed nature of actually existing EU minorities, even within the narrowed actual group of Europe's Muslim immigrants.

Among the many non-white peoples living within the EU today there are many types of relationships to states and to the world at large. There are a relatively small number of political refugees and many more who have no legal residency status in Europe. A large number have European citizenship, including a great many who were born in Europe to immigrant parents. Others are foreign nationals but with legal residency status in the EU. Many of these non-white residents can be characterised as members of 'minority ethnic groups with loyalties split between host nation and imagined communities dispersed around the world and rooted in non-European histories' (Amin 2004: 3). However, their ethnic ties to home communities may not even be particularly nationalistic. To illustrate, Olivier Roy has analysed the ways different Muslim minority immigrant groups in Europe position themselves in relation to their host and home nations and nation-states. These various positionings exemplify the conceptual distinction that Deleuze and Guattari make between the Nomad and the Migrant, the former operating in opposition to the State, and the latter living comfortably within the stratifications of the Majority and the State. Located between the Nomads and the State, Migrants 'come and go . . . but also integrate themselves and reterritorialize' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 222). Roy's model acknowledges cultural difference but at the same time shows a wide variety of positions in relation to the state.

Roy maps immigrant populations by way of their relations to a diaspora. Migrants who maintain a great deal of cultural autonomy from the host nation-state form diaspora communities:

> A diaspora is formed when a community of migrants maintains close links with its country of origin: continuing to speak the mother tongue; keeping in touch with national events through newspapers and other media; supporting extended family relationships through endogamous practices (the marriage partner is selected from the country of origin, sometimes from the same village); maintaining a juridical link (dual nationality or the nationality of the country of birth); and often preserving the myth of a return to the home country – even if this return is constantly being postponed. (Roy 2003: 64)

Distancing from diaspora communities complicates ethnic ties, especially among the descendents of immigrants. Roy therefore provides a classification of immigrants according to three forms of 'transition away from

the diasporic condition'. The first, 'assimilation', consists in 'the loss of all identity-related indicators of existing differences', whereby the immigrant blends into the new host nation, severing cultural ties with the home nation. The second, 'integration', is 'characterised by a reconstituted identity that stresses remaining differences', preserving some cultural ties to home. Roy has found examples of migrant integration even among conservative Muslims, noting that those who 'practice traditional Islam with strong cultural and linguistic affinities with non-European cultures, can nonetheless develop strong loyalty toward the host European country'. Finally, 're-communalization' designates a complete break from home, 'a transnational Islam divorced from its country of origin', as well as a new ecumenical loyalty to 'a supranational community, the Muslim *umma*' (Roy 2003: 64–5). In Deleuzo-Guattarian terms, opposition for this third group may be as much to the State as such as to any state in particular.

Those immigrants from the third group correspond generally to the Deleuzian Minority, because they have banded together outside of and against the State, although in a mixed fashion, by operating at an ecumenical level, that of a worldwide religious movement. Perhaps paradoxically, those who belong to this group have typically been the most culturally assimilated into their European host nation-states, whether they immigrated from a Muslim country or whether they were born in Europe and have only European nationalities. 'Most radicalized Muslim youth in Europe are Western educated, often in technical or scientific fields . . . most experience a period of fully Westernized life, complete with alcohol and girlfriends, before becoming "born-again Muslims" in European mosques or jails' (Roy 2003: 64). The universalist claims of this radicalised minority group make it mixed, deterritorialising it on two levels, as nomadic and as ecumenical. Roy describes the 'deterritorialisation' that characterises Al Qaeda: it is international in outlook, stateless and located all over the world. Its members travel globally, learn the languages of the non-Muslim countries where they live and work and rarely carry out operations in their own home countries. In fact, their targets are less national than they are global (Roy 2004: 304–7). Anthony Appiah refers to the warriors of this global guerrilla war machine as 'toxic cosmopolitans' (Appiah 2005: 220; see also Appiah 2006: 137–43).

The rise of Al Qaeda in Europe has been interpreted in terms of clashing culture. For Paul Gilroy, the 'clash of cultures' is a racist formulation because it essentialises both Muslims and non-Muslims while promoting Islamophobia and a more generalised hatred of immigrants and explains away lingering colonial prejudices (Gilroy 2005a: 433). Gilroy goes on

to speculate that the presence in the UK of immigrants from Britain's former colonies reminds the white British majority that their global geopolitical dominance has been lost, and concludes that Britain is suffering from 'a melancholic attachment to its vanished pre-eminence' (Gilroy 2005a: 434). Although this diagnosis of depression resulting from loss does on one level evoke individual subjective sentiment, Gilroy's analysis is in fact geopolitical, since he goes on to point out that racism served European colonialism very well.

Culturalism may actually be transforming racism, as Balibar has suggested and as follows logically from Gilroy's equating racism with the theory of 'culture clash'. Deleuze and Guattari provide a further model for mapping this process, according to the logic of the Majority. Their theory of racism relies on the concept of 'faciality', a notion which I think works well for examining the transformation of racial discrimination into an equally striating culturalism. During its long years of colonial domination, Europe defined itself in opposition to its Others, first racially, then more recently ethnically and culturally. Mainstream Europeans are no longer openly racist, and most of them genuinely struggle to move beyond racism. This does not mean that there are no longer hierarchies by which the majority stratify the peoples of the world.

Balibar hypothesises that 'culture' and 'ethnicity' have replaced 'race' in classifying the peoples of the world. In previous centuries, race defined biologically appealed logically because it made colonial hierarchies seem 'natural', or at least consistent with 'nature'. Today, now that biological theories of racism have been discredited, 'culture itself can work exactly in the same way as nature, or is just another name for "nature" ' (Balibar 2005: 27). A certain European vision constructs Europe itself as secular and cosmopolitan, a construction that still depends on describing the other as religious and ethnic, defining 'white, Christian, reasoning Europeans' endowed with 'progress and superiority' in opposition to 'other worlds defined in ethno-religious terms' (Amin 2004: 2). This model of Europe was thus constructed negatively, against 'the coloured, racialised or marked other that allows the Europeans to pass off their whiteness as the defining trait of humanity' (Braidotti 2004: 132). What Deleuze and Guattari's notion of 'faciality' attempts to explain is the process by which Europe has maintained its imposed norms which uphold whiteness, reason and secularised Christianity as the markers of human superiority.

The Majority operates by a logic similar to that of the State, but with slightly different conceptual tools, such as counting, models and grids, which it uses to produce and maintain social hierarchies. The white, European, secularised Christian Majority protects its dominance by

imposing models. 'What defines the majority is a model you have to conform to: the average European adult male city-dweller, for example', or 'today's average, urban European' (Deleuze 1995: 173; Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 469). Identity (or non-identity) to the model serves the apparatus of the State (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 361). This form of domination by comparison to a model or norm is enabled by what Deleuze and Guattari call the 'faciality machine', which operates by establishing and maintaining a grid. Faciality 'assumes a role of selective response', providing a mechanism for judging faces: 'given a concrete face, the machine judges whether it passes or not, whether it goes or not, on the basis of elementary facial units . . . At every moment, the machine rejects faces that do not conform, or seem suspicious . . . you've been recognized, the abstract machine [of faciality] has you inscribed in its overall grid' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 177). The process begins with a binary moment, an initial yes/no, but in a second moment the machine may add another category, and may even deem a 'no' face tolerable after all (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 177).

The faciality machine is an invention of Christian Europe, feeding in turn the continent's feudal, imperialist and capitalist regimes. As a point of comparison, Deleuze and Guattari cite tribal societies grounded in territories, for which the head has not been facialised. 'The reason is simple. The face is not a universal. It is not even that of the white man; it is White Man himself . . . The face is Christ'. Faciality began as racism:

> If the face is in fact Christ, in other words, your average ordinary White Man, then the first deviances, the first divergence-types, are racial: yellow man, black man . . . They must be Christianized, in other words, facialized. European racism as the white man's claim has never operated by exclusion. . . . Racism operates by the determination of *degrees of deviance* in relation to the White-Man face . . . (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 178)

Imposed by the model-enforcing grid of the white man's faciality machine, the face is always defined from the outside. Race is a matter of divergence from the majority norm. 'The race-tribe exists only at the level of an oppressed race, and in the name of the oppression that it suffers: there is no race but inferior, minoritarian; there is no dominant race; a race is defined not by its purity but rather by the impurity conferred upon it by a system of domination. Bastard and mixed-blood are the true names of race' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 379). With the help of models and faciality – which includes not just facial features, but also clothing, accessories and even gestures – 'culture' and 'ethnicity' can be used to hierarchise.

The faciality machine supports the above-mentioned association of racial and ethnic minorities with figures of unrest such as terrorists, labourers stealing jobs, criminals, seducers, etc. The State may well be benefiting from this phobic reaction to foreigners. 'The administration of a great organized molar security has as its correlate a whole micromanagement of petty fears, a permanent molecular insecurity, to the point that the motto of domestic policymakers might be: a macropolitics of society by and for a micropolitics of insecurity' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 215–16). Suspicion of immigrants helps the EU justify its actions as it continues working toward the establishment of a common border policy among its member-states. Control of the EU states' internal and external borders is crucial to the control of the flow of labour into the EU. This is done less by physical repression than by axioms of overcoding and geometric logic, imposing rigid lines to enforce binaries, dualisms and concentric conjugation. Molecular insecurity inspired by fear of unruly immigrants allows the State and the Majority to respond by defending their rigid hierarchies.

States draw lines in order to striate space. Primitives and Nomads also draw lines, but while the Primitives draw supple lines around territories and the Nomads create lines of flight, the State uses its rigid lines to produce social space by way of a dualist organisation of segments, a concentricity of circles in resonance and a generalized overcoding (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 222). This method entails policing, rather than military force. Deleuze and Guattari quote Paul Virilio, who theorises that ' "the political power of the State is *polis*, police, that is, management of the public ways," and that "the gates of the city, its levies and duties, are barriers, filters against the fluidity of the masses, against the penetration power of migratory packs," people, animals, and goods' (Virilio 1986: 12–13; quoted in Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 386). Striating lines connect points, which are made to converge on a single central point, conjugating elements, enclosing space and then parcelling it out (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 380–1, 459; see also 433). 'It is a vital concern of every State not only to vanquish nomadism but to control migrations and, more generally, to establish a zone of rights over an entire "exterior," over all the flows traversing the ecumenon. If it can help it, the State does not dissociate itself from a process of capture of flows of all kinds, populations, commodities or commerce, money or capital, etc.' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 385–6).

The rigid line imposed by modern states usually takes the form of a border, whether external (located at the physical boundary between sovereign states) or internal (for example, at airport customs and

immigration checkpoints). An internal border can be thought of as one of the concentric circles deployed by the State apparatus of capture (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 222). The Schengen agreement and its extensions are rearranging Europe's borders, both internal and external, but contrary to appearances and despite the free passage of many goods and certain citizens across many borders internal to Europe, 'this does not mean that [borders] are disappearing. Less than ever is the contemporary world a "world without borders" ' (Balibar 2002: 92). The EU is not eliminating borders, because it is at the same time reinforcing exclusions against many non-citizens, according to a domestic policy which 'is about maintaining law and order' and 'also – in the real Europe of today, as in all other industrial societies – [is] about excluding large numbers of people who would like to be immigrants' (James 2005: 60). 'Borders are vacillating' means not that they are being effaced, but that 'they do not work in the same way for "things" and "people" ' (Balibar 2002: 91). These borders are enforced not only by geometric lines, but also by documents delineating status – passports and visas indicating citizenship, travel permissions, residency permits and permission to work legally for pay. Papers determine one's placement in relation to the line, demarcating social delineations. 'Citizenship corresponds to the constitution of a differentiated society, and to the functioning of a state' (Balibar 2002: 114). The flow of asylum seekers and refugees, both economic and political, attest to the real presence of all types of internal and external borders, raising the spectre of an 'apartheid' based not directly on colour or ethnicity, but rather on the juridical categories of citizenship, legalised residency status and work permits (Balibar 2002: 112; 2004b: 43–5). Thus Europe (and the rest of the First World) can insist on fundamental human rights for all people, while denying most of the world's people the right to live, work and travel within its state-imposed boundaries.

