



# THE GUATTARI EFFECT

Edited by Eric Alliez and Andrew Goffey

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# Introduction

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Éric Alliez and Andrew Goffey

How is the polyphonic theoretical practice of the *collective assemblage of enunciation* to be attained? Of the many concepts created by Guattari, that of the collective assemblage is perhaps the one which best accords with his ongoing ethico-political attention to the kinds of existential and ontological mutations that new historical contexts bring with them. The conjunctural situation that holds at the time we write this introduction is no exception, and it makes it all the more necessary both to prolong and to amplify the simultaneously speculative and practical effects that Guattari's life of micropolitical experimentation engendered.

The initial catalyst for this collection of explorations of the *Guattari Effect* was a conference of the same name held at the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy at Middlesex University in London in April 2008. Over two days, a series of participants sought to verify the ramifications of this effect across a number of domains, in its constitutive relationship with concepts and non-concepts, its critical and clinical resonances, its ampliative operations within the social and the political and its ethico-aesthetic dimensions. In an exploration of both Guattari's written oeuvre and of the social, artistic and analytic practices that he innervated – from Oceanic anthropology and contemporary art to institutional therapy and autonomist political praxis – the conference mapped out some of the connections of this effect with the highly *uncommon* theoretico-practical notion of the *collective assemblage of enunciation*. Functioning as something of a probing device, a 'probe-head', the assemblage operated to enable novel emergences to be detected and the urgency of events to be elaborated, drawing together experiments in the making and speculative cartographies of the most varied sorts.

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If common themes emerged from the research that the workshop put into play, it is nevertheless the case that what was thereby initiated was a process united in and by the diversity of its movements, with a consistency that is to be found *between* the individual explorations that were essayed, enacting the very movement that the concept of the collective assemblage was forged to capture. It is not surprising that bringing together a group of researchers sharing a focus on Guattari should have this effect, because the collective assemblage engages with the matter of subjectivity (from the angle of its *production*) by virtue of the way in which it reconstructs the ensemble of modalities of group-being<sup>1</sup> from the hyper-complex multiplicity of components of subjectification. Crucially, such components do not necessarily pass via the individual – the researcher, the patient, the impatient, the militant and so on – but rather via *a politics* that is *ontologically and pragmatically redefined starting from the linkage between the assemblage itself and its most singular trajectories*.

After the pioneering studies of Franco Berardi 'Bifo' and Gary Genosko (published in 2001 and 2002, respectively)<sup>2</sup> a more sustained and focused consideration of the work of Guattari has been developing over the last four or five years. Guattari, of course, has been a presence in the English-speaking world for several decades now – following the crucial role that the publishers Semiotext(e) and Autonomedia played in making his work (and that of other French theorists) available in the 1980s (Guattari's 'winter years') and from Deleuze and Guattari's clandestine subversion of the linguistic and semiotic sufficiencies of the incipient era of the post-modern. The work signed Deleuze *and* Guattari was never (at least not initially) an academic phenomenon or the datum for tenured radicalism – in the way in which Derridean deconstruction, for example, became quickly susceptible – even if it did eventually also become so in part. And for a long time (such has been the extent of the focus on Deleuze) direct consideration of Guattari's work, for itself, has clearly seemed nugatory or irrelevant to many. But it must not be forgotten that it was Guattari who put the mole in the molecular revolution, and his sometimes gentle, sometimes strident subversions of the academic codes of the production and reception of (French) philosophy – with which the development of his work was nonetheless simultaneous – has confounded many, not being valorized on its own count.

Despite the absence of Guattari from the canons of university study, the Middlesex workshop was only one of a number of sessions that have been devoted to Guattari's work in recent years<sup>3</sup>, sessions that have likewise evinced a recognition of the crucial importance of Guattari in the elaboration of Deleuze and Guattari's joint work. So a panorama of the work of

academics and independent researchers interested in Guattari's writings has started to be sketched out, and it is hoped that this volume will offer a comprehensive addition. The papers gathered together here – besides including previously untranslated material from Guattari himself (an early version of a chapter of *Chaosmosis* as well as two late interviews) and revised versions of the presentations from the Middlesex workshop<sup>4</sup> – also include a series of articles by a number of researchers unable to be present at Middlesex in 2008,<sup>5</sup> as well as material from two artists who developed strong relationships with Guattari (Gérard Fromanger and Annie Ratti).<sup>6</sup> For the most part, the contributors pick up the baton that Guattari handed over to the future by focusing on his own writings (from the early *Psychanalyse et transversalité* to the late *Chaosmosis* and *The Three Ecologies*), but not exclusively so: a crucial aspect of the effect that Guattari produces is this acknowledgement of the insufficiency in itself of the interpretation of texts and the need to make (i.e. to experiment) new connections with, and uses for them.<sup>7</sup>

For many in the English-speaking world familiar with Guattari's work, it will be the depth of his immersion in the clinical that will perhaps be the biggest surprise here, an immersion explored in the second section of this book. This is despite the fact that – as several of our contributors show – his clinical experience with psychotics remained an abiding reference throughout his work, even in the proliferating, diagrammatic ramifications of his *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*.<sup>8</sup> Yet where Freud limited his analytic exploration of the sentiment of strangeness associated with the unconscious to the surroundings of the couch in his consulting room – decorated with Egyptian statuettes – and to the antiquarian theatre revisited in his books, Guattari explored – with his *impatients* – the production of an unconscious that wouldn't stop making the historical and social field drift. By inscribing in the socius every possibility of real experimentation and the reality of the blockages by which we are imprisoned (with our cohort of symptoms), in their company he could gauge the equilibrium of forces to be modified in order to gain access to a new montage of assemblages. Hence, from its first emergence at La Borde, the clinic would extend across the social field in its entirety and Guattari would practice his perpetual reinvention of the transformational trajectory of existents stuck in the past from his armchair behind the couch (he was also an analyst), or from his study at La Borde and, equally in no matter what militant or administrative meeting room or office. Not being of the order of the intimate, there is no privileged locus for the expression of desire – it arises from the assemblage insofar as this latter is *in itself* the analyser and synthesizer

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for an unconscious in act. Turned towards the future, the unconscious opened up by Guattari's experimental (clinical) practice is not structured like a language, although it is disorganized, deterritorialized by the generalized interference of all its components, which are constantly worked over *in* and *by* the socius.

Thus, in turn, the urgency for Guattari of 'exiting language'<sup>9</sup> and its supposed structural invariants, so as to follow the paths traced out far from the meta-stable equilibrium of the personal identity of the subject of enunciation. Falling back on the 'signifying' utterances that are imposed on it through association and interpretation, the patient in psychoanalysis is made to conform to the 'symbolic' castration of this split subject, through the *subtraction of his or her utterances from the very collective assemblages of enunciation and desire from which they are nevertheless inseparable*. Rupturing from Lacan and the circle that he opened up (only to close again), Guattari's clinical practice was particularly concerned with psychotics – those impatients who are incapable of bending to the symbolic 'cut' on which the abstraction of the person is founded and of accomplishing the subjective normalization demanded by society. Guattari's micropolitical propositions are thus confirmed to have minoritarian-becomings of the production of desire at their heart; their infinitesimal – and infinite – divergences with regard to the refashioning of the subject by Lacanian psychoanalysis (into the – not very experimental – subject of science) aim to create the polyphony of a singular-common that breaks with capitalistic modes of subjectification. It is the polyphony of this singular-common that, in divergent ways, forms the focus of the third section of the present collection.

Given the importance of the stakes of Guattari's practice, we can turn back on him his exposition of the motives for his seminar in schizoanalysis – a seminar that he held regularly from 1982 onwards – and explore the way that he himself developed through the heterogenetic capacities of his work. By *making systems of statements drift towards collective assemblages of enunciation*, in which those statements would be reformatted and reworked as catalytic operators, the aim was *to forge the coordinates for new forms of theoretical practice*. Where systems of statements are always at risk of regressing into discursively self-sufficient, transcendental entities (as when terms like machine, flux, deterritorialization and chaosmosis turn into keywords, something to which the Deleuzo-Guattarian corpus has, in its academic reception-transformation, been particularly susceptible), the theory–practice of collective assemblages of enunciation that his seminar enacted sought to problematize the 'putting into existence' of modellings (or meta-modellings) and of unforeseen propositions, generating in turn

*processes of subjectification with a real incidence on the concrete situations that they implicate, explicate and complicate.*

The primacy that the question of subjectification had for Guattari *vectorizes* the entire trajectory of his project of refounding *social practice*, and the effects that belong to it. It is a project that ranges from the ‘institutional’ critique of Freudianism undertaken at La Borde,<sup>10</sup> to the ‘destructuring’ of Lacanianism pegged to the ‘desiring machine’,<sup>11</sup> and thence to the critique of Lacan in the name of a ‘politics of fluxes’. It equally ranges from molecular revolution – which feeds into the movement towards becomings and machinic assemblages in *A Thousand Plateaus*, via the minor literature of Franz Kafka – to the semiotic analyses of Integrated World Capitalism and the chaosmosis of ecosophy, proposing as it does to shift ‘the human and social sciences from scientific to ethico-aesthetic paradigms’.

Artistic practices, in which Guattari became increasingly interested later in his life, are exemplary in this regard, and they form the subject of the fourth section of this book. What mattered for Guattari in artistic practices is less the institutional dimension of the works or of works of art inscribed in the gallery system, and much more their indissociably ontological and social dimension of creativity. Invoking a proto-aesthetic or ethico-aesthetic paradigm – so as to enunciate an otherness grasped in its position of subjectifying emergence, meshing with the most innovative segments of the socius – subjectification is understood as a becoming of multiplicities that associates actualized discursive and virtual non-discursive components. Guattari, thus, invests subjectification under the sign of processuality and singularization, thereby breaking with both a centring on the transcendent unity of the subject and with the becoming-subject of a transcendence dialectically immanent to consciousness, accomplishing instead a *transversalist* enlarging of enunciation through matters of expression that are worked over by forms of praxis (or dispraxis, perhaps, given the baggage associated with the former) generative of heterogeneity and complexity.<sup>12</sup>

Guattari’s theoretical constructivism is the life-experiment of an *artifice-Real*, a ‘merger between the most artificial kind of modernism and the naturing nature of desire’.<sup>13</sup> It is a question of a constructivism of desire identified with the ‘Real in-itself’ as well as of a *chaoticizing* opening of philosophy, a chaoticization that is relative to heterogeneous states of complexity, that relates concepts to circumstances, to percepts and affects, to affect as the deterritorialized matter of philosophical enunciation – and of enunciation *tout court*. The productive nature of this chaoticizing constraint, particularly as it imposed itself on Deleuze, is clear, for as he once remarked – risking a strange indefinite and singular article – creating

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'A philosophy amounted for me, then, to a sort of second period that would never have begun or got anywhere without Félix'.<sup>14</sup> But it was Guattari who, claiming – mock-seriously – 'I very proudly consider myself as a sort of Douanier Rousseau of philosophy',<sup>15</sup> indexes something of the transformative – singularizing – effect that he had on Deleuze and his philosophy.

The comparison with the self-taught painter of *Jungles* associated with the *Fauves* is as instructive as it is amusing – and not just because, not having studied medicine (but, rather, pharmacy), been to any of the *grandes-écoles* nor obtained the doctorate so indispensable to getting finance for the conduct of research,<sup>16</sup> Guattari felt like something of an *outsider*. Rousseau was the promoter of a 'primitive' art, one that ignored the perspective of *high* art and wanted to be the best ally of the new age of machinism that was announced by the building of the Eiffel Tower. He was also the inventor of the 'portrait landscape', someone who knew little more about his exotic subjects than what he could glean from the Jardin des Plantes, the catalogue of *Wild Beasts* from the Galeries Lafayette and pictures from encyclopaedias or books of botany. On the one hand, then, a pragmatic approach to art voyaging in the movement of the present indicative, and on the other, a minor art of document research, an art that CERFI – equally lacking a disciplinary domain of its own – practiced cheerfully. In his art practice, Rousseau conjugates the 'stubborn naivety' of a becoming-child with thought from the outside, the refrains of an unknown jungle that arise less from an imaginary world than from a dispositional *mise en scène* of the simultaneously primitivist and constructivist fields of virtuality of *this* world. Not the relating of an exotic journey or the rendering of a dream, but – as Deleuze might say – the *anexact* description of a hallucination ready to jump on you or carry you away from within, precisely when everything is desire affirming and constructing itself in a rupture with discursivity and pictoriality.

The hallucinatory constructivism of the Douanier Rousseau of philosophical practice puts into play the unlocalizable power of an assemblage meshing with unsuspected exteriorities, which operates with precisely the kind of outside forces from which political struggles, in their myriad forms, acquire their strength. It is not surprising then that, opening up onto new universes of reference, Guattari's world immediately – and continuously – broadened out to struggles for independence, on whatever continent they may have been, and to every manner of processual operator of intensification of in- and over-human becoming. Anthropologists working in Africa, Brazil, Mexico and Australia found in him an attentive interlocutor, curious about everything that manifestly escaped from the

'symbolic' recognition of structure dear to Marxist (and/or structuralist) thought. Yet, it was with Marxists that Guattari first participated in the support for third world movements, and then in the generalized calling into question – that the movements of 1968 formed – of the most widely shared statements of the period.

However, Guattari was already proposing a new meaning for labour, generalized to the ensemble of human activity and transformed into research and self-management in every domain. His appetite for struggles, for political fronts, for all the places in which the desire for a new world, for other possible worlds was machined, led him to the U.S.A., to Italy, to Japan and Brazil<sup>17</sup> and – towards the end of his life – to ex-Yugoslavia. The refounding of political praxis, the new spaces of freedom and the new social practices that he promoted on these trips, tended to leave all those whom he encountered with the conviction that self-education, autonomy and communism are always possible. They are constructed in everyday material and immaterial labour, through micropolitical practices seeking their way by means of hesitant experiments, through an infinite production of softness open to the most diverse of fields of alterity.<sup>18</sup> It is a softness or gentleness that in Guattari is allied with an equally real theoretical toughness, which is that of the machinic heterogenesis that he makes every process of creation – in its most immanent point of negotiation between complexity and chaos – depend on.

As a practice as much as a concept, the collective assemblage of enunciation is thus a multiplicity of attempts, of unique or repeated occasions, of catalyses imposed by a situation or prepared by reflection, a circumstantial multiplicity in the wake of which both the colloquium at Middlesex and this book are inscribed. Inseparable from processes of micropolitical experimentation – grasped as the truth of the macropolitical on a constructivist (or *constitutive*) plane (a plane that has renounced any kind of hermeneutic mediation – or other, subtractive, conception – that would be supposed to found politics in its sense – or essence – as a domain that is separate from the social, itself cut off from desire, and so on) – it gives us another line of investigation to follow, alongside the *topoi* usually associated with the study of Deleuze.<sup>19</sup> It is a line of investigation sketched out in François Dosse's book,<sup>20</sup> a book that – despite its evident theoretical confusions and some unfortunate mistakes – has the practical merit of tying the Guattari Effect to the ensemble of political movements of the second half of the twentieth century.

The collective assemblage follows the always singular pathways of *transversality*, as the opening up of fields of experience, as the consistency a thinking of experience takes on when freed up from both the tutelage of



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the subject and the discipline of the object, in the multivalent logic of heterogeneous states of complexity. Guattari characterized himself as a 'specialist in transversality', in the precise sense that he could only validate an idea – or, more than an idea, what he called a 'concrete machine' – on condition that 'it be able to traverse different orders', in a sort of constant *work in progress*. But transversality as an ontologico-political foundation for an *in-disciplined transdisciplinarity* is a bit more than just a question of method – it is an affair of becoming, of a becoming that does not ignore history . . . but tends in fact to subvert it.

The concept of transversality, which is properly signed 'Guattari' (like that of the collective assemblage of enunciation, and others, to which we will return), changes completely when, as he insists in one of his last interviews, he 'advanced the notion of deterritorialization in the 1970s.' Constructed at the start of the 1960s in the context of the affirmation of the 'group-subject', it would become 'the transversality of deterritorialized [machinic] instances' – in other words, a rhizome.<sup>21</sup> The concept emerged from the very concrete fields of experience of the running of the clinic at La Borde and the organization of groups and groupuscules, to become (with the events of May 1968) an approach that was coextensive with the destabilization of the real as a structured whole, an approach lived first in a multitude of meetings in which Guattari nomadized, along with the Movement of March 22, and subsequently with all the movements of which he was a part. An entire pragmatics is required in order to give a consistency to transversality, to make a rhizome, because such actions are only justified by the effects that come out of them under determinate conditions. Nothing could have been changed at La Borde, that fantastic Guattarian laboratory, in which the clinical continually called the critical into question (and vice versa), were it not for a line of accordance that (as in music) would pass transversally from the gardener or the cleaner right up to the director of the clinic, while conferring a superior power of invention on the set of differential relations implied by dissent. Today, though, as Guattari explains in the same interview, transversality and then deterritorialization have acquired some magnitude and might 'change again with the concept of chaosmosis, because transversality is chaotic, it is always linked to a risk of plunging outside of sense, outside of constituted structures'.<sup>22</sup> There is a sort of auto-alterity to transversality, for which the concept of the Body without Organs, advanced by Artaud and transmitted from Deleuze to Guattari, enabled the pragmatics to be grounded in theory. It equally enabled transversality to be extracted from the limits of the clinic and a respect for the existing institution, and turned to the profit of the exploration of 'desiring machines'.<sup>23</sup>

Hence, the necessity and interest of studying the corpus of Guattari's writings for themselves in the long duration of its constitution. It is a task that we have proposed doing – in a transversal fashion, inevitably – without falling into an *exegetic practice* that would simply 'rebalance' the prevailing doxa of Deleuze studies by enlarging the academic order of a commemorative discourse that is blind to what founds it. What is at stake here is the critique and clinic of philosophical enunciation as a virtual–real political practice deployed through transdisciplinarity, or what we might here call *philosophy as a political ecology of the virtual* projected into the general framework of a *pragmatics of knowledge*. At the very least, this would enable us to define what Guattari brought to Deleuze over the long duration of their cooperation – and which made the latter write (in his dedication of the copy of *The Movement-Image* he offered to Guattari) that he was indiscernible from his friend 'even when he writes alone'. Inversely – and reciprocally – of course, one cannot understand the complete change in the concept of transversality in the 1970s, linked by Guattari to *his* invention of deterritorialization, without the intervention of what he himself calls the 'miracle' of his encounter with Deleuze – Deleuze, the theorist of signs and events related to a biophilosophy, affirming the thinking of the Body without Organs as a virtual plane of forces, an intensive power of differentiation. This miracle is the miracle of *the convergence of the body without organs and transversality*.

In a long interview with Michel Butel in 1985, Guattari points to the role of Deleuze in the generation of the effect that he would in turn exercise on his collaborator. The 'madness of [the] labour' that gave rise to the *Anti-Oedipus* rested on a 'prudent and knowledgeable, but also radical and systematic, undertaking, that of the demolition of Lacanianism and of all my previous references, and on a labour of purification of the concepts that I had "experimented" [with], but which were unable to take on their fullest extension, because they remained too attached. It was necessary that there be a certain "*deterritorialization*" of my relation to the social, to La Borde, to conjugality, to psychoanalysis, to the FGERI<sup>24</sup> for concepts like that of the "machine" to be given their full range'.<sup>25</sup> So, Deleuze becomes the agent and condition of reality for deterritorialization as formulated by Guattari, whose transversality had as its effect the exit from psychoanalysis for them both. It is a *double deterritorialization*, or the double capture of the wasp and the orchid, if you will, a process acknowledged by Guattari in the Introduction to his 1979 collection *L'Inconscient machinique*. Presenting there the essentials of the pragmatics that they would subsequently develop in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Guattari writes: 'although I wrote them alone, these essays are inseparable from the work that Gilles Deleuze and

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I have been doing together for some years. That is the reason why, when I am led to speak in the first person, it will be indifferently in the singular or the plural. One should especially not see in this the business of the paternity of the ideas put forward here. Everything is a question, here too, of a “collective assemblage”’.<sup>26</sup>

It is difficult not to sense the multiple forces that animate Guattari’s writings and out of which they constitute themselves, the practices to which he was attached, the struggles with which he was involved, the minoritarian research on subjugated knowledges he promoted in diverse domains. And with the initial translation in English of *Anti-Oedipus* first appearing in 1977, and the Guattari Effect subsequently developing a life of its own in English-speaking countries, most often outside the academy (to say nothing of the impact that he had elsewhere in the world), any broader consideration of those writings inevitably has to deal with the ways in which they operate in other languages.

The concepts discussed here (collective assemblage of enunciation, transversality, deterritorialization), even as they follow mutant lines of becoming under the creative constraint of the encounter with Deleuze, are not just vital concepts in the Guattarian corpus such as we have been exploring it. They are also concepts the operations of which are vital for the theory–practice of relaying Guattari’s work across the fluid frontiers and rigid territories of language. Translation-transduction – this is a practice that everyone engages in, even (and especially, perhaps) when thinking and writing in their own language – and it poses numerous questions when operating with the relatively ‘molar’ codings of languages such as they stabilize (around the totems of nationhood, the vocabularies of canons and traditions and so on.<sup>27</sup>) The perennial problem of betrayal for translators – *traduttore, traditore*– changes in a world that itself fluctuates along the divergent lines of chaosmosis (rather than submitting to some or other principle of identity.) Where it is the drifting of sense and the production of the a-signifying that acquire primacy, betrayal becomes something to be affirmed – and an assemblage of enunciation opens up a whole new field of virtualities to be mined. How Guattari gets translated into English-speaking discourse is, thus, a question to be addressed in de jure and de facto terms, and in this respect is more complicated than it might first appear, given Guattari’s apparent insouciance with regard to language.<sup>28</sup>

Pivotal to this collection, the concept of assemblage is a case in point. Although the French *agencement* is something that might be said of the way in which elements on the page of a magazine are put together, of a palette of colours or of the arrangement of furniture in a room, in the use that

Deleuze and Guattari make of it, it also conveys an active sense of agency as being what some or other entity *does*,<sup>29</sup> a precious indicator of the constructivist horizon within which it operates. The *agencement* of a phrase in language would refer not just to the syntactic and semantic ordering of terms but to the way that it generates sense, as well. The term ‘assemblage’ does not really convey this crucial nuance of agency, even while it does capture the function of synthesis of disparate elements rather well – the irreducible bricolage of being first thematized with Guattari’s desiring machines. But considerations of this nature – while obviously crucial – remain rather focused on the domain of significations and tend to ignore the pragmatic, creative – the disorganizing – effect that the choice of a term can have in the fields into which it is introduced. The characterization of language proposed in the analysis of Guattari’s favourite writer Kafka, when ‘of sense there remains only enough to direct the lines of flight’<sup>30</sup>, is critical in this regard, for it points towards the deterritorializing dynamics of Guattarian pragmatics, the opening up it aims at. So, felicitously, while the selection of ‘assemblage’ by Massumi may not grasp the active nuances of agency in quite the same way as *agencement* does in French, it connects with – and through retrojection, redistributes the sense of – Whitehead’s use of this term at the start of his late essay *Modes of Thought*,<sup>31</sup> for example. This, in turn, generates the possibility of new readings of the Anglo-American empiricist – and vice versa, because, as infinitesimal as it might sometimes be, all deterritorialization is always double.<sup>32</sup> Certainly, the translation of *agencement* as assemblage can also lend itself to the quasi-scientific orthodoxy of a social philosophy of assemblages understood in relation to the plane of reference of scientific functions.<sup>33</sup> ‘Assemblage’ thus comes to name an invariant characteristic of a state of affairs – a development that allows the habitual prerogatives of the subject-predicate logic, with predicates as attributes rather than events (as they appear in the mannerist schema outlined by Deleuze), to be re-asserted easily, although it would be a mistake to attribute this movement of reterritorialization to the specific use of a specific term.

The ease with which words originally forged to move language away from the kind of equilibrium that would allow the entities to which they refer to acquire a self-sufficient status (see the point made earlier, regarding concepts as buzzwords) is not something for which translation per se can be faulted. The syntax of habitual judgements is heavily codified within academia, stabilized by institutional practices, regulations, publishing genres and so on – from which arise the risks associated with what we referred to earlier as exegetic practice. The point here, however, is simply to note that translation is itself an element in the constitution of a

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collective assemblage, introducing an additional, differential complexity to the process it sets in motion.

Other Guattarian terms in English are equally problematic – *coupure*, as in *coupure signifiante* working equally well as ‘signifying break’ (cf. Bachelard’s epistemological break) but also as the ‘cut’ of symbolic castration, of Dedekind’s approach to continuity and of the cutting of flows of desiring machines (‘Connecticut, connect-I-cut, shouts little Joey’). *Ritournelle* – undoubtedly a concept developed most extensively by Guattari alone – acquires the tra-la-la cadences of the school playground or the postman delivering the mail when translated by Massumi as ‘refrain’, while a direct translation as ‘ritornello’ – which the vocabulary of classical music authorizes – doesn’t open so directly onto the music of the everyday that is evoked so well by Deleuze and Guattari in the plateau ‘Of the Refrain’ in *A Thousand Plateaus*. *Ritornello* will also capture the humourous resonances with ‘eternal return’ (which is more directly perceptible in French – *ritournelle/retour éternel*) and allow for unusual neologisms such as *ritornellization* – an expression rendered here awkwardly as ‘putting into refrain’, but the little ditty, the playground, and whistling while you work will have disappeared (along with the affective possibilities they engender). There are other terms that could be discussed and there are equally very real difficulties involved in the task, as it was proposed above, of capturing just enough sense to ‘direct the lines of flight’. But sense, as our collective assemblage aims to make sensible, lies in use, and it may just be that the felicity of a translation lies in the futures onto which it opens.

The further we go into the exploration-experimentation of the collective assemblage of enunciation, the more complex matters get: so, it is for the reader to develop his/her own trajectory through the series of papers presented here. But as he/she does, it is perhaps worth bearing in mind Guattari’s own transformative guidelines. In a homage to Foucault, he wrote (and inevitably we divert this to our own purposes): ‘One cannot hope to keep the thinking of one of the greats alive, once they have died, by means of an exegetic practice. It is only by taking that thinking up again and putting it into action, at the risk or danger of those who expose themselves to it, so as to open up its questioning once again and bring to it the flesh of its own uncertainties’.<sup>34</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In the 1960s, Guattari’s work developed on the basis of a re-appropriation of the Sartrean distinction between the ‘subject group’ and the ‘subjugated group’.