Contemporary states operating under global capitalism seem most likely to welcome immigrants when and where they are needed for their labour power. However, for Deleuze and Guattari, by far the greatest aspect of Minority power is the capacity for creativity, whether scientific, technological, philosophic or aesthetic. As theorised in *A Thousand Plateaus*, only those who assume a Minoritarian position can create, invent or innovate. 'Creativity' here should be understood in a strong, broad sense, encompassing invention, innovation, transformation and production outside of capitalist constraints. This creative capacity is an essential feature of the War Machine, which does not have to be wielded by the Nomads who invented it, and, furthermore, can appear in almost any social domain. 'The nomads do not hold the secret: an "ideological,"

scientific, or artistic movement can be a potential war machine to which it draws . . . a creative line of flight, a smooth space of displacement' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 422–3). As Paul Patton explains, the War Machine 'has little to do with actual war'; instead, 'the real object of Deleuze and Guattari's war-machine concept is not war but the conditions of mutation and change' (Patton 2000: 110). The 'cacophony' of multi-ethnic diversity in the EU should not be overcome by creating a common identity; rather, the discordant din should instead be preserved, because a complacently harmonious homogeneity would mean the end of cultural creativity and positive social transformation. A minority borrows Majority ways only at the risk of stifling Minority creativity, 'drying up a spring or stopping a flow' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 276). Despite the dangers, a minority might have to become a majority 'to survive or prosper' (Deleuze 1995: 173). However, 'a people is always a creative minority, and remains one even when it acquires a majority: it can be both at once because the two things aren't lived on the same plane' (Deleuze 1995: 173–4). Even so, capture by the State apparatus is always possible, as will be shown in the following example of Minority creativity.

A contemporary French example of Nomadic creativity can be found in the much maligned low-income housing estates (*banlieues*) known for high unemployment, drug dealing and angry youthful rioting characterised by burned cars and destructive vandalism. Many of the restless youths who live there can be classified as modern Nomads, but differently than the European jihadists described by Roy, since many of the French *banlieue* youth are not especially devout Muslims. One could say that they transform the State-built space of their tall apartment blocks into a Smooth Space, a concrete desert, the spatial equivalent of the steppes or the Sahara.[3] They do constitute a Minority because they occupy a position of economic and political exclusion, and organise themselves into bands or gangs. However, viewed en masse, as during riots, these suburban youths do not constitute an *ethnic* Minority, because of their ethnic heterogeneity and lack of a common national identity – almost all are French citizens or legal residents, but self-identify neither as French nor by allegiance to ancestral nationalities (Wacquant 2006; illegal immigrants tend to live as squatters or in cheap hotels, as they are generally not eligible for suburban public housing). This poor, ethnically mixed suburban culture has produced its own culture in their housing estates, complete with commercially successful cultural products. 'The hip-hop movement, which came out of poor estates, is making banlieue culture into a force for integration, perhaps

even more powerful, given its international inspiration, than the working-class culture it replaces' (Duclos 2006). This *banlieue* music, much of which includes overtly political content, appeals to French young people across class and ethnic lines, and is especially popular among middle-class students. Its influences are American, Arabic, African and even French. The above-quoted commentator suggests that such cultural innovations are not being produced from within the majority culture of France, and concludes from this example of original artistic creativity that 'We must stop vilifying the estate adults, youths and children who draw on their predicament, sometimes unwillingly, to produce this dynamic part of modern French culture', adding that with the production of this music, 'rage has been sublimated in artistic and political expression' (Duclos 2006). For Gilroy, as for Deleuze and Guattari, the cultural asset of the minorities is not identity, but creativity. 'Culture can never be immobilized in the way that this pursuit of absolute identity demands. To seek to fix culture is a problem because, if we arrest its unruly motion, we ossify it' (Gilroy 2005a: 434).

Duclos called *banlieue* culture 'a force for integration', implicitly recognising that it has already been 'captured' by the State and by capitalism. After all, this music comes from people whose housing is subsidised by the State. More importantly, the music is diffused through the venues of capitalism, which is inseparable from the State-form (Patton 2000: 102; Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 434), since this French-language hip-hop would never leave the housing estates if it were not for the production facilities and distribution networks of the music industry, along with diffusion by the mass media (which in France is part private, part state-owned). States need creativity from their minorities, not only culturally but also militarily, scientifically and technologically. Conversely, minorities must sometimes call on the resources of the State, not only to secure their legal rights and material well-being, but also to realise large projects which require capital investment or commercial networks. 'All progress is made by and in striated space, but all becoming occurs in smooth space' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 486).

As indicated earlier, even if social entities like minorities and states were not always mixed, it would not be possible to base ethical choices on one over the other. There is no abstract formula for acting ethically, for ethics is not a structure or a particular political position, but rather, phrased in roughly Deleuzian terms, a multiplication of connections so as to maximise life's potentialities. Appiah's recent work on cosmopolitanism similarly demonstrates that ethics cannot be based on abstract qualities or concepts. Pure cosmopolitanism is potentially dangerous, as

in the above-cited case of radical Islamic militants. 'An ideology can be staunchly supranational and also staunchly illiberal: moral universalism can carry a uniformitarian agenda' (Appiah 2005: 220). This does not mean that cosmopolitanism should be dismissed. For many, it is a viable way of living in the world, but actually existing cosmopolitans must be willing to accommodate local particularisms. Appiah therefore defends a 'wishy-washy version of cosmopolitanism', which compromises its universalist logic by recognising 'at least some forms of partiality' (Appiah 2005: 222, 223). This is not to say that structures are in the end unimportant, but rather that ethical judgements cannot be based on the form of the structures, but rather on their real effects on actual, particular, singular subjects.

Minoritarianism, ethnic nationalism and cosmopolitan internationalism may lead to good outcomes or bad outcomes, to oppression or emancipation. In one of his last books, Guattari notes in current events increasingly vociferous 'demands for subjective singularity, characterised by 'quarrels over language, autonomist demands, issues of nationalism and of the nation', including fundamentalisms in Arab and Muslim countries. These demands, he continues, 'express on the one hand an aspiration for national liberation, but also manifest themselves in what I would call conservative reterritorialisations of subjectivity' (Guattari 1995: 3). In other words, nation and race in themselves are neither bad nor good, but rather it is a matter of asking 'what can be done to prevent the theme of a race from turning into a racism, a dominant and all-encompassing fascism, or into a sect and a folklore, microfascisms?' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 379; see also Nairn 1997).

To cite a recent example of an ethical dilemma that cannot be solved by loyalty to a single abstract concept or principle, the Muslim headcovering has been banned in French schools in the name of secularism. The French who supported this law are not the only Europeans who interpret Muslim headcovering as a refusal to integrate. Muslim girls and women who wish to remain covered in a stubbornly secular France find themselves trapped between two worthwhile principles, caught in the middle of a 'contradiction between two emancipatory claims [which] is total: those which fight ethnic discrimination, cultural racism, the hegemony of the old imperial nations, and those which fight the subordination of women and the violence and denial of equality to which they are subjected' (Balibar 2004a: 359). Many Muslim feminists supported the headscarf ban in French schools because they wished to defend young girls against the imposition of conservative rules by their fathers, brothers and uncles. 'We must not lose sight of the tragic character of a

situation in which young women, somewhere between childhood and maturity, become the stake of a merciless struggle for prestige *between two male powers* which try to control them, one on behalf of patriarchal authority wrapped up in religion, the other on behalf of national authority wrapped up in secularism' (Balibar 2004a: 359). Stubborn loyalty to an abstraction is not the only problem with the French headscarf ban. The French state is at the same time establishing a hierarchy of identities, and what seems to me to be worse, paying undue attention to symbolic images instead of addressing serious structural issues like employment or housing discrimination against those with Muslim names. Issues of cultural difference (like styles of dress associated with particular religions or ethnicities) must not be allowed to obscure the structural effects of striation and majority dominance, such as the unequal partitioning of resources (including access to good wages) and the maintenance of social hierarchies of privilege.

Europe and its member-states ignore the structural and logistical aspects of minorities at their own peril, especially on the scale of the ecumenon. The Third-World minority far outnumbers the First-World majority, and economic indicators along with political instability suggest that the non-denumerable flow of would-be refugees and migrants into the First World will not slow any time soon. Although the apparatus of capture will continue to make use of these flows of people by turning them into inexpensive labour, while excluding or marginalising the excess, Minority power may find a way of coalescing against any state that deals only in axioms. Just as crucially, a state that views its minorities only in the narcissistic images of ethnic identity will never be able to create policy which takes into account the structures based on the Minority logic of the State exterior. Europe and its minorities will need to find a way to negotiate this competing logic of the exterior.

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Notes

1. Among European intellectuals, Paul Gilroy and Anthony Appiah have been writing about identity and multiculturalism for many years. Some of the newcomers to the debate wrote essays in response to the newspaper article on Europe co-signed by Habermas and Derrida (Levy et al. 2005). For an account of the new interest in minorities among mainstream political philosophers, see Kymlicka (2001: 17–38).
2. On Europe's nationalist past: 'The moral and political bankruptcy of European identity was an effect of the holocaust perpetuated against the Jewish and the Roma populations, as well as the persecution of homosexuals and communists by the Nazi and Fascist regimes' (Braidotti 2004: 131); 'Contemporary Europe has been shaped by the experience of the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century and by the Holocaust' (Habermas and Derrida 2005: 11). On the inappropriateness of the US multiculturalism model, see Braidotti (2004: 134–5), Gilroy (2005a: 438), Kristeva (2001: 41).
3. 'It is possible to live striated on the deserts, steppes, or seas; it is possible to live smooth even in the cities, to be an urban nomad' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 482).

Chapter 11

People and Fabulation

Philippe Mengue

The question of the people, of peoples – *la Nation, das Volk*, etc. – is not, to put it mildly, in high favour these days. According to prevailing intellectual opinion, to raise or reintroduce this question at the present time can expose you to a charge of unhealthy complicity in the fascism said to be rampant in European and North American societies. Such, it seems, is the price of the ruling anti-globalism, of vigilance and 'resistance'. And yet the question of the people underlies and over-determines all others. The point at issue is (yet again) nothing less than the meaning of democracy and the future of Western countries.

This surprising need to rethink the concept of 'the people' involves a paradox, and it is this that I propose to make my central subject. It concerns the declarations of Gilles Deleuze, his complaint about 'the missing people' and his call for 'a people to come', as well as the connection he establishes between the people and the 'function of fabulation'. Take, for example, the following passages (emphasis added to bring out the set of concepts I have in mind): 'We here come upon what Bergson calls "*fabulation*" . . . To catch someone in the act of legending is to catch the movement of constitution of a *people*' (Deleuze 1995: 125–6); 'We ought to take up *Bergson*'s notion of fabulation and give it a *political* meaning, (Deleuze 1995: 174).

We have met this theme before. We know that with Nietzsche, Bergson, Heidegger, the search for the 'myth of the future' or for new gods, for a 'new mythology' (Nietzsche locates it in Wagner's musical drama) rejoins a constant feature of the start of the twentieth century, a feature which itself, together with all that pertains to the concept of '*voelkisch*', is itself anchored in German romanticism. There is nothing odd about this current of thought except, it seems, for being taken up by Gilles Deleuze. How can this man we have known since *Anti-Oedipus* as the champion of subversion and revolution, the author of *A Thousand Plateaus*, said to

be the justifier and vindicator of the alternative-world ideas of Toni Negri and Michael Hardt, invoke a problematic apparently so compromised by its association with fascism? Or, looking at it another way (Deleuze might have thought the two ways came to much the same thing), a problematic so conservative, so law-abidingly democratic? Could there be something wrong with the way Deleuze's political thought is presented to us today?

In the situation that is ours today, I proceed from the conviction that questions raised in connection with terms such as 'people', 'myth' and 'fabulation' cannot be thrust aside in the name and under the authority of moral condemnation of their closeness to fascism of one kind or another. What, then, is involved in these concepts that are making a comeback and that cannot be simply wished away?