- <sup>2</sup> Franco Berardi 'Bifo' (2001) *Felix. Narrazione dell'incontro con il pensiero di Guattari, cartografia visionaria del tempo que viene*. Roma: Luca Sossellaeditore – translated (and edited) in 2009 (by Mecchia, G., and Stivale, C.) as *Felix Guattari: Thought, Friendship, and Visionary Cartography*. London: Palgrave; Genosko, G. (2002) *Félix Guattari. An Aberrant Introduction*. London: Continuum.
- <sup>3</sup> Prior to April 2008, we are thinking particularly of the seminars organized by M. Antonioli at the Université de Paris VIII (St. Denis) and by L. Mozère at the Université de Metz. The proceedings of these seminars were subsequently published as books or journals. See Antonioli, M., Chardel, P.A., and Regnauld, H. (eds) (2007) *Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari et le politique*. Paris: Editions du Sandre; Mozère, L. (ed.) (2007) *Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, territoires et devenir*, special issue of *Le Portique*. 20 Strasbourg. A number of less academic initiatives into the conduct of militant or activist research, clearly inspired in part by Guattari, have also emerged in recent years.
- <sup>4</sup> Some of which appeared in a first version in the journal *Multitudes*. See *Multitudes* 34 Autumn 2008: 22–133.
- <sup>5</sup> Raymond Bellour, Pascale Criton, Toni Negri and Isabelle Stengers.
- <sup>6</sup> Annie Ratti's contribution is new for this volume.
- <sup>7</sup> In his response to questions on his lecture on 'nomad thought', Deleuze – already operating under the effect of Guattari – speaks of the text as but a cog in a non-textual machine. See Deleuze, (2004), 'Nomadic Thought' in *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*. New York, Semiotext(e).
- <sup>8</sup> Which engages in a somewhat subterranean debate with phenomenological approaches to psychosis, in addition to the permanent critique of Lacanianism.
- <sup>9</sup> The entire first section of *L'Inconscient machinique* is entitled 'Exiting language' [*Sortir de la langue*].
- <sup>10</sup> See his essay of 1962–1963 'Introduction à la psychothérapie institutionnelle' in Guattari F. (1972), *Psychanalyse et transversalité*. Paris: Maspéro.
- <sup>11</sup> The 1969 essay 'Machine et structure' was commissioned by Lacan as an account of Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense and Difference and Repetition* for the review *Scilicet*. When he didn't publish it, Guattari took it to Deleuze.
- <sup>12</sup> Hence, also, the often disconcerting complexity of Guattari's meta-modelling and other cartographies, which have the expression-construction-experimentations of immanence (as the absolute horizon of all processes of creation) as their *subject*, and also of his 'conceptual commando operations', in which he treats writing as a schizo flux and makes his the principle of an ontological apprehension of the real – before and beyond discursivity, in a sort of hypnosis of the real – proper to psychosis. 'The real' – as he puts it in *The Anti-Oedipus Papers* – 'is the artificial – and not (as Lacan says) the impossible'. (Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, op. cit. p. 149.)
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.
- <sup>14</sup> Deleuze, G. (1995), *Negotiations*. Translated by M. Joughin. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 136–37.
- <sup>15</sup> Guattari, F. (2011), 'The Vertigo of Immanence' in this volume.
- <sup>16</sup> CERFI – the Centre d'Études, de Recherches, et de Formations Institutionnelles that Guattari set up – thus had to associate with authorized figures, such as Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, in order to get research funding.

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- <sup>17</sup> The interventions and discussions in Brazil, originally published in Portuguese in 1986, have been translated into both French and English. See Guattari, F., and Rolnik, S. (2008), *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*. Translated by K. Clapshow and B. Holmes. New York: Semiotext(e).
- <sup>18</sup> Anne Querrien has always found the best words to evoke this effect, in her numerous interventions in *Chimères, Revue des Schizoanalyses*, which both Deleuze and Guattari founded, but which Guattari alone ran.
- <sup>19</sup> Even when they learn to refer to Deleuze and Guattari.
- <sup>20</sup> Dosse, F. (2010), *Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Intersecting Lives*. Translated by D. Glassman. New York: Columbia University Press.
- <sup>21</sup> See Guattari, F. (1964), 'La transversalité', in *Psychanalyse et transversalité* op. cit., and the discussion of transversality in the interview, 'The Vertigo of Immanence', art. cit.
- <sup>22</sup> 'The Vertigo of Immanence', art. cit.
- <sup>23</sup> It's worth noting here that Guattari never stopped using the term 'desiring machine' (see *Chaosmosis* in particular). It remained for him the key to the 'transversal' enlargement of the question of subjectivity in the entirety of its human and non-human registers.
- <sup>24</sup> The Federation of Institutional Studies and Research Groups [Fédération des groupes d'études et de recherches institutionnelles].
- <sup>25</sup> Guattari, F. (2009), *Les Années d'Hiver 1980–1985*. Paris: Prairies ordinaires (first edition 1986), p. 101.
- <sup>26</sup> Guattari, F. (1979), *L'Inconscient machinique*. Paris: Recherches, p. 16.
- <sup>27</sup> Cf the way that Deleuze and Guattari take up the work of Weinrich in *Rhizome* to describe the political reality of language. It is a description that Guattari first essays in *L'Inconscient machinique* (Guattari, op. cit.). It is worth noting that it is in the context of a consideration of issues of nationalism in ontology and in language that the question of the difference of languages and the creative possibilities of the untranslatable, has been explored recently by Barbara Cassin, entailing a use of Guattari's concept of deterritorialization.
- <sup>28</sup> The tetchy exchange with Olivier Zahm over narrative in the 1992 interview *On Contemporary Art* (in this volume) is indicative in this regard.
- <sup>29</sup> It is no accident that actor-network theorist Michel Callon borrows the term from Deleuze and Guattari for precisely this reason.
- <sup>30</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1986), *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*, translated by D. Polan. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, p. 21.
- <sup>31</sup> See Whitehead, A.N. (1938), *Modes of Thought*. New York: Free Press, p. 2.
- <sup>32</sup> It is not a matter of suggesting some kind of legitimate filiation or philologically accurate derivation across languages, even if Guattari was an enthusiastic and intense reader of Whitehead – as his copy of *Process and Reality* testifies. Rather it is to suggest that one may find here in the diligent work of the translator the informal functioning of Guattari's concepts within the very process of their translation.
- <sup>33</sup> As in the work of Manuel De Landa, for example.
- <sup>34</sup> Guattari, F. (1985), 'Microphysique des pouvoirs et micropolitique des désirs' in *Les Années d'Hiver 1980–1985*, op. cit., p. 217.

# **PART 1**

Sorties

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# CHAPTER 1

## Schizo Chaosmosis<sup>1</sup>

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Félix Guattari

Normality in the light of delirium, technical logic under the law of the Freudian primary process: a *pas de deux* towards chaos so as to home in on a subjectivity far from the dominant equilibria and capture its virtual lines of singularity, emergence or renewal. Could it be a Dionysiac eternal return or a paradoxical Copernican overthrow prolonged by an animist overturning? At the very least, it is the originary phantasm of a modernity that is constantly brought up again, without a post-modern hope of remission. Always the same aporia. Madness – with its halo of strangeness, reified in an alterity with no return – nevertheless inhabits our ordinary apprehension, without qualities, of the world. But one should go further. Chaotic vertigo, which finds one of its privileged expressions in madness, is constitutive of the founding intentionality of the subject-object relation. Psychosis lays bare an essential driving force [*ressort*] of being in the world.

What is most singular in the mode of being of psychosis – but also, in other modalities, in the ‘emergent self’ (Daniel Stern) of childhood, or in that of aesthetic creation – is the irruption, in the foreground of the subjective scene, of a real that is *anterior* to discursivity. Its pathic consistency literally leaps to one’s throat. Should one consider that this real is fixed, petrified and becomes catatonic by an accident of pathology? Or was it there for all time – past and future – on the lookout for a putting into act that would sanction the foreclosure of a presumed symbolic castration? Perhaps it is necessary to bridge these two perspectives. It is already there as an open virtual reference, and it arises correlatively as the *sui generis* production of a singular event.

The structuralists were too hasty when positioning the Real of psychosis topically in relation to the Imaginary of neurosis and Symbolic normality.

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What did they gain by that? In erecting the universal mathemes of the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic, considered as all of a piece and each one for itself, they reified and reduced the complexity of the stakes: the crystallization of real-virtual Universes assembled from a multiplicity of imaginary territories and semiotized in the most diverse of ways. Real complexes – those of the everyday, the dream, passion, delirium, depression or aesthetic experience – do not have the same ontological colouring as each other. Besides, they are not endured passively, mechanically articulated or triangulated dialectically to other instances. When they cross certain autopoietic thresholds of consistency, they set to work on their own count and constitute nuclei [*foyers*] of partial subjectification.<sup>2</sup> Their expressive instruments (of semiotization, encoding, catalysis, moulding, resonance, identification) do not in any way amount solely to a signifying economy. The practice of institutional psychotherapy has taught us the diversity of modalities of agglomeration of these multiple real or virtual stases: those of the body and the soma, that of self and other, that of lived space and temporal refrains, that of the familial and of the artificially elaborated socius. This practice taught us [how] to open up other fields of the possible: those of psychotherapeutic transference or even those of the immaterial universes afferent to music, to plastic forms, animal, vegetal and machinic becomings.

In their clinical emergence, psychotherapeutic complexions of the real constitute a privileged path for the exploration of other modes of ontological production: they reveal their aspects of excess, of limit experiences. Thus, psychosis doesn't only haunt neurosis and perversion, but all forms of normality, as well. Psychotic pathology is particular, because in it, the expected to-ings and fro-ings and the *normal* polyphonic relations between the different modes of *bringing into being* of subjective enunciation see their heterogeneity compromised by repetition. I will characterize this exclusive insistence of an existential stasis as *chaosmic*. Here it is susceptible of taking on all the tints of a schizo-paranoiac-maniac-epileptic scale, whereas everywhere else it is only apprehended through avoidance, displacement, misrecognition, disfiguration, overdetermination, ritualization . . . In these conditions, psychosis could be described as a hypnosis of the real. Here a sense of *being-in-itself* imposes itself prior to every discursive scheme, uniquely positioned through an intensive continuum. And the traits of distinctiveness of the latter are not graspable in a representational apparatus but by a pathic existential absorption, a pre-egoic, pre-identificatory agglomeration. Schizophrenia is as if set up right in the centre of this chaotic gaping, whereas paranoiac delirium manifests a limitless will to take possession of it. As for the passionate deliriums (Sérieux,

Capgras, de Clérambault), they harbour an intentionality of *chaosmotic* takeover that is less closed and more processual. The perversions already imply the signifying recomposition of the poles of alterity whose lot it is to incarnate – from the outside – a chaosmosis that is mastered, tele-guided by phantasmatic scenarios. The neuroses for their part present all the variants of avoidance previously evoked, starting with the simplest, the most reifying, that of phobia, continuing with hysteria (which forges substitutes for it in social space and in the body), to end with obsessional neurosis, which in its case secretes a perpetual temporal *différance* (Jacques Derrida), an infinite procrastination.

This chaotic theme and these nosographic variations call for many other developments: they have only been advanced here so as to set out the idea that the ontological apprehension proper to psychosis is not at all synonymous with a simple chaotic degradation, a trivial increase in entropy. It is a matter of reconciling chaos and complexity. Freud's merit is to have indicated the path towards this in the *Traumdeutung*.

Why characterize the homogenesis of ontological referents, and through it the latent homogenesis of other modalities of subjectification, as chaotic? It is because, in any event, bringing a complex of sense into the world always implies a massive and immediate taking possession of the entirety of contextual diversity. A world is only constituted on condition of being inhabited by an umbilical point of deconstruction, of detotalization, of deterritorialization, starting from which a taking of subjective position is incarnated. Under the effect of one such nucleus of chaosmosis, the ensemble of differential terms, of distinctive oppositions, of poles of discursivity, are the object of a generalized connectivity, of an indifferent mutability and a systematic disqualification. This vacuole of decompression is at the same time a kernel of autopoiesis on which *existential territories* and *incorporeal universes of reference* are constantly reaffirmed, are knotted, insist and take on consistency. This oscillation at infinite speed – between a state of chaotic *grasping* and the deployment of complexions anchored at the heart of the coordinates of a world – is established prior to space and time, prior to processes of spatialization and temporalization. Formations of sense and states of things thus find themselves chaoticized by the very movement that makes their complexity exist. A certain modality of chaotic maltreatment of its constitution, of its organicity, of its functionality and of its relations of alterity is always at the root of a world.

We will not oppose here two antagonistic drives, of life and death or of complexity and chaos, as in Freudian metapsychology. The most ordinary of object intentionalities is outlined against a background of chaosmosis. And chaos is not a pure *indifferenciation*, it possesses a specific ontological

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weft. It is inhabited by virtual entities and modalities of alterity that have nothing universal about them. It is thus not Being in general that irrupts in the chaosmic experience of psychosis or in the pathic relation that one can entertain with it, but a signed and dated event marking a destiny, inflecting previously stratified significations. After such a process of dequalification/disqualification and ontological homogenesis, nothing will ever be the same as before. But the event is inseparable from the texture of the being brought to light. This is what is attested to by the psychotic aura that associates a catastrophic sentiment of the end of the world (François Tosquelles) and the overwhelming sentiment of an imminent redemption of all the possibles or – in other words – of all the maddening to-ings and fro-ings between a proliferating complexity of sense and a total vacuity, a dereliction of the existential chaosmos without remission.

It is essential to locate this ontological petrification, this existential freezing of the heterogenesis of beings in the pathic apprehension of delirium, of the dream and of passion. It is manifested there in particular styles, but it is always latent in the other modalities of subjectification. It is like a freeze-frame which at the same time both reveals its basic (or bass) position in the polyphony of chaosmic components and intensifies its relative power. It doesn't constitute a degree zero of subjectification, then, a negative, neutral, passive point, one in deficit, but an extreme degree of intensification. It is by passing through this chaotic earthing [*prise de terre*], this perilous oscillation, that something other, something different, becomes possible, that ontological bifurcations and coefficients of processual creativity can emerge. That the psychotic is incapable of a heterogenetic recovery is something that is not contradicted by the richness of the ontological experimentation with which he is confronted, despite himself. Thus, delirious narrativity, as a discursive power finalized by the crystallization of a universe of reference or of a non-discursive substance, constitutes the very paradigm of the construction of mythical, mystical, aesthetic and even scientific worlds. The existence of chaosmic stases is not the privilege of psychopathology at all. One might come across their presence in a philosophy like that of Pascal, or in the most rationalist of authors. The Cartesian sequence of generalized doubt, which precedes the clinging with extreme urgency to the 'cogito' – which will itself be succeeded by the reunion with God and the refounding of the world – may be likened to this *schizo-analytic* reduction. And the fact that complexity and alterity are tempted to surrender (by the evil demon), confers on subjectivity a supplementary power, a breaking out from the spatio-temporal coordinates that find themselves reinforced elsewhere. In a more general fashion, one can consider that a collapsus of sense will always be associated

with the promotion of chains of a-signifying discursivity devoted to the ontological weaving of an auto-consistent world. The eventual rupture<sup>3</sup> thus happens at the heart of being, and it is from there that it is in a position to generate new ontological mutations. Distinctive oppositions, the syntaxes and semantics of code, of signals, of the signifier, continue on their rounds, but to one side of their strata of origin. As in delirium, signaletics and semiotics take off. The *schizo chaosmos* is a means for the apperception of the abstract machines that work transversally to heterogeneous strata. The passage through chaosmichomogenesis, which can mechanically or dialectically represent a route of access towards complex heterogenesis (although this is never guaranteed), does not constitute a translucent, indifferent zone of being, but an intolerable nucleus of ontological creationism.

It is by undoing ontological heterogenesis – which confers its diversity on the world and its distraction (in the Pascalian sense) on subjectivity – that *schizo homogenesis* exacerbates the power of transversality of chaosmosis, its aptitude for traversing strata and breaching walls. Hence the capacity – frequently observed in schizophrenics – of revealing, as if by accident, the most secret of their interlocutors' intentions, of in some way reading the unconscious as an open book. Unlinked from its discursive signifying traits, complexity is then incarnated in mute, immobile and stupefying abstract machinic dances. It is a good idea not to make a simplistic and reifying use of categories such as autism and dissociation when considering schizo strangeness or the loss of vital sentiment in depressions or even glischroidy in epilepsy . . . One is dealing with modalities of auto-alterity that are at the same time plural and singular, more than with the standard and global defects of a normal subjectivity. 'I is an other', a multiplicity of others incarnated at the crossroads of components of partial enunciation everywhere exceeding individuated identity. The cursor of chaosmosis oscillates ceaselessly between these diverse enunciative nuclei, not so as to totalize them and to synthesize them in a transcendent ego but – despite everything – to make of them a world. One is thus in the presence of two types of homogenesis. On the one hand, there exists a normal and/or neurotic homogenesis, which is careful not to go too far or for too long towards a chaotic reduction of the schizo type. On the other hand, an extreme pathic/pathological homogenesis leads to a point of positioning of world complexions, where not only components of sensibility, affective and cognitive components, fixed in a time and space, but also ethical and aesthetic axiological *charges* find themselves conjoined. On the passive side of schizo ontology, one thus finds reductive homogenesis, the loss of the colours, the flavours and the timbres of universes of reference. On its active

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side, an emergent alterification freed from the mimetic barriers of the ego. Being is affirmed as the responsibility for the other when the nuclei of partial subjectification are constituted in absorption or in adsorption with the taking on of autonomy and of the autopoiesis of creative processes.

It is not at all a matter of making the schizo a hero of post-modern times, nor of underestimating the weight of systemic organic, somatic, imaginary, familial and social components at the heart of the psychotic process.<sup>4</sup> But one must locate the effects of inter-componential inhibition that lead to a face-to-face impasse with chaosmic immanence. Social stratifications are arranged so as to ward off the uncanniness<sup>5</sup> generated by too marked a fixation on chaosmosis, as far as is possible. One must go quickly, one mustn't fixate on what risk's getting us bogged down: madness, pain, death, drugs, extreme passion . . . All these aspects of existence are certainly the object of a functional taking into account by the dominant socius, but always as the correlate of an active misrecognition of their chaosmic dimension. The socius secretes an imaginary eternity (through the mass media in particular) that skirts around the essential dimension of finitude of chaosmosis: the facticity of being-there, without quality, with a past, without a future, in absolute dereliction and yet a virtual nucleus for a complexity without limit. In other words, the eternity of a profoundly infantile adult world, which should be opposed by the hyperlucidity of the child meditating alone on the cosmos, or by the becoming-child of poetry, of music, of mystic experience. But instead of re-impelling complexions of alterity and relaunching processes of semiotization, sometimes chaosmosis is fixed, imploding in an abyss of anxiety, of depression and of mental collapse. Then, of course, the question of a recomposition of existential territories is posed, of 'transferential grafts', of dialogic relays, of an invention of welfare and institutional pragmatics of all sorts. No heroism of psychosis, then, but on the contrary an indexation, without complacency, of the chaosmic body, which it makes incandescent and whose murdered remains – since it has stopped being cultivated, like a monstrous flower, by the traditional asylum – are decimated by chemical therapy.

Friable primary delirium or the grand narrative constructions of paranoia – precarious paths to recovery from the intrusion of the absolute – cannot be put on the same plane as the well-socialized systems of protection, games, sports, manias fed by the media, racist phobias . . . However, their mixture is the daily bread of institutional psychotherapy and of schizoanalysis.

It is thus equally always advisable to extract these *Z* or *Zen* points of chaosmosis from within a hodgepodge of banal utterances, prejudices, stereotypes, aberrant states of fact and an entire everyday free association. They

can only be located against the grain, through lapsus, symptoms, aporia, passages to the act, in somatic scenes, in familial theatrics or through the cogs of institutions. This derives, I repeat, from the fact that chaosmosis is not the property of the individuated psyche. One is confronted with it in the life of the group, in economic relations, in mechanization (that of IT for example) and even at the heart of the incorporeal universes of art or religion. Each time it appeals to the reconstruction of an operational narrativity, that is to say, a narrativity functioning beyond information and communication, as the existential crystallization of an ontological heterogenesis. The production of a new real-other-virtual complexion always results from a rupture of sense, from a short-circuiting of significations, the bringing to light of a non-redundant repetition (auto-affirmative of its own consistency), and from the promotion of nuclei of partial alterity that are *non-identifiable* (which escape identification). It thus condemns the therapist or the mental health operative to an essential ethical disreputableness. On the one hand, he works in the register of a haphazard heterogenesis to remodel existential territories, to forge semiotic components for the passage between blocs of immanence on the way to petrification, etc. On the other hand, he can only pretend to a pathic access to the chaotic thing – at the heart of psychosis and the institution – to the extent that he has recreated or reinvented himself in one way or another as a body without organs receptive to non-discursive intensities. It is on his own plunging into homogenetic immanence that his possibilities for conquering supplementary coefficients of heterogenetic freedom, his access to mutant universes of reference and his entrance into renewed registers of alterity depend.

Nosographic categories, psychiatric and psychoanalytic cartographies necessarily betray the chaotic texture of psychotic transference. They constitute some of the languages, modellings among [many] others – those of delirium, of the novel and of the television series – and cannot pretend to any epistemological eminence. Nothing more, nothing less! That is a great deal already, perhaps, because through them, roles, points of view, components of submission and even – and why not? – processes of liberation are incarnated. Who is right? That is no longer the question. But how, and under what conditions, might a pragmatics of incorporeal events best come to light, one which would recompose a world, reinstitute a processual complexity? Idiosyncratic modellings, grafted onto a duel analysis, an auto-analysis, a group psychotherapy, are always required to borrow from specialized languages. Our problematic, of *chaosmosis* and of the schizo-analytic exit from signifying imprisonment aims – as a compensation for these borrowings – at the necessary a-signifying



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deconstruction of their discursivity and a pragmatic putting into perspective of their ontological efficacy.

*Translated by Andrew Goffey*

### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Guattari published this essay in the journal *Chimères* in the autumn of 1991. A revised version of the text subsequently formed the fourth chapter of *Chaosmose*, which was published by Galilée in 1992. We are indebted to Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis, whose translation, as *Chaosmosis*, we consulted in the preparation of this text, and to Emmanuelle Guattari for permission to publish the article in translation.
- <sup>2</sup> We follow Massumi in his translation of *subjectivation* as ‘subjectification’ [TN].
- <sup>3</sup> *Rupture événementielle*. The translation of *événementielle* here by the neologism ‘evental’ follows contemporary translations of the term in Badiou’s work. See also the note on *événementialité* in the essay by Pascale Criton later in this volume [TN].
- <sup>4</sup> The term that Guattari uses here is *procès*, which can mean both process and trial [TN].
- <sup>5</sup> *Inquiétante étrangeté* is the standard French translation for Freud’s notion of the ‘uncanny’ (*das Unheimlich*) [TN].

## CHAPTER 2

### The Vertigo of Immanence<sup>1</sup>

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Interview with John Johnston, June 1992

Félix Guattari

#### REFOUNDING THE PRODUCTION OF SUBJECTIVITY

**John Johnston:** For a long time your work has centred on the production of subjectivity . . .

**Félix Guattari:** For me, it is a matter of refounding a certain practice of the production of subjectivity, of the production of the unconscious in diverse real situations – collective, familial, institutional, etc.– where this production of subjectivity, this assemblage of enunciations, doesn't go without saying. It doesn't exist in natural relations, if there ever were natural relations between humans. It must therefore be invented, constantly recreated, but such an invention implies a sort of ontological reinsurance. What authorizes me to take somebody on, to make him speak in a certain mode, in an associative mode, about himself, of his dreams, of his childhood, of his projects? I'm not authorized. To borrow Lacan's expression: 'The analyst is authorized only by himself'. In fact, this isn't true. He is not authorized only by himself. He is authorized by a theory, by identification with his colleagues, by belonging to a school. That is what I call an ontological pseudo-guarantee. And what interests me is to refound this practice, not directly on existing modellings, those of psychotherapies and psychoanalyses, but on what I call a 'meta-modelling' . . .

J.J.: In which the model is not given in advance?

F.G.: That's right. The entirety of systems of psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic modellings must be considered, the different conceptions, the

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different currents, so as then to see that each modelling must be founded each time, reinsured in a singular, particular relation, whatever the authority or the experience of the psychoanalyst might be.

What interests me today in schizoanalysis is the heterogenetic character of this practice. Each cure develops a constellation of singular universes, constructs a scene, an entirely particular theatre, and meta-modelling consists in forging the instruments to grasp this diversity, this singularity, this heterogeneity.

J.J.: The relationship between your work at the La Borde clinic and your theoretical work – is it very close or rather distant?

F.G.: I have always lived in the situation of a rift between my social commitments, my militant commitments, my practice at the La Borde clinic, my practice as an individual psychoanalyst, my theoretical and literary activity. It is not something homogeneous, or which can be superposed, at all. Now, it is precisely through this rift that, from time to time, I find the matter for calling something back into question or the matter for reworking something.

It is evident that my acquaintance with psychosis in the context of La Borde has called into question traditional psychoanalytic practice, modelled in the schools of psychoanalysis. Besides, my social practice in groups, when I was young, in youth groups or in movements on the extreme left, gave me a sort of technology of social relations, not without relation to what I was doing at La Borde.

Then, the philosophical work I undertook with Gilles Deleuze led me to deepen what before were only interrogations or doubts with regard to Freudo-Lacanian dogmatism. It is this constant passage from one level to another that reintroduces this first concept of transversality, proposed a long time ago. How is one to pass between heterogeneous poles? How is one to find a transversality between these poles? How is one to develop abstract machines which are not universals but which, on the contrary, move in the direction of heterogeneity?

J.J.: You developed the key-concept of transversality in the 1960s, but it subsequently changed.

F.G.: Yes, this concept completely changed when I proposed the notion of deterritorialization in the 1970s. Transversality then became the transversality of deterritorialized instances. Today it might change again with the concept of chaosmosis, because transversality is chaotic, it is

always linked to a risk of plunging outside of sense, outside of constituted structures.

J.J.: Gilles Deleuze remarked that we are living less and less in a disciplinary society and more and more in a control society. How is this difference of regimes manifested in the behaviour of people, notably in that of 'poorly adapted' behaviour?

F.G.: I believe one shouldn't oppose societies of sovereignty, of discipline, of control and – I would add – of integration, to the point of view of capitalism. In reality, these different options always coexist. For my part, I would not make such a sharply contrasted genealogy, of the Foucauldian type. They are components of subjectification that coexist with one another. On the other hand, what is affirmed more and more, alongside the society of control, is the society of integration, of subjective integration, in and by which the subject is modelled so as to function as a social robot. There isn't even any need to keep the subject under surveillance or control.

J.J.: You have just published a new book, called *Chaosmosis*. The least that one can say is that, in it, you deploy highly original concepts and ideas, like that of the refrain, of material, kinematic and energetic fluxes, universes of value and existential territories. But it seems to me that the key concept – which you have already mentioned – is the concept of meta-modelling.

F.G.: My meta-modelling concepts remain relative to singular cartographies. I never claim to propose them as a structuralist or scientific grid for reading. I simply find myself faced with a problem of existential singularization at the level of the body, of the ego, of the relation to the architectural, urban environment, to values of ethnic or religious ideals. I try to find a transversalist concept and I forge this notion of existential territory. Then, bit by bit, I will try to see how this existential territory, which is inhabited by a function of existential *grasping*, of the collapsing of discursivity, allows an autopoietic recapturing, how to articulate it with the discursivity of universes of value, etc. I try to construct a conceptual meta-modelling machine that allows me to stick myself back together again as best I can in this breaking up, this rift, this fragmentation.

J.J.: To do this you combine phenomenology, semiotics, Marxism and aesthetics. But one has to say straightaway that this mixture has a consistency that in my opinion is both rigorous and very useful, which makes

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possible the analysis of many things in the same frame. What allowed you to make this type of analysis? Is it precisely because you are not stuck in one professional domain?

F.G.: In a friendly interview with some Brazilians in Rio, some months ago, I was asked a similar question, and I replied that I very proudly consider myself to be a sort of Douanier Rousseau of philosophy . . .

J.J.: That's brilliant . . .

F.G.: It's because I only read theoretical corpora, philosophical corpora as a thief, by taking things that can be useful to me. But a badly informed thief. Burglars will walk past an Old Master on a wall and steal the pleasing little object just there, next to it. Well, it's the same with me. I certainly walk past the canvases of the philosophical masters, but I try to grapple with some little things that could, it seems to me, be useful for my theoretical constructivism.

J.J.: Maybe at the same time you are explaining why it is so difficult for analysts, sociologists and others, stuck in their respective domains, to make truly new analyses, to say something new.