I would like to demonstrate that the Deleuzian thesis, properly understood, registers the postmodern condition of politics (characterised by the absence of a political or historical subject, social 'body', proletariat, ethnic community . . .) and must lead to a re-examination of the relations between micro-politics and democracy (which necessitates the joint destabilisation of both these concepts and takes them outside the 'political' areas in which they are usually current – the extreme left in the case of micro-politics, liberal republicanism, shall we say, in that of democracy). But in parallel with the 'fading' of the historical subject, neither can Deleuze's political thought be reduced to a theory of dissemination of the effects of more or less stratified micro-powers that regulate the nomadic intensities of resistance warring against them, a picture all too often conveyed in connection with Deleuzian politics.

Neither should we imagine that what Deleuze is demanding, when he speaks of the people's absence and projects its image into the future, is a people without divisions or the disappearance of the class struggle in an at last re-established community of freely associated workers. His demand (is it a demand?) is neither of the order of regret nor of the order of (revolutionary) hope. For two reasons. He knows with Spinoza that a people does not exist by nature, and he goes on to sow the suspicion that it will never exist (we shall soon see why). That being so, what is fabulation doing here, and what is the connection with micro-politics and with the question at its centre, that is to say the minor?

Let us briefly examine the antecedents of this question.

I Myth and the People in Heidegger

The relation between myth and people is a theme that – as we know – has marked the whole of right-wing German romanticism (the people,

the Nation, as opposed to Revolution, the theme of the romanticism of the Left). We must also remember to what ends this exaltation of the myth, recognised via Nietzsche as capable of forming a people – in the case in point, the German people – was used in Nazi propaganda.

A. In the tradition that precedes Deleuze, the function of myth is essentially twofold. First, in German romanticism – from, let us say, Hölderlin onward – it creates the people; it constitutes a means of identification that renders possible the birth of a people ('Nation'), that enables a people to take possession of itself by drawing its identity from a model rooted in a story of heroes and gods. As for Heidegger, whose thought – Adorno's vicious attack notwithstanding – cannot be assimilated with that of National Socialism, the *Dasein* ('being-there'), like the *Mitsein* ('being-with') is immediately determined as *Volk*, people or historical community, considered first and foremost as a community of language. Far from the racial interpretation, which anchors the people in blood and soil (*Blut und Boden*), Heidegger holds that the people is above all the bearer of a 'historical' destiny (*Geschick*), and in its most intimate being finds itself alongside the *muthos* (Sage), creator of gods. Heidegger follows Hölderlin in believing that only a myth could have enabled a people to achieve its own language (*Sprache*), as, for example, Homer's mythical poem (*Dichtung*) did by giving Greece its gods and its destination. What, then, is the logic that links people and myth so closely together? Let me refer here to the analysis provided by Lacoue-Labarthe in *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, which shows that a 'mimeology' is at work behind Heidegger's concepts. And indeed, if there is no identity, individual or collective, without a process of identification, then the appropriation of the self – of one's own being – must necessarily involve the imitation of a model. At the collective level, this task of offering such objects of identification is principally performed by myth. For Heidegger, national identification – the self-identification of a people – is not, as such, a matter of nationalism but only and specifically of politics, that being its specific essence. All politics imply the 'fictioning' of communities, in both senses of the term: as 'fiction' (fabulation, myth, fable, etc.) and as 'fashioning' (in the 'plastic' sense) in and by the original myth, which proposes models or types for imitation, thus making it possible to grasp or appropriate one's own self. It should not be thought – even though the myth must recover and set free what is at the source of a people, what 'initiates' its destiny – that the myth is already created and present in the culture, so that the only thing that needs to be done is to pick it up and put it back in the foreground by adopting a retrograde, backward-looking and reactionary attitude. Quite on the contrary, the challenge for Heidegger (as

also for Nazism) is revolutionary (in counter-distinction to Marxism's proletarian revolution, National Socialism said it was making a 'conservative revolution': still, this too was a revolution, a fact we tend to forget). The point at issue is to invent, to create a new myth, the myth of the future that will enable a defeated or scattered people to gather itself up in its unity, to find again what gives it the identity of a common destiny and makes it what it is in its profound specificity and singularity. Here, the fable is explicitly an object of creation and invention. Thus politics is art, supreme art, as in Plato (at least, in Heidegger's case, during his committed Rectorship period, but an art that involves a higher fabulation, whose depositaries are the poets, as Homer or Hölderlin are for Heidegger).

But this process of identification cannot be acceptable to Deleuze in that it substantifies the idea of 'the people' and locates the roots of fabulation in an origin that precedes and propels it (Heidegger's 'Being' in its historical dimension, or the soul or spirit of the nation, of civilisation, etc.). These ideas, inspired as they are by rightist attitudes, are just what Deleuze abhors and could not under any circumstances have adopted as his own. We may even say that his own ideas on the subject are directly opposed to this concept, which he endeavours to deconstruct.

II Nietzsche and the Role of Monumental History

B. The other central function of myth, a correlate of the first, is to forget, to obliterate the precariousness of all established things and their underlying discords, and thus, through legend, to legitimise and perpetuate the existence of a people possessed of a minimum of unity and identity, to 'make believe' in the legitimacy of institutions.

Nietzsche, in the Second Untimely Meditation entitled 'On the Use and Abuse of History for Life', recognises the positive function of what he called history as fable, history that pinpoints and mythifies certain historical personalities of use to the present and, correlatively, overlooks or forgets to mention less glorious periods, to the extent that such forgetfulness is necessary in order to protect and ennoble the life of a people. History as a science undoubtedly serves a purpose in its field, that of academic study, but it cannot be entrusted with the task of creating a political memory capable of assuring the self-confidence of a nascent people. History in the service of life implies free fabulation that cannot be subject to systematic verification by scholars and experts. In Section II of the Second Untimely Meditation, Nietzsche calls monumental history such history in the service of historical action, history that can create the

greatest momentum and generate the plastic force that forms a living people. Such history is essentially one whose task it is to make mankind beautiful and great. The man of action, unlike the man of science (whom Nietzsche calls the 'micrologist'), must believe that if greatness was possible once, it will surely be possible again.

But, says Nietzsche, monumental history can perform its task of ennobling the past so as to encourage and inspire the present only if:

> violently what is individual in it would [. . .] be forced into a universal mould and all its sharp corners and hard outlines broken up [. . .] [M]onumental history will have no use for [. . .] absolute veracity: it will always have to deal in approximations and generalities, in making what is dissimilar look similar; it will always have to diminish the differences of motives and instigations so as to exhibit the *effectus* monumentally, that is to say as something exemplary and worthy of imitation, at the expense of the *causae* [. . .] That which is celebrated at popular festivals, at religious or military anniversaries, is really such an 'effect in itself'. (Nietzsche 1997: 70)

Producing images that create an effect, that encourage imitation – at the cost of forgoing the search for the unique and unrepeatable (the proper object of historical science) – such, then, is the function of political fabulation that a historical people cannot do without (but which, even as a reaction to the academic discourse which is the mark of our times, it cannot put above all other forms of history without serious risk).

For once, Deleuze does not adopt his master Nietzsche's position as his own: for him, the function of myth cannot be to beautify or legitimise the instituted present. On the contrary, he criticises the sphere of grand politics, of what Jean-François Lyotard terms 'grand narratives' and what Deleuze himself describes as 'majoritarian'. One is entitled to think that the work of micro-politics is, inversely, to unpick this work of myth, legend, fabulation, and to reveal beneath the large ensembles (of the majorities) the infinite dispersal of causes and small beginnings, the 'shameful origins' as Nietzsche used to say, believing these to be the object of the historical knowledge of academic historians. Micro-politics, viewed as the locus of critical radicalism or of 'deconstruction' in the broad sense, and the function of fabulation would then be mutually antinomic.

III Formulation of the Deleuzian Problem

We are thus faced with a major problem. What can be the place and function of 'fabulation' in micro-politics if neither of the two central functions traditionally assigned to myth will fit the bill? At first sight, this seems to me to put us in the tightest of spots.

The problem, as I see it, boils down to the following. Let us suppose that the proper activity of micro-politics is to deconstruct by recollecting what all social or civic 'memory' forgets, namely the products of 'fabulation' (partisan ideologies, a nation's legendary histories, hero-worship, commemoration, celebration, rites, funeral orations, inaugural speeches, etc.); this purely critical, positivist, historicist function will bring back, without fabulation and legend-making, past instances of violence, usurpations, conquests, the triviality of small beginnings, the dust of old causes, the absence of destiny or design, in short the injustice, fragility, instability, arbitrariness and illegitimacy of all that is instituted; how then, under these circumstances, can such a function's work of sapping and deconstruction fail to lead to what has always been legitimately and universally feared by all peoples as encapsulated as phantasm in the story of the Flood, namely the liquefaction of all social ties, the apotheosis of pure flux? We are faced with the major problem of Gilles Deleuze's political philosophy, to the extent that this philosophy is thought to constitute an unrestricted apology for all forms of deterritorialisation. But that is a partial and partisan view of Deleuze's philosophy. We are entitled to think that Deleuze does not disdain the problem of unity, of social links, that is central to all societies. Note that he was never an apologist for the individualistic, atomistic pluralism that leads to the pulverisation of the social. The multiple is not pluralism or simple plurality, and the politics of the multiple requires a mode of unity, a specific Whole that connects or relates without unifying or totalising (in other words, that connects 'rhizomatically'). I have chosen to proceed in this direction because I believe it is the only one that can enable us to understand Deleuze's insistent reference to the people and to fabulation. What is it that distinguishes Deleuzian fabulation from those that preceded it?

First, we must point out that the problematic of fabulation appears in Deleuze's work rather late, towards 1985, relates to the period of the two books on cinema, and – given the failure of revolutions – seems to take the place of what had been the end goal of his political vision since *Anti-Oedipus*. This stage was preceded and prepared for by the concept of minor literature. As early as 1975, in *Kafka*, Deleuze had said: 'The literary machine thus becomes the relay for a revolutionary machine-to-come' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 17–18). Collective enunciation, being proper to minor literature, is 'positively charged' to produce 'an active solidarity' by substituting itself for the disaggregation of 'collective or national consciousness' (17). Not only is 'literature . . . the people's concern' (32) – which means that the link between fabulation and the

people is already present ('there is no literature without fabulation') – but the writer, despite of and thanks to his marginal position, is able 'to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility' (17).

The first point to note is that as early as *Kafka*, even though the revolutionary outlook had not been abandoned, the people makes its appearance and is placed in the foreground of political activity, either as the collective locus of enunciation or as the entity to which that enunciation is addressed.

This first point is confirmed and clearly explained in declarations dating from 1985 onwards. Here is a first text, already quoted in my introduction, concerning the minoritarian discourse whose aim is to 'constitute' a people: 'We here come upon what Bergson calls "*fabulation*" . . . To catch someone in the act of legending is to catch the movement of constitution of a *people*' (Deleuze 1995: 125–6).

A second text, again concerning the creation of a people:

> When a people's created, it's through its own resources, but in a way that links up with something in art [. . .] or links up art to what it lacked. Utopia isn't the right concept: it's more a question of a 'fabulation' in which a people and art both share. We ought to take up Bergson's notion of fabulation and give it a political meaning. (Deleuze 1995: 174)

And here is a third text, which concerns the absence of a people and is developed principally in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (Deleuze 1989: 215–24). '[T]he people are what is missing' (215), yet this recognition is no reason for 'a renunciation of political cinema, but on the contrary the new basis on which it is founded', not 'addressing a people which is presupposed already there, but [. . .] contributing to the invention of a people' (217).

These passages reveal that, contrary to appearances, there are points of profound agreement between Heidegger, or the German romantic tradition, on the one hand and Deleuze on the other, and that these points are of considerable significance and should be considered more closely than they usually are.

1. The object and locus of politics is indeed the people – its invention, its creation (or its preservation from the forces of dissolution or of repression).
2. Such creation or preservation of the people cannot be accomplished without the involvement of art, which means that politics is art and, reciprocally, art is politics. We thus have an aesthetisation of politics

(as we also do especially with Heidegger and to a far lesser extent with Bergson).
3. In this art, the role of fabulation is decisive.