F.G.: But John Johnston, you know me sufficiently well to know that I work at La Borde, I live half my time in Paris, I travel a lot, I am caught up in objective constraints which make me change existential context frequently. That is something that could make theoretical or even practical work impossible. There are people who cannot stand this kind of perpetual nomadism, even if it is a nomadism that goes round in circles, on the same trajectory. Unfortunately, it is the same with many theorists and researchers. They are in a clearly marked-out theoretical territory, where they feel at ease, with timetables and work rituals, as if they were clocking in. For me, it is never in that way that it happens. It is through encounters, through systemic ruptures, which from time to time, give me these little transversalist short-circuits. I have very rarely undertaken a book from end to end, except with Gilles Deleuze, who introduced me to a whole dimension of continuity that I wouldn't have had without him.

J.J.: So, you escape from this closed circuit, whereas the others are a part of the very problem that they analyse.

F.G.: Exactly.

J.J.: For example, sociologists like Gilles Lipovetsky tell us with a certain nostalgia and melancholy that the individual is in decline, if not already dead. In the United States, one talks about the death of the subject in philosophy, beginning with the advent of structuralism. What is more, American Marxists, like Frederic Jameson, talk of the decentred and schizophrenic subject as a product of consumer society and of global capitalism. For you, this problematic is tackled in a more positive and fruitful manner, in the sense that you are interested in the forms of subjectivity and – notably – in the way in which certain assemblages produce subjects or effects of subjectification. Could you nonetheless say something about the decentred and fragmented subject?

F.G.: For me, there is no logic, dialectic or irreversible movement that leads the subject in one direction or another. One effectively observes a reduction of subjectivity, of what I call capitalist subjectivity, which is losing its capacity for communication, to the degree that the society of communication grows. Because the more there is a discursive dimension, the more information spreads out across the world, the more there is a closing down of enunciative capacity. There is a sort of pincer movement, a double movement, here and – alongside this – there is less and less of a collective response. It is a kind of abandonment to the subjectivity of the market, which – in any case – seems to respond to the emergence of the postmodern thematic.

However, for me, there is no destiny, no ultimate necessity, no death of the subject. On the contrary, what interests me is the re-singularizing of subjectivity: not necessarily by individual paths, but by complex assemblages, group assemblages, machinic assemblages, agencies with another type of environment, with another type of productivity. This is an option that is not inscribed in history, an ethico-political option that has another, different horizon. Without this recomposition of collective assemblages of subjectivity, we are bound to head towards a major crisis of mental ecology, of social ecology and – what is more and as a consequence – environmental ecology. But why wouldn't there be a new finality for human activities and for economic production trying to valorize this type of recomposition of existential territory?

J.J.: You privilege art as an assemblage that creates new constellations of reference. But is the subject of modern art a subject with multiple centres, which can respond to the multiple points of reference and subjectification? That is to say, does modern art demand a 'polyphonic' subject, to borrow Bakhtin's expression?

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F.G.: There mustn't be any misunderstanding: I'm not proposing an aestheticization of the social. I only refer to art as a paradigm that underlines three types of problem: that of processual creativity, of the permanent calling into question of the identity of the object; that of the polyphony of enunciation; finally, that of autopoiesis, that is to say, the production of nuclei [*foyers*] of partial subjectification. This type of paradigmatic cocktail is something that is very important, in the domain of science, in the domain of the social, for the recomposition of assemblages of enunciation. And art is a sort of avant-garde, like a military commando unit, at the heart of the problematic – modern art since Marcel Duchamp, in particular, which responds to the radical question of enunciation.

J.J.: On the political level, it is said that we are still in a neo-conservative period, but it is really possible that we might be entering into a neo-fascist period. In your book *Molecular Revolution*, you made a good analysis of the Nazi State. What are the dangers with which we are confronted today?

F.G.: In the period of the Cold War, of the antagonism between the United States and the USSR, the balance of nuclear terror overcoded the territorial antagonisms, caught under the control of the big military machines. That is how the Vietnam War, the war with Egypt in 1956, the Afghan War, etc., happened, but always with people in charge like referees in a boxing match: 'ah no', 'move', 'stop', 'don't hit there'. All that is over. Today we find ourselves faced with a multitude of powers, including atomic powers, and for a certain number of them it is difficult to see who might umpire their antagonisms. There is, of course, the attempt to promote the UN to this umpire function. But in my opinion, the UN greatly discredited itself at the time of the Gulf War . . .

J.J.: Why?

F.G.: Because it functioned in a very dishonest way. It didn't resolve any problems. So, that is a major risk. Beyond that, there are all these quasi-tribal wars, these private wars that one sees developing in Yugoslavia, in Moldavia, in Armenia, etc. Some have a slightly cataclysmic vision of this, saying: 'It's the start of a war which will spill out over Europe'. I don't think so, because once again, one must always be wary of having a historical, evolutionary, dialectical or catastrophic vision . . .

J.J.: Or a paranoid one . . .

F.G.: Or a paranoid one, because all the same, there are zones of influence, zones of interest. If there is a civil war or a terrible famine developing in Somalia, none of the big powers give a damn about it. If a civil war develops in Belgium between the Flemish and the Walloons, it won't develop in the same way as in Croatia or with the Serbs. And between Alabama and Georgia in the United States, it won't happen in isolation.

J.J.: The Gulf War was almost a genocide, and [involved the] complete control of information by the military, with the almost total complicity of the media. So, it was an astonishing and frightening event . . .

F.G.: What was interesting about this war was to see to what point there was a transversalist integration, in a cataclysmic, chaotic (and not chaotic) sense, of machines of mass mediatized subjectification, of intellectual and religious machines. Besides, the religious machines would have been more prudent than the military lobbies in this domain. In one blow, this war – which was made for its image, but which resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths – completely reshuffled the general economy of all these social, military and informatic machines. In my opinion, the UN machine was compromised, crushed and gravely disappointed the hopes placed in it. Perez De Cuellar is a truly detestable person. He hasn't maintained the autonomy of the UN as a possible interlocutor at all.

### FOR HETEROGENEOUS DISCURSIVITIES

J.J.: In *Chaosmosis* and in certain recent articles, you refer to James Gleick's book *Chaos Theory*, and especially to 'Prigogine and Stengers' book *Entre le temps et l'éternité*, to highlight the notion of 'strange attractors' and that of the 'irreversibility of time'. These notions are essential to your current work and above all to your conception of the formation of assemblages and of the emergence of universes. Can you talk about the importance contemporary science has for you? For example, the notion of proliferation . . .

F.G.: In all scientific work, one might fear that its results are not inscribed on homogeneous cartographies, from an ontological point of view. But in reality, each scientific practice implies a heterogenetic procedure, notably these points of passage, these points of bifurcation, of singularity, which are points of irreversibility and heterogenesis, which correspond to all



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the bifurcations of creation. Scientific digrammatism is something that starts from a discursive landmark, from constants, functions. Then, at a certain moment, it finds a point of bifurcation, a point of proliferation, by the intermediary of mathematical procedures, in particular, or today, of informatic procedures. So there is a whole dimension of concrete creativity that is crushed. That is why I would like to draw scientific paradigms more towards aesthetic paradigms.

J.J.: The researchers who address the enigma of life also find themselves positioned between chaos and complexity. So, one has to start thinking from there, from this position 'between'. It seems to me that that is the first lesson of the book . . .

F.G.: What matters to me is to find a certain number of markers in the relation between sensible discursivity in the domain of language, the communication of scientific statements and pathic, non-discursive apprehension. To do that, I'm led to postulate an existential apprehension alongside the relative, limited, delimited speeds of communication.

It is always this double articulation which leads me to pose on the one hand, a world of discursivity, a world of discursive complexity, and on the other hand, a world of non-discursive complexity, and what I call a chaotic apprehension of this latter. How, then, does one hold qualities together in relation to quantities?

J.J.: One can also say that the book sets out both a politics and ethics of singularity, as these words come back like a little refrain. What is the relation between the refrain and the production of singularities?

F.G.: In truth, the refrain is much more [about] singularization or re-singularization than singularity. One finds the singularity in the domain of mathematics; one finds it in the domain of science, as singular point. What interests me – since you speak of refrains – is precisely to see how – starting from the refrains of everyday life, from aesthetic refrains – one can find a bifurcation point that engenders a process of re-singularization. In other words, for me, singularity is not given in a massive opposition with generality or universality, but as a praxial crossroads and, thus, as a choice. This ethical choice of the always possible reimmersion in questions like 'what am I doing here?' 'what am I doing right here?' 'do I have a responsibility for what I am at the moment?', but also, for what will come afterwards, not just for me but for the other, for the entirety of universes of sense that are concerned?

J.J.: I've always wanted to ask you a question about music, which is evidently very important for you. I'm thinking, for example, about the marvellous pages in *A Thousand Plateaus* on the refrain. Do you have a musical training?

F.G.: I studied the piano when I was a child. I continued to play for a long time and I can say which musical universes served as references for me, as routes of access to other aesthetic universes, because after all, musical universes are the most gratuitous, those that call inter-subjective relations into question most radically. There is an ontological generosity in music, then . . .

J.J.: It carries us away very quickly, music, straightaway . . .

F.G.: That's it. While there is always a co-presence of fields of signification in literature, and even in poetry and the plastic arts (even if it is hijacked, for use in different directions), in music there is a massive apprehension of the universes of reference that I mentioned. That is why I always illustrate them with the stereotypical examples of Debussy or polyphony.

J.J.: The art of performance is fairly important in your book *Chaosmosis*. I will read you a passage, if you don't mind: 'performance art delivers the instant to the vertigo of the emergence of Universes that are simultaneously strange and familiar. It has the advantage of drawing out the full implications of this extraction of intensive, a-temporal, a-spatial, a-signifying dimensions from the semiotic net of everyday life'.<sup>2</sup>

Usually, one says that performance, like cinema, functions with a mixed aesthetic, and so produces a whole sensorial and signifying range. But what you say there is perhaps more precise and more accurate.

F.G.: In the usual classical aesthetic apparatus, there is always the distinction between a time of [for the] mediation and time for the crystallization of the aesthetic universe, and . . .

J.J.: . . . and real time.

F.G.: What is real is generative time. It is the fact that one is there in the concert hall, one is there, even without anyone, and then one generates an aesthetic universe, in one go. If you do so on the basis of personal talent, a knack, a pragmatic capital, with the background of a knowledge of the history of art, it is not the same as if you launch into it directly. Having

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said that, there is always personal talent, always a reference to the history of art, but one which is no longer in the same relationship, that of a safety net, of insurance, a guarantee, legitimation. So, it's like saying that the part an actor is going to play is not that [scripted] in the play but what is called stage-fright. I'm asking you to interpret stage-fright . . . Play stage-fright for me.

J.J.: In *Chaosmosis* you speak of the importance of a new aesthetic paradigm, with regard, above all, to what you call 'processual immanence'.

F.G.: It's entirely the same type of preoccupation as for performance: there are two immanences. The immanence in which nothing occurs, where one remains in refrains closed in on themselves, empty repetitions, as Gilles Deleuze said in *Difference and Repetition* . . . And the immanence in which a microscopic difference sets off a processuality, something which starts up, gets organized, develops. As the two of us speak here, it is quite possible that I always repeat the same thing, or that I'm not saying anything, and then it is possible that there will be a bifurcation, that there will be a process that is set off. This is something that evidently concerns aesthetic questions a great deal, but it concerns psychoanalytic questions as well, because one encounters refrains closed in on themselves there, too. It is a matter of knowing if there can be an event, if there can be something that gives the feeling of existential singularity, of not being in an infinitely reversible time, but in a processual time, an irreversible time.

J.J.: Since Duchamp at least, art is what gives food for thought, not a model, at all, but . . .

F.G.: A risk, including the risk of madness, the risk of nonsense, the risk of a break with the dominant significations, with others, such as they are organized. There is effectively something in art that one could relate to a sort of hero cycle. It is for that reason that Joyce's *Ulysses* is so important for me, because it is a way of transposing the hero cycle into the aesthetic problematic.

J.J.: And into everyday modern life, which is entirely different from Homeric life. This transposition gives itself as or produces a whole proliferation of words, of phrases, of types of literary structure. It is the polyphonic novel par excellence.

F.G.: It's also valid for the domain of politics. For example, there is a hero who has just appeared in the United States today, Ross Perot . . . What is he doing, just when everything was organized, you know, the routine, the pre-established scenario. He's a frightening kind of character, like Le Pen in France, who dramatically changes the course of things . . . and has the media behave differently in relation to him.

J.J.: One must be suspicious of someone like Perot, who says, 'I'm outside of politics' or 'If you're breathing, I want you working'. It gives a direct message but without saying precisely what he is going to do. Everything is there in his manner of speaking. For example, he has said, 'I don't have anything against homosexuals, but they will not be in my government'. It's frightening.

F.G.: Truly a hero of antiquity.

J.J.: Yes, but in modern times, a hero . . . who opens a direct route to neo-fascism.

F.G.: All the big heroes of modernity are fascist, whether you take someone like Hitler or a literary hero like Céline . . . There is no room for heroism or for the hero cycle in my work.

J.J.: I have a theoretical question about literature: in *Chaosmosis*, after you quote a passage from Mallarmé's poem *Un coup de dès*, you write this: 'this irruption of the irreversible, these choices of finitude can only be framed, can only acquire a relative consistency, on condition that they are inscribed on a memory of being and positioned in relation to axes of ordination and reference. The autopoietic fold responds to these two demands by putting into action its two inextricably associated facets of appropriation (or existential grasping) and trans-monadic inscription'.<sup>3</sup> In this regard, if there is inscription, there is a kind of writing of traces, and thus a coding. So is it inevitable that there is a capture by the signifier and maybe a new regime of discursivity? What could prevent this possible [eventuelle] capture?

F.G.: This trans-monadism is of a pathic, a non-discursive, order. That is why there is no universal, general, signifying writing that traverses different, heterogeneous orders.

J.J.: OK, but does each assemblage produce a type of discursivity?

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F.G.: Discursivity is in any case inevitable, it is part of our apprehension of the world. It is linked to the fact that one is thrown into time, thrown into space, thrown into energetic fluxes, into what I call energetico-spatio-temporal fluxes. The question is one of knowing if they found being, of knowing whether these energetico-discursive beings are things which are of the weft of being or on the contrary refer to an existential function which is this grasping, which is not a being that 'edits' relations between beings [*un être de type éditorial entre les étants*] but which is a projected being – a little like in the Sartrean tradition, but much more so – projected, multidimensional, heterogenetic, and which corresponds to singular constellations. That is not why it is discursive, its discursivity is secondary.

J.J.: I had the impression that discursivity lay in wait for assemblages, like a cancer . . .

F.G.: What is a cancer is not discursivity as such, it is capitalist discursivity, the discursivity that deals with standardized, distinctive oppositions, with exchange currencies: capital, energy, the signifier, etc. By contrast, heterogeneous discursivities, discursivities whose universes of reference flow through their processes of expression, are entirely essential. Thus, in the schizoanalytic cure, one seeks to make discursivities discernable according to their lines of heterogeneity. One is not going to stay in a sort of Z collapse, saying nothing, expressing nothing.

J.J.: In the end, the question was rather simple: one might have the impression that discursivity was the enemy, something that is on the lookout, lying in wait for emerging assemblages, which threatens them from the outside, but that isn't true.

F.G.: No, because so far you have got me talking about fluxes, about universes of reference, about existential territories, about existential grasping, but I note that you never mention machinic phyla. Machinic phyla are precisely the root of expressive discursivity, of machinic propositions. The whole question is one of knowing if these machinic propositions form part of a reductionism of a logicist or informational type, or if, on the contrary, there will be a machinic heterogenesis. This fourth pole is completely fundamental.

J.J.: You refer to Heidegger, and more precisely to the ontological difference he makes between Being and being. But for you, Heidegger remains a philosopher of transcendent universals.

F.G.: It is not so much that he is [caught up] in transcendent universals, it is that he maintains a homogenetic ontology. He founders in a Being which is for itself a chaosmic vertigo. Evidently then, if Being corresponds to the chaosmic vertigo, everything collapses in a radical loss of sense and a catastrophic pessimism. What interests me is that behind beings, there is no homogenetic Being but heterogenetic ontological dimensions.

J.J.: Being is not a constant for Heidegger, there is always the simultaneous unveiling and concealing of being, but the way in which that happens changes historically. And if truth is discerned in a manner that is proper to each epoch, perhaps for us truth is immanence, processual immanence.

F.G.: Yes, but the question is not purely speculative. The question is one of positioning the historicity of *techne*. There the stake is very political, very immediate. If *techne* corresponds to a way of veiling fundamental being more and more, if it is linked to a sort of malediction that turns us away from being, one has a point of view that is completely different from the one that I am proposing. For me, *techne* is only an aspect of machinic phyla. There are many other machinic phyla than the technological phyla, the machine in the ordinary sense of the word. There are the phyla of technique, the phyla of the sciences, of mathematics, to be articulated, but also those of poetry, of the *socius*, of desiring machines, etc. So one has a heterogenetic machinic imbrication, which is antagonistic towards this deathly vision of technique.

J.J.: It is also striking that many students concerned with the ecological problem are interested in Heidegger.

F.G.: Ah yes, that is the danger of a deathly ecology.

J.J.: In your book *The Three Ecologies* you talk of ecologies of the environment, the *socius* and the psyche. The ecological crisis truly is a much bigger crisis than is admitted. In fact, it is rare to see a thinker like you address this crisis and the problems that it poses, at all levels, even the philosophical. In order to initiate this problematic, you invented the word 'ecosophy'. Can you explain what you mean by this word?

F.G.: What interests me and disturbs me at the same time, is the development of an ecology centred entirely on nature, on the protection of species, a sort of identitarian vision then, which may end up in a very worrying conservatism, an authoritarianism. For me, the protection of

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material species, of natural, vegetable and animal species, is inseparable from the protection of incorporeal species. I always use the examples of auteur cinema, of the values of solidarity, of universes of fraternity, of sociability, of neighbourhood, of human warmth, of inventiveness. These are also species that are disappearing and which must be protected. The problem of the subjective assemblage becomes primary in relation to the object considered, the ecological object. What counts in the oikos is not just the walls of the house . . . Instead of a reductionist vision of being as natural being, being that is already there, it is a matter of posing the horizon of a pluralist ontology.

That is to say that human praxis engenders heterogeneous universes, it engenders practices. The mechanosphere is a part of nature in this enlarged sense, as is human responsibility, notably for the current state of the environment, for the existential context that we are in. But responsibility for the future, that is to say, for the scientific and aesthetic forecasting of what the world will be for future generations, also becomes one of the roots that announces being. It is a matter of considering not only being-here-already-there, but being to come, machinic being, the deterritorialized dimensions, the pluralism of being. A responsibility with regard to being, grasped as creativity, is what I have tried to present as ecosophy, as the wisdom of the oikos, not only the wisdom of inter-human relations but also that of relations with the environment, with machinic phyla, with universes of sense, with existential territories.

J.J.: Do you think that the ecological movement will form the basis for a truly global movement, and if so, under what conditions and with what dangers?

F.G.: The danger is that ecology may become a new conservatism and an ideology for the maintenance of already existing structures, that it won't be able to articulate itself to all the machinic phyla. So, I'm for articulating environmental ecology, social ecologies, mental ecologies, urban ecologies, mass media ecologies, etc. One reaches a crisis of humanity where it is the very basis of the biosphere that is called into question. Perhaps that can generate a movement of gaining awareness [*prise de conscience*]. It seems to me fundamental that this gain of awareness [*prise de conscience*] be encompassing, be heterogenetic, and not reductionist, as ecological movements so often are.

*Translated by Andrew Goffey*

NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This interview was conducted with John Johnson in June 1992 and was published in *Chimères* 38. Thanks to Emmanuelle Guattari for permission to publish this interview in translation.
- <sup>2</sup> Guattari, F. (1995) *Chaosmosis*. Translated by P. Bains and J. Pefanis, Sydney: Power Institute, p. 90 [translation slightly modified].
- <sup>3</sup> Guattari, F. *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p.113 [translation slightly modified].



## CHAPTER 3

### On Contemporary Art<sup>1</sup>

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Interview with Oliver Zahm, April 1992

Félix Guattari

**Olivier Zahm:** In *Chaosmosis*, the empty shell of the subject breaks. How did you come to this transversal conception of subjectivity, thought in terms of ‘process’, of ‘production’ and ‘assemblages of subjectification’?

**Félix Guattari:** Rather than thinking of contemporary problems in terms of a productive, material infrastructure and an ideological superstructure, it seems to me much more relevant not to think of subjectivity as the new infrastructure, but to consider that it has become the number one objective of capitalist society, of contemporary society. . .

One wonders if it has not always been the objective of all societies to produce subjectivity, material productions merely being mediations to bring the production of subjectivity under control. This of course implies leaving behind the dualisms between subject-object, matter-mind, the self-others, being-values. . . and, therefore, identifying the practices which cross between these areas, which are separated in a Manichean manner.

O.Z.: Your manner of thinking about subjectivity finally puts an end to the primacy given to the concept of the individual (opposed to the socius), as the pivot of postmodern sociologies.

F.G.: I start from the idea that subjectivity is always the result of collective assemblages, which involve not only a multiplicity of individuals, but also a multiplicity of technological, machinic and economic factors. . . a multiplicity of factors of so to say pre-personal sensations. The individual, for me, is only a particular case of assemblage linked to a certain type of culture, and of social practices. I reject in advance the kind

of reductionism which consists in thinking communication and culture result from an interaction between individuals. There is no interaction between individuals; there is a constitution of subjectivity at a scale that is transindividual from the outset.

You see this with language. . . You don't invent language as you go along, as you speak. . . The language you live in coexists with the ecological and ethological areas of the social in which you are inserted. . . It is the same with all processes of subjectification.

O.Z.: According to you, the processes of subjectification are immediately extended to otherness and the social field. . .

F.G.: The social field, the technological field. . . It is completely beyond the anthropological sphere, and extends to becoming-animal, becoming-plant. . . Subjectivity is what is richest, most heterogeneous. . . the social field, already that's reductionist.

O.Z.: What role does contemporary art play for you? Should it be granted a special place as a paradigm of subjectification?

F.G.: In this context, artistic practice has both an impact in the domain of the sensible, in the domain of percepts and affects, and at the same time a direct influence on the production of universes of value, universes of reference and nuclei [*foyers*] of subjectification. Think of the emergence of polyphonic music in the West, it is a mutant mode of subjectification. . . Entirely mutant ways of seeing, of feeling, of being affected. . . Aesthetic machines are productive of mutations in subjectivity in the same way as social machines, or technological information or communication machines, by the extraction of deterritorialized percepts and affects, of mutant affects.

O.Z.: In what way is the production of subjectivity by contemporary aesthetic machines able to resist the 'steam-roller' of post-capitalist subjectivity?

F.G.: Let us say that art is the domain that resists. It is in the underground of art that one finds zones of resistance to this flattening [*laminage*] of capitalist subjectivity. That is where we find a proliferation of parasitic fungi, cells of resistance to this dominant reductionism of subjectivity.

In this sense, artists are always seeking to return to the point of emergence of the production of subjectivity, for them, for the community. . . One can give other representations: one can say that art has developed as an autonomous discipline, as an expanding field of a certain specialization

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of subjectivity. But one can also see that art is a residual phenomenon in relation to a reductionism of subjectivity. Finally, artists are like errant knights, like Don Quixote and his chivalry, lost in a certain type of subjectification. Art moves in the direction of heterogenesis against the homogenesis of capitalism.

O.Z.: From the point of view of subjectivity, has contemporary art lost the battle, particularly in the face of the media?

F.G.: We see with the impoverishment of the cinema industry. . . Subjectivity produced on the industrial scale of the mass-media is a reduced, flattened, devastated subjectivity, which is losing its singularity. But this is not an irreversible situation – one can imagine a post-media evolution and a re-singularization of subjectivity. . . Capitalism today is tending to establish its modes of subjectification all over the planet. We are in a state of subjective impoverishment and, in addition, of its functional implementation, in particular with the collapse of the Eastern bloc and the systematic colonization of the third world by the media.

O.Z.: In *What Is Philosophy?* you define art with Gilles Deleuze as a 'being of sensation', and the artist as the producer of affects and percepts. This idea seems a little limited in relation to actual artistic practices. Isn't this a way of reterritorializing art on an empirical zone?

F.G.: It is a book on philosophy and not on art. . . What interests us is defining the distinctive features that separate the concept, the scientific function and affects and percepts. . . We were seeking to reground the specificity of the philosophical concept. This is why the whole book tends toward this objective. We talked about art from other perspectives in *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*, *A Thousand Plateaus*, *Anti-Oedipus*.

O.Z.: And yet the relationships between these areas are more interesting than their reframing.

F.G.: At the end of *What Is Philosophy?* the chapter on the brain clearly marks the possibility of transversal connections between art, science and philosophy. . . with the function of the three planes (composition, reference, immanence). There is a fashion, inherited from the counterculture of the 1960s, for the facile intercommunication of the different disciplines. It is the myth of interdisciplinarity. Scientists will give a hand to artists, who will give a hand to philosophers, politicians, to God knows who. . .

And everything is going to be better. But it just doesn't work like that! The languages differ, their objects are singular. . . there are strange relationships established. . . of course transversalities are possible. . . but they are not within reach. They can only be found, perhaps, precisely in a specific relationship, a singularization of each of the disciplines. It is through this that deterritorialized relations can be located, that abstract machines can establish communications between systems of thought. . .

O.Z.: You develop this conception of art as a being of sensation mainly in relation to literature (Joyce, Melville, Woolf, Faulkner, Kleist, Kafka. . .), to music (Messiaen, Debussy. . .) and painting (Cézanne, Fontana, Bacon, Mondrian, Kandinsky. . .). But you don't, or barely, tackle the field of contemporary art, which is no longer defined by the pre-eminence granted to a material, or to a medium and its tradition, but by the multiplicity of languages [and thus] the use of conceptual materials. Can one speak of contemporary art as a conceptualization of sensation?

F.G.: Because you think that conceptual art is not a being of sensation?

O.Z.: I don't know if sensation plays as a decisive role [in contemporary art] as in painting, or even as in the cinema. I think Cassavetes's camera is as drunk as the people it films.

F.G.: No, conceptual art produces the most deterritorialized sensations it is capable of creating. . . Instead of working with painting, with colours, with sounds, it works with a material that is the concept. But it's not a concept made for creating concepts, it's a concept that creates sensations. . . It paints with the concept, within an urban or natural spatial environment. It changes the material. It aims at a transgression, as you say, a deterritorialization – I don't know how to say it any other way – of sensation. . . In addition, it is all the more within sensation for deconstructing the dominant, redundant sensations. It grasps sensation all the more. . .

O.Z.: Even when it is a question of abstract material, of conceptual material?

F.G.: Obviously, perhaps more so! Because there, the freedom of mutation no longer has any formal support. Yes, there are deterritorialized materials, and conceptual art looks for the most deterritorialized of materials. . . Even if it sometimes looks for them in a way that is sometimes very poor, because finally conceptual art isn't 'conceptual', most of the time.

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O.Z.: But that it might not be isn't a problem.

F.G.: Yes, absolutely not.

O.Z.: The artist, even the conceptual artist, is therefore an inventor of sensations.

F.G.: Yes.

O.Z.: When art mobilizes totally conceptual materials (most often a language-object), how, in your opinion, does it effectuate these mutations of sensation?

F.G.: It is not so much a question of searching for materials, but rather for points of deterritorialization that traverse these materials. It will look for breaks, for leakages, for what allows it to slip in between, outside the dominant redundancies. The artist has, in effect, to search through all the rubbish bins – of society, of philosophy, of all of the domains of thought – to get out of here, to get out of this kind of stalled perception and affection, to produce mutant percepts and affects. . . to produce a type of feeling that engenders a mutation in the domain of the infinite. . . It is a new mode of finitude, one that produces a new relationship to incorporeal universes. . .

O.Z.: In fact, the idea of deterritorialization, of deterritorialized materials, that comes from *Anti-Oedipus*, seems to me to contradict the notion of the 'plane of composition' in relation to conceptual art (as opposed to the plane of immanence for philosophy and the plane of reference for the sciences). Unless your 'plane of composition', isn't also a plane of deterritorialization, of disconnection, of destabilization, of deconstruction?

F.G.: The two movements go together. It is on condition that the powers of redundancy that live in the material are defeated, that other houses, another cosmos, other constellations of the universe are recomposed, that composition is possible. What is most important in this idea of a 'plane of composition' is the pragmatic perspective that it opens up. That means that there is something to do, something that isn't a prisoner of a state of things, of a given society, of a given state of technology. With that one can create. And the importance of this paradigm of critical creativity exceeds the field of art. . . It is something that concerns education, psychiatry, all the domains of social life. . . Introducing the idea that things are as they are, but could be otherwise. . . Especially in the domain of postmodernism,

which has surrendered in the face of the idea of social innovation, in the face of the idea of the mutation of human relations. . .

O.Z.: Doesn't this notion of composition risk being confused with the constant call for creativity, the order-word of our always more conservative societies? I'm thinking, for example, of the cells of creativity in business.

F.G.: You are well aware that it is an obsessive order-word, because everywhere creativity is being extinguished. There is a loss of collective creativity. . . In the domain of scientific research, for example, or again in the social domain where there is a total collapse. In Yugoslavia, with the return of tribal wars, or elsewhere, where religion has been refounded on fundamentalism. . . There is this desperate appeal to creativity. Artists, philosophers, intellectuals should wake up! But we are in a period of complete glaciation and we are calling for heat. . . and it is glaciation that dominates.

You mentioned cells of creativity in industry: the flattening of subjectivity in research, among the managers, etc., is such that it becomes a sort of vital urgency for the top firms to re-singularize a minimum of subjectivity. . . How to get out of the bloated dominant signification? And besides, why not? I'm not against creativity in any domain, including in the domain of production. . . But it only responds in a very partial way to how we have become bogged down [*enlissement*] in the dominant subjectivity. I don't see what you want to oppose to this notion of composition. . .

O.Z.: A term that perhaps resonates more with actual artistic practices.

F.G.: It is not an affair of the concept, but an affair of the practices of sensation. . . This is not a question of redefinition but a question of invention, of production, of a mutation of subjectivity. . .

O.Z.: Words which create other directions?

F.G.: I don't see the interest in words, if these are order-words. . . The term 'composition' may seem insufficient to you, but it seems to me that one always makes something with something. Put the older term *praxis* in its place. Is this really necessary to do something, to make something mutate at the same time as freeing something?

O.Z.: Perhaps your model of reference is not so much contemporary art, as institutionalized practice, as it is an expanded aesthetic paradigm that

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qualifies artistic creation as 'polyphonic animist and transindividual subjectivity' belonging to the world, of childhood, of amorous passion, of madness. . . ?

F.G.: Let us say that contemporary art has remained surrounded [*cadré*]. There is a universe of reference, a universe of valorization, including economic valorization, that frames the work and qualifies it as such, attaching it to a social field. There is an institutional framing.

O.Z.: The responsibility of this discourse is perhaps situated in spotting what art can produce as ways of life, as social practices.

F.G.: Which is to say that it is in a situation comparable to what we were saying about creation within industry. There is more and more economic activity in art, especially as there is a collective will to crush art. It is the battle of Verdun. A few survive, and one wonders how! But they are valued because they have not been shot down! What remains of art is mainly design and publicity. . . It is the reduction of the subjectivity which tends to dominate the art world; it is frightening to see the submissive behaviour of the people going to the Beaubourg, who, in doing so, acquire a patina of culture but cut themselves off from the autopoietic character of the work, which concerns their perceptions, their amorous relations, their perceptual connection to the world.

O.Z.: The latest exhibition at the Beaubourg (*Manifest*) is a blatant example of this misunderstanding. How can we find connections, relays, when the exhibition fails to say anything different from the museum (as a collection of purchases)? We can multiply art centres, place artist's installations in the *Place du Châtelet* or other places in the city, talk about art on prime time. . . it won't ever come to anything if we cannot free these connections, what you call 'existential synapses'.

F.G.: You put great emphasis on the character of liberation represented by words, definitions and language. Personally, I don't believe in them too much. But to each their own. . . But the key to the problem is the ability of the community to enter into ethical and aesthetic paradigms. You talk about installations in public places. With the *Place du Châtelet*, I think of the Tour St Jacques<sup>2</sup> as Breton saw it. There are Tour St Jacques everywhere. Including in your apartment, in daily life, etc. . . . It is the ability to grasp a re-singularization of life, the spice of life; the desire to be connected to sound, to plastic forms, to environmental forms. . . It is

much more this mutation of social practices, ecologies, this mutation of environment for praxis, which will give another reception to art, rather than explanations and conceptualizations.

O.Z.: A whole generation of artists have reintroduced narration and fiction into their work today, such as Marcel Broodthaers, Richard Prince, Jean-Luc Vilmouth. . . Montage, stories, fragments of discourse, recomposed or diverted [*detournées*] narration. . . Should one see in this new narrativity what you call forms of 'partial subjectification' characteristic of processes of subjectification?

F.G.: We – Gilles Deleuze and I – did our utmost, over hundreds of pages, to underline that we refuse the primacy of signifying semiology [*la sémiologie signifiante*], but considered the traits of matters of expression of other components significant: plastic, spatial or musical materials have their own lines of composition. Then you tell me that they can all be reduced to a narrative of a linguistic type: we really have failed to make ourselves understood.

O.Z.: But how can subjectivity be produced if not in a narrative fashion?

F.G.: Not in terms of narrativity, but in terms of nuclei [*foyers*] of mutant productions of subjectivity. Precisely not in terms of narrativity.

O.Z.: Doesn't the concept of the 'refrain', which you argue crystallizes an existential territory, involve a narrative base? A story [*une histoire*]?

F.G.: A story is by definition something discursive. There is a term, then another term, then a third that relates to the first two. There is more montage than composition, whereas in my way of seeing things the subjective mutation made by the aesthetic refrain is not discursive, it is the outbreak of the non-discursive at the heart of the discursive. That is why it always crosses a threshold of non-sense, a threshold that ruptures the coordinates of the world.

In order to be able to tell a story, to recount the world, one's life, one must start from a point that is unnameable, unrecountable, which is the very point of the rupture of sense and the point of absolute non-story, of absolute non-discursivity. And this isn't something that is given up to a transcendent, undifferentiated subjectivity, it is something that is worked at. This is art, this unnameable point, this point of non-sense that the artist works. In the domain of schizoanalysis it is the same aesthetic



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paradigm: how can one work a point that is not discursive, a point of subjectification that will be melancholic, chaotic, psychotic?

O.Z.: Is it in this sense that we must speak of a-signification?

F.G.: Of the relation of a-signifiante. Of course, once the leap is made, once the subjective mutation is made, well then. . . Once the impressionist mutation was made for example, we find the impressionist vision in sugar lumps, in advertising, everywhere. . . The fissure of a-signifiante that surged up in impressionist vision is totally recovered.

O.Z.: Re-semanticized?

F.G.: Re-inscribed in significations that become dominant.

O.Z.: Is this passage by the point of a-signifiante, the artistic criterion for you, what art puts to the test?

F.G.: Indeed. Take for example a painter I like very much, Fromanger, and here, in this room, you have one of his first paintings. What interests me is how Fromanger confronted the a-signifying mutations he encountered, that of a way of life, his near-delinquent childhood, 1968 and the fine-art studio, his confrontation with the menacing presence of abstract art, of conceptual art. How did he manage to deal with all of that? At that moment there is a trajectory, and what counts is the process, the work, the processuality that makes an artist continue being an artist, sometimes at the price of a breakdown [*décomposition*] of his personality.

O.Z.: The test of a-signifiante also puts into play the painter's life, his existence?

F.G.: There is another dimension that one could call trans-nomadic: the way in which the artist faces up to, takes on the nuclei of a-signifiante doesn't pass through the concept but through a material that develops a power of transversality. The material is a bearer of pathic functions. That is to say that from the moment you have made this transmutation of yourself through this work, then this work is capable of transmitting, of producing the same type of subjective mutation whoever is confronted by it.

O.Z.: That has nothing to do with the lonely expression of the self. It is a matter of a relation of production of subjectivity.

F.G.: The work establishes an autopoietic relation. It is not already there to deliver a message, but to testify about a process of autoproduction. This is a banal idea, but the mutation of the work doesn't belong to the artist, it carries off the artist in its movement. There isn't an operator and a material object of the operation, but a collective assemblage that carries off the artist, individually, and his public, and all the institutions around him, critics, galleries, museums. . .

O.Z.: At the same time as you violently denounce the devastating effects of the media on processes of subjectification, you propose the hypothesis of a post-media society. Will this give more of chance to subjective heterogenesis?

F.G.: It is important for me to affirm – as a deliberate provocation – the character of finitude of the relation to today's media. It will not last forever, and one can see today in France the catastrophic state of television, and tomorrow of the written press. Will it get better after that? I don't know, maybe everything will die. Imagine the French landscape with the death of *Le Monde* or *Libération*, this would significantly change subjectivity. When we see how the right wing press has decomposed. . . It is possible that the media will fall to the level of banality of the telephone, and that fascination with the media will disappear and be replaced by other telematic practices, by interactivity with databases, etc. Media such as the telephone will continue to exist, but it will no longer be invested in the same way.

O.Z.: Are you pessimistic?

F.G.: Axiologically pessimistic. I would say: 'Listen, sit down, I have some good news and some bad news: for the moment this is how things stand, but it can be stopped'. From then on, what can one do? The field is open. One can imagine other things than this mediatized society. All the more so given that there aren't only negative factors, for there are also technological factors that permit the recomposition of things in an altogether different way. In particular, the junction of the audio-visual screen with telematics and information technology is something that will open up quite incredible possibilities of recomposition. But there again, nothing is given. Post-media society will be invented, created within the perspective of a new aesthetico-political paradigm, or not at all.

O.Z.: It is because of the case of it not being invented at all that you propose, in *Chaosmosis*, the notion of an ecology of the virtual, as a defence

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of threatened cultural species, but also as the ‘formation of unheard of subjectivities, never before seen, and never before felt’.

F.G.: Be careful in this regard not to fall into a myth of progress, as if everything was evolving in a good way in capitalist and machinic movement. We are witnessing the death of German, Japanese and Italian cinema. It is an incredible disaster, the death of species such as this, comparable to the disappearance of certain species of birds and mammals. I think of a reflection of Fernand Braudel, who told me he was shouted at by the people of the *Annales*: ‘Be very careful, if you continue in this direction you will kill “history”’. But for him, History was mortal even if historians still invest in it as a transcendent cultural species.

O.Z.: In this context, the artist is an ecologist of the virtual. A hero of subjective survival?

F.G.: Yes: a hero in the defence of incorporeal species. And not only of the defence, but also of their promotion, their proliferation, of their own machines.

O.Z.: Your thought, from *Anti-Oedipus* to *Chaosmosis*, responds to a machinic model. How is the machine involved in the production of subjectivity?

F.G.: As opposed to a thinker such as Heidegger, I do not believe that the machine is something which turns us away from being. I think that the machinic phyla are agents productive of being. They make us enter into what I call an ontological heterogenesis. I am not making an opposition between the technological world (the ontic) and ontology. The whole question is one of knowing how the enunciators of technology, including biological, aesthetic, theoretical, machines, etc., are assembled, of refocusing the purpose of human activities on the production of subjectivity or collective assemblages of subjectivity.

O.Z.: Enunciation produces subjectivity?

F.G.: That’s right.

O.Z.: And the model is machinic?

F.G.: Yes, machinic discursivity always corresponds with something in an assemblage of non-discursive enunciation, with an a-signifiant rupture.

I am not making the machine depend on techné, I consider that techné is only a case of machinism. I have expanded the meaning of machine – I am not the only one to do so – in the sense that Francisco Varela and Umberto Maturana have spoken of systemic machine, Chomsky of linguistic machines. . . I think that there is a machinic level that crosses and is incarnated in technological, biological, artistic, aesthetic levels etc.

What counts in the machine is not its machinery but, as Varela put it, its autopoietic organization. Varela differentiates ‘autopoietic machines’, which produce something other than themselves, from ‘allopoietic machines’, which generate their own organization. He doesn’t consider technological machines to be autopoietic. For me this is not an objection, because the allopoietic machines are in connection with autopoietic machines, and constitute assemblages with human beings. They are autopoietic by proxy.

O.Z.: The concept of the machine joins that of the living organism in a biological system?

F.G.: No, because there are machines which are not organisms. The axiomatic machine.

O.Z.: And the abstract machines?

F.G.: Aesthetic machines for example. They go beyond the organs, but refer to a body without organs, which is its reference enunciator. A non-individuated enunciator.

O.Z.: Could you give an example of an aesthetic machine?

F.G.: I always give the same example; the music of Debussy, and its many heterogeneous components, the return to a modal music, the influence of French music, Eastern music. . . These components singularly crystallize in the first works of Debussy. It is enough to hear just a few notes of Debussy to be immediately in the Debussy-universe. It is an enunciation, a break [*coupure*], a kind of non-discursive nucleus [*foyer non discursif*]. There is not only the musical dimension, but also the adjacent plastic, literary, social (the exhibitions, nationalism) dimensions, etc. It is, therefore, a heterogeneous universe with multiple components. This constellation of universes of reference forms an enunciator that gives consistency to the pentatonic notes, to the writing on the paper, to interpretations.

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There is something that holds all that together, what I call the incorporeal nucleus of enunciation. And it can be dissolved. . .

It is both eternal, because it is an incorporeal, it is an haecceity, something that cannot be located in time and space, but which was born on a certain date and which will be effaced. Debussy will be forgotten from a certain date, even if he is rediscovered later. . .

O.Z.: This crystallization of incorporeal universes in a note is of an ontological order?

F.G.: It is an ontological mutation.

O.Z.: That can be grasped in the paradigm of the machine?

F.G.: Yes, because the different systems of discursivity are all connected to the machinic phyla. The discursivity of written music, of polyphony, of symphonic interpretation, etc. But what is it that makes all the components hang together? In ecosystems, the parts form a whole, because they form an organism identifiable in space and time. But in the incorporeal plan, what is it that makes it form a whole? Where is the beginning and where is the end of Debussy? And yet, it is perfectly consistent.

O.Z.: Finally, a question about time. In your work with Deleuze there is a passage about the idea of the event. Do you think that it is from within art that one can search for an other connection to time? In your hypothesis of a post-mediatic evolution I can identify better now the connection to being (ontological mutation), but what is its connection to your conception of time?

F.G.: We can answer this question with Marcel Duchamp, who marks the emergence of a becoming which is totally beyond time. The event comes as a rupture with the coordinates of time and space. And Marcel Duchamp focused vision more acutely. . . to show that behind relations of temporal discursivity, there is always a possible index into the point of crystallization of the event outside time, which crosses time, transversal to all the measures of the time.

O.Z.: There is a transversality of the work in relation to time, if the measurement of time boils down to the ticking of the clock, to chronological points, to social and historical time.

F.G.: Yes, otherwise the moment is a becoming; the moment, instead of being passively enshrined between past and the future, becomes generative, it develops ontological coordinates.

O.Z.: Could we speak then, of a production of temporality?

F.G.: Let us say, a production of temporalization.

O.Z.: Would it be a way of de-chronologizing time?

F.G.: It would be an ontological composition of time, a compositional development of time, time beating in another way, through becomings.

O.Z.: If I follow you, the term 'contemporary art' would not be valid. It is better to speak of a-contemporary art.

F.G.: *A-temporal* art, where the cursor of time is brought to the point of the autopoietic nucleus, where the category of time dissolves.

O.Z.: Dissolves and recomposes.

F.G.: Recomposes as becoming.

*Translated by Stephen Zepke,  
revised by Andrew Goffey*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This interview was conducted by Olivier Zahm in April 1992 and was first published in *Chimères* 38. Thanks to Emmanuelle Guattari for permission to publish this interview in translation.

<sup>2</sup> The Tour St. Jacques is located between Place du Châtelet and the Rue de Rivoli in central Paris [TN].

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## **PART 2**

### Critical and Clinical Protocols

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## CHAPTER 4

### Analysis, between Psycho and Schizo<sup>1</sup>

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Jean-Claude Polack

‘Psychoanalysis leads to an activism animated by charity’, Jacques Lacan is supposed to have said during a seminar. Félix Guattari was most certainly an activist – but not for charity. While leading a life as a political agitator, he practised psychoanalysis to the end of his days, principally in an institutional framework, but also in the orthodox form, that of the armchair and couch.

On the pretext that he was anti-Oedipal, he has been believed to be the enemy of psychoanalysis. But his project is antinomic to his reputation. Rather than reacting, polemicking or destroying, he liked to scaffold and to construct. His oeuvre and his militancy sought to give the Freudian invention of unconscious Desire its full amplitude, to extend its concept by deploying its scope in the therapeutic field, philosophical thought and revolutionary action. He led his existence, in Sartre’s sense, between chance and necessity, by adding up situations, something that caused him to occupy a singular intellectual position in the second half of the last century.

His suspicion with regard to the Oedipus complex is well known. He considered this assemblage a structure of familial alienation, dated and developed by industrial capitalism. By contrast, he liked to look for the events, whether brief or long, in history, likely to inflect – in the dimensions of an entire nation – the *productions of subjectivity*. Thus, he spoke of the ‘1936 complex’ (the People’s Front), for example, as an unconscious, collective overdetermination, and when, much later, I wanted to write an article on *Palombella rossa*, Nanny Moretti’s film – in the form of an apologue – I discovered in it all the symptoms of a ‘1989 complex’ greatly exceeding Italian society.

Félix entered his adolescence with the end of the Second World War, Hiroshima and the Yalta Conference. He became the friend of his teacher,

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Fernand Oury, who drew him into libertarian and Trotskyite militant activities and introduced him to his brother Jean, a trainee psychiatrist. The latter introduced him to François Tosquelles, the founder of institutional psychotherapy. Tosquelles was a Catalonian hospital psychiatrist, a member of POUM, a dissident communist organization,<sup>2</sup> who underwent analysis with Reminger, a central European analyst exiled to Barcelona during the rise of Nazism. One owes to Tosquelles the invention of a new manner of caring for hospitalized psychotic patients, one that stood on the 'two feet' of Marxism and Freudianism, which he outlined in the hospital at Reus. It was inseparable from the historical context of the revolution in Catalonia, the Spanish Civil War, the functions of captain and doctor of Tosquelles in the region of Valencia, and the Republican defeat in 1939. After the defeat, he managed to cross the border, was held in a refugee camp in Sept-Fons, then liberated, in the middle of the Occupation, through the intervention of French friends in the Resistance, who had him go to the Saint-Alban asylum in Lozère. In this central region of France, the war continued: the communists, the English parachutists, semi-clandestinity. The hospital, run by nuns, was a centre for the Resistance. The asylum had to find the means for the survival of its patients. Institutional psychotherapy was hit violently by history and reality, or more exactly, the Real, in the form of a famine that killed more than 40,000 mental patients during the war. But there were no victims at Saint-Alban.

The La Borde clinic, near to Blois, was founded by Jean Oury in 1953, and Félix joined him two years later – that is, one year before the start of the Algerian War and shortly after the death of Stalin. Frequently, the clinic would serve as a place of clandestine asylum for people engaged in illegal militant activities. The collaboration and intellectual complicity of Oury and Félix, both of whom were very close to Tosquelles, was unflinching, right up to the events of May 1968. This crumbled in the context of the wave of *antipsychiatry*, which was detested by one of them, and with which the other would reach a compromise, in the name of what seemed to him a necessary *tabula rasa* of the politics of mental health in the asylum.

I worked at La Borde in the period that encompassed May 1968, when the conflictual friendship of Félix and Oury produced a particularly fruitful and agitated 'disjunctive synthesis' (to talk like Deleuze). The encounter of Guattari and Deleuze, their friendship, the putting into place of a joint work, were contemporary with post-May 1968, the end of the war in Vietnam, the 'winter years' of Mitterrand (as Félix and Toni Negri called them), the decline of really existing socialism, the denouement of the

Cold War, the rise to global hegemonic power of the United States, and globalization.

This summary reminder of the socio-historical décor of his intellectual and militant adventure might seem artificial, or too Foucauldian, but one can understand nothing of Félix's journey if it is left out. One sees clearly that every step [in the development of] institutional psychotherapy is inscribed in moments of *crisis, folds* wherein the powers of the state are forcibly contested and central control weakened. Like Tosquelles, Félix moved continually between the two scenes, the psychiatric and the political, madness and history. He only stopped thinking the politics of institutional care so as to introduce the seeds of a corrosion of psychoanalysis, grafted onto his conception of the unconscious.

We cannot describe the functioning of the clinic in Sologne – which was the terrain on which Félix's work and experience was anchored for 30-odd years – here, even in a summary fashion. All the same, let's clarify several points.

Oury and Félix agreed on a general division of labour. The first was in charge of things medical and the psychoanalytic training of personnel, the second with the institutional properly so-called, financial management, administration, and external relations. During the period extending as far as 1968, the allegiance to Freudo-Lacanianism and the Marxist sociological reference, united in an ambient structuralist syncretism, supported the distinction between two distinct *alienations*, the one *individual* and *psychopathological*, the other *social*. They were both present in the place of care, but the treatment of illness supposed a permanent combat against the pathogenic, the *pathoplastic* effects of the trouble that affected both the establishment and the carers. One sees here already the dialectical hypothesis of a constant to and fro between the symptoms of psychotics and the modes of reception of those who look after them – neurotic, perverse (if one uses the classical division of Freud), or *normopath* (as Oury ironically puts it).

Local pragmatics would bear essentially on *three axes of deterritorialization*:

- A first strategy developed the autonomy and parity of patients in the clinic, by means of the activities of a club having all the rights and obligations of a private association. The patients could sometimes replace absent monitors, were paid for their work, their remuneration adding to the finances of the club.
- A second approach sought to prevent the identification of carers with their status, by exploring the possibilities of their multiplicity. The rotation of tasks, the systematic scuttling of hierarchies, the

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permanent questioning of supposed knowledges was supposed to thwart the illusion of a psychic normality faced with mad people determined as such.

- The third route explored all the possibilities of an institutional cure. Here the specialists were no longer the only interpreters. The analytic capacities of everyone, including patients and collective assemblages, were solicited.

In this context, despite the celebrated *On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis* (1958), references to the *Écrits* and the seminars of Jacques Lacan were awkward. Freud's allergy to these difficult, nasty and violent patients, those who, designated by him as 'narcissistic neurotics', seemed unfit for the transference, is well known. His fine study of the case of President Schreber was elaborated on the basis of the president's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, written and published in 1903. Freud never saw him, any more than he did Little Hans, who he attempted to treat through the intermediation of what the child's father said. It would be his disciples – Jung, Ferenczi, Abraham, Tausk, Fenichel, generally working in hospitals – who would set off on this risky adventure. Freud nevertheless considered it necessary, at the risk of calling into question the apparatus, the method and the metapsychology of the 'science' he founded. Like Freud, Lacan never carried out a cure of a psychotic. 'The Case of Aimée' is a magisterial introduction to the psychoanalytic interpretation of erotomanic paranoia. But he only ever met this patient at the hospital, rarely alone, and for exclusively diagnostic ends. The few analysts in his School who do treat psychosis operate in asylums, and rely more on the teachings of Rosenfeld, Searles, Gisela Pankow or Françoise Dolto than on the *foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father*.

For some years, Félix shared the ambition of the members of the inner circle of institutional psychotherapy of recognizing the paternity of the master – who was, as we know, the analyst of most of them – in their work (in agreement with Oury, he really wanted him to be mine, too). It can [also] be seen that Félix paid homage to Lacan's interest in the dialectic of Melanie Klein's part objects, and the invention of the object 'a'. But he criticized the restricted use that the master made of it when he related it solely to the object of the drives, specified by corporeal zones and then, before the topologies of the Borromean knot, by linking it to the 'void' of 'lost jouissance'.

All the same, the thinking of institutional analysis would coil up in the lap of structuralism, where Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Barthes, Derrida, Foucault and Althusser kicked the ball of the signifier around, each in their

own way. But against the scientific hyperlinguistics of certain of them, Félix never stopped singularizing his research, staying as close as possible to his everyday experience. He refused to adopt the analysis of exchange (of goods, women, speech) at La Borde, which claimed to rule over the anthropology of the epoch. He denounced its residual colonialist stink and the victorious Oedipalism.

His approach to the alienating effects of the powers and terms of the division of labour was always empirical and transformational. *Institutionalization* takes precedence over the institution, *process* over structure. The keys provided by Lacanian doctrine didn't seem particularly heuristically valuable to him, although for some time he tried to make a parallel between the status, role and functions of carers and the instances of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real.

A step away from Lacanian axiomatics was taken in 1964–65, when Félix had those who Jean Oury called the 'barbarians', survivors from the UEC<sup>3</sup> who were badly mistreated by the leadership of the party, come to La Borde, where they worked as doctors, monitors and psychologists. In one move, his two passions – therapy and militancy – condensed.

His dissident and fractional activities, exported to Paris during the Algerian War (a journal: *La Voie communiste* and a support network for the FLN<sup>4</sup>) would also be deployed in Loir-et-Cher from then on. When Félix tried to think together these different activities, he questioned himself about the subjectivity of *groups*, whether it was a matter of groups of patients or political militants. Apart from the terms *subject group* and *subjugated group*, which owe much to Sartre, the Guattarian lexicon was still, for a while, compromised by that of Lacan: the field of *speech* and of *language*, the theme of the death drive, the pathways of the *phallus* and circulating everywhere – like in a game of hunt the slipper – the *signifier*.

In 1972, Félix would dedicate his *Psychanalyse and Transversalité*<sup>5</sup> to me, a collection of articles that shuttles constantly between psychiatric practice and revolutionary groups: 'to P, some old remarks, completely surpassed, sincere and barely true – it's shameful but that's how it is!'

And yet the book contradicts its author, because from the first years of the 1960s, the entire explosive critique of *Anti-Oedipus* is clearly announced. It's just that the multiple question marks hesitate to give way to the stylistically clearly more Celinian exclamation marks and introduction. It was the famous essay 'Machine and Structure', initially destined for the Ecole Freudienne but accepted for the review *Change* in 1969, that would initiate the rupture. Félix's footnotes confirm that the writing found its support in the work of Gilles Deleuze, and particularly in *Difference and Repetition*. But to explain the adjacency of the subject to the machine, the

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reader is referred to the '1 – a' of Lacan's imaginary totality, and the first break that he evokes in the structural continuum of representations is the fact of the voice, the 'machine of speech'!

From the end of the Algerian war, in 1962, the proteiform critique of the psychiatry of the asylum gained amplitude at the heart of the protest movement, reinforced by a sometimes imprecise reading of Foucault. When I arrived at La Borde in 1964, the author of the *History of Madness* was my intellectual and rhetorical model. Félix had the greatest respect for Foucault's concrete engagement in the struggles of homosexuals and common criminals, and also for his manner of historicizing the medical gesture and the anthropological status of madness. Despite the fine collective book that he organized on the parricide of Pierre Rivière at the start of the nineteenth century, Oury suspected Foucault of a lack of clinical knowledge and of bias. In whatever form it took – social, systemic, nominalist, libertarian or utopian – *antipsychiatry* seemed unacceptable to him. Félix, by contrast, ran the movement for alternatives to psychiatry, alongside Laing, Cooper and Esterson in Great Britain, Mony Elkaim in Belgium, Basaglia and Jervis in Italy.

The disagreement at La Borde kept on getting worse until May 1968, when the division of the collective body of carers was only avoided by the friendship and reciprocal confidence of the two founders. Because they had – along with numerous psychiatrists in the public sector – put the asylum and the 1838 law of internment on trial a long time previously, they shared the conviction that the long-term treatment of psychotics necessitated the permanent collective invention of propitious *places* and *networks of life*.