IV The Deleuzian Difference

Now that we have identified and clarified the data of the problem – which, as we see, are remarkably close to those of the two earlier authors, even where they are at odds with them – we must try to pinpoint what it is that makes Deleuze different from, and even opposed to, those authors. It will be seen that, while they start from common ground, the concepts of politics, people and fabulation form new configurations, which create them anew and alter their meanings. Very schematically, and going straight to the point, I propose to focus on four distinguishing features:

1. The people are missing. No pre-existing or supposed entity (one that is 'already there') is posited.
2. The idea of absence is linked with that of a minority: 'A people is always a creative minority' (Deleuze 1995: 173); 'the people exists only in the condition of minority, which is why they are missing' (Deleuze 1989: 220).
3. Fabulation is not a matter of the imaginary, nor is it a matter of myth (and the search for origins) or of utopia (and hope in the future). 'Utopia isn't the right concept' (Deleuze 1995: 174). Deleuze is looking for 'an act of fabulation that is not a return to myth' (Deleuze 1989: 222; translation altered) nor a part of utopian imagery, always reintroducing some amount, large or small, of the ideal and of transcendence. 'In utopia (as in philosophy) there is always the risk of a restoration [. . .] of transcendence' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 100).
4. Far from eliminating the possibility of politics, the absence of the people makes possible not only a new concept of politics but also a new function for the people, essentially and exclusively the function of resistance. Art and fabulation are what makes resistance possible: 'Art is resistance' (Deleuze 1995: 174).

In *Cinema 2*, even when speaking of the political films of postcolonial peoples, Deleuze does not defend the return to (the belief in) a substantial, territorialised people. On the contrary, he speaks of the people as a power allied with the art-creating minority and its capacities for resistance. Art is what resists, and only a minority can create and resist, for the people cannot concern itself with art (Deleuze 1995: 174); therefore

it can only be absent. The people is the correlative of creation (not that which creates), and as such it is always absent from creation. Hence creation must make 'a people to come', it must produce a sense of 'the advent of a people' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 110). 'The creation of concepts in itself calls for a future form, for a new earth and people that do not yet exist' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 108). Thus the Deleuzian people is a virtual entity: in so far as it tends to join the creative minority and inasmuch as the creative minority tends to join what the people lacks. This is where fabulation comes in: it is the common element that can connect art with the people. The people that does not make art can fabulate so as to join (partake of) artistic fabulation, while art fabulates by addressing itself to a people yet to come. In this way Bergson's concept of fabulation is given a political instead of a purely artistic meaning, for the locus of politics – the people – is present and targeted. At the same time, recourse to a people that is already there, rooted and territorialised, has been avoided, thus escaping Heidegger's reterritorialisation with its attendant dangers.

So much for the essentials of Deleuze's argument. We are now in a position to form an overall view of the question.

V The Difficulties of Deleuzian Politics

How, then, are we to characterise Deleuze's political stance? First, I think a good way of defining it is, by opposition to Heidegger's 'national-aestheticism', as an 'aestheticism of the minor, of minorities'. In this way the Deleuzian position does not emancipate itself from the political romanticism which grants art (literature or fabulation) the privilege of conveying the essence (creative, untimely and 'revolutionary') of politics. What all these concepts have in common is that the people invents itself in and through a fabulation, determined in one case as being the nation's and in the other as being that of creative minorities. In neither case is the specific autonomy of the political sphere recognised as distinct from that of art, philosophy and science and hence from 'thought'. We know that in the celebrated trilogy of *What Is Philosophy?* (philosophy, science, art), politics, unlike the other three, is not granted a specific mode of its own and a plane of its own. What follows from this denial of independence to political space (and, correlatively, what follows from the dilution of that space in the 'socius' as a whole, the consequence of which is that 'everything is political')?

Next, it will be noted that we have two peoples: the people that tends to join, or to merge with, the elite or the creative minority and the people

as 'mass', 'herd', etc. The division *populus* = people in the noble sense / *grex* = herd in the locus of politics has been restored. The people as a virtual element necessarily extends beyond (though it does not transcend) the people in its present-day actuality, in the ethnic sense, because the movement can and must be thought of in terms of immanence (people 1 (*populus*) is interior to, and works upon, people 2 (*grex*), which is virtually or potentially people 1). If we are dealing with two peoples, there is an internal fault or flaw. Deleuze acknowledges this scission, but only insofar as it divides the true people from the false people produced by the majoritarian centres of power. The people that is absent is distinct from the ethnic group (*grex*) in the substantive sense, it coincides with the ethnic group as minority (here, the term 'ethnic group' is used in the special sense given it by Carmelo Bene). Micro-politics draws a 'border [that] is not inscribed in History, neither inside an established structure, nor even in "the people" [. . .] It divides the people and the *ethnic*. The ethnic is the minority, the vanishing line in the structure' (Deleuze 1997: 254).

The minoritarian concerns 'those that History does not take into account' (Deleuze 1997: 254), and the invention of a people as minority concerns exclusively the invention of a new possibility of life. So we have, on the one hand, the 'people' in (restrictive) quotation marks and, on the other, the people as a minoritarian ethnic group. Under such circumstances it is difficult to see how, other than by denying the existence of the problem, it is possible to affirm that 'minority represents nothing regionalist, nor anything aristocratic, aesthetic, or mystical' (Deleuze 1997: 255). It follows that, for Deleuze, the politics that is legitimate and true does not have for its object the people as a whole or as a totality of citizens, but only certain leading minorities (such as can be recognised, for example, in the theatrical works of Carmelo Bene), virtually or necessarily in conflict with the majoritarian people, which for its part is determined solely as being caught in 'the powerlessness of a state, a situation'. Such a position precludes any kind of unity, any stability, any identity for the people, however open it may be. Thus the proper object of politics – that is to say the people as a whole – is marginalised or denied.

What is the significance of this unnoticed (or masked) flaw at the heart of politics? I will conclude by developing these questions, which will remain on the horizon of my problem-raising interpretation.

VI Territorialisation and Deterritorialisation

Although this division of the people is inherent in his conceptualisation, Deleuze fails to reflect its political implications. Why is this so?

In order to be able to recognise this division, one would first have to recognise that it comes from the 'aestheticism' which thinks of politics as art (and consequently as dependent on the authority of 'thought') and which comes to grief over thus opposing the people to the thinker: in other words, one would have to recognise the error of refusing to posit the autonomy of the political sphere, and hence the discontinuity of the political sphere in relation to the 'thinking of thinkers' that Hannah Arendt peremptorily established in and through her meditations on the failure and error of Heidegger's political commitment, and that is directly at the root of all her work on totalitarianism.

In order to probe into this question at greater depth, we must refer to the complex problematic (in the 'Geophilosophy' chapter of *What Is Philosophy?*) of earth and territory, of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, which raises questions about the very nature of thought. *Absolute* deterritorialisation belongs to thought and to thought only (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 38, 88). What Deleuze calls 'the plane of immanence' is the plane on which the absolute deterritorialisation of thought takes place, and as such it provides the very soil of philosophy, that which constitutes 'its earth'. 'Earth' for Deleuze, is therefore not of the order of a territory but of a deterritorialisation. But thought as absolute deterritorialisation, in order to be thinkable and actually thought, must stay in relation with the *relative* deterritorialisations that take place in history and concern empirical movements (physical, psychological, social), from which it 'takes over' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 88). It is to these that thought connects itself, these that it amplifies, reactivates, overtakes, etc. It follows that politics as empirical practice, as a process of relative deterritorialisation, cannot by right be cut off from thought and the demands of thought, which it echoes and relays. The demand of absolute deterritorialisation is none other than Revolution: 'Revolution is absolute deterritorialisation even to the point where this calls for a new earth, a new people' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 101). Revolution is not a dream: it has a reality, that of Becoming (distinct from history), that of the Event at the level of thought. And it is from this level that it intervenes, awakening the powers of resistance neutralised by capitalism (100) and generating micro-political action as 'resistance to the present' (108). And the call to the people is further vindicated by the principle of inseparability of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation: 'Absolute deterritorialization does not take place without reterritorialization' (101). We understand that the people to come is the absolute reterritorialisation proper to thought, and that this mode is distinct from the relative deterritorialisations and reterritorialisations

which in modern times are, respectively, capitalism and democracy. 'Deterritorialization of such a plane does not preclude a reterritorialization but posits it as the creation of a future new earth' (88). Here we have the gist of what Deleuze has to say on these points.

A question arises, however. We cannot but agree that reterritorialisation implies an earth and a people (by virtue of the essence of politics, which is implicit here). But why must the virtual movement of absolute and infinite deterritorialisation have an earth or a people posited as absent and 'to come' as the only possible mode of reterritorialisation? The recourse to utopia is made necessary by the fact that utopia alone connects thought with society: 'it is with utopia that philosophy becomes political' (99). Very well, but why is utopia alone in this? Can there not be another, more effective mode of joining the two together, and under what conditions? In order to open up another relationship between people and fabulation, should we not review the underlying postulate which, by refusing to grant politics a specific mode of thought, subordinates politics to art and to the thought of thinkers?

VII Virtual and Actual People

From the Deleuzian point of view, the answer to these questions is entirely contained in his ontology of becomings, which both divides the real into two parts – virtual and actual – and makes the latter 'internal to' the former, which engulfs it. We might say that the difference in kind between the two means that the reterritorialisation of thought – itself absolute – cannot find anything adequate to itself in empirical reality, and therefore can only connect itself, in actuality, to absence and to what is 'to come'. In the present, thought makes for absence, expectation, nostalgia and hope. It should be noted, since we are talking about principles, that this 'people' is condemned to be *forever* 'to come', that it cannot have any historical existence. Always thought, never present. The revolution is therefore a 'spiritual' one first of all, and doomed to remain so (it 'inspires' or 'blows on the embers of discontent', or offers us absence as a gift). Disguised comeback of Platonic idealism? 'Revolution'? Or return to a form of absence or 'lack', so decried by Lacan, yet so central to Deleuzian politics?

Furthermore, since for Deleuze the people as demos and democracy belong exclusively to the sphere of relative, historical processes of capitalist reterritorialisation (this has to do with his attachment to Marxism), they are legitimately subordinated to the absolute deterritorialisation of thought and its 'revolutionary' demands. Democratic institutions cannot

have any mediating role because of their definitive reduction to the status of a mode of reterritorialisation of capitalism (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 98). Hence the use of such terms as 'colonizing democracy' (97) or 'democratic imperialism' (97) to characterise Greek democracy. In short, there is nothing left but a future that will never come, a past heavy with the danger of 'origins' and a present that represents the abjection of capitalism and the hypocrisy of democracy (107). This people will never exist in the actuality of history – except for a few local and momentary resistances, by a handful of minorities entrusted for a brief instant with carrying out the demands of thought – resistances that are likely to get quickly bogged down and fizzle out. Does this not mean an a priori desertion of political space?

What was Heidegger's error or 'blunder'? A problem of reterritorialisation: 'Heidegger lost his way along the paths of the reterritorialisation [. . .] He got the wrong people, earth, and blood' (109). But is this really so? Did his mistake really consist in, say, taking the German people – at the worst moment of its history, the moment of National Socialism – for the Greek people and choosing it as the object of reterritorialisation? Did 'the thinker's tired eye' (109) mistake the one for the other? Or, rather, did his error consist in choosing a people – any people in the actual, ethnic sense – for reterritorialisation, because reterritorialisation, as we have seen, is a matter of pure 'becoming', beyond all history, beyond any specific people: 'The people is internal to the thinker' (109)? Heidegger should have known that there is no 'people', in the ethnic sense, capable of meeting the demands of infinite thought. He 'betrayed' (95) the movement of deterritorialisation, he placed it once and for all in the territory of Greece and Germania, dedicating himself to the cult of a people functioning as origin (and root) (95) and having an inner destiny that makes history.

The most important result of our analysis is that it highlights what I believe to be a very strong and significant tension. Heidegger, by his positive consideration of the people in its actual and ethnic reality, opens up a problematic that is properly political but slides towards the politically dangerous, whereas Deleuze, who is not politically dangerous and to whom no suspicion of fascism attaches, slides towards a danger of a different kind: by investing the concept of the people with a reality that is merely virtual, he misses the central and proper object of politics.

How is this predicament to be overcome?

The fundamental problem is this: the Deleuzian people, being always a people to come, is indeterminate (it has neither territory nor borders nor traditions), it is deterritorialised (and therefore capable of being

created by thinkers), but can it properly be a 'political' locus? Politics has to deal with a people that is other than virtual, potential or yet to come. A people that fears for its safety, that has borders to defend, that hopes to improve its well-being, a people that is territorialized, such a people is the proper object of politics. How can micro-politics, with its aestheticism of resistance, find the means to occupy a position that is neither pre-political nor anti-political? How can micro-politics acquire objectives that are concrete, determined, positive, how can it come to grips with the reality of something like a people, if that people's ethnic reality is immediately suspect and potentially rejected as one of the negative factors that impede movement, that arrest and fossilise the flow? How can it fail to have, as its entire contents, a NO opposed to any determined institutional procedure, any mediation, any proposed reform, on account of their inadequacy, their territorialised (i.e. limited, localised, ethnically determined) nature?

The essence of politics is to be found in its locus, which is the existence of a historical community as a people. And this community is always at one and the same time particular, singular or heterogeneous in respect of any other, implying a community of language, tradition (custom, religion, myth), a community limited in space, having borders, occupying a territory. Deleuze's problem, in his anti-fascist struggle, can therefore take only the following form: how to open the territory (which is always present in point of fact) or the closed society, which is the basic datum (a positive one, not just an obstacle) of all politics? One thing is sure: for Deleuze, the people, the demos, cannot only take the form of a *Volk*, a nation in the ethnic, physical or racial sense, but neither can it have the face of Humankind without the reintroduction of a transcendent fiction, the fiction of abstract humanism and Human Rights. To posit a cosmopolitical republic in the manner of Kant (remembered by Habermas) at the (regulatory) horizon is tantamount to breaking the immanence and introducing a utopia of transcendence (because it involves relating the social field as a whole to something exterior to it, Law, Humankind, whatever). Neither present nor future, nor to be found in the ideal: where, then, is the reality, other than its infinite virtual reality, of the Deleuzian people – which, it seems, a people cannot forgo without abandoning political space?

VIII The Refrain

In order to achieve a better grasp of the connections Deleuze establishes between territory (closure) and deterritorialisation (openness) we can

turn to his attractive theory of the refrain (ritournelle). Bergson's idea of the necessary complementarity and solidarity of relations between closed (territorialisation) and open (deterritorialisation) societies had already traced this.

Far from sharing the 'in' approach to the imaginary, Deleuze never envisaged the act of deterritorialisation as an act of cutting off all links with territory, of leaving the past completely behind, abandoning it forever as something dead and gone for good. The line of flight is not rectilinear: rather, it forms a loop. It always takes some territory with it as it flies off or, as it were, doubles upon itself, reterritorialising as it advances. The line of flight can never be drawn as an absolutely pure line: it must always contain some code, some land, some stable segment, something that will reterritorialise itself in one way or another. In terms of its actuality – at the level of history – it will always and of necessity, as we have seen, be associated with forms of territorialisation that limit it and make it 'relative'. No deterritorialisation without reterritorialisation. Territorialisation and deterritorialisation are simultaneously distinct, indissociable in fact, and caught in a relationship of hegemony assigned to deterritorialisation, which as the line of flight leads or pulls with it the most stable and most hardened, most territorialised elements. In other words, Deleuze is aware of the weight of (re)territorialisation and of the necessity for it. This may suggest that he never broke with the Bergsonian concept of the closed and the open and their necessary complementarity. In particular, with the concept of refrain (ritournelle), Deleuze may seem, like Bergson, to be assigning a positive status to the people as a sociological and ethnic reality. But this is not so.

The refrain, says Deleuze, is a 'territorial assemblage' which serves to make or mark a territory, a dwelling (an ethos), a 'home', a fatherland; it has 'an essential relation to a Natal, a Native' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 344). But at the same time it performs a process of deterritorialisation, so that 'a territory is always en route to an at least potential deterritorialisation (360). A refrain that holds together heterogeneous elements without their ceasing to be heterogeneous cannot owe its 'consistency' (that which makes it hold together) to anything other than deteritorialisation: 'Even in a territorial assemblage, it may be the most deterritorialized component, the deterritorializing vector, in other words, the refrain, that assures the consistency of the territory' (361).

From this it follows that the Natal, the fatherland, tends to be left behind, that the value of the refrain lies solely in its ability to unleash something that has its being beyond territory and the Natal. The territory, for all its resources and its wealth, is not what links together the

heterogeneous elements (interest groups, individuals, social categories and so on) because their unity (rhizomatic and transversal) resides in the process of deterritorialisation. An ambiguity could, however, be detected here. For with the concept of the refrain comes the idea that the territory, the people as an ethnic whole, having a specific language and customs, having borders in space, constitutes the 'germinal' factor that guides the openings and reterritorialisations from its inner resource, its inner space: 'The forces of chaos are kept outside as much as possible, and the interior space protects the germinal forces of the earth from being submerged, to enable them to resist . . .' (343).

Deleuze does not deny the richness and fecundity of tradition, but, as we have seen, tradition is for him only one element in the assemblage and by no means its centre or origin. Hence we can – and must – 'say bad things about the territory' (355), and by the same token about tradition with its codes, etc., since they are not what gives consistency to the assemblage and makes the components hold together. 'The assemblage holds together by its most deterritorialized component' (371) and not by 'the play of its framing forms' (371), in other words its territorialities, its codes and customs, in short its tradition.

As we can see, the continuity with Bergson has been broken. Bergson regarded the people in its ethnic reality as a basis, a plinth having its own consistency or identity, which could serve as the starting point for the process of opening-up or deterritorialisation. But even within the framework of the refrain, the people or the Natal, albeit referred to, plays no part other than that of a potential factor – one component, among others, of assemblages that are varied and diversified. The refrain is viewed as subject to the process of deterritorialisation, which prevails over that of reterritorialisation. The latter, while recognised as necessary and useful in the face of a still greater danger ('when chaos threatens' (353)), has no really positive ontological or axiological status; it is inferior to deterritorialisation in both being and value. This was not at all what Bergson had in mind: in a sense, he regarded reterritorialisation as a substratum for democratisation processes in open societies.

The situation is the same if we consider the matter, not from the angle of social and relative processes, but from that of the absolute deterritorialisation of thought. As a new earth, the people is assigned a value only to the extent that it preserves its absence. Deleuze thinks that absolute reterritorialisation of thought (which is rightfully infinite) also calls for a 'Homeland' capable of 'restor[ing] an equivalent of territory, valid as a home' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 68, 69). But for him, since this question is absorbed or concentrated in that of thought, with its purely

'spiritual' modes of registration or actualisation (reterritorialisation), such a people and such a land can only be absent in history and always yet to come. This being so, we are entitled to suppose that the proper object of politics cannot be maintained because peoples in their political actuality and reality have already been deserted. It is true that 'peoples' do not exist in nature. They are neither collective subjects nor substantive realities having an immutable and pre-existing identity. But that does not mean that they do not have a mode of existence and of subjectivation that particularises them and endows them, via their traditions, with certain singular traits that are relatively slow to change and an identity that, temporary and non-essential though it is, nevertheless belongs to a relatively stable stratum with only limited mobility in terms of thought processes and art. Every people is above all a network of billions of little stories. But at the same time, poles of agglomeration form at points where these singular narratives concentrate and thicken, providing the people with a relatively compact and solid substratum. It is thanks to common myths or fabulations, that a people achieves its common political reality. Unity is of the rhizomatic type, the territorial assemblage is 'open' when the common space rests upon a *plane of doxic immanence* that traverses the little stories and commands confrontation and the elaboration of a narrative that tends towards the common. Deleuze would like to ignore this dimension, which he tries to banish by consigning it to Opinion, repressive communication or, worse (or better?) still, 'chatting with friends', that is to say the whole area of commonplace observations, conversational fallout, fossilised or hardened fragments rather than creative flows. And so we see that all that counts for him are the infinite aspirations of thought (hence the role of art and philosophy) and the fact of tending towards a people, which has a right to exist only insofar as it is sure to be absent. The people in its actual reality being thus subordinated to a virtual people that can never be actual, it has value only to the extent that it is absent and/or that it preserves its own absence.

IX The Democratic Plane of Immanence

There exists an answer to the difficulties we have just outlined. To my mind, this answer remains Deleuzian to the extent that, although it is not literally spelled out anywhere in Deleuze's writings, it agrees with the spirit of the principles upon which his philosophy is founded. This answer, which I hope to be able to elaborate in compliance with Deleuzian principles, lies with democracy, viewed as irreducible to capitalism and imperialism, a view which is at odds with Deleuze's Marxian

concept (as it also is with Heidegger's historicism). Once we have accepted the essential Deleuzian principle that 'the people' is real without being actual, we have to add that what supports the people in its virtuality is its rhizomatic mode of connection, in other words what I propose to call the doxic plane of immanence, which is the plane of immanence that is occupied by all democracies (see Mengue 2003, 2005). This plane of immanence is not a plane of consistency (philosophy) nor of composition (art) but of transversality (politics). It does not draw an image of the Universe or of Thought-Being (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 65) but an image of sociality. It does not handle concepts (as does philosophy) or percepts and affects (as does art) but opinions. These, given their mobility and the possibility of making them fluid by an 'analysis' at the democratic level, should not be conceived of as segments that are stubbornly resistant and fixed. Above all, they should not be reduced to 'Opinion' in the singular, that caricatural object that nobody has ever seen. Opinions are multiple, as are the little stories that the people tells itself. They are narrative mobilities, fugitive and mocking, that concentrate momentarily upon this or that 'object' or 'subject' or 'event' that will briefly attract and capture the people's attention. A people is nothing other than this cloud of billions of little stories that navigate in all directions (Lyotard). The plane of transversality is not what fabulates: it is not a subject nor a power, still less a substance. It is not a people, but it makes possible the existence of a people as *demos*, not just an ethnic group (*ethos*) or a herd (*grex*) but a political people (*populus*). It has a potential existence as fabulation – in other words it is what makes it possible to receive the thousands of little stories irrepressibly produced by the multitude, to compare them with one another, to 'analyse' their phantasmal or delirious character, and to work towards an agreed decision on what is to be done. 'Demos' exists only where there is a plane of immanence working in actuality upon the present, as a collective historical whole, formed by the hazards of history and conveying, with its myths and traditions, affects and illusions about itself which are never to the liking of (or equal to) the thinking of artists and philosophers.

What genuinely political role can Deleuze then assign to fabulation? The other political function of fabulation, which I propose as a way of getting round the Deleuzian political impasse or, at least, difficulty, presupposes adopting a more positive attitude towards 'communication' and the media and, above all, re-evaluating the democratic plane by constructing a concept such as that of the plane of doxic immanence, the plane of transversality.

The positive and political task of micro-politics – '*rendre la parole aux gens*' (the great Foucaldian-Deleuzian watchword that goes straight back to May 1968) – would be to give back the power to narrate (or to fabulate) to the people. It would consist in urging people, egging people on to tell a thousand and one little stories that would restore to the Spinozan 'multitude' its power of narrating, fabulating, drawing lines of flight that are really lines of non-mythical fabulation. Deleuzian fabulation would not be oriented towards the past of 'the origins' nor the future of dreams, but towards little stories, minor narrative fictions (see, for example, the spread of private radio stations in the recent past, followed by the Net today, etc.) which, in the actuality of the present, are the creators of the future (projects, programmes, scenarios of various kinds, sci-fi, etc.) There, without doubt, is a direction that can be followed so as to actualise and enrich the political function of fabulation.

From such a standpoint it would become clear why utopia is not a good concept – although, of course, utopian literature forms part of fiction and belongs to the fabulating function. Deleuze calls for utopias of immanence, which he opposes to utopias of transcendence. We understand that this immanence of utopia must be assigned to the power of fabulation and narration that is inherent in the social (so much so that it defines the social and constitutes the essence of the social link), a power that is not denied to anyone, that is open to all, to the masses, to those whom Jean-François Lyotard called 'the pagans', to the humour of unimportant people who thumb their noses both at the authorities and at the intellectuals who make grand speeches on their behalf and espouse noble causes that are never anything but disguises for their conceit and their power.