Félix was particularly attentive to the struggles that called into question the normative and psychosocial policies of the state, like the protest of the students' Mutuelle<sup>1</sup> against functioning of the university office for psychological support in Strasbourg, and against the outlawing of any union activity on the part of students in the psychiatric clinics of the *Fondation santé*. One feels his elective affinities with the libertarian and Situationist groups in Nantes, Lyon and Paris, who celebrated the transgressive forces of desire and attacked the doctrines, representations and spectacles that reduced the unconscious to the structural schema of myth and Oedipal tragedy.

He noted the incapacity of psychoanalytic milieus to understand and support a creeping revolution, in which free speech, challenge, affects and utopia took on so much importance. The balance sheet for fruitful psychoanalytic dissidence seemed rather gloomy to him: Wilhem Reich – forgotten; *Socialisme ou Barbarie* (with Castoriadis, alias Cardan. . . ) – recuperated.

The Freudo-Marxist thinking of Herbert Marcuse, much appreciated by the protest movements after *Eros and Civilization* (1958) and *One-Dimensional Man* (1966) remained of no interest to practitioners. They only saw in it the simplistic thesis of a spontaneously revolutionary sexuality. Already, the societies of analysts, mindful of their doctrine or their zones of influence, sought to gain control in some of the bastions of public health and of the university.

From their side, Marxist organizations were passionately opposed in their bid to possess the status of 'avant-garde of the working class'. Certain of them rediscovered, sometime unknowingly, the polemical accents of the Stalinist tradition: a Trotskyite review, *Garde-fous*, which specialized in questions of mental health, devoted an entire issue to denouncing the 'reformism' of the La Borde clinic, which was, thus, duly erected – with Félix, of course – into the principal enemy of progressive psychiatry.

The encounter with Deleuze and their joint work would develop around two obstacles that were, for Félix, fundamentally linked: *incurable psychosis* and *impossible revolution*. The writing machine for two, well described and commented on by Stéphane Nadaud, crystallized the possibility for Félix of theorizing a journey in which on the ground therapeutic and militant practices were mixed together.

One sees clearly that the 'Introduction to Schizoanalysis' in *Anti-Oedipus*, and many passages in *A Thousand Plateaus*, take up again therapeutic propositions that had for a long time been tested in institutional psychotherapy: the liberation of spaces (the 'stroll'); self-management and the decompartmentalization and rotation of tasks (the 'grid'); the abandoning of the reference only to speech and language; distrust and reservation with regard to familialist interpretations; the permanent cartography of *collective assemblages of enunciation*.

The improvisations, tests, material and social investments, the constant critique of the effects of hierarchization, homogenization, inhibition or culpabilization produced by the structures of care were already well-trying out methodological options, in search of adequate concepts: *smoothing, war machine, multiplicities*. The work with Deleuze operated as a 'lifting of the [injunctions] of the superego'. Their joint work, which was resolutely materialist, cast off the moorings of the Subject, Structure and the Signifier. It took hold of *rhizomes, breaks, differences and singularities*. The terms *production, flux, machines, real* definitively dislodged *representations, myths, phantasms, imaginary, symbolic* of the Lacanian exegesis of Freud.

Reading certain passages of this 'Introduction to Schizoanalysis' which – in the name of a kind of bodging together of the object 'a' and the big



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Other – still treats Lacan carefully, while attacking his disciples, I have become sufficiently orthodox again to suspect Félix of having hesitated in going all the way with his murder of the father – despite the radical violence of his charge against psychoanalysis.

This is because the inevitable rupture was the direct consequence of an *advance of psychoanalysis onto the terrain of psychosis*. Freud had predicted it and Lacan wanted to ward it off, but schizophrenia roots its trouble in a region of the Unconscious that phenomenologists sometimes describe better than psychoanalysis. It is the chaotic zone of *originary repression*, of Jean Oury's 'pré', of Henri Maldiney's 'pathique', and, of course, of Artaud's 'body without organs', which forms the hard core of *Anti-Oedipus*. It is a psychic space that symbolic structuration has not yet gridded and striated, which one approaches obliquely, via sensations, sensibility, affects, forms and intensities. This existential universe is not that of the illness given its name by Bleuler: it is a processual step common to all humans, that ethologists of the newborn infant (Brazelton, Stern, Kramer) have tried to map out so as to complete, modulate, or correct Melanie Klein's hypothesis of the precocious symbiotic psychosis of the child.

On the side of politics, the 'Introduction to Schizoanalysis' condenses a singular militant biography in which the ideological debates between Maoist, Trotskyite, Castroist, anarcho-syndicalist groups and so on, seemed less pertinent to Félix than the *meta-modelling* critique, as he put it, of modes of organization, of the circulation of speech, of the distribution of powers, and above all, of the taking charge, the receptiveness to subjective singularities.

The confirmation that his aim always exceeded the question of the treatment of psychosis would be provided later by *Cartographies schizoanalytiques* and *Chaosmosis* (which he characterized, in a dedication to me, as 'rather mad'). The 30-odd pages of *Psychanalyse et transversalité* on 'Causality, Subjectivity and History', written on the eve of May 1968, testify to this. On the pretext of settling a score with Leninism and its substitutes, he took up La Boétie's question of 'voluntary servitude' again, giving it the harmful power of an unconscious counter-revolution: 'It is the misrecognition, by the revolutionary avant-garde, of unconscious processes coalescing with socio-economic determinations that has left the working class without defences faced with the modern mechanisms of alienation under capitalism'.<sup>6</sup>

He kept the terms 'signifier' and 'signified' but challenged their capacity to structure history, which – when it escapes from deathly repetition – proceeds by inassimilable *signifying breaks*. Where do these breaks come from? What do they manifest? Félix proposed, impetuously:

The schizzed subject, in truth, will stay in the background, it will be the subject of the unconscious – the hidden key of repressed enunciations, the potential break of signifying chains ‘capable of anything’, including the liberation of bound energy – of fauves, the *mad*, and imprisoned others who will lay waste to the well arranged gardens of consciousness and the social order.<sup>7</sup>

Already, then, for Félix, the Unconscious was no longer the hidden treasure of *repression* but the immanent machinism of Desire that precedes and resists its accumulation. Because for him, the symbolic or imaginary avatars of representation masked the real of an *Unconscious that lacks nothing and that produces its objects*. Of the two alienations of which we spoke at the beginning, it was a matter for him of showing their permanent interaction, on the basis of a *common nature*. Productions of subjectivity have parity with economic and mercantile productions, because they constitute two distinct regimes of the investment of *desire*.

The politics of change has to break with the theme of super- and infrastructures, and the obligatory chronology of revolutionary undertakings. Félix anticipated a *micropolitics of desire* that would have to grasp modes of alienation in their most fine-grained and secret *molecular, machinic* forms, as well as in their evident *molar*, statistical and social manifestations.

From before 1968, he experimented with ‘psych and po’ groups<sup>8</sup>, where collective analysis no longer separated the public and the private, the body and ideas, dreams and reality, the virtual and the actual, the two modes of a creationist Surreal. In other words, among ‘Leftists’, he managed to make some rare friends but also quite an array of adversaries, who singled him out as the transversalist figure of the traitor.

Félix took up – in depth and in a polemical mode – Erasmus’s joyful, quasi-Rabelaisian eulogy.<sup>9</sup> For him, madness is not the ‘absence of work’ (as Foucault imprudently put it), but the perceptible expression of a constant process of properly *schizophrenic deterritorialization*, affecting social production and libidinal economy at the same time. This is where the conceptual takeover that seduced Deleuze is located. The philosopher of *transcendental empiricism* and of the *event* had not, to that point – and despite *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* – invested [in] the enigmas of the unconscious or the paradoxes of the ‘class struggle’, which Félix brought to him, knotted together in one, common, abstract problematic.

The ethical reversal of schizoanalysis chose *psychosis* as its machinic source and model, instead of the signifying impasse of *hysterical neurosis*. In politics, it also distinguished between the desire of the masses and class

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interest, and in this way attempted to better understand the discordant lineaments of dictatorships and totalitarianisms. Schizophrenia as illness and economic globalization testify to the same processuality, which it has not been possible to modulate through adequate reterritorializations or which the axioms of Capital have oriented towards the inflation of profit and the black holes of private property. The consequences of this systemic repression may be completely disastrous, both for individuals and for the human race. One thus understands Félix's affinity for the Greens, to whom his *Three Ecologies* – the fundamental, social and mental all on the same footing – are proposed, gathered together in the ethics of an *Ecosophy*.

In the years following the Second World War, the French Communist Party waged a bitter fight – inaugurated in the 1930s by Georges Politzer – against psychoanalysis as a 'bourgeois ideology'. Psychiatrists and analysts who were party members had to publicly renounce their faith. Twenty years later, Althusser adjusted the firing by according psychoanalysis, revised by Lacan, the prestigious status of science. Today, 'true' sciences – neuronal, behavioural, pharmacological – well adapted to the state's concern with control, evaluation and profitability – want to depose a clinical approach to the Unconscious, which is judged too independent, too expensive, too long and of too feeble a normalizing efficacy.

Some of our very badly intentioned contemporaries have wanted to see in *Anti-Oedipus* the sophisticated repetition of a double, Stalinist and techno-modernist condemnation. The combat of Deleuze and Félix is completely different. It is not a matter, for them, of refuting the real of Desire, but on the contrary of affirming its omnipresence and immanent productivity. The unconscious of neurotic repression only circumscribes a very small region, the region worked over by 'lalangue', by the 'Symbolic', the 'phallus', 'incest' and 'castration'. Taking up Sade's Republican injunction, Gilles and Félix utter an 'Analysts, one more effort, if you will tackle the matters and intensities of Desire!' – not only beyond the symptoms of mental illness but also in philosophy and art, and above all in the paradoxes and 'catastrophes' (René Thom) of politics and history.

Schizoanalysis is not an 'anti-psychoanalysis' but an active deterritorialization, a deconstruction and a decoding of the axiomatized, semiotized and structured fluxes of desire of an orthodox Unconscious, the servant of capital. A suranalysis, in some ways, Freud's plague, here at last.

*Translated from French by Andrew Goffey.*

## ANALYSIS, BETWEEN PSYCHO AND SCHIZO

### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This essay was first published in *Multitudes* 34 with the title 'L'analyse entre psycho et schizo'.
- <sup>2</sup> *Partit Obrer d'Unificació Marxista or Workers' Party of Marxist Unification*, active in the Spanish Civil War and with whom George Orwell served [TN].
- <sup>3</sup> The Union des étudiants communistes [TN].
- <sup>4</sup> The National Liberation Front [TN].
- <sup>5</sup> Guattari, F. (1972), *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle*. Paris: François Maspero. Republished in 2003 by La Découverte.
- <sup>6</sup> Guattari' *Psychanalyse et transversalité*, op. cit. p. 199.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 182.
- <sup>8</sup> Psychiatric and political [TN].
- <sup>9</sup> For instance, the *Moriae Encomium (In Praise of Folly)* [TN].

## CHAPTER 5

### The Deterritorialized Unconscious

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Peter Pál Pelbart

Guattari's attention to literature was always accompanied by James Joyce and Samuel Beckett. The contrast between the two writers, however, couldn't be greater: although in a similar personal situation (foreign, Irish, uprooted), Beckett proceeds inversely to Joyce by creating a minor literature, made of stuttering, subtraction, almost without oeuvre, and opposed to any ambition of totality, which both Deleuze and Guattari criticized in Joyce. A letter by Beckett to his German translator is evidence of his impossible undertaking:

It is indeed becoming more and more difficult, even senseless, for me to write in an official English. And more and more my own language appears to me like a veil that must be torn apart in order to get at the things (or the Nothingness) behind it. Grammar and Style. To me they have become as irrelevant as a Victorian bathing suit or the imperturbability of a true gentleman. A mask. Let us hope the time will come, thank God that in certain circles it has already come, when language is most efficiently used where it is being most efficiently misused. As we cannot eliminate language all at once, we should at least leave nothing undone that might contribute to its falling into disrepute. To bore one hole after another in it, until what lurks behind it – be it something or nothing – begins to seep through. I cannot imagine a higher goal for a writer today.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding, it wasn't *The Unnamable* but *Ulysses* which was on Guattari's bedside when he died. As Marie Depussé said when considering his literary ambitions: 'He wasn't a true writer and I think he suffered for it. He had the desire to create. I believe he was too obsessed with Joyce'.<sup>2</sup>

Fate decided to intersect my reading of Guattari with that of Joyce. *Cartographies Schizoanalytiques* and *Finnegans Wake* – truly is an anomalous junction. In their genre, style and purpose it would be difficult to imagine two writings more distant from each other. A text by Beckett regarding Joyce, however, allowed me to situate myself in the distance that separates both and make each of these very extravagant and diverging projects resonate. Addressing the critics of Joyce's *Work in Progress*, Beckett says:

And if you don't understand it, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is because you are too decadent to receive it . . . You complain that this stuff is not written in English. It is not written at all. It is not to be read – or rather it is not only to be read. It is to be looked at and listened to. His writing is not *about* something; *it is that something itself* . . . When the sense is sleep, the words go to sleep. When the sense is dancing, the words dance . . . The language is drunk. The very words are tilted and effervescent . . . Mr. Joyce has desophisticated language. And it is worthwhile remarking that no language is so sophisticated as English. It is abstracted to death. Take the word 'doubt': it gives us hardly any sensuous suggestion of hesitancy, of the necessity for choice, of static irresolution. Whereas the German *Zweifel* does, and, in less degree, the Italian *dubitare*. Mr. Joyce recognizes how inadequate 'doubt' is to express a state of extreme uncertainty, and replaces it by 'in twosome twominds' . . . This writing that you find so obscure is a quintessential extraction of language and painting and gesture, with all the inevitable clarity of the old inarticulation. Here is the savage economy of hieroglyphics. Here words are not the polite contortions of twentieth-century printer's ink. They are alive . . . This inner elemental vitality and corruption of expression imparts a furious restlessness to the form, which is admirably suited to the purgatorial aspect of the work. There is an endless verbal germination, maturation, putrefaction . . . In what sense, then, is Mr. Joyce's work purgatorial? In the absolute absence of the Absolute. Hell is the static lifelessness of unrelieved viciousness. Paradise the static lifelessness of unrelieved immaculation. Purgatory a flood of movement and vitality.<sup>3</sup>

I'll leave this provocation in the air: let Beckett's words reverberate, let them dangle between Joyce's literary project and Guattari's philosophical ambition, in the abyssal distance which separates the entourage of neologisms, barbarisms and imbalances, all those yanks in high ebullition which characterize both of them.

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JOYCE, LACAN, GUATTARI

Might there be a relation between Guattari's passion for Joyce and his reading of Lacan? In the 1975–76 Seminar XXIII, Lacan asks: 'Why is Joyce unreadable? . . . Maybe because he doesn't invoke in us any sympathy'.<sup>4</sup> But in noticing that he is in fact read, even without an understanding of what is read, Lacan suggests that maybe it relates to the readers' feeling that what is present is 'the enjoyment of the one who wrote it'. The essential is the relation to language as enjoyment. The pure game with language, the *pun*, even when it fails, proves in any case, Lacan says, that Joyce is exonerated [désabonné] of the unconscious. In it, language 'is the only thing of his text we can hold on to', even if it leaves us bewildered. 'Where it speaks, it enjoys, and it knows nothing'<sup>5</sup>. But the Sinthome that Joyce would carry, according to Lacan, differs from the classical symptom (message directed at the other). Given the weakening of the paternal metaphor, he would be nothing other than a prosthesis that offers him a replaced ego upon which he 'makes his name'. The necessary relation with the Name-of-the-Father is noticeable. The Sinthome is equivalent, in fact, with the Oedipus complex. Differently from the symptom, which one can let go of during the cure, the Sinthome is that which cannot be abandoned in its prosthetic function of keeping the three spheres of the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary conjugated. It can assume the aspect of art for certain artists, of mathematics for the mathematicians, of God for believers, of the psychoanalyst him/herself for certain analysands, of the loved one for the lover. In sum, it would be a part of the 'structure'.

Now, nothing of this is present, not even from afar, in Guattari, and right from his first texts he joyfully gets rid of the very notion of Name-of-the-Father. When he invokes Joyce, it is in an entirely different sense, one that goes against all structuring or unifying functions. In *Psychanalyse et Transversalité*, for instance, Joyce is summoned as a machinic opening: 'the unconscious is nothing else than the real to come, the transfinite field of potentialities hidden by an open chain of signifiers that wait to be opened and articulated by a real agency of enunciation and effectuation. . . . It is the same as saying that the cuts to this chain, including the more 'intimate', and – why not – of the intended 'private life', too, could be revealed as decisive nodes of historic causality. Who knows if the revolution that awaits us will not have its principles of enunciation stated by Lautréamont, Kafka or Joyce?'<sup>6</sup> Lacan's theorization of Sinthome as a function of prosthesis or of the 'individual's' psychic destiny and Guattari's poetico-political opening, prefiguration of the collective assemblage of enunciation, couldn't be any more different.

It isn't at all certain that Guattari experienced the same enjoyment that Joyce did in his writing, even if Guattari's word games express at times a great freedom, intermediated with fragments of 'jargon' and hardenings which testify before anything else to a true suffering in writing:

Writing so that I won't die. Or so that I die otherwise . . . Deleuze is concerned that I'm not producing anymore . . . I'm home kind of fucking around . . . It's the first time I write Deleuze here instead of Gilles. No more Fanny. Epiphany. A cavity of lack. Gilles writing a big article . . . He works a lot. We're really not of the same dimension. I'm a sort of inveterate autodidact, a do-it-yourself guy, a sort of Jules Verne – *Voyage to the Centre of the Earth*. In my own way I don't stop . . . But you can't tell. It's the work of never-ending reverie. Lots of ambitious plans. Everything in my head, nothing in the pocket. Epiphany . . . I will keep giving these texts to Fanny and, at the end of the chain, Gilles. I can tell they don't mean anything to him. The ideas, sure. But the trace, the continuous-discontinuous text flow that guarantees my continuance, obviously he doesn't see it like that. Or he does, but he's not interested. He always has the *oeuvre* in mind.<sup>7</sup>

The reader finds himself faced with a true *malaise*: 'Have to be accountable. Yield to arguments. What I feel like is just fucking around. Publish this diary for example. Say stupid shit. Barf out the fucking-around-o-maniacal schizo flow. Barter whatever for whoever wants to read it . . . write right onto the real. But not just the professional readers' real, "*Quinzaine* polemical" style. The close, hostile real. People around. Fuck shit up. The stakes greater than the *oeuvre* or they don't attain it . . . Writing to Gilles is good when it enters into the finality of the common project. But for me, what matters, really, is not that. The energy source is in the whatever, the mess'.<sup>8</sup> His appeal to a right to derail finds added to it an almost Kafkian formulation: 'I still have no control over this other world of systematic academic work, secret programming over dozens of years. I lack too much. Too much lag has accumulated . . . I need to stop running behind the image of Gilles and the polishedness, the perfection that he brought to the most unlikely book . . . Dare to be an asshole. It's so hard, being strapped onto Gilles! Be stupid in my own way'.<sup>9</sup> If we add to this the 'animistic' perspective which traverses him, the sidestepping of a tiresome structuralism and the postmodern prostration which he fought against ferociously, we come close to the challenge launched by this *oeuvre* so close to dismantlement, that 'schizo flux which drags with it all sorts of things', as Deleuze said. Just as Guattari's diagrams formalize



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machinic and chaosmotic circuits with an obstinacy and rigour which await philosophical elucidation, the general velocity of the text responds to the whatever [*tout-venant*] and to all that which escapes [*tout-fuyant*], even if the ensemble emits 'conceptual commands' of an extreme efficacy. As he writes humorously: 'There is an end to schizo-analysis: it's deterritorialization and the schizoidation of desire. All artificial means and suggestions are good for arriving at this, a kick in the ass included!'<sup>10</sup>

## PSYCHOSIS AND CHAOSMOSIS

*Chaosmosis's* greatest wager is to reconcile chaos and complexity on the same plane of immanence. Guattari refuses a simple and static idea of chaos: 'those in particular which attempt to illustrate it in terms of mixtures, holes, caverns, dusts, even as fractal objects'.<sup>11</sup> He insists mainly on the following points: (1) chaos 'chaotizes', (2) it is 'virtual', (3) it carries with it 'hypercomplexity'. An infinite velocity, bypassing discursive logics, and 'engendering disorder as much as complex virtual compositions'.<sup>12</sup> 'In sum, chaos is to be conceived as virtual matter, inexhaustible reservoir of infinite determination . . . which implies that in returning to chaos it is always possible to find in it matter to complicate the state of things'.<sup>13</sup> In a surprising parentheses in *Chaosmosis*, he adds: 'It is to Freud's credit that he showed the way in the *Traumdeutung*'.<sup>14</sup> Guattari's chaosmosis, however, does not coincide with the primary process. Differently from Freud, he privileges access to chaosmosis, what he calls a 'chaotic umbilical zone', which passes primarily through psychosis and its pathic apprehension rather than neurosis, dreams or their interpretation. The chaosmic dimension, prior to discursivity, which the psychotic incarnates, literally 'leaps to your throat', as Guattari puts it. What characterizes it is a singular combination of homogenesis and heterogenesis, of frozen repetition and incessant deterritorialization, where we pass from the 'feeling of catastrophe about the end of the world' to the 'overwhelming feeling of imminent redemption of every possibility'.<sup>15</sup> The existential stasis alternates between vacuity and complexity. This coexistence exceeds the figure of the mentally ill, with both poles finally rejoining everywhere, under diverse modalities. 'We are confronted by it [chaosmosis] in group life, in economic relations, machinism (for example, informatics) and even in the incorporeal Universes of art or religion'.<sup>16</sup> It falls to the schizoanalyst to dive into homogenetic immanence and to liberate heterogenetic coefficients there where they are to be found, beyond any oral performance, the family and the idealized figure of the analyst.

We would have then to suppose, according to the context, two kinds of homogenesis converging within the primary heterogenesis of the depths. That of the neurotic, with his everyday 'distraction and avoidance' of chaosmosis, and that of the pathic-pathological, the loss of colours, flavours, tones, where we also find emerge an 'alterification relieved of the mimetic barriers of the self'.<sup>17</sup> Guattari's formula is twofold: on the one hand, as with Nietzsche, we 'have to move quickly, we mustn't linger on something that might bog us down: madness, pain, death, drugs, the vertigo of the body without organs, extreme passion'.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, we must fight the reactive approach to chaosmosis, which secretes 'an imaginary of eternity, particularly through the mass media, which misses its essential dimension of finitude: the facticity of being-there, without qualities, without past, without future, in absolute dereliction and yet still a virtual nucleus of complexity without bounds'.<sup>19</sup> Everywhere it is a matter of detecting the chaosmotic 'congealings', which Guattari calls the 'Z or Zen points of Chaosmosis'.<sup>20</sup>

If psychosis starkly reveals an essential motor for being-in-the-world,<sup>21</sup> it is followed by a nuanced warning, which distances him from the mists of Heidegger: 'it is not therefore Being in general which irrupts in the chaosmotic experience of psychosis, or in the pathic relationship one can enter into with it, but a signed and dated event', with its ontological homogenesis, the sentiment of catastrophe, of the end of the world, its peculiar texture, after which nothing will be as before, except for the 'alarming oscillation between a proliferating complexity of sense and total vacuity, a hopeless dereliction of existential chaosmosis'.<sup>22</sup> If Guattari compares this ontological petrification, which is so notable in psychosis, with a freeze-frame, he adds the following: it reveals its basic (or bass) position in the polyphony of chaosmotic components. It is not, therefore, a degree zero of subjectification but an 'extreme degree of intensification. It is in passing through this chaotic "earthing", this perilous oscillation, that something else becomes possible, that ontological bifurcations and the emergence of coefficients of processual creativity can occur'.<sup>23</sup> One could object that the congealing to which pathology attests is contrary to the processuality that Guattari defends, and the status of schizophrenia in his work carries this paradox from the beginning. But the way in which the question is posed clarifies the anchoring point of Guattari's approach. The fact that the sick psychotic patient is at times incapable of a heterogenetic recovery does not contradict the richness of the ontological experimentation with which he is, in spite of himself, confronted. He isn't the postmodern hero or normative model, and chaosmotic ecstasies aren't the privilege of psychopathology; in the psychotic there appear with less mediation simultaneous,

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strident, combinations of speeds and slownesses, births and wreckings of worlds. As he recalls: 'A world is only constituted on the condition of being inhabited by an umbilical point – deconstructive, detotalizing and deterritorializing – from which a subjective positionality embodies itself . . . At the same time, this vacuole of decompression is an autopoietic node on which existential Territories and Incorporeal Universes of reference constantly reaffirm and entangle themselves, demanding and developing consistency'.<sup>24</sup> The fact is that the collapse of sense, in general, promotes a-signifying discursivities, causing ontological mutations. 'So chaosmosis does not oscillate mechanically between zero and infinity, being and nothingness, order and disorder: it rebounds and irrupts on states of things, bodies and the autopoietic nuclei it uses as a support for deterritorialization . . . Here we are dealing with an infinity of virtual entities infinitely rich in possibles, infinitely enrichable through creative processes . . . Infinite speeds are loaded with finite speeds, with a conversion of the virtual into the possible, of the reversible into the irreversible, of the deferred into difference'.<sup>25</sup> The final formula, a Nietzschean one, calls upon the 'incorporeal eternal return of infinitude'.<sup>26</sup>

## MODULATIONS OF EXISTENCE

The entire question rests on how the 'becoming consistent' of these autopoietic foci come into effect, how these 'choices of finitude' occur, in which manner the inscription in a 'memory of being' is given, and how to produce such an intensive ordering, what we could subsequently call proto-subjectification or subjectification *tout court*. This second fold, of active and creative autopoietic ordering, which unleashes from the passivity inherent in the first chaosmotic fold, constitutes Guattari's fundamental interest.<sup>27</sup> 'To produce new infinities from a submersion in sensible finitude, infinities not only charged with virtuality but with potentialities actualizable in given situations, circumventing or dissociating oneself from the Universals itemized by traditional arts, philosophy and psychoanalysis: intensive and processual becomings, a new love for the unknown'.<sup>28</sup> The event is simultaneously actualization and intensive deterritorialization, instantaneous and eternal, although already crystallized in spatial coordinates, temporal causalities, and energetic intervals. But there is an 'existentifying' clause, which is reiterated innumerable times. Proto-subjective or even subjective finitization, supported on a prominent component of the infinite chaosmotic and deterritorialized velocity doesn't abolish the infinitization and the deterritorialization that

it promotes, a little like a throw of the dice wouldn't abolish chance. In that to and fro which his writing doesn't cease to traverse, and by means of instances which put complexity into discourse, Guattari is especially interested in manners of auto-referencing that coincide with the very process of subjectification.