Such a plane is needed in order to transform a *Volk* – any *Volk* – into a *demos*. In this way we see that the (democratic) 'people' is indeed absent, for it is not actual (and will never be so in history) because it has no substance, melting into the pure space of confrontation and the principles that allow it to be drawn upon the abyss (chaos) of not-knowing. Yet at the same time the people is not absent, for it is the virtual reality of the democratic plane on which opinions are received and confronted – the only possible meaning to be given to the word 'WE' – and perhaps, if necessary, the thing on behalf of which and thanks to which the 'resistance' will rise up. For a specific plane of immanence is implied as a necessary precondition even for the accomplishment of this necessary function of resistance, so that the narrations may not be lost in the clouds of elementary particles without connection or communication, and so that the people may, through this possibility of connection, accede to political existence in the proper sense. The plane does not, by itself, create

a social link, for it constitutes only a space for the reception of possible narrations (proffered by one or another locus of enunciation). The plane is purely virtual and the social link is given in the very existence of particular, actual fabulations, which represent society, being-together, its possible struggles and its hopes. As the plane of immanence, it is the One-All stretched over the chaos, the abyss or yawning gap of non-knowing of what being-together should be, and it traverses the chaos (disorder) of the billions of little stories that give life and vivacity to every 'socius'. It follows that peoples (or Nations, or, say, the United States of Europe or of America), are as it were double-jointed: one side is turned towards the territory (to be protected) and the other towards the deterritorialisation that frees a people from the constraint of ethnicity and opens it up to the Otherness of what it might want to fabulate by way of universal freedom, reconciled humanity and so forth. Thus, in a sense, we come back to Bergson's schema, the aspiration to the open society, which – although of a different nature – is grafted on to the closed society and will open it up and draw into the lines of resistance and creativity drawn on and from the plane of political and democratic immanence. To some extent we must undoubtedly return to the root of this common inspiration if we are to restore political meaning to Deleuze's micro-politics.

Our analysis of Deleuze's argument will, at the least, have had the merit of establishing that the question of earth and territory is indeed that of politics, and that – contrary to the *doxa* of 'Deleuzeism' that has the greatest currency today – this question is indeed central to the political thought of Gilles Deleuze. But even while recognising this, Deleuze, in his deliberate refusal to acknowledge the relative autonomy of the political stratum, would not go beyond the notion of a purely spiritual reterritorialisation, to which, because of their inadequacy and their hypocrisy, existing peoples and the existing principles of Western democracy could – by definition and of necessity – only be obstacles to be fought and resisted. He never suspected that disparagement of politics and the obligation of permanent guerrilla warfare against all authorities without distinction resulted from his infinite aspiration as a thinker, which isolated him not only from the Polis (every thinker, he wrote, is an exile without a country (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 69)) but also – and this he failed to realise – from politics itself, like all thinkers as such since Plato, as Hannah Arendt so magisterially teaches us.

I am, however, inclined to think that Gilles Deleuze was sufficiently aware of the problems arising from minorities as such and their temptation to withdraw into separate communities, their intolerance, their latent micro-fascism. But he was banking – very romantically – on the

appeal, attraction and contagion of the most creative and most deterritorialised segments of society, on their ability to generate cohesion (national or other). But this has never sufficed politically, even in a period of revolutionary agitation such as May '68, all its great merits notwithstanding. I believe Deleuze had clearly identified what threatens micro-politics from the inside in the falling apart or crumbling of atomised instances or loci, wandering without communication, violent and, ultimately, uniformly different in their chaos, and for that very reason also uniformly alike – in other words, the present state of the 'socius' that he had before his eyes towards the end of his life. This explains the other, complementary demand he addressed to the people, the demand for fabulation, which, alas, was fated to remain indeterminate and vague. For Deleuze (as for Negri and Hardt), the people, like democracy, is forever 'to come', and therefore ultimately forever non-existent because of his inability to admit the positivity interior to the liberal democratic plane (which he systematically reviles), diminished and reduced as it is to being a product of the 'majorities'. Hence the shift to the hope for a 'kairos', the expectation of occasions favourable to an 'event' as unforeseeable as it will be explosive, but which cannot constitute an effective policy capable of enduring in the long term.

That is why I thought that, by analysing the Deleuzian problematic – while fully respecting, I believe, his demands as they relate to those facing us today – I could establish that although the people, the political *demos* of democracy, without being an ideal, is necessarily virtual as Deleuze will have it, it must coincide with the plane of immanence proper to politics and to democracy, the plane that rightly *traverses* all 'communities', all social formations, and is the sole guarantor of a veritable and effective 'democratic future'.

Translated by Anna Bostock

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Chapter 12

Micropolitical Associations

Ralf Krause and Marc Rölli

Whether Deleuze and Guattari's concept of micropolitics can be regarded as a significant contribution to current philosophical debates around the questions of democracy and political action is the subject of considerable debate. While many interpreters (Patton 2000; Hayden 1998; Antonioli 2003; Holland 2006) emphasise the post-Marxist and radical democratic tenor of the concepts developed in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, others, in contrast, contest their political relevance. Critics like Todd May or Philippe Mengue consider micropolitics to be lacking in political content insofar as it tends to reduce the transformatory political processes of social interaction, decision-making and the definition of political claims and purposes to a merely anarchistic or dissolutive escapism. In light of this debate, it might be useful to review the concept of micropolitics in more detail, paying particular attention to its formative context. Thus we will begin by investigating to what extent the micropolitics promoted by Deleuze and Guattari intersects with the Foucauldian concept of power. We will then confront Deleuze's problematisation of power and resistance with theories of radical democracy and democratic becoming. We thereby want to highlight certain aspects which – for us – characterise Deleuze and Guattari's original and genuine approach to the political. Finally, we will investigate the political impact of this approach in terms of *associations*, understood as relational, interactive and virtual assemblages capable of subverting and transforming manifest or majoritarian structures of power.

I Micropolitics at the Outside of Power

The concept of micropolitics is part of Deleuze's critical confrontation with the model of representation in thought and action.[1] It follows Foucault's alternative conception of power. In Foucault, power ceases to

be a property of sovereign leadership. Thus it can no longer be attributed to a central authority representing a dominant class in the sense of socio-historic antagonisms. Instead, power is conceived as the basic interaction of pluralistic, local, differential and productive forces that provide much more diverse and heterogeneous effects than those that could be identified along the conflictual, striated lines of institutionalised social actors and conflicts. As such, questions of power demand a 'post-Marxist' problematisation that goes beyond the logic of contradiction, which identifies class subjects as instances of sovereignty or repression.[2] Like Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari reject social-utopian ideals that, departing from an alienated and repressive reality, project their perspectives onto a future state of free social practice. In their view, the concept of alienation presupposes a natural, essential (human) nature and therefore limits the potentials of a becoming-other of social relations. Repression, as characterised in Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (*La volonté de savoir*), likewise assumes a limitative function, insofar as it tends to stabilise and confirm established, majoritarian conditions and their claims of validity at the moment it opposes them. In spite of these commonalities, a remarkable distinction emerges between the micropolitics of Deleuze and Guattari and Foucault's microphysics of power.[3] In 'Desire and Pleasure', a brief commentary on Foucault's theory of power, Deleuze argues that with regard to a supposed omnipotence of power, the difference between micro und macro tends to vanish.

Whereas the Foucault of the 1970s understood power as a generative positivity that brings forth the discourses, practices and institutions in a given social field, Deleuze and Guattari look for immanent, molecular and micrological conditions of interactive transformations capable of *resisting* capture by the structured *dispositifs* of power. As regards the micropolitical level, they seek to detach resistance from its dependence on the formative procedures of power-structures. In his book on Foucault, Deleuze notes that, due to the comprehensive generic creativity of power in Foucault's analysis, it becomes difficult to endow resistance or counter-power with a genuine potential for subverting power-dependent social values and truth conditions. 'If power is constitutive of truth, how can we conceive of a "power of truth" which would no longer be the truth of power, a truth that would release transversal lines of resistance and not integral lines of power? How can we "cross the line"?' (Deleuze 1986: 94–5). In 'Desire and Pleasure', Deleuze points out three possible poles of resistance in the work of Foucault: first, from within and below the power relations; second, from the outside, the excluded or marginalised; third, in the bodies and their pleasures (against the

dispositif of sexuality). It is this ambiguity of resistance that Deleuze wants to avoid by suggesting that micropolitical processes precede power relations. Thus power and its structuring effects upon the social field cannot account for all of the movements and connections taking place in social interaction.[4]

The micropolitics of Deleuze and Guattari, then, attempts to approach an irreducible outside of power in order to affirm the diversity of dynamic connections prior to the formative processes establishing and conserving regimes of thought and action.[5] Deleuze argues: 'the final word on power is that *resistance comes first* [. . .]. This means that a social field offers more resistance than strategies, and the thought of the outside is a thought of resistance' (Deleuze 1986: 89–90). In order to explain the priority of resistance, Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* invoke the work of Pierre Clastres, who suggests in *Society against the State*[6] that in so-called primitive societies, war occurs as a practice (among other practices) employed to prevent the institutionalisation of hegemonic tendencies. Deleuze and Guattari attribute these practices to a kind of *war machine* driven by external forces that defend or reproduce a smooth space freed from hierarchical centralisation. War, in this sense, neither appears as an act of state-building nor merely as a state of nature (Hobbes), but as a deterritorialising process of *basic social interaction*. More importantly, such a notion of resistance affirms the interaction of forces prior to or detached from their limiting function when subordinated to a state form or power structure (such as the *dispositifs* of discipline, sexuality or biopower, examined by Foucault). In this sense, resistant forces are not primarily considered to be effects of social exclusion practised on marginalised, expulsed or suppressed modes of life.[7] Such an interpretation would risk reducing the basic productivity to a mere reaction. From a micropolitical perspective, a society is not defined by its leading oppositions, its exclusions or margins, but most of all by *lines of flight* traversing, extending and deterritorialising the social field.[8] Thus the movements of political transformation always appear as problematic, as they are constantly changing under the pressure of deterritorialised forces opening up new dimensions for further interactive connections.

Another important inspiration for the concept of micropolitical transformation beneath manifest social distinctions, conventions and role-ascriptions is found in the micro-sociological research of Gabriel de Tarde. According to Tarde, social patterns of action result from 'imitative rays' that influence individuals and their social habits in multiple ways. In the case of conflict, a modification of these conventional patterns becomes necessary. What Tarde calls adaption is precisely the

inventive, creative capacity to transform divergent modes of behaviour into a new activating assemblage. Adaption, thus, especially concerns the less integrated individuals, who – with their adapting efforts – contribute to or even evoke the continual, molecular variations of social relations. Inspired by Tarde, Deleuze and Guattari locate micropolitical activities in those submerged processes of becoming that may prepare and provoke significant changes on the majoritarian, molar scale of the social order.

Micropolitics is neither politics *in miniature*, nor single actors in contrast to the political whole. Instead, this notion circumscribes a multiplicity of different flows which traverse individuals as well as society as a whole. These intensive flows, which do not correspond with articulated, institutionalised opinions and interests, drive the unconscious machinery of desire as a basis for all political action.[9] 'Good or bad, politics and its judgements are always molar, but it is the molecular and its assessment that makes it or breaks it' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 222/271). Thus the micropolitically engaged forces and processes cannot be adequately evaluated and measured if they are judged according to manifest social conditions.[10]

Nevertheless, the characterisation of a specific micropolitical level of association and action remains ambiguous. The political outcome of such a level oscillates between:

1. rapid recapture;[11]
2. u-topical reterritorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 135/128);
3. alternative modes of pragmatic interaction (weapons vs. tools), as assemblages like the nomadic war machine indicate (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 397–402).

Let us for this reason consider the specificity of the micropolitical level while distinguishing it from recent theories of democracy, such as those that insist on an indisposable and irrepresentable idea of democracy, which is ceaselessly at stake in an open and never-ending becoming of socio-political self-comprehension.

II Micropolitics and Radical Democracy

By virtue of its plurality, heterogeneity and transformative processuality, micropolitics seems to conform to recent theories on radical democracy that focus on the *empty centre of power* (Claude Lefort) or a *democracy to come* (Jacques Derrida). Both of these notions, in their own particular ways, consider democracy as an ultimately groundless process of open,

never conclusive becoming of further determinations and contents. As such, continual self-institutionalisation affirms the heterogeneous social forces that contribute to the successive formation of a democratic society, while resisting all attempts to impose a definitive, final societal condition. In his essay *Deleuze et le Problème de la Démocratie*, Philippe Mengue points out that the remarks in *What is Philosophy?* treating ancient Greek society could be interpreted as a contribution by Deleuze and Guattari to just such a postmodernist understanding of democracy. Nevertheless, Mengue contrasts such an interpretation with a sharp critique of the micropolitical approach by referring to Deleuze's repeated expression of aversion to the ideal of a democratic pluralism of opinions.[12] Deeply influenced by Nietzsche's aversion to socially circulating values and opinions, Deleuze holds that opinion reinforces the dominant conditions of evaluation and discursive validity.[13] For this reason, he and Guattari distance themselves from a concept of social interaction based on a rivalry of diverse opinions circulating around an empty centre of power.

Their characterisation of Athens democracy as a free, agonistic milieu of competing opinions primarily allows Deleuze and Guattari to describe its relative deterritorialisation as a purely contingent condition for the emergence of philosophy. Deleuze and Guattari thereby contradict the presuppositions of historical foundationalism which confounds the beginning of philosophy with a historical origin. Moreover they suggest that the deterritorialisation provoked by immigrating strangers effects a becoming-other upon the native Athenians, dissolving essential political categories like nation, class and language.[14] In such a *zone of indiscernibility* between stranger and native the conventional patterns of social identification give way to a minoritarian becoming-alien that is far from the classical concept of alienation. While alienation refers to an essential Self, becomings are minoritarian insofar as they undermine the social standards or norms of evaluation. Such becomings escape the so-called majoritarian connection of normality, norm and normalization, in which transcendental standards extracted from a supposed empirical normality furnish the normative conditioning of socio-political development.[15] For Deleuze and Guattari, any attempt to re-establish such universal, majoritarian standards (as is undertaken by several theories of recognition) tends to subject minoritarian activities to external criteria in order to regulate, check and capture their basic diversity.[16]

While political theories that focus on an empty centre of power or on democracy as an idea in constant becoming seem to be well suited to resist a majoritarian occupation of the political, the minoritarian becoming of micropolitics takes a different direction. *First*, it does not

subscribe to the idea of a necessarily unachievable and unrepresentable *telos* of the political, objecting that such an idea is indebted to negative teleology and depends upon the perpetual delay of its (impossible) fulfilment.[17] Deleuze and Guattari continuously attack the notion of an economy of lack as an interiorisation or internalisation of the outside. In such an economy, that which cannot be represented in a given order is endowed with a central significance because of its essential absence in the regime of actualised connections. The diversity of political action, then, tends to be understood as directed to an unachievable desiderate, and thus is susceptible to capture by the gravitation of this alleged central lack in the heart of society. *Second*, the so-called empty centre of power preserves the chief mark of an overcome sovereignty in the form of lack. Such a centralising understanding of power risks obscuring the multiplicity of social flows traversing and deterritorialising the social field. It tends to certify only those activities as politically relevant that compete for a representation of the social whole.[18]

Finally, what appears as a lack left behind by abolished sovereignty may rather signal a completely different transformation of power structures in the emergence of regimes of discipline and control, where multiple and decentralised forces detach power not only from an identifiable leadership's power of disposal but also from its attachment to a single focus that attracts all basic movements in order to coordinate or conjugate them. According to Deleuze, a centralised concept of power does not account for the manifold power relations at work in the local connections all over the social field (in families, schools, factories, prisons, hospitals, barracks, asylums, etc.). Sceptical of political theories that proclaim universal rights and advocate democratic pluralism and consensual decision-making, Deleuze and Guattari engage in the analysis of concrete power relations in order to evaluate their transformative potential. Instead of an evaluation according to general criteria susceptible to conformity with majoritarian common sense,[19] Deleuze and Guattari look for immanent modes of association in pragmatic assemblages that are capable of inventing alternative forms of social interaction.

III Immanent Features of Power

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari develop a concept of pragmatism that emerges from their critique of structuralism and offers new points of connection for political thought. In this work they abandon the simple opposition between representations on one hand and lines of flight on the other. Instead they activate concepts that make it possible to think

of the forces of deterritorialisation as inhering in 'collective assemblages'. Their basic thesis is that events and virtualities only appear as utopias and phenomena of withdrawal, as non-identical, disordered or extraordinary, as long as they are perceived from the perspective of traditional identity and order or in simple contrast thereto. In distinction to this kind of identity-oriented thinking that only allows for deviations *ex negativo*, Guattari and Deleuze pluralistically propose new and paradoxical *orders of difference* that think difference *in itself* without mediating it via the authority of a presupposed subject.[20] Making use of the 'pragmatic' concepts of association and collective assemblage, we will now examine more closely what the differential structures of micropolitics might look like.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari understand associations not as actual connections of sense data, but as virtual chains or multiplicities of singularities.[21] They thus define association as a form of synthesis that neither rests on a few principles of human nature nor refers to given, individual perceptions, but rather takes place in an unconscious structural environment, so that only its results correspond to conscious, objective experience. This is expressed in the formulation: 'Relations are exterior to their terms.'[22] This means that the *relata* of the associations are heterogeneous elements that are not determined in their essence by conceptual functions of the understanding.

The logic of association eludes the model of representation. Its form of repetition is not bound to the idea that certain essences transcend the process of repetition. In a first step, the characteristics of association can be grasped with concepts that are taken from that of the structure.[23] Association takes place automatically, without intentional ego-activity, generating the implicit relations of a structure upon which, as a (variable) condition, its process is at the same time based. The singularities it links together are not qualified as such: they have neither form nor meaning, and make sense only once they are associated with each other. The structure, which structures itself in and from out of itself, determines in its processes of actualisation the actualities that emerge from it. In this sense the sub-representative micro-structures are subject to existing social conditions as well as conscious individual experiences. They prescribe their actualisations, but simultaneously withdraw – as virtual conditions – from the actualities thereby produced. This is why Deleuze conceives of them ontologically with the concept of *implication*, which cannot be grasped in reference to actual representations, nor in reference to representational, transcendental figures (such as God, substance or subject). The example of space and time will allow us to clarify the consequences of the structural theory of association.

Associations are defined in the first place as syntheses of time that integrate a temporal factor into the structural logic. Every new association *per se* modifies the virtual order of its initial conditions. In this regard, Deleuze theorises association as a form of repetition that not only reproduces past events in the present but that as a fundamental process of repetition enacts a 'self-affection' that extends into the virtual depths of a past and a future that cannot be grasped from the field of a living and enduring present. Here association becomes defined as a mode of 'counter-effectuation' because it constantly connects with new problematic fracture points – without interrupting the circulation of the virtual object – and multiplies, bifurcates, and extends the proliferating processes of structuring. If the actual orders of representation are segmented by a chronological temporal regime, the temporality immanent to the structuring associations underlies these orders.

In addition to the temporal factor, associations also exhibit a spatial one, which can only be explained in terms of difference and its unpredictable shifts, in a space that is configured by the associations themselves. Associations spread out in an open space; they become dispersed in processes of differentiation that are not schematically ordered beforehand. They lack a hierarchical principle that dictates rules of mediation and assigns particular cases to certain categories. In the limitless space of the virtual structure, the associations defy the representational connections between set, predetermined entities in a space segmented beforehand into constant, unified and clearly delimited divisions (possessions or territories). The possibility of freely associating and moving around without restrictions can be actualised in 'smooth' public space.

In the name of the 'generalised pragmatism' worked out in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari define the collective assemblage as the successor concept to that of the structure.[24] They thereby retrieve the political dimension contained in the empiricist concept of association that is neglected in structural thought. We should keep in mind that in his book on Hume (1991 [1953]), Deleuze defined association as a transgression of the given that brings forth an imaginary social reality of action. While the contingent conditions of the association are not thereby given as empirical facts in a narrow sense, they nevertheless appear as practice, imagination, subjectivisation and institutionalisation (Deleuze 1991: 37–54). Our claim then is that these conditions of association return in the collective assemblage, on the new, *virtual* level of the structure. There they relate as undetermined structural elements to immanent, non-intentional acts, reciprocally defining each other in associations (acting as forms of power, made possible by other acts and

making other acts possible in turn). In this way micropolitics avoids two one-sided positions. It is not satisfied with a classical thinking of association that only extends to actual conventions, habits and imaginary institutions, without distinguishing between existing macro-conditions and implicit micro-conditions. But it is also not satisfied with a thinking of structure that incorporates associations as passive syntheses and simply opposes the actual plane of the representation of what exists and the virtual plane of differences and events. It is doubtful whether it suffices to break with the consensus of the ruling powers in order to automatically be caught up in the turbulence of difference – is it not much more that it is only the turbulence of difference that allows us to understand the subtle influence of the structures of power?

Placing the collective assemblage in a structuralist frame is to situate it on the level of actualisation, which is virtually determined and extends to the actual where it exhausts itself. Differentiated on a *vertical* axis (reterritorialisation–deterritorialisation), the assemblage exhibits ossification above and liquefaction below. But it is also determined on a *horizontal* axis – analogous to the serial arrangement of the lines of differentiation in the concept of the structure – by the distinction between expression and content, statements and things, signifier and signified (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 88/112). It becomes evident that in the transition to pragmatism, political association and the micrological dimension of the virtual structures in the collective assemblage can be brought into relation with each other. The assemblage makes it possible to distinguish while *still in the realm of the virtual* between stratified power structures and free conditions of immanence. This is the actual achievement of the 'pragmatic turn'.

It is easy to see that in the vertical respect alone, two levels of collective assemblage can be distinguished, which are both virtual-real but that connect expression and content on different actualisation levels in specific ways: on the one hand the immanence of criss-crossing lines of flight, on the other the segmented and stratified power structures such as the 'regimes of signs' that determine the exchange and the (actual) referential relations between content and expression. Deleuze and Guattari explain the plane of power with respect to speech acts, interventions, incorporeal transformations and so on.[25] Deleuze proceeds in the same way in his book on Foucault, where he attributes the two fields of the visible and the utterable to a non-representational *dispositif* that organises their reciprocal relations as relations within constellations of power[26] (Deleuze 1986: 70–93).

The difference between power and immanence can be located in a relatively static way in the methodology of structural thinking. While this

difference does introduce an additional dimension between the instances of the virtual and the actual, nevertheless this 'new' difference remains tied to the opposition between structure and representation. It merely opens up the possibility of generating power structures based on a theory of immanence, that is to make them dependent on an idea of 'difference and repetition'. But is it also possible to describe different structuring types on the horizontal plane, assemblages of content and expression with specific courses of actualisation? To describe, that is, other elements, other relations, other singularities, other virtual objects, other series, but also other temporal and spatial dynamics?

Deleuze and Guattari do in principle situate the collective assemblages below the *dispositifs*, insofar as the assemblages not only exhibit segmentations and concentrations of power but also lines of deterritorialisation that can redirect the effects of power. But the war machine not only opposes the state apparatus in the vertical sense because it comes from 'elsewhere', 'outside of the state's sovereignty' and co-optive power, it also provides a model for an alternative, 'nomadological' politics and form of socialisation.[27] The war machine (contents) and war thinking (form) constitute a single assemblage or 'idea' (as we could say using the terminology of *Difference and Repetition*). The potential of micropolitical thought lies not only in the conceptual toolbox with which complex structures of immanence are articulated, but also in the pluralistic concept of assemblages 'structurally' composed in different ways and with different courses of actualisation.