Hence, a self-founding subjectivity, consisting of itself, and processing its own coordinates. Referring to the neurologist Viktor von Weizsäcker, Guattari alludes to the idea of a subjectivity in relation to the depths (*Grundverhältnis*) – which proposes that the living, following different modulations, have an originary relation with life as depth. As Schotte explains:

As paradoxical as it may appear, the living phenomenon cannot be represented through the natural forms of space and time. To take the example of causality, the living is an undergoing and a self-moving, it presents itself as being its own cause. The objectivity of the clinician consists, then, in substituting the ontic for the pathic. While physics presupposes that a conscious I be put face to face with a known object, biology . . . [assumes] that the living finds itself in a determination whose depth cannot itself become an object. The living, in its 'relation with the depth' (*Grundverhältnis*) discloses the ground: a non-objectifiable 'zōē' . . . In its critical moments, life goes to 'the depths', it resurges from within the depths. The decision (which corresponds to the crisis) is '*Grundlegung*', attestation and positioning of deepenings through the originary moment of a 'relation with the depth', the obscure ground, indefinite life.<sup>29</sup>

As Maldiney says: the *depth* is the indeterminable, Anaximander's *apeiron* from which all finitude emerges, as its own abyss.<sup>30</sup> This is perhaps what Guattari, in the counter-current of Heidegger's lineage and even of phenomenology, will call Chaosmosis. The consistency and subjective inflection thereby arising, in their turn, shall depend more on the categories which von Weizsäcker called pathic, more on the modalities of 'existentifying' than ontic determinations. What interests a patient, for example, is not what he is in the eyes of the doctor (ontic category), but what he is capable of, what he wants, what he should become, what he does or doesn't desire to do and so on. Such verbs modulate the pathic subject, and as Schotte – to whom Guattari refers in his *Cartographies schizoanalytiques* – puts it, in any human or clinical situation, what is at stake is always the will, action, power, sieves that fix, provisionally, the flux of becoming, modulating it. In this way, the pathic dimension is less of the order of

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suffering than that of experimenting, neither passive nor active, close to Blanchot's 'neuter' or Deleuze's 'impersonal', an a-subjectivity.

At stake is the abandoning of the logic of all or nothing: 'Here, existence is won, lost, intensified, traverses qualitative thresholds due to its adherence to this or that incorporeal Universe of endo-reference'. In a philosophical amplification, he affirms: 'an open range of existential intensities substitutes for the brutal caesura of Being/Non-being' since 'Being is modulation of consistence, rhythm of montage and demontage. Its cohesion, if not its coherence, reveals neither an internal principal of eternity, nor an extrinsic causalist framing which would maintain together beings in the same world, but refers to the conjunction of processualities of consistency themselves intrinsically engaged in generalized connections of existential transversality'.<sup>31</sup>

## PSYCHOANALYSIS AND POST-PSYCHOANALYSIS

The ethical wager is to multiply 'existential shifters' to infinity, joining creative mutant Universes. The ontological pragmatic corresponds to this function of existentialization, detecting intensive indices, diagrammatic operators in any point or domain whatever, without any ambition to universalize them, so that what is demanded are not instruments of interpretation but cartographic tools. Even the little 'a' of Lacan, with its admirable deterritorializing character, or the partial objects of Melanie Klein, can be considered as 'crystals of singularization', 'points of bifurcation outside of dominant coordinates, from which mutant universes of reference might emerge'.<sup>32</sup> However, it is not fitting to make of them universals of desire in a cartography that is itself mutant. If we approach Guattari in this manner, little by little the psychoanalytic notions that he invokes, in an entirely redesigned landscape, will indicate more clearly to where his schizoanalytic project points. He defends a post-mediatic age, indicating with this not so much the surpassing of media but rather its miniaturization, its personalization, multicentering, decentralization, fractalization, proliferation, its propagation as well as the diversification of its modalities of enunciation, the molecularization and dissemination of its apparatus, in sum, the generalized appropriation of its enunciative potential. This implies and at the same time results in a sociotechnical, semiotic and above all subjective reinvention. In the same way, we could say that his schizoanalytic elaboration points to a post-psychoanalytic age whose theoretical and cartographic operators he intends, without any universalizing ambition, to establish. The first pages of *Cartographies schizoanalytiques* are very clear

regarding the status of this theorization. No monotheism, no scientificity, but a liberty to take or abandon whatever is wanted from this open collection that he does not stop completing, remaking, amassing, redesigning, in order to rearrange cartographic criteria in face of the urgencies of the present, the evoked situations, always singular, whether clinical, institutional or scientific. As we read in his eighth rule for analysis of the machinic unconscious: 'Every idea of principle must be taken as suspect'.<sup>33</sup> The theoretical elaboration is even more necessary and more audacious to the extent that a schizoanalytic assemblage admits its precarious nature. Or, as was already stated in the preparatory texts for *Anti-Oedipus*: 'Theory is, or needs to be, instrumentalist, functionalist . . . Break with the theory-oeuvre, and arrive at: "to each his own theory". Collective assemblages of enunciation *produce* their own theories by articulating themselves on planes of consistency. . . Theory is artifice. Its foundation is what, historically, is most deterritorialized, it works with machinic indices',<sup>34</sup> this movement being, by definition, unending. It is as if Guattari suspected an end to oeuvres and canonical redundancies, academics included, that could weaken what for him was in play, in this vanishing, maddening, derailing construction. So then, the ethics that guide the project are clear: to 'make the pragmatics of incorporeal events that will recompose the world flourish'.

All the effort goes in the direction of rethinking that which has by convention been called the Unconscious, this time *as a function* of assemblages. What Freud may, in the end, have accomplished, is a mutation of the Assemblage of Enunciation. In this sense, the very problematization of the unconscious should be refounded in the direction of a partial subjectivity, pre-personal, polyphonic, collective and machinic – under the sign of a logic of non-discursive intensities on the one hand, and the pathic incorporation-agglomeration of these vectors of partial subjectivity within deterritorializations on the other, all of which are to be adequately mapped. 'Everything. . . leads me to think that it would be preferable that it [psychoanalysis] multiply and differentiate, as far as possible, the expressive components that it introduces. And that its own Assemblages of Enunciation were not necessarily placed adjacently to the divan, in such a way as to exclude a dialectic of seeing. Analysis has all to gain in amplifying its means of intervention; it can work with speech, but equally with a modular mass (as with Gisela Pankow) or with video, cinema, theatre, the institutional structures, familial interaction, etc. – everything, then, which would allow the sharpening of the facets of a-signification of the ritornellos analysis finds, where it is more apt to unleash its catalyzing functions crystallizing new Universes of reference ( . . . ) and explore its pragmatic virtualities.'<sup>35</sup>

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We do not think that this task, initially attributed to transversality, and then to institutional analysis, and finally, schizoanalysis, has suffered decisive inflections throughout Guattari's trajectory, ever since its first, still stammering formulations, but also in the midst of terminological or even conceptual changes. In a chapter of *L'Inconscient machinique*, Guattari shoots at close range: 'First, what is, exactly, this unconscious? A magic occult world in some unknown fold of the brain? A mini-cinema, specialized in infantile porn or the projection of fixed archetypical planes?' And he answers: 'I see the unconscious rather as something which would spill a little everywhere around us, also in the gestures, everyday objects, in TV, in the atmosphere of the time, and even, and perhaps principally, in the big problems of the moment. An unconscious, then, working as much in the interior of individuals, their manner of understanding the world, live their bodies, their territory, their sex, as in the interior of a couple, a family, a school, neighbourhood, factories, stadiums, universities . . . In other words, not an unconscious of the specialists of the unconscious, not an unconscious crystallized in the past, petrified in an institutionalized discourse, but, on the contrary, one turned towards the future, an unconscious whose intrigue wouldn't be anything other than the possible, the possible which is at the surface, at the surface of the *socius*, the surface of the cosmos'.<sup>36</sup>

## CREATION AND SYMPATHY

The effects of such an indetermination aren't very distant from William James's perspective. With him, relations and connections are rolled, refolded, unfolded . . . Arbitrary, discontinuous, enwrapped, viscous, distressing, fragmentary, these are some of the adjectives James uses to qualify his universe. Something rude, coarse, breaking dams everywhere, making of the river a continuity, where waves cross each other in uproar. As many as these things that exist are, and as interconnected as they may be, there is always an Outside, and there is always something that escapes. To refuse determinism, James affirms indeterminate variables. 'Things are coherent in part, but outside the points through which things are connected to each other, they involve free elements'. It is a 'theory of an incomplete world, theory of the new, indeterminism, theory of the possibility'<sup>37</sup>. The task is one of evaluating to what extent forces are ready to make the difference. In such a conception, to believe means believing in the possibility, ours and that of the world, of making of such a challenge,

as Deleuze did, the challenge of a contemporary world which has lost its belief in this world as well as its connection with it. Sympathy with the 'to come' is what may connect us to the world and its possibilities, without which everything would already appear given and determined. This sympathy, as connection to the process of becoming, is a wager in the indetermination of the depths, it is the very invention of the possible. Guattari's thought and even that of James would not so much be a philosophy as a method which can help us produce ideas to serve thought and action. . . 'It is an instrument of creation', as Lapoujade put it.<sup>38</sup> Not a method of creation but a method for creating.

In relation to these processes, the challenge is 'to assist them semiotically and mechanically'.<sup>39</sup> Hence no order-words, only words of passage. Everything is passage, from one consistency to another, from one complex of possibilities to another, from one assemblage to another.<sup>40</sup> Well, in the end, we should not speak of reality. Social, mental objects, intrapsychic entities should be translated in terms of an assemblage. An assemblage, contrary to a structure, always depends on the heterogeneous components that contribute to its specific consistency. 'An assemblage is inconsistent when it is deprived of its quanta of possible, when the particle-signs abandon it to emigrate to other assemblages, when the abstract machinisms that specify it become sclerotic, degenerate in abstraction, encysted in stratifications and structures, when, after all, it is degraded, over a resonating black hole or falls under a threat of a pure and simple disintegration (catastrophe of consistence). It acquires, on the contrary, consistency, when a deterritorialized machinic metabolism opens to new connections, differentiates and complexifies'.

### STATUS OF THE INFINITE

When Guattari defines the unconscious as being productive and not representational, when he refers it to Assemblages of Enunciation, or when – mostly at the end of his life – he thinks it in terms of Chaosmosis, it is clear that he carries out an increasing radicalization in the relation of the unconscious with the Outside, an incessant effort to proliferate, molecularize and infinitize it which redesigns the unconscious entirely.

I tend to think that part of Guattari's obsession with the infinite, in its multiple senses, together with the theme of acquiring consistency, derive from his pathic experience with psychosis and the manner in which this experience overflows towards the plane of thinking itself. It is useful



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to recall the passage in *What Is Philosophy?* on chaos and the brain: ‘We require just a little order to protect us from chaos. Nothing is more distressing than a thought that escapes itself, than ideas that fly off, that disappear hardly formed, already eroded by forgetfulness or precipitated into others that we no longer master. These are infinite *variabilities*, the appearing and disappearing of which coincide. They are infinite speeds that blend into the immobility of the colourless and silent nothingness they traverse, without nature or thought . . . We constantly lose our ideas. That is why we want to hang on to fixed opinions so much. We ask only that our ideas are linked together according to a minimum of constant rules. All that the association of ideas has ever meant is providing us with these protective rules – resemblance, contiguity, causality – which enable us to put some order into ideas, preventing our “fantasy” (delirium, madness) from crossing the universe in an instant, producing winged horses and dragons breathing fire’.<sup>41</sup> For Guattari, thinking in the light of schizophrenia intensifies the relations between form and its dissolution, unliveable velocity and its interruption, heterogenesis and homogenesis, as these are affirmed in a book like *Chaosmosis*. The pathic relation with the mentally ill, that is, the complex and immediate body-to-body relation with intensive and infinite movements, put at risk a plurality of temporalities, fragments, disjunctive syntheses, transversal schizo connections, collapses, paralyses, slips and destructions of sense. . . That a delimited and precise frame such as the one proposed by Freud should have difficulty coping with such a proliferation isn’t surprising. The very experience of La Borde, from the beginning, already constitutes an experiment in the direction of such an opening on to the infinite.

## UEINZZ

Just as Guattari, in the midst of complex theorizations, would include a little fragment of a workshop at La Borde, I here conclude by following his example. For almost 15 years I have coordinated the work of a theatre group which includes users of psychiatric institutions in São Paulo. This project began in a day-hospital into which I first stepped in the company of Guattari himself, being his translator for the day. Since then, and lasting until today, my daily contact with so-called psychotic patients began, Guattari’s theorizations regarding schizophrenia, the machinic unconscious, transversality in the institution, his experience at La Borde, the way he smuggled fragments of his practice into the philosophical and

micropolitical domain, having inspired me enormously over all these years. The creation of a theatrical troupe inside the hospital was one of the fruits of this proximity, with the group quickly overflowing the walls of the institution, and flowing into the cultural circuit of the city. In a few years, already disconnected from the hospital circuit, we performed throughout Brazil and also abroad.

Our last production was based on Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, and has as its title, *Finnegan's Ueinzz*. Ueinzz is a sound uttered by one of the actors, in one of our first rehearsals, years back, and whose meaning escapes us entirely. Today we are the Theatrical Company Ueinzz. An a-signifying rupture of some sort functioned on the occasion as an autopoietic focus, a focus of subjectification, a crystal of singularity, carrying an entirely unforeseen, yet sharable, existential productivity, giving the name to our company. It is the production of a work, but also of subjectivity, of unconscious, of ruptures and recastings in the trajectory of a life, be it individual or collective. As Guattari says: 'The artist – and more generally aesthetic perception – detach and deterritorialize a segment of the real in such a way as to make it play the role of a partial enunciator . . . A singularity, a rupture of sense, a cut, a fragmentation, a detachment of a semiotic content – in a dadaist or surrealist manner – can originate mutant nuclei of subjectification.'<sup>42</sup> It isn't certain that we are artists, and from our point of view that for us is indifferent. What matters is the nature and potency of the assemblage, with the dissonant voices and the singular gestures and the mad bifurcations which it is able to embrace, sustain, relaunch, to thin or intensify, as well as the incorporeal universe and subjective displacements which emerge from this existential territory. At stake isn't only the smudging of the frontier between mad/not-mad present in social imagination, as some decades ago it used to be demanded. One of the challenges is to make appear the chaosmotic dimension which is in operation, to allow it to echo, to dive into that to and fro between heterogenesis and homogenesis, of working that relation between the 'vacuoles of decompression' and the 'nuclei of autopoiesis'. It isn't necessary to run from the collapses of sense and the a-signifying discursivities, but to grasp their potency of mutation. What is there on stage are singular ways of perceiving, of feeling, of dressing, of dislocating, of speaking, of thinking, of putting into refrain, but also a way of representing without representing, of associating while dissociating, of being on the stage and at the same time at home, in this presence that is at the same time precarious and of steel, untouchable, that takes everything extremely seriously and at the same time 'isn't even there' – to leave in the middle of the performance crossing the stage, with a backpack on your shoulders – why would you

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stay until the end if you'd already played your part? Or leave everything because it's your turn and you're going to die soon, or argue with your prompter who is supposed to be hidden . . . Or to grunt or croak, or as the nomads from the Great Wall of China, talk like the crows, or simply say, Ueinzz. The singer who doesn't sing, like Kafka's Josephine, the dancer who doesn't dance, the actor who doesn't act, the hero who loses strength, the emperor who doesn't rule . . . What is seen on stage isn't naked life supposedly reduced to its biological dimension, but life in a state of variation, reinventing its coordinates of enunciation, which doesn't stop effectuating and counter-effectuating modes of existence, as Guattari used to say when evoking the need for a Refoundation of the Unconscious on Deterritorialization.

*Translated from Portuguese by  
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## NOTES

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- <sup>2</sup> Interview with Virginie Linhart in Dosse, F. (2007), *Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Biographie Croisée*. Paris: La Découverte, p. 68.
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- <sup>5</sup> 'Là où çaparle, ça jouit, et ça sait rien.' Lacan, J. (1999), *Le Séminaire, Livre XX, Encore*, Paris: Seuil, p. 95.
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- <sup>7</sup> Guattari, F. (2006), *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, edited by S. Nadaud. New York: Semiotext(e), p. 399.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 400.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- <sup>11</sup> Guattari, F. (1989), *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*. Paris: Galilée, p. 133.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133–4.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.
- <sup>14</sup> Guattari, F. (1995), *Chaosmosis*. Sydney: Power Institute, p. 80.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 84.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 77.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 81.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 82.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 80.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 112–13.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 113.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 112–13.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 117.
- <sup>29</sup> Schotte, J. (1985), *Une pensée du clinique. L'oeuvre de Viktor von Weizsäcker*. Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain, Faculté de psychologie et des sciences de l'éducation. Notes by Ph. Lekeuche and reviewed by the author.
- <sup>30</sup> Maldiney, H. (1991), *Penser l'homme et la folie*. Grenoble: Millon.
- <sup>31</sup> Guattari, *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*, op. cit. p. 138.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 52.
- <sup>33</sup> Guattari, F. (1988), *O Inconsciente maquínico*. Campinas: Papirus, p. 191.
- <sup>34</sup> Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, op.cit. p. 366.
- <sup>35</sup> Guattari, *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*, op. cit. pp. 266–7.
- <sup>36</sup> Guattari, *O Inconsciente maquínico*, op. cit. pp. 10–11.
- <sup>37</sup> James, W. *Problems*, quoted in Wahl J. (2005) *Les philosophies pluralistes d'Angleterre et d'Amérique*. Paris: Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond/Seuil, p. 198.
- <sup>38</sup> Lapoujade, D. (2007), *William James. Empirisme et pragmatisme*. Paris: Les Empêcheurs de penser en rond/Seuil.
- <sup>39</sup> Guattari, *O Inconsciente maquínico*, op. cit. p. 179.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 183.
- <sup>41</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1994), *What Is Philosophy?* New York: Columbia University Press, p. 201.
- <sup>42</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. pp. 18 and 31.

## CHAPTER 6

### Maps and Refrains of a Rainbow Panther<sup>1</sup>

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Anne Querrien

The soundtrack and cartoon figure from Blake Edwards's film *The Pink Panther* elevated the panther to the rank of political animal with its release in 1963. In 1966, the Black Panthers were formed in the United States, a movement imitated for a time by young Sephardic Israelis; later, the Grey Panthers demanded social recognition for the rights of the elderly. In 1974, French singer Eddy Mitchell tried to capture the subversive dimension of the panther in the song *Au pays bleu*: 'In a blue country, the Pink Panther is blue'. The Pink Panther is found among the bestiary of possible references for a schizoanalysis: 'The Pink Panther imitates nothing, it reproduces nothing, it paints the world its colour, pink on pink; this is its becoming-world, carried out in such a way that it becomes imperceptible itself, making its rupture, its own line of flight, following to the end its "a-parallel" evolution'.<sup>2</sup> Since 2002, Pink Panthers across the planet have struggled for a feminism open to all repressed practices. While the Pink Panther may have changed his appearance and tune, his relevance continues. The *rainbow panther* desires another world in which all colours, types, genders and positions coexist. On its body-without-organs, the mixture is always imperfect, lending it every nuance and type, all genders. But in Guattari's *Chaosmosis*, colours become invisible, and recompose light. The coat of the rainbow panther is white like the sun at its height, white like 'the singlet that clings to the chest of a wrestler'.<sup>3</sup> Colour and sound are the two privileged materials of the panther. They are made of differentiated speeds and expressed in a continuous variation perceptible only in a discrete manner, and differently within each culture. Colour and sound change with the crossing of every new milieu. Colour and sound do not have an intangible signifying reality, rather, their perceptions are cultural; their permanent deterritorializations are the works of painting and music. From institutional psychotherapy to

schizoanalysis, Guattari, thanks to his collaboration with Deleuze, constructed an intensive vision of the world and of history that encompasses the tasks of the exploration of the unconscious and of the fabrication of capacities for invention put to work in the La Borde clinic and in the ranks of militant movements. He affirmed with Deleuze in *Anti-Oedipus* that what the child represses is the unconscious of the father and mother in him (or her), and that the difficulties of the young adult are only faulty steps in the attempt to give an autonomous expression and content to his or her own subjectivity. As Simone de Beauvoir observed in *The Second Sex*, we are not born what we become; from the day we struggle for our freedom, such becoming is not an imposition but a construction, an art.

Paying adequate attention to the multiplicity of affects which speak to each of us, and to the diversity of concrete ways in which these affects enter us, entails new methods of analysis: the verbal flow on the couch is only one index of assemblages in which everyday life unfolds, and masks, like a view of the forest blocked by the trees, the concreteness of the assemblage. The patient lives in groups that metabolize his or her own problematic, modifications of which contribute, more than intention itself, to personal evolution, opening onto new ideas and realities.

Observing subjective reorganizations at the La Borde clinic, as well as in political groups, gives us hope that psychotics, and schizophrenics in particular, could enter into a redeployment of their difficulties in the world. Make all human beings sensitive, heterogeneous, rhizomatically interconnected multiplicities, recognizing the particularities of one another, and how each is changed by them, edging towards the deployment of their own specificities: Guattari cleared the way for new existential territories that have the appearance of jungles only for those who do not dare to enter them. Fernand Deligny's experiment with seriously autistic children is a reference point for forging ahead: since the behaviour of these children – shouting and turning in circles – posed problems for their adult guardians, Deligny proposed that the adults map the movements of the children in the local environment, without omitting behaviours which made them feel uncomfortable. The sign of these latter disappeared as quickly as the maps accumulated. The relationship of the adults with the children had changed, which is not to say that the real behaviour of the children had changed. At the beginning of institutional psychotherapy, François Tosquelles had already pointed to this: it is the institution that confines the patients which needs to be examined, it is the treatment inflicted on the mentally ill which is unhealthy.

Guattari repeatedly underlined that the individual, in his own body and self, does not at all coincide with the existential territories that he upholds,

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and which press upon him from all sides. Through the cultural work of the integration of affects into the dominant incorporeal universes of the civilization to which one belongs, these universes and affects are generally contained within the individual limit that one embodies; one is then a normopath. This integration is never perfectly successful, but it is messier for some, who consequently are prone to adopting repetitive behaviours, which cause problems for the majority. The correct appreciation of the nature of this problem is very difficult because all refrains are singularizing; they are what help individuals emerge within existential territories, and indicate their presence – like the signature tune of the Pink Panther.

For Guattari, the individual can appear only against the background of the collective, but capitalism relentlessly destroys collectivities, and constructs a direct equivalence between individuals, which is the underlying condition of the most productive form of their labour. From that moment on, the anti-labour of the mental health operator must not only listen to the complaints of the analysand on the couch, but constitute sufficiently differentiated collectivities in order to accommodate the maximum number of hypotheses conveyed by individuals, and by their diverse collective assemblages. Cinema, literature and the totality of social practices bear witness to the existence of numerous desiring productions and the proliferation of sources [*foyers*] of anti-labour. Gradually, Guattari forged a collection of tools able to support each in his or her desire to escape from the capitalist injunction, relying instead on passions, committed actions, drawing on cultural universals, and on the fluxes liberated from the surface of the earth by the human adventure. Kept at a distance from the powerlessness that the centrality of the self would engender, the subject develops its reflexions and capacity for action in an infinity of different situations. Initially, these tools were borrowed from institutional psychotherapy and psychosociology; but then Guattari turned towards semiotics that were not limited by the collapsing of *lieux de parole*, a turn evident in his thought since around 1975; finally he invented ‘schizoanalytic cartographies’ and laid the foundations of ‘ecosophy’.

### THE TOOLS OF INSTITUTIONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY AND PSYCHOSOCIOLOGY

Guattari had a habit of forming groups. At La Borde, he had groups called Base Therapeutic Units, Patient’s Clubs organized around specific activities, and a ‘group of groups’. In Paris, he had a ‘Tuesday group’ as well as

the FGERI (Federation of Groups for Institutional Study and Research). He created groups in relation to all the problems that arose at CERFI (Centre for Institutional Study, Research and Training), and stated: 'form a group'. A group takes a problem in an unknown number of directions, and this permits unpredictable encounters between the preoccupations of its members. This mutualizes the associations of ideas and expertise, and has an erotic force that increases the benefits in relation to what people would have contributed as individuals.

A group is a desiring-machine. But such a machine can perfectly easily jam and, thus, comes with no guarantees; only experience can say whether something works or not, and determine if the collective assemblage can extract from the environment what it needs to function. Hence, always the Guattarian political proviso: the group does not stand alone, it is part of an ensemble of groups; the group was coordinated by 'a group of groups' at La Borde and by a general assembly at CERFI, which was open to non-group members whose 'lay' or 'incidental' points of view were taken into account, even to the point of exasperation, but in order to produce unexpected developments.

The subject acts between the groups with which it collaborates, and contributes its singular territoriality, as a point of rhizomatization, of particular, social encounters. The centre of the organization has no objective, except that of maintaining the cohesion of the ensemble, with all the risks of taking control of the contents that that represents; however, it is necessary that this central position, this chieftainship, be taken up, for administrative and financial reasons attached to normality. But that was no problem: occupying the central position could also become the objective of a group, one not chosen any old how. At CERFI, Guattari derisively called such a group *the Mafia*, that is, those who had seniority and self-importance, who were part of the family, in short, a group who expressed its allegiance to the dominant society according to classical criteria.

The group produces a bulletin or a journal. For example, in the early 1960s, *Recherches universitaires* explored the contours of student identity; in its pages, Guattari and his friends proposed the creation of a day-hospital for young workers and students in which the subjective barrier between the university and the factory could be investigated, a matter that was at the heart of student unrest at the time. *Recherches* was the journal both of the groups for institutional study and research, and of their federation that was founded in 1965. FGERI was an assemblage of heteroclitic groups consisting of physicians, psychiatrists, teachers, students, women, architects and so on. From the outset, it proposed to change something starting from the neglected 'entries'<sup>4</sup> of political groups. The May 1968



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issue had multiplied endeavours of this sort. *Recherches* continued until 1982. It was published more or less reliably, and it was always produced by working groups that cobbled together contributions of various lengths and unequal quality. In this regard, the project repeatedly produced dazzling patchworks by radically questioning divisions between the human sciences, with a healthy contempt for the neutrality required in sciences beholden to power. The dazzle flared with the issue titled *Three Billion Perverts: Grand Encyclopedia of Homosexualities*, which relied on the scathing humour of Guy Hocquenghem. Soon thereafter, a centrifugal effect took over from what had been a series of fireworks. Other issues followed, and these were sometimes written by individuals or by couples. The issue titled *Les Untorelli* gathered together the leaders of the Autonomist movement, and marked the birth of another of Félix's groups, CINEL (Centre for the New Spaces of Liberty Initiative), which participated in the struggles of ecologists, Palestinians, Italians, free radio stations, non-nationalist Yugoslavs, etc. As for *Recherches*, overrun by real researchers who lacked an ethics of openness to 'passers-by', it slowed down a little, and it was decided that the journal would fund a publishing house for books written by individual authors rather than collectives. Félix published two books under the imprint Encres Recherches: *La révolution moléculaire* (1977) and *L'Inconscient machinique* (1979). Then a crisis erupted: certain researchers within CERFI wanted a journal free from Italian connections and 'paedophiles', as well as from exposure to the risks of undertaking a multidimensional exploration of the world. The dissensus – almost equal in terms of the balance of power – won out in CERFI.

This collapse was tied to the drying up of the fundamental flux in the time of capital: money. Guattari was always aware of this and within La Borde he arranged for money to circulate in a way that gave a certain autonomy to the patients through their clubs, as in other psychiatric hospitals. An operating principle of CERFI was that it would sell its studies to both French and foreign ministries, and in this way 'make money', and fund the militant activities it supported. But the circulation of money was in fact very different: funding paid for the salaries at the level of a research technician for around 25 people, while also raising money for the journal. The research contracts also specified that remuneration would be in terms of person-months for a smaller number of research directors paid at a much higher wage. However, in 1974, the government had a change of heart: it earmarked more contracts for promising young researchers, with the goal of integrating them into the CNRS (French National Centre for Scientific Research) or universities, and moved the funds once reserved for contracts into the financing of civil service positions. It was

the end of central CERFI, leaving just its rump, dwarf CERFI on precarious contracts.

This tour of some of the first tools used by Guattari would be incomplete without consideration of the transference, whether it concerns money, a redistribution of funds as in the example given above or analysis. The flow of money from one hand to another changes the desiring positions of those involved. Guattari insists instead on the fact that it isn't only money that is transferred in the analytic situation, but affects, expectations about the potential of the analysis, entailing an apprenticeship on both sides. Coming from the youth hostelling movement, as well as organizing leisure activities with young workers, Guattari was particularly sensitive to the shared character of the relation of care at La Borde,<sup>5</sup> and how work is distributed in any organization. He goes so far as to indicate that the transference does not only concern persons, but relations with objects, with the setting and surroundings that can have a beneficial or pathological effect. Above all, drawing on clinical experience informed by political experimentation, Guattari explained that the transference must be understood institutionally as something levied from a flow, that relations must be permanently modified, in order to ensure that the organization does not fall into routine and may serve as the support for the schizoanalysis of each person. Other tools are thus needed for schizoanalysis, beyond psychotherapy and institutional analysis, which at the moment he was writing, was starting to run up against the crisis in Social Security and the increased scarcity of the funding flows that sustain psychiatric practice.

### SEARCHING FOR TOOLS THAT DO NOT PRIVILEGE SPEECH

In groups, speech, whether shared or not, is the principal tool of investigation and decision-making. In order to be able to speak, the group must be brought into existence by an institution or a movement. When institutions and movements become fossilized, as they did around 1975, it is necessary to find processes that are capable of transcending their institutional conditions of birth. The observation of the evolution of technologies, for example, reveals a functional and formal transformation of machines in the direction of ever more power, for identical energetic means, implying a mobilization of whatever contributes to their conception and realization. This transformation assembles heterogeneous components and multiple knowledges in the case of industrial production; it corresponds to the

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capacity of an assemblage practically adjacent to the object in production in the case of the craft industry. If one follows Simondon's analyses of the technical object, there is a sort of piloting of human innovation by objectivity [*objectité*] in the process of its constitution.<sup>6</sup> This transversal abstract machine, capable of giving a power of ontological 'self-affirmation' to the assemblage of components, is a desiring-machine, drawing desire into its adjacency.

The emergence of desire is expressed in the double movement of deterritorialization-reterritorialization that shapes the invention and reproduction of material, artisanal or artistic objects. But the development of capitalism tends to select the springs of production very narrowly. Desire is shunted towards the incorporeal universes of the image, sound, science, meaning, that is, towards every form of creation. Writing, which has a bureaucratic origin, becomes a desiring-machine if what is written is placed in a position adjacent to the processes that it serves, and begins to draw the tangency of its existence on the body-without-organs and not in the service of the writer's insurance company or ministry. The letter, deterritorialized from the couch, becomes the vehicle of a transfer across any terrain. Kafka excelled in the assembly of a literary machine, writing letters to his friends, keeping a journal, penning short stories, and novels: these four types of compositions engineered his exit from conjugality and bureaucracy.<sup>7</sup> The part-time hours that he kept at his employers, whom he denigrated in lengthy letters, served Kafka as a ground for power and money; he drew from the enemy what fed his war machine.

Guattari had already engaged in writing political tracts and articles in the field of institutional psychotherapy, and from a more theoretical perspective, contributed essays to the first issues of *Recherches*, for example, before meeting Deleuze and adopting the rigour of a more methodical approach. His method of writing is that of fine-tuning a flow of ideas poured onto the page by means of reductions and successive corrections with no concern for realizing a plan. This approach draws out the complexity of the play of the facets of a question, and the point where desire is acted out. The act of writing ends with an incompletely formed straight line, a line of flight that continues without signification. In his books that followed, from *Psychanalyse et transversalité* to *Chaosmosis*, Guattari tirelessly worked on the same problem. Living with psychotics at La Borde, he noted the existence of a real anterior to discursivity [*discursivité*], capable of singularizing itself in an infinity of different ways in accordance with events. The emergence of new processes of subjectification would be interrupted by the projection of unified categories onto this reality. The invitation to write, to participate in a writing machine, entails regularity, exchange, or in any case,

a transferential relation; it presents opportunities for change where this is denied by social pressure. The same applies to defeated political movements, such as the student Movement of 22 March after its suspension in June 1968. The setting up of a literary or oral machine, with shared trajectories among the people involved, gave a consistency back to disused existential territory and prepared the way for CERFI.

Video became available during this period, first of all in the Women's Liberation Movement. Its relative ease of use gave cause for hope in a tool for the collective description of situations that could be shared among the members of a group. Experiments in this direction have been conducted in businesses, for example, when Electricité de France (EDF) came up with a new procedure for dealing with electrical failures that meant repairs could be carried out on the live grid rather than switching off an entire section of it; it was by filming each other that the workers learned to overcome their fear and take the appropriate course of action. Guattari's friend, the Belgian psychiatrist Mony Elkaïm, used video in the practice of a family therapy organized in the form of psychodramatic scenes. The video gaze is not set on what is explicitly said, but rather, on a series of 'semiotic manifestations' that elude an ordinary gaze.<sup>8</sup> Guattari hypothesized that if members of youth gangs in New York were given video cameras, we would learn what makes them tick, how they are organized clandestinely, and arm themselves. Exploring further this hypothesis, the photographer Martine Barrat lived in the black neighbourhoods of Harlem and through images revealed the threat posed to them by gentrification.<sup>9</sup> With the video group at CERFI, desires were more cinematographic: François Pain made a film in the Paris Métro.<sup>10</sup> What was discovered experimentally was that the *Topographie idéale pour une agression caractérisée*, imagined by Rachid Boudjedra in his novel of the same name published in 1975, is impossible to film: the sociability of the Métro is in fact civil, even helpful. However, in order to be truly deterritorializing and connective, video production would need to be supported by adequate financial flows. In making demands for regular pay, the *intermittents du spectacle*<sup>11</sup> are currently trying to open up this possibility. Regarding the use of video for the purposes of publicity by television stations, the situation is akin to our computers, which are used at the weakest link of all of their expressive possibilities. The connectivity that is expanding with technical objects, around new professional relations in a service society, and around new relations of consumption, form very different relations from those of earlier social classes, or those of ethnic or religious communities. From the schizoanalytic perspective, this mutation of social relations is acknowledged and in response a 'rhizome' is drawn, a notion that – on top of those of horizontality and step-by-step

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construction – adds a subterranean dimension and a dimension of re-emergence to that of the network, which can generate the illusion, of belief in a unique stem, though it is a matter of a totality. To make a rhizome is to move towards the other, not to venture into enemy territory or into competition from the standpoint of destruction, but with the prospect of alliance and the construction of a temporary micro-territoriality that is quickly open to being shared with others, through new ramifications of the rhizome. The group, which has displayed its limitations, is no longer in command. Schizoanalysis is then aimed at individuals entering into changing relations and moving in multiple directions, by way of always-partial adjacencies, and transitional objects, without ever definitively solidifying anything. In showing how to draw on existing technological, natural and social resources, schizoanalysis constructs an alter-society that does not have power as its idol, but does mean to extend over the whole surface of Empire. The free radio movement gave Guattari the hope that this alter-society could be federated thanks to new lightweight communications technologies, that its subterranean swarming could be made audible, and it could be made to sing like Josephine in Kafka's short story, *Josephine, the Singer, or The Mouse Folk*.

## THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF THE ECOSOPHIC OBJECT

Guattari tirelessly applied himself to 'creating local nuclei for collective subjectification'. Taking La Borde as an example, he explained how the organization of diverse activities aims at opening up equally diverse possibilities for recomposing an existential corporeality, overcoming its repetitive impasses and singularizing itself. The Labordian territory was in this way endowed with a transferential capacity, an analytic power, certified (myself included) by experts from the Ministry of Health. In supervising the successive reorganizations of the clinic; in comparing its organization with those of other psychiatric experiments; by interrogating these achievements from different theoretical points of view, Guattari extracted the components of an institutional (then schizoanalytic) territory likely to develop similar virtues. It is a matter of providing each person with reference points that are at once individual and collective, a 'cartography' for managing anxieties, inhibitions and drives. Guattari forged tools that each person could use to put an end to reducing 'problems' to one's childhood, yet without ignoring it, either, and work one's way through other existential territories, making them enter into composition with one's

own in the construction of new social machines. For this it is necessary to have the most adequate approximate map of the situation at one's disposal as possible. Guattari's *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*<sup>12</sup> provided a synthetic and operational representation of this elaboration. The drawings of maps, like those superimposed in Deligny's experiment, make desire play among four functors, each worked by processes of deterritorialization that make of them poles in movement, intensities, which traverse the fields of the unconscious and the social. Material and natural fluxes deterritorialize into the machinic phylum, the unceasing invention of technologies that control its capture. Existential territories deterritorialize into the incorporeal universes that constitute the common valued by Toni Negri: music, painting, mathematics, sciences and other human productions. Fluxes and incorporeal universes thicken in existential territories. Incorporeal universes give form to the fluxes by composing the machinic phylum. And machines, by transforming existential territories, are required to pass through incorporeal universes, in the same manner that fluxes, in order to be registered in incorporeal universes, are required to detour through the machinic phylum or existential territories. There is no short cut for producing the common, without which there is only abolition and death.

Guattari situates the problematic of the unconscious in relation to material fluxes and to their transformation, by means of increasing speeds, into tools that are as helpful as they are destructive, depending on the use made of them. In relation to which machines is one placed in adjacency so as to invent one's own situation of creation? In *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*, deterritorialization appears to become objective, and is directly opposed to Heidegger, who stigmatizes the enframing of the world by the operations of technique. *Cartographies* is projected into a beyond of existing knowledges, 'extending a hand towards the future', and the infinite possibility of new inventions. A modification of position on the machinic phylum, which is not constituted solely by technical machines, but also by social machines like institutional psychotherapy and any operational organization in a limited domain, can help to change an existential territory experiencing suffering, via the interpretation-experimentation furnished by the pertinent incorporeal universes of reference, by an appropriated discursivity.

Guattari's discovery of Norwegian and German ecological writings, most notably Hans Jonas's *The Imperative of Responsibility*, moderated his belief in a post-media era in which the miniaturization and networking of informatic devices would permit the development of a new creativity. Achievements of this sort began to display a dependency on existing representations, for example, the difficulty in moving from a vision

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informed by trees as opposed to rhizomes. In *Chaosmosis*, the maps multiply, attached to all eco-systemic systems of reference, and schizoanalytic cartography is only the most successful among them, the one which does not allow every situation to be always brought under the sway of at most two variables. Guattari provides ways to avoid binary alternatives and to explore the multiplicity of possible variations of subjectivity. The refrain – a sonorous space that marks an existential territory with a well-defined function – assumes more importance than flux in Guattari's thought. The refrain had already appeared in *L'Inconscient machinique*, in the reflection on Proust, as the sonorous marker of an assemblage of local desire. The refrain always presents itself as the detachment of an existential 'motif' installed as an 'attractor' within the chaos of sensations and significations, but in the *Cartographies schizoanalytiques* it takes up a new position: it initiates the possible opening of dominant assemblages. The refrain, a simple marker of territory for the bird or of presence for the Pink Panther, attracts the attention of a partner or television viewer. Freud confuses it with the symptom in the cases of the neurotic and psychotic, when speaking of an automatism of repetition constitutive of its identity. But ecosophic research goes further in exploring the possibilities of deformation and rhizomatic connection with other universes, as in those of musical creation or painting. A narrative activity is released thanks to schizoanalytic cartography, bringing existential territories into contact with universes of values and machinic productions. It is a question of providing stability for an individual history, of finding one's footing, of being anchored not in a return to childhood or in a familialist regression, but with the knowledge of the knots of signification peculiar to each, and the possibility of untying them by following the branchings out onto which they open. The territories of the existential refrain are strongly called into question by the deterritorialization that capital-money exercises on them, either by drawing them towards the always more deterritorialized realization of the values of capitalist civilization, or by destroying them based on the fact of their complete incompatibility with these same values. But reinforced by schizoanalytic work, these territories of the refrain make use of new individual and collective productions that enable one to survive amid deterritorializing fluxes, without for all that making a fortune in the process, this chance being reserved for those who choose to serve capitalist reterritorialization body and soul.

Of course, Kafka had indicated derisively in *In The Penal Colony* that this servant would pass away in the end, too, and cause the machine to break apart by putting it to work on his own body. But this ultimate justice holds

little interest, as it is that of the last of the living. Facing a map in flux, in the technological and financial torrent that sweeps us away, how does one build a raft, that is, how can the flux be transformed into a resource? In *Cartographies schizoanalytiques* and later in *Chaosmosis*, Guattari suggests being attentive to these existential refrains, to the barely perceptible signs of a 'paradigmatic rupture of techno-scientific moorings and a refastening of social and analytic practices on the side of ethico-aesthetic paradigms'.<sup>13</sup> Schizoanalysis must be completed by a 'refrain-analysis', which concerns itself specifically with enunciative modalities, not only the linguistic, but sonorous, olfactory, behavioural, and also with the diversity of ways of living. Techno-financial fluxes would be kept at a distance and would no longer have the role of piloting desiring machines that they tended to take in previous theorizations. They would be adjacent to the body-without-organs, like every subjective function.

Although the full body-without-organs is mentioned in *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, it seems to me that the concept of the body-without-organs, as it is articulated with the desiring machines, is a production typical of the couple Deleuze-Guattari and remains practically absent from Guattari's own thought. He favours the plane of consistency arising from descriptive and projective geometry, which serves to sketch out the machines. If, in an elementary mathematical conception, one can imagine lines of flight as tangential to the body-without-organs, and represent to oneself the subject as taking flight on a straight line to infinity, then a more advanced mathematical reflection conceives of the curve in space-time, on the contrary, as the limit between two indefinitely broken lines which tend towards one another. The line of flight between the segments of desire is, on the surface of the body-without-organs, an infinitely curved surface in the finite. This limit is infinite because it defers indefinitely in time the sequence of operations that would completely define it; it holds its hand out towards the future as Guattari hoped. His simple approach by way of finite form, in the prevailing doxa, allows one to gain contentment in the present, and not to abandon oneself to the throes of anti-productive hysteria, to obeying capitalism at the cost of desire.

The body-without-organs is then a curved surface that is at once unlimited and closed, finite and infinite, that by means of its energetic tensions, separates the inside from the outside, existential territory from incorporeal universe. As Artaud said, the body-without-organs senses and experiences by means of tensions, by the energy that the battle of forces between the inside and the outside consumes at the expense of the body: a battle that each alone can carry on. In their complexity, the maps are presented



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in the *Cartographies schizoanalytiques* as professional quasi-tools for a geometry of the unconscious, even though they should be a map for hikers. Needless to say, an important work of translation remains to be done!

The production of the body-without-organs by means of subjective intensities, recommended in *A Thousand Plateaus*, is a completely different exercise. It no longer concerns a paper representation but a putting into tension of sensations, an attention to the filtration of events passing from the outside to the inside and vice versa, and an assemblage of these elements according to desire. The doxa would recommend configuring the assemblage towards the minimum amount of tension or equilibrium. Guattari states that this equilibrium is variable, making a declension of the infinity of combinations encountered on the body-without-organs, producing ever new singularities. To the doxa that understands this assemblage in terms of the death drive, being's attraction towards nothingness, Guattari responds that history shows to the contrary the permanent excavation of a difference, the continued declension of the body-without-organs. Inventing for oneself a body-without-organs certainly consists in a maximal reduction of the tension between the inside and the outside, but so as to succeed in sensing desire like a point of singularity taking flight. The Rainbow Panther synthesizes the colours of the world and diffracts them from each of the points of its coat of fur. It has got the world under its skin. Chaos no longer needs to be restored to the initial conditions that engendered it. The recurrence of its occurrence has got the upper hand and carries the ecosystem towards states that are unpredictable in the long term. It is necessary then to inhabit the moment we live in, in a hypersensitivity to becomings, reconstituting the glimmer of the world from the place where it was discovered. This is a collective work that deploys art at all scales.

## CHAOSMOSIS

*Chaosmosis* confirms the unlocking of the primacy of machinic production, which Guattari now underlines 'can equally work for better or for worse'.<sup>14</sup> He certainly continues to hold out hope for a 'post-media era' made possible by miniaturization, the generalized diffusion of communication tools, and anticipated by numerous social experiments. Working on the social and mental ecological production of places, like La Borde, which enable the emergence of new subjectivities released from their previous blockages, remained an objective for Guattari. At La Borde, the

patients – whatever their previous clinical histories and social origins – participate in new complexes of material, social and cultural subjectification, which are all machines, transferential operators. In the clinic they live a soft reterritorialization, which is different from the deterritorialization and depersonalization of confinement; there they are attentive to other refrains and may develop different interests; they can try new activities or rediscover previous ones. As director of the clinic Jean Oury describes in the pages of *Chimères*, institutional work aims at developing a certain ‘eutony’ different from the feeling of ‘atony’ that ordinary psychiatric services exude. Schizoanalysis tended to emphasize the double attraction of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, giving the former a positive value, and the latter a negative value. *Cartographies schizoanalytiques* sets out a multiplicity of configurations and leaves open the question of the balance between the two tendencies; however, it is the addition of a new machine on the phylum that seems to be the solution that is proffered for shifting the emphasis from the problems encountered in incorporeal universes or in existential territories. Confronted with disoriented individuals, who are more and more numerous owing to the generalized extension of capitalism, schizoanalysis provides elements of understanding, but it constructs a meta-modelling, a map of the totality of analytic trajectories that are too dependent upon technological development to effectively support the definition of viable existential territories. Following Mikhail Bakhtin and Francesco Varela, Guattari’s theoretical work then turns towards the implementation of an autopoiesis, a production of subjectivity that is much slower and more attentive to its inscription in the rhizome of its relations: ‘The polyphony of modes of subjectification actually corresponds to a multiplicity of ways of “keeping time”. Other rhythmicities are thus led to crystallize existential assemblages, which they embody and singularize’.<sup>15</sup> These ideas were already present in *L’Inconscient machinique*, which was dominated by a very strong concern with the meaning of history, in which abolition, catastrophe and finitude were evident – a machine is haunted by the passion for its abolition – but conjured by an appeal to urgency and belief in the temporary. With *Chaosmosis*, this voice becomes more serene. Guattari assesses the existential territory he has created and sets out the rudiments of this discipline that remains to be developed: ecosophy. He writes: ‘Ecosophy will tend to create new systems of valorization, a new taste for life, a new gentleness between the sexes, generations, ethnic groups, races.’<sup>16</sup>

*Translated by Gary Genosko  
and revised by Andrew Goffey*

## THE GUATTARI EFFECT

### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This essay was first published in *Multitudes* 38 under the title 'Les cartes et ritournelles d'une panthère arc-en-ciel'. The author would like to thank Pascale Criton and Éric Alliez for their helpful suggestions. The French original included a diagram, which has not been reproduced [Eds].
- <sup>2</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1987), *A Thousand Plateaus*. Translated by B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 11.
- <sup>3</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1977), *Anti-Oedipus*. Translated by R. Hurley, M. Seem and H. Lane. New York: Viking, p. 11.
- <sup>4</sup> 'Entry' in the sense of an entry in a dictionary [TN].
- <sup>5</sup> Guattari, F. (1972), 'Sur les rapports infirmiers-médecins' in *Psychanalyse et transversalité*. Paris: Maspero, p. 12.
- <sup>6</sup> Guattari, F. (1995), *Chaosmosis*. Translated by P. Bains and J. Pefanis. Sydney: Power Institute, pp. 34–5.
- <sup>7</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1986), *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Translated by D. Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- <sup>8</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 6.
- <sup>9</sup> See Martine Barrat's exhibition, 'Harlem in My Heart' at the Maison européenne de la photographie, December 2007–January 2008.
- <sup>10</sup> In testing the miniature infrared camera developed by Jean-Pierre Beauviala for Aaton.
- <sup>11</sup> A political movement of precariously employed cultural workers in France [TN].
- <sup>12</sup> Guattari, F. (1989), *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*. Paris: Galilée.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.
- <sup>14</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, p. 5.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

## CHAPTER 7

### Guattari and Anthropology: Existential Territories among Indigenous Australians<sup>1</sup>

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Barbara Glowczewski

Palestinians, Armenians, Basques, Irish, Corsicans, Lithuanians, Uyghur, Gypsies, Native Americans, Australian Aborigines . . . all in their own way and in very different contexts, appear as so many left-overs of history . . . In fact this nebula with fuzzy contours is called on to play a growing role at the heart of the international relations that it is already ‘parasiting’ considerably. And for our part we consider that, in the future, the nationalitarian fifth world will no longer be simply passive and defensive, but will bring a decisive renewal to the cultural values, social practices and models of society of our times.<sup>2</sup>

Félix Guattari *Les Années d’Hiver* (1986)

In the early 1980s, the decade Guattari called *Les Années d’Hiver* (*The Winter Years*), when he was testing the concepts, graphs and machines of his *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*, in his seminar, it was sometimes difficult to understand what was happening in his intellectual garage, full of spare parts and oil. But a very tangible flux regularly emerged, like an illumination that sketched out a route, onto which everyone would graft certain of their own questions. We had the impression that the brain, the heart, the body with or without organs, disconnected us from our individual identity through diverse crystallizations of subjectivity, while reinforcing our existential bedding in a flux of collective desire. It was a passionate subjectification, shared with Guattari through a multitude of singularities: a vocalization of ideas, as Deleuze put it.

I would like to emphasize here my debt with regard to Guattari’s thinking by tracking some steps in the exchanges that we had about my fieldwork with Warlpiri people in Central Australia, notably on the occasion of two

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seminars published in the first issue of *Chimères*.<sup>3</sup> Guattari is often quoted – with Deleuze – by Anglophone anthropologists (particularly in Oceania) and ignored – even rejected – by a generation of French anthropologists. It seems that most of them have missed the anthropological potential of his writings, whether by ignorance or incomprehension of the evolution of his concepts. That of ‘collective assemblages of enunciation’, for example, in the debates on the subject, agency and modes of subjectification. Or the linking together of the three ecologies (environmental, social and mental) in relation to the systemism of Gregory Bateson’s ecology of the mind: ‘in my own modelling system, I try to advance the notion of an ecosophical object which would go further than the ecosystemic object. I conceptualize the ecosophical object as articulated across four dimensions: those of flux, machine, value and existential territory . . . it is really a matter of producing the junction between the machines of ecosystems of material fluxes and those of ecosystems of semiotic fluxes. I am trying, then, to enlarge the notion of autopoiesis, without restricting it to the living system, as Varela does, and I consider that there are proto-autopoieses in all other systems: ethnological, social, etc’.<sup>4</sup> The articulation of existential territories with different systems of valorization and ontological self-affirmation is, in my opinion, an essential key for the anthropological analysis of any process of re-singularization of the relation to place in the contemporary universe of globalized interactions.

### ANTHROPOLOGY, KINSHIP AND POLITICS

When Robert Jaulin tried to mobilize public opinion against the ethnocide of Amazonian Indians, George Balandier replied (in a discussion filmed in 1967)<sup>5</sup> that such societies were condemned to disappear, because their cultures did not have any ‘images’, which – as in the case of Japan – would allow them to adapt to the changes of modernity. The last 50 years have shown, on the contrary, that despite the killings, the dispossessions and the destruction of their environment, the indigenous peoples of the Amazonian rain forest – like others in Australia or in the Pacific – had, precisely, trusted in ‘images’, whether in their shamanic visions, or their political use of art and media.<sup>6</sup> Guattari was convinced by Jaulin’s arguments and by the alternative model presented by the Amazon Indians, such as it was described by another of his anthropologist friends, Pierre Clastres. The latter’s essays *Society against the State* had provoked a

sort of scandal in the arena of French anthropology, by calling into question, among other things, Levi-Strauss's postulate about war as the effect of failed exchanges.<sup>7</sup> The conflict worsened to the point that Clastres and Jaulin quit the Laboratory of Social Anthropology founded by Levi-Strauss. In the Department of Ethnology that Jaulin ran at the University of Paris VII (Jussieu) in the 1970s, we were told to turn our backs on structuralism: rather, it was a matter of urgency to analyse the critique of past orders carried out by feminism, countries in the process of decolonizing, and indigenous peoples. Alongside De Certeau and Desanti, we had the opportunity of listening to Native Americans explain their resistance.

I was a witness to the impressive creativity of the Aboriginal people of Central Australia who, in the name of their ancestral value systems had – after decades of struggle – succeeded in getting a law passed (NT Land Rights Act 1976) that allowed them to make a legal claim for the partial restitution of their traditional lands. They had been dispossessed of these lands by their forced settlement in reserves in the 1950s, when they had had to abandon their lives as semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers. In the 1980s, the Aboriginal people of the desert re-appropriated their lands by car, establishing 'outstations', solar-powered camps, with windmills for water. Both men and women were involved in sacred rituals, painting their bodies with designs that symbolized the geographic journeys of their totemic ancestors, called, in the language of Central Australia, *Jukurrpa*, Dreamings. Night after night, they celebrated these Dreaming pathways so as to initiate the younger generations by dancing and singing their links to sacred sites marked with traces of the Rain, Lizard or Yam Beings. In some communities, the men and women began to paint their totemic maps on canvas, in order to get their territorial rights – founded on their spiritual links with places – legally recognized. Their success was stunning, and painting became a tool for political claims and an economic resource. Within 20 years, the profusion of artists, of their works, and their growing popularity among collectors from all four corners of the world would challenge the categories of art history, getting this Aboriginal art out of primitivism and onto the global contemporary art market.<sup>8</sup>

The message that I brought back from Australia after my first field trips in 1979 and 1980 related to the ancestral connections with the land, which Aboriginal people experienced as a moving network: a real ontology in which humans, animals, plants, water and the whole of social life are thought of as the actualization of virtualities that are constantly in feedback with the space-time of *Jukurrpa*, the itineraries of ancestral travelers called Kangaroo, Plum or Digging-Stick Dreaming. These beings and the tracks of their voyages are effectively defined as being in

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becoming: sleeping in hundreds of places, springs, rocks, and interacting with humans in their own dreams and rituals, which aim to reinforce the links between all living things. Dreaming was practised as a means of regenerating life. My 1981 thesis *Le rapport au temps et à l'espace des Aborigènes d'Australie* (*The Relation of Australian Aborigines to Time and Space*) aimed to demonstrate that this dynamic process – mistakenly described by most anthropologists as 'out of time' – was intrinsic to the traditional vision of the world. I also demonstrated the active role of women – whose power had been denied (and continues to be denied) – in these societies. I utilized Guattari's conception of the flux of desires to account for the mythic networks and to analyse numerous rituals: including the circulation among allies of hair strings as women's non-alienable possessions, or a secret cult which, dreamed following the wrecking of a ship (Koombannah) deporting Aboriginal people in 1912, had journeyed among different languages groups as a symbolic form of economic transformation producing a double law, including that of the White men.<sup>9</sup> Two years after I defended my thesis, I received a surprise phone call from Guattari, whom I hadn't yet met. He invited me to his seminar to discuss my thesis, a copy of which he had received from his friend the video-maker François Pain and which he had just read in one sitting.<sup>10</sup>

Guattari's enthusiasm for the totemic paths and the use of dreams by the Warlpiri was stimulated, by, among other things, the fact that the kinship system – which extends to all the totems (Dreamings) and their associated places – seems to favour social strategies that prevent centralized structures of domination, a situation that echoes Clastres's 'society against the State'. For the latter, it was the recourse to war among the Amazonians that seemed to maintain the autonomy and dispersion of each group, preventing the centralizing of power and its seizure by some, over others. Many specialists of the Amazon region have criticized Clastres's extreme position, but they recognized the non-hierarchical structure, based on kinship, of the social reproduction of these groups. A certain resistance of the Warlpiri (and other Aboriginal people living in the desert or in the North) to the accumulation of goods and to Western-style management speaks in favour of the fact that in diverse ways they refuse the logic of the State imposed by colonization and by current bureaucracy. The refusal of a central power seems to me to be founded not on war, but on a particular way of extending kinship (in the form of symbolic filiations and alliances) to the management of land, of its resources and associated systems of knowledge. Men and women use the English terms 'boss' and 'worker' to translate the ritual roles and duties according to which everyone is the 'boss' (*kirda* in Warlpiri) of the

land of his/her father and the 'worker' (*kurdungurlu* – also 'manager', 'lawyer') of the land of his/her mother and of his/her spouse.

This description of meta-kinship so fascinated Guattari that he invited me to talk about it to the patients at La Borde. It was an extraordinary experience, because the residents seemed to have a surprisingly intuitive understanding of the Aboriginal aims and workings of these social games and rituals. The rules for the ritual management of the land and of the knowledge of stories, songs, dances and paintings invert the roles of men and women according to the place in which each action takes place: the land of the father, the mother or the spouse. It is not just a matter of biological parents or of true marriage alliances, but of classificatory parents. Everyone in the group as well as every stranger who works with the group is automatically classified as the *skin brother or sister* of certain group members. Thus, all social relations are expressed with kinship terms as one big family. This system has inspired numerous anthropologists and mathematicians, but the literature on this subject – including the sections Lévi-Strauss devoted to Australians in his *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* – is a little lacking in flesh and in soul. This posed a real problem for anthropology which, at the time, had difficulty in transposing into the same books both theoretical speculations and the performativity of life. In my experience, the 'skin' names kinship system is a brilliant type of role-playing (which in its simplest form corresponds to what is called in mathematics a dihedral group, combining reversible and irreversible cycles of relations between eight poles). At the time though, most anthropologists rejected the analogy with games to explain ritual or political activities. The patients at La Borde, however, immediately said that the 'family game' was essential for mental and social survival and for that of the environment. In other words, they saw in the Australian kinship game an entwined dynamic similar to the three ecologies Guattari was later to theorize.

#### TOTEMISM, STRUCTURALISM, ONIRISM AND DETERRITORIALIZATION

Since everything that is named in nature and culture is associated, in the desert and in the North, with series of toponyms whose links are deployed in stories (Dreamings) that act as 'totems', I have emphasized that there was no opposition between nature and culture in totemism (an opposition which is the basis of Lévi-Strauss's nominalist interpretation of totemism) from the moment that concepts from more than 200 different languages, like *Jukurra*, translate individual or collective totemic



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identity (animal, plant, fire or digging stick) and geographic tracks, which – nourished by mythic stories and rites – can be renewed in dreams in the form of new episodes, recounted, sung, danced and painted. The guardians of the Warlpiri law say that they invent nothing, but rather uncover and reveal what is virtually already there in memory, the matrix of the Dreaming, anchored in places associated with totemic beings. This dynamic use of the notion of the Dreaming space-time, which identifies each being with places inhabited by multiple totemic becomings, offers an alternative to Freud's *Totem and Taboo* and to the nominalism of Lévi-Strauss's *Totemism*.

The creative survival and linguistic diversity of Aboriginal people, who have been present in Australia for at least 60,000 years, challenge all forms of evolutionism, whether Darwinian, Marxist or Deleuzo-Guattarian, such as the primitive/barbarian/capitalist model in *Anti-Oedipus*. Deterritorialization is certainly a very handy notion for talking about the mental, social and ecological disaster provoked by the colonial violence of displacement of Aboriginals into reserves, and the physical and ontological dispossession that the forced settling of these former semi-nomadic hunters constituted. Contrary to the use that some make of it, deterritorialization here is not a metaphor but the expression of the becoming of the contemporary unconscious as machinic deterritorialization of living fluxes. As Anne Querrien says, the latter 'is coiled around colonial deterritorialization' and enables the social, economic and environmental disaster that colonization has engendered to be survived. Because deterritorializing, in the sense of *Anti-Oedipus*, is the human capacity to make up imaginary, symbolic and real territory (the three aspects of desire in Lacan): it doesn't coincide with everyday territory, the territory of animal reproduction, but refers to the capacity to dream territory, to modify it, and not simply to submit to it, to pass beyond the death drive, the drive of maximal reterritorialization. What struck Félix in my work with the Warlpiri was to discover that this capacity for deterritorialization is not restricted to Westerners. Even if their enforced entry into modernity, with the Welfare State and integration, has destroyed some Aboriginal people even more, others resisted, notably with the tour de force of their artistic production, which metabolizes the territories of their totemic Dreamings. For Guattari, the creation which reassembles [*réagence*] through the desiring machine without Lacan's imaginary/symbolic/real triangle, is a revolutionary position provided that one moves away from the psychiatric position, in which the *object a* is a pathology to be resorbed. The apparent absence of any taking into account of the strength of the assemblage and of the agency [*agencéité*]

of desire in the structuralism of Lacan or that of Lévi-Strauss perhaps explains the fixed aspect of a certain analysis of myths and of kinship, which justified the pursuit of the deterritorialization of anthropology without taking into account the possible deterritorialization of the peoples concerned.

It remains the case that for many readers of *Anti-Oedipus* the category of the nomad as landless is problematic. Aboriginal people in the desert and elsewhere in Australia have an extremely strong attachment to diverse places, while nevertheless being nomadic. The particularity of Australia is that land is perceived not as a juxtaposition of limited parcels but as an open network of places linked together by narratives and songs in the form of virtual tracks forming a network that is both unlimited and 'boundless'. It is open in all the cardinal directions but also according to the principle of an infinite interior. One can always add a narrative place, with its geographical basis, between two others, and a subterranean historical level as a series of superposed strata or layers of events into which one 'digs' (via rituals and dreams). These additions are produced by the interpretation of dreams, which seems to follow certain cultural patterns, to legitimate such and such a vision as authentic. One requires the approval of other groups for a dream vision to be certified as 'real', it has to be linked to pictorial and narrative forms transmitted for hundreds of generations, the Warlpiri man Maurice Luther Jupurulla explained when invited to Paris with 11 other law men from Lajamanu to recreate a ritual sand painting at the ARC<sup>11</sup> and to dance in the Peter Brook theatre of the Bouffes du Nord. The demonstration of authenticity here is an exercise in tracking, the same as for a hunter, who has to recognize a print on the ground. A dream must reveal a sign of the ancestral principle that is said to sleep actively in different sacred places of a territory. These places – rocks, springs, creeks, trees – which seem natural to us, are cultural places, in the sense that events are attached to them: mythical episodes, oniric interpretations and re-enacted historical and everyday experiences. All these events are constantly re-stratified by rituals and the everyday experience of the people who journey in these places, by physically camping in them or by visiting them mentally in dance performances or dreams.

In his intellectual fight against the reductionism of certain applications of psychoanalysis and structuralism (in Lévi-Strauss or Lacan), Guattari was very touched by this Australian practice of dreams and above all by their integration into much more complex indigenous concepts accounting for the links between the productions of the unconscious (songs, narratives, dances) and the reterritorialization of their referents in extended networks of exchange: 'Archaic societies, in particular those of

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Australian Aborigin[al societies] are customary in that each oneiric performance refers not only to a diachronic series of individual dreams but, furthermore, to dreams with a collective reference, playing a fundamental role in the establishment of filiative relations, ritual itineraries and the fixation of transactions of all kinds'.<sup>12</sup> Aboriginal people presented Félix with an example of his 'logic of archaic intensities',<sup>13</sup> which made evident the role of dreams as a cartographic assemblage, 'the mythic Aboriginal cartographies, which "endeavour to localize the transformative potentials of their real and/or incorporeal Universes"'.<sup>14</sup> He referred again to the Indigenous Australians in *Chaosmosis*, writing 'in archaic societies, it is through rhythms, songs, dances, masks, marks on the body, ground and totems, on ritual occasions and with mythical references that other kinds of collective existential Territories are circumscribed'.<sup>15</sup>

Colonization under-estimated the Indigenous Australians' relation to place. On the pretext that they didn't practise agriculture or construct houses (with the exception of the groups established along the Murray River in the South-East), Australia was supposed to be a *terra nullius*, an 'uninhabited land'. It was only in 1992 that this Western colonial notion was challenged by the successful land claim of Eddie Mabo, a Torres Strait islander, which led to a change of Australian law (the Native Title Act of 1993). Hitherto it had been commonly claimed that Aboriginal people could not be 'owners' of the land, since they said they 'belonged to it', a reasoning that in the colonial era even legitimated their relegation by some to 'non-humans' with the status of animals. However, by claiming a totemic continuity between humans, animals, plants, rain and the land, Aboriginal people (made up by more than 200 different languages and 15 linguistic families) also insist on the fact that they have always acted on the land: singing, dancing, painting are literally their means of 'looking after the country', in the same way as burning the scrub to 'clean' the land of spinifex grass or even to practise a semi-nomadism to manage the seasonal irregularity of the sourcing of water-holes. Without ritual activities and seasonal practices, the elders say, no species of flora or fauna would be able to reproduce and the climatic balance would be disturbed. Droughts and cyclones can thus be a human responsibility and threaten the reproduction of humans, because everything is linked on the earth, in the sea and the sky. From the Aboriginal point of view, every human action is responsible for the balance between the forces of nature and the health of people and all other living beings. This is not a holism but a singular responsibility for each gesture accomplished individually or collectively, in everyday life, during specific events and also in dreams. It is properly a matter of

*collective assemblages of enunciation* as defined by Guattari: 'collective must not just be understood in the sense of a social group: it also implies the entry of diverse collections of technical objects, material and energetic fluxes, incorporeal entities, mathematical and aesthetic idealities, etc'.<sup>16</sup>

#### ONTOLOGIES AND TOPOLOGIES

When I went back to the desert in 1984, I sent Guattari carbon copies of the transcriptions of translations of the narratives in Warlpiri that I was recording and typing out on a little typewriter. On my return, I lived in his flat, which gave me a wonderful opportunity to discuss the first outlines of my book *Les rêveurs du desert (Desert Dreamers)* with him on a daily basis. Sometimes he copied out phrases of mine that pleased him in a notebook, such as 'what is a word? In Warlpiri it is *yirdi*, which also serves to designate a proper name and a songline. The etymology refers to *yirdyi*, which condenses the indissociable connections between words, itineraries, the flesh and the dream'. 'The status of the word is to be a place or an itinerary. As names of places and heroes correspond to things, it is essential to understand that these are neither poetic analogies nor metaphors'. 'In other words, there is no relation between signifier and signified, between a hero and his name. The hero is nothing other than the power of his name'. 'To say the name of a place, to dance a place or paint a place, is not necessarily an identification with this place, but a manner of being, simultaneously in the places of this *Dreaming*'. Another remark that caught Félix's attention comes from my Warlpiri friend, Barbara Gibson. 'Just as the Voice of the Nights [*Mungamunga*] can make us ill because it shows us too many things in dreams, so we are hit by "stones" when we are too weak in our heads'.<sup>17</sup> These phrases have everything to do with the materiality of thought: the Warlpiri enunciation of apparently abstract procedures that are conceived in the form of tangible traces seems to escape from structural and linguistic oppositions. Our conversations were continued in public in his seminar on 15 February 1985, published in the first issue of *Chimères*, with our discussion of 1983.

Being in the grip of my year-long immersion in an experience in the field which had me journeying with the Warlpiri to their sacred sites, I was finding it difficult to translate the complexity of their concepts. I spoke of black holes and of energy to try to depict these knots of recognition of secret connections localized in sacred sites that are unchanging, while everything around them can change. Félix told me to replace the

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notion of energy with those of 'singularity' and of the 'a-signifying': 'in my current preoccupations, I would translate what you say in the following fashion: not only is it not a matter of a structural key for the interpretation of different mythic components, but it is a matter of a certain use of the semantic material put into play which has to be actively rendered non-signifying. It is not only the fact that there is, in a contingent fashion, a fact of non-sense or a rupture of signification, but that it has to be actively rendered non-signifying so as to function as a means for what I call existential territorialization. And it is precisely these non-signifying elements which will constitute what I call the transversality of assemblages: they are what will traverse heterogeneous modes of expression from the point of view of their means of expression, or from the point of view of their content, mythical content, for example. Because what will function from one register to another, is not axiomatic, a structure articulating signifying poles, but what I will call an ontological logic, a fashion of constructing existence in different registers, what, with Éric Alliez, I call ordology, in opposition to a cardology'.<sup>18</sup>

In 1988, Guattari became angry when he read my Thèse d'État, *Le Rêve et la Loi. Approche topologique de l'organisation sociale et des cosmologies aborigènes* (*Dream and Law. A topological approach to Aboriginal social organization and cosmologies*) (Glowczewski, 1991). It was an attempt to compare different kinship systems, myths and ritual taboos (of the Warlpiri and other Aboriginal groups) by deploying them differently on a hypercube, according to several levels of relational complexity: why use topology? he asked: Was this a return to the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss and Lacan? Lévi-Strauss had indeed been very pleased with this work, which articulated, on the Australian continent what he had proposed for Native American myths with the Klein Bottle in *The Jealous Potter*. But my inspiration came above all from science fiction that speculated about the fourth dimension. My true judges were the Warlpiri: when I showed them the hypercube as a tool to account for the kinship logic of their Dreamings, the elders, custodians of the culture thought it was a 'good game'! The famous acrylic canvases that the desert Aboriginals had begun to paint in the 1970s in Papunya (in 1985 in Lajamanu)<sup>19</sup> show structural tendencies in the network compositions of the Dreamings, as too the kinetic effects of the continuities between the above and below characteristic of their cosmological concepts and ritual procedures. According to the Warlpiri, these consist in transforming the *kanunju* (below/virtual/totemic beings and spirit-children of the Dreamings) in *kankarlu* (above/manifest/human and all those who give them their totemic names), and vice versa: this is the topology which had encouraged me to propose the hypothesis according to which there is

a 'topologic' (illustrated by the properties of the hypercube) common to kinship, ritual taboos and myths.

Discussing recently the question that Deleuze and Guattari pose in *Rhizome* 'Does not the East, Oceania in particular, offer something like a rhizomatic model, opposed in every respect to the Western model of the tree?' the Australian anthropologist Alan Rumsey<sup>20</sup> refers to the drawing 'The Body of Australia' published in the book *Yorro-Yorro* by David Mowaljarlai. This visionary initiate, with a Ngarrinyin father and Wororra mother came to Paris in 1996 to call on the scientific community to protect the rock paintings of his people, threatened as they were by diamond mining.<sup>21</sup> His drawing showed a map of Australia and its surrounding waters, entirely covered by a network of intersecting lines connecting places distributed at their intersections in a regular manner like a net. Rumsey, who worked for years with the Ngarrinyin, recognizes the 'rhizomatic' nature of the cartographies of Aboriginal Dreamings, but he opposes to them more ambiguous examples from Oceania, in which the rhizome model cohabits with arborescent models, notably in Papua New Guinea and on the island of Tanna in Vanuatu (studied by the geographer Joël Bonnemaïson). Thomas Reuter has underlined the fact that numerous researchers have shown that in Oceania botanical metaphors are most common for expressing social relations in the Austronesian world; they 'generally suggest a process of segmentation of spatial expansion due to organic drives from the inside, but can also be and are applied in local societies having a population with multiple origins'.<sup>22</sup> Corporeal metaphors are also present for imagining social space, but the most important of all the metaphors in the Austronesian world to 'conceptualize socio-territorial unities is the path or the journey, a trajectory of human movement through space and time'.<sup>23</sup> Like others, Rumsey contests the absence of arborescent systems in Oceania but admits that the rhizome is 'good for thinking with' on condition that it is experienced by the people of Oceania as 'emplaced' and not 'nomadic'.

In the 1980s, particularly after contact with my Aboriginal data, Guattari reformulated his understanding of the rhizome in the ethnographic context of the production of existential territories anchored in places, the space-time of myth and dream, the body and kinship, extended to all becomings, human and non-human. The Yam Dreaming, whose rhizomes weave through the desert and other regions of Australia is explicitly used by the Aboriginal people of these regions, not as a simple metaphor but as a model for thought: the vines where the yams grow extended in a subterranean manner, coming to the surface (notably when they are stimulated by a little adder.) and creep to the surface of the ground, coiling

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around trees in multiple branches that are sometimes broken. Vines at the surface lead to hidden tubers and they supply the Aboriginal people with a rhizomatic machine for thinking alliances and the circulation of tangible or intangible goods for exchange, goods for which the ownership is inalienable. Elsewhere I have compared this paradox of ‘keeping while giving’<sup>24</sup> to the copyleft advocated by the creators of software for which the author’s ownership would be better recognized by circulation than by forms of copyright which transform knowledges into monopolized commodities. This thought encounter, between local traditions of the putting into circulation of non-alienable goods across Australia and between groups in the Pacific, and the community of Internauts who advocate Creative Commons licensing, is one of many examples of a transversal – and here, transhistorical – attractor. It sides with the knotting together of the three ecologies – mental, social and environmental – of Guattari’s ecosophical project.

*Translated from the French by Andrew Goffey*

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This essay first appeared in the journal *Multitudes* 34 under the title ‘Guattari et l’anthropologie: Aborigènes et territoiresexistentiels’.
- <sup>2</sup> This is taken from the text of a lecture that Guattari gave in Bilbao on 26 March 1985 to the International Congress ‘Los derechos colectivos de las naciones minorizadas en Europa’. It takes up the ideas that we developed together with Survival International France to set up a project called *Rencontres du Cinquième Monde* under the aegis of the Fondation Transculturelle Internationale, in order to promote the legal status and the singular identities of indigenous peoples, their struggles for their land rights, and the recognition of their knowledges, therapies and resource management. The preface to Glowczewski, B., Matteudi J.F., Carrère, V., and Viré M. (1983), *La Cité cataphile. Mission anthropologique dans les souterrains de Paris*. Paris: Les Méridiens, is also reprinted in Guattari, F. (2009), *Les Années d’Hiver 1980–1985*. Paris: Prairies ordinaires. It is worth noting that Guattari’s neologism ‘nationalitarian’ does not mean the same thing as ‘nationalist’ [TN].
- <sup>3</sup> Guattari, F., and Glowczewski, B. (1986), ‘Les Warlpiri’ in *Chimères* 1. The Warlpiri are one of the many Indigenous Australian language groups [TN].
- <sup>4</sup> ‘Nouveau millénaire, Défis libertaires’ interview with Félix Guattari in ‘Qu’est-ce que l’écophilosophie’ (1992), *Terminal* 56.
- <sup>5</sup> In an interview with Max Pol Fouchet in Papée, J. (dir.) (1967), *Mort et Métamorphoses des Civilisations*. Paris: INA.
- <sup>6</sup> See Glowczewski, B., and Soucaille, A. (eds.) (2007), ‘Majeure et Introduction. Réseaux autochtones: résonances anthropologiques’, *Multitudes* 30.

- <sup>7</sup> See Clastres, P. (1987), *Society against the State*. New York: Zone.
- <sup>8</sup> Glowczewski, B., 'The paradigm of Indigenous Australians: anthropological phantasms, artistic creations and political resistance' in Strivay, L., and Le Roux, G. (eds.) (2007), *The Revenge of Genres. Australian Contemporary Art*. Paris: Editions Aïnu discusses, among other things, the matrix of four ontologies proposed by Philippe Descola in Descola, P. (2007), *Par delà nature et culture*. Paris: Gallimard.
- <sup>9</sup> I was inspired by Annette Weiner who, in Maurice Godelier's seminar in 1980, described the circulation of mats among Trobriand Islanders as an inalienable possession of women that thus affirmed their power. She went on to develop this notion of inalienability in Weiner, A. (1992), *Inalienable Possessions. The Paradox of 'Keeping while Giving'*. Berkeley: University of California Press, extending it to other regions in Oceania.
- <sup>10</sup> Glowczewski, B. (1981), *Le rapport au temps et à l'espace des Aborigènes d'Australie*. PhD Thesis, University Paris VII (Jossieu); Guattari and Glowczewski, 'Les Warlpiri', art. cit. pp. 4–37.
- <sup>11</sup> See Glowczewski, B. (1989), *Les Rêveurs du Desert*. Paris: Plon. ARC is a workshop on research and creativity run by the Museum of Modern Art in Paris [TN].
- <sup>12</sup> Guattari, F. (1989), *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*. Paris: Galilée, p. 240.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- <sup>15</sup> Guattari, F. (1995), *Chaosmosis*. Sydney: Power Institute, p. 15.
- <sup>16</sup> Guattari, *Les Années d'hiver*, op. cit. p. 292.
- <sup>17</sup> Glowczewski, B., and Nakamarra Gibson, B. (2002), 'Rêver pour chanter: Apprentissage et création onirique dans le désert australien'. *CLO* 51, pp. 153–68. See also Glowczewski, B. (2004), *Rêves en colère: Alliances aborigènes dans le Nord-Ouest australien*. Paris: Plon Terre Humaine.
- <sup>18</sup> Guattari and Glowczewski, 'Les Warlpiri', op. cit. Guattari's comments were made in the second of the two seminars in which Glowczewski's work was discussed, on 26 March 1985 [TN].
- <sup>19</sup> Glowczewski, B., and De Larcy Healy, J. (2005), with the artists of Galiwin'ku and Lajamanu, *Pistes de rêves. Voyage en terres aborigènes*. Paris: Editions du Chêne.
- <sup>20</sup> 'Tracks, Traces, and Links to Land in Aboriginal Australia, New Guinea, and Beyond', in Rumsey, A., and Weiner, J.E. (eds) (2001), *Emplaced Myth: Space, Narrative, and Knowledge in Aboriginal Australia and Papua New Guinea*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- <sup>21</sup> See the conversations with Mowajarlai in Glowczewski, *Rêves en colère*, op. cit.
- <sup>22</sup> See chapter 13 ('The ways of the land tree') of Reuter, T., *Sharing the Earth, Dividing the Land. Territorial Categories and Institutions in the Austronesian World* online at [http://epress.anu.edu.au/austronesians/sharing/mobile\\_devices/index.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/austronesians/sharing/mobile_devices/index.html).
- <sup>23</sup> 'In Palau the metaphor of the turmeric rhizome is used to explicate relations between kin and between villages. Traditionally people of Palau, the westernmost and largest of the Caroline Islands, made sense of kin relations through matrilineal descent. To explain these relations they used what has been termed the "turmeric metaphor"'. See Rainbird, P. (2001), 'Deleuze, Turmeric and Palau: Rhizome Thinking and Rhizome Use in the Caroline Islands'. *Journal de la société des Océanistes*, p. 112.
- <sup>24</sup> Annette Weiner's 'keeping while giving' – see fn9 above.



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## **PART 3**

### Social and Political Connections

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## CHAPTER 8

### Guattari's Contributions to the Theory of Semiocapitalism

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Gary Genosko

The concept of semiocapitalism aims, first and foremost, at vanquishing false antinomies and updating stale distinctions like those belonging to structuralism and Marxism, that is, between the signifier and the real, and between desire and the economic infrastructure, respectively. Specifically, the concept has the ambition of capturing in all of its complexity the relations *between* the semiotic and material strata in the context in which informational commodities are created by info- or digital labourers, described as the immaterial labour of the cognitariat or semiotic production of knowledge workers. Immaterial labour is a rich semiotic concept that refers to both labour processes (increasingly involving informatic and communicational skills) and the provision of the cultural content of products (requiring capacities of aesthetic judgement, taste and style sensibilities not normally associated with work and traditionally the province of the bourgeoisie and children of privilege).<sup>1</sup> An info-product like a piece of software has a corporeal manifestation in an autonomous object, no matter how abstract it may seem; affective production (caregiving in the health sector, or greeting customers in the retail and entertainment sectors) that takes place across the vast service sector often has both manual and intellectual aspects.<sup>2</sup> In short, the semiotic subtlety of immateriality is suggested in the complementary statements that its products are not entirely immaterial, and immaterial labour is not entirely cognitive. This does warrant a tentative conclusion that there is a residual materiality and a reticent intellectuality in the immaterial labour hypothesis. However, these soft claims are an invitation to explore the semiotic–material relation by following the lead of Félix Guattari.

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The neologism 'semiocapitalism' combines a general semiotic and a contemporary formula of capitalism – which may or may not be the highest – and also participates in a periodization of sorts, since the concept references the flexibilities of post-Fordism, evoking mobile productive spaces (post-factory), the rise of precarious labour for whom life is indistinguishable from work, and the financialization of the economy. Most importantly, a fundamental shift has occurred with post-Fordist production. Consider the implications of Franco 'Bifo' Berardi's remark: 'The rise of post-Fordist modes of production, which I will call Semiocapitalism, takes the mind, language and creativity as its primary tools for the production of value'.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the production of value in post-Fordist capitalism occurs through the appropriation of general human semio-communicative capacities, called by Marx 'general intellect',<sup>4</sup> in a manner that is lightly, if at all, mediated by things or product-objects. General intellect is often referred to a 'general knowing'; Paolo Virno, for example, explains: 'We live in a time, the post-Fordist era, in which human nature has become an economic stake. Every aspect of human nature . . . constitutes raw material for production'.<sup>5</sup> Human semiosis itself is directly and immediately productive of value through its combination in semio-commodities. However, how light or indeed absent this mediation may be – and some such as Akseli Virtanen have insisted it takes place 'without the necessity of mediation or a corporeal form'<sup>6</sup> – remains a key point for consideration. Virno was one of the first to advance the view that all of the traits of general intellect, including 'formal and informal knowledge, imagination, ethical tendencies, mentalities, and "language games" function themselves as productive "machines" in contemporary labour and do not need to take on a mechanical body or an electronic soul'.<sup>7</sup>

Semiocapitalism seemingly carries us far from simplified industrial labour, the traditional work day and the factory floor to the complex tasks undertaken at any time, seemingly any place, by cognitive labourers according to their singular subjectivities, all yoked to increasingly mobile and extensive electronic networks of exploitation, as well as to those professionals who appropriate the cognitive surplus value of designers, philosophers, engineers, computer scientists. All of life, what may be called life-skills, and experiences, can be appropriated by capitalism.

The concept of semiocapitalism might be taken as a variation on the theme of the infiltration of information into the process of production,<sup>8</sup> hence, info-capitalism and its globalization as integrated world capitalism in which older segments of territorialized capital appear less and less relevant. However, the analysis of how production becomes semiotic entails the theorization of semiotic operations answering questions about which

sign types are at issue and what their salient traits are; launching critical inquiries into the relations between capitalist power and signification; and describing the limits of the formation of semiotic substance expressed in the semiotic–material relationship under semiocapitalism. In other words, how do semio-commodities express the connection between semiotic and material fluxes when the thing-commodity has been displaced by directly productive signs or part-signs working directly on the raw material of human intelligence?

It was Guattari who founded a conceptual language adequate to the investigation of semiocapitalism. His approaches and concepts have inspired and informed contemporary theorists like Lazzarato and Berardi, among others, whose work has opened up a troubling new chapter on capital's semiotic misadventures. From a semiotic perspective, semiocapitalism engages what might be considered a classical semiotic problematic: the description of the formation of matter given most explicitly and influentially by Louis Hjelmslev. He thought of unformed matter (purport) as sand, an 'amorphous [thought] mass'<sup>9</sup> fundamentally receptive to form understood as the moulds of different languages; he figured the projection of form onto matter as the shadow of a net, a grid, cast onto the undivided sand. The move to figure form as an abstraction, an open net's (untangled) shadow, inspired Guattari to recast form as an abstract machine (irreducible to language – ensuring its abstractness and keeping it beyond the reach of linguists) that constitutes and conjugates the components of assemblages. It is not the net but its shadow; it is not the form but its function. In Guattari's thought, an abstract machine is a function rather than a form. A function is not yet semiotically formed – it is a formless form that has no substance – and this makes it 'pure matter-function' because the matter it works is 'not yet' formed (into substance, physically or semiotically).<sup>10</sup> The conceptual language that Guattari adapted from Hjelmslev may be characterized by its semiotic reticence, especially in the moves to pure function, abstraction, and 'not yet' that maintain the independence of the abstract machine prior to the emergence of distinctions (distinct forms