The pragmatism of the assemblages opens up the possibility of thinking relations of association that are more or less conditioned, that in some cases are more deterritorialised and micrologically structured and in others more (re)territorialised and macrologically structured. The point is that in the (vertical) difference between power and immanence, a 'normative' distinction comes into play that can be made to refer politically to (horizontally) different descriptions of the assemblages. 'Power' in this context stands for a connection between practices and discourses that is 'unjustified' according to immanent criteria, that is to say that operates according to the logic of representation and that is embodied among other things in the state apparatus.[28]

Against the background of his thinking of philosophical immanence, Deleuze is convincing when he situates power between the pure repetition of difference and the actual conditions of representation. But this has to be interpreted according to a ternary logic of association. This means in the first place that both the immanent conditions of the war machine as well as the power structures of the state apparatus can be put into

concrete terms with regard to their virtual forms of association. In both cases a differential logic takes effect, which is alone capable of probing into the complex arrangements. With this logic we are able to describe the productive relations of power that are stimulated 'from below' to expand, by virtue of the fact that they ultimately rest upon immanent micrological processes that have the strength to transform, destabilise, and intensify these same relations. Against the background of this assumption it then becomes possible to determine 'counter-power' not as resistance, but as immanent action: precisely because the immanent conditions are structured in themselves and are structure-forming, a typology of collective assemblages comes to the fore and begins to displace the monolithic, all-pervasive *dispositifs* of power. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, state apparatus and war machine stand opposed to each other as ideal types. Basically it is a matter of two selected types of collective assemblages of which there are many, which are not only distinguished from one another according to their respective modalities of distribution of power and immanence, but also in their structural conditions of actualisation. Indications of such differences are, for instance, working conditions and institutions and technologies that are integrated into the assemblage, but also every-day objects, forms of belief, ways of thinking, affect, gender relations, etc. A field of study emerges here with which the political thought in the work of Deleuze (and Guattari) can fruitfully intersect.

The strategic motives behind the 'postulate' of immanence evidently lie in its revolutionary implications: instead of fortifying the 'moral image of thought' by endorsing the (minor) deviations relative to the universally valid norm, it is a matter of pre-empting the present and declaring the exception to be the rule of thought. That this will not mean the normalisation or perversion of the exception, therein lies the confidence Deleuze placed in philosophy, a confidence he himself occasionally referred to as 'naive.'

Translated by Millay Hyatt

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Notes

1. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that the state endows thought with a form of interiority, while thought reciprocally endows the state with a form of legitimating universality. This reciprocity refers back to Deleuze's earlier philosophical criticism of representation and identity in his thinking of difference and repetition. Deleuze distinguishes the nomadic distribution of external relations from sedentary distinctions established by an image of thought configured in terms of similitude in intuition, contrariety of predicates, identity of universal concepts and analogy of judgement. The model of recognition emerges from these four roots and striates the field of experiences according to the subjective conditions of knowledge. In more or less the same way, the state form captures a territory and internalises and regulates its flows and connections according to their contribution to the formation of centralised power.
2. Although Deleuze (1995: 171) maintained that both he and Guattari remained Marxists, their adherence to 'Marxism' is a quite specific one. They deny the chief role of dialectical class antagonisms as well as a teleological, historical materialism based on the economic schema of base and superstructure in favour of the irreducible difference of force relations. Thus, effecting a displacement of the base from its economic conditions into a virtual sphere of interacting forces

and the heterogeneous becomings they engender, Deleuze and Guattari look for transformative potential beneath the manifest oppositions governing the social field. With their notion of desiring-production they aim to detach the primarily productive syntheses of this production from an economy of restraint that conceives desire as a mere imaginary substitute, which, as an index of lack, derives its significance from social mechanisms of repression.

3. While Paul Patton (2000: 76) considers this difference to be negligible, we underline its crucial bearing on the concept of resistance. It also explains why Deleuze und Guattari maintain a certain notion of repression and even alienation while analysing the effects forms of power have on the deterritorialising flows of desire and nomadic distribution.
4. 'I myself don't wonder about the status resistance phenomena may have, since flight lines are the first determinations, since desire assembles the social field, power arrangements are both products of these assemblages and that which stamps them out or seals them up' (Deleuze 2006: 129).
5. 'We must distinguish between exteriority and the outside. Exteriority is still a form [. . .], even two forms which are exterior to one another, since knowledge is made from the two environments of light and language, seeing and speaking. But the outside concerns force: if force is always in relation with other forces, forces necessarily refer to an irreducible outside which no longer even has any form [. . .] It is always from the outside that a force confers on others or receives from others the variable position to be found only at a particular distance or in a particular relation. There is therefore an emergence of forces which remains distinct from the history of forms, since it operates in a different dimension. It is *an outside which is farther away* than any external world and even any form of exteriority, which henceforth becomes infinitely closer' (Deleuze 1986: 86).
6. Cf. Clastres (1989).
7. 'I share Michel's horror regarding those who claim to be on the fringe of society: I am less and less able to tolerate romanticising madness, delinquency, perversion or drugs. But flight lines, that is, assemblages of desire, are not, in my view, created by marginal characters. [. . .] I therefore have no need to posit the status of resistance phenomena if the first given of a society is that everything escapes from it and everything is deterritorialised' (Deleuze 2006: 129).
8. 'From the viewpoint of micropolitics, a society is defined by its lines of flight, which are molecular' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 216/263).
9. Consider Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche's *will to power*. According to Deleuze, *power* has to be understood as the differential of interacting forces, whereas the *will* to power concerns the evaluative principle that is expressed in each interaction of forces. Thus the evaluation concerns the directions or determinations immanent to the expanse of force relations. It depends on the concrete relations whether forces are capable of affirming and acting out all of their potential, or rather execute it in a destructive, repressive way by transforming it into a violent aversion against the lines of flight. Deleuze and Guattari see the latter, paranoiac movement – an analogy to Nietzsche's nihilistic herd instinct (*Herdentrieb*) – at work in what they call micro-fascisms.
10. In *Negotiations*, Deleuze (1995: 171) describes May of '68 as a crucial event, an irruption of pure becoming. The protest could not be confined to a confrontation with the governing authorities, but rather brought out a manifold of alternative modes of life and experimental practices which hardly corresponded to the logic of antagonistic class struggle. As Deleuze and Guattari put it in *A Thousand Plateaus*: 'The politicians, the parties, the unions, many leftists, were utterly vexed; they kept repeating over and over again that "conditions" were not ripe. It was as though they had been temporarily deprived of the entire

dualism machine that made them valid spokespeople' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 216/264).

11. '[M]olecular escapes and movements would be nothing if they did not return to the molar organizations to reshuffle their segments, their binary distributions of sexes, classes and parties' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 216–17/264).
12. 'Comment se réclamer de l'immanence radicale, du millieu, du entre, et avoir tant d'hostilité à l'égard de la démocratie, sinon parce qu'on reste à son insu enfermé dans un modernisme, un avant-gardisme (dit révolutionnaire)?' (Mengue 2003: 48)
13. In this sense, Patton (2000: 104) also argues that Deleuze and Guattari's Nietzschean heritage obstructs the political potential nevertheless recognisable in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*.
14. 'Deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation meet in the double becoming. The Autochthon can hardly be distinguished from the stranger because the stranger becomes Autochthonous in the country of the other who is not, at the same time that the Autochthon becomes stranger to himself, his class, his nation, and his language' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 110/105).
15. 'What defines the majority is a model you have to conform to: the average European adult male city-dweller for example . . . A minority, on the other hand, has no model, it's a becoming, a process' (Deleuze 1995: 173).
16. At this point it becomes obvious that Deleuze and Guattari have to maintain a certain notion of repression concerning the effects of majoritarian procedures on processes of becoming, desire and deterritorialisation.
17. Consider Derrida's formula of a Messianism without Messiah.
18. 'There is always something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organizations [. . .]. May 1968 in France was molecular, making what led up to it all the more imperceptible from the viewpoint of macropolitics' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 216/264).
19. Clemens Pornschlegel (1996: 194) suggests an alternative interpretation concerning human rights. Instead of attributing universal rights to humanity as such according to an abstract, majoritarian feature, he proposes the undisposability of these rights in terms of: nobody is without right. In contrast with a positive attribution, the negative formula should express the distance between actualised rights and a right never exclusively possessible. Indeed, this suggestion resembles much more Derrida's concept of justice in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice* than Deleuze's preferance on inventive jurisprudence. The latter aspect is taken up by Paul Patton, when he argues that minoritarian rights (like native rights in contrast with common rights) can deterritorialise the legislative order if introduced as a hybrid concept into the common law. As such, according to Patton (2000: 129), a reciprocal becoming takes place. In terms of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming, the recognition of native title involves a becoming indigenous of the common law to the extent that it now protects a property right derived from indigenous law, and a becoming-common law of indigenous law to the extent that it now acquires the authority along with the jurisprudential limits of the common law doctrine of native title.
20. It is for this reason that micropolitics distances itself from a concept of minority that is distinguished from an image of the majority presupposed not only *de facto* but also *de jure*. Instead it devotes itself to an understanding of minority that by rights should determine the image of thought. This change in perspective is summed up in the phrase inclusive difference.
21. Deleuze and Parnet (1977: 69ff)
22. 'The famous association of ideas is certainly not reducible to the platitudes which the history of philosophy has retained from it. In Hume there are ideas, and then the relations between these ideas, relations which may vary without the

ideas varying, and then the circumstances, actions and passions which make these relations vary. A complete 'Hume-assemblage,' which takes on the most varied figures' (Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 56/70).

23. In the 1960s, Deleuze primarily treated the problem of association under the synthesis heading. By *Difference and Repetition* at the latest, the terms synthesis and linkage start to appear side by side. Linkage represents a logic of connection that refers already to the modern world of simulacra. Repetition is given its structural definition in the chapter on 'Ideas and the Synthesis of Difference' (cf. Deleuze 1994: 168–221). On the transformation of Deleuze's concept of association, cf. Rölli (2003: 333ff).
24. Guattari and Deleuze expressly turn their back on structuralism, to the extent that the latter ties the system of language to the understanding of an ideal individual, and social factors to actual individuals as speakers (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 524 note 10/101 note 9). Language can thus not be conceived as a code that functions independently of its non-discursive conditions. Neither can it be defined in terms of its phonological, syntactic or semantic constants, since this would be reducing its pragmatic variables of use to mere external factors. Finally, the rigid distinction between *langue* and *parole* has to be given up, since speech acts introduce a performative dimension into the linguistic structures rather than simply realising them in an individual act or applying them in a context external to the system of meaning.
25. Due to the strict heterogeneity of forms of expression and content, any representational relation between things and signs is out of the question. The two segments do, however, intersect vertically in a zone of indiscernibility where they are subject to a permanent process of variation. What this means in concrete terms is that statements about bodies (the knife cuts the flesh) do not *represent* these bodies, but are *ascribed* to them. In this way a relation of *intervention* is established that accentuates the acts immanent to the expressions. In expressing the non-corporeal attribute, and by that token attributing it to the body, one is not representing or referring but *intervening* in a way; it is a speech act (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 86/110). The concept of intervention in Deleuze and Guattari refers to the diagram (forms of power and chains of desire) upon which expression and content are equally based.
26. 'This is the whole of Foucault's philosophy, which is a pragmatics of the multiple' (Deleuze 1986: 84). Cf. Krause and Rölli (2005: 192–229).
27. 'It is not enough to affirm that the war machine is external to the apparatus. It is necessary to reach the point of conceiving of the war machine as itself a pure form of exteriority' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 354/438).
28. We can confirm that in every case the (virtual) structure is organised serially. The formally heterogeneous series cannot be harmoniously mediated in a theoretical context of correspondences. The mediation rather takes place in the strategic field of a zone of indiscernibility. The criticism of structuralism articulated in *A Thousand Plateaus* concludes that the idea of the structure is insufficient for thinking the power relations that regulate the factual exchange between statements and acts. It is true that as early as *The Logic of Sense*, sentences and things are structurally so intertwined with each other that what is expressed in a sentence is at the same time the attribute of the condition of the thing (cf. Deleuze 1990: 26 and Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 71/86). Therein lies the sense of the sentence, while its meaning merely resides in an external relation of reference that is dependent on numerous factors. But *The Logic of Sense* associates sense with the event, while in *A Thousand Plateaus* the pragmatic concept of the speech act is called upon, which testifies to the conditions of overpowering and the real circumstances of action that are linked with the expression of a sentence.

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(L'Harmattan, 2003), *L'ordre sadien* (Kimé, 1994), *Gilles Deleuze ou le système du multiple* (Kimé, 1994) and *Proust et Joyce avec Deleuze* (de la Différence, forthcoming 2008)

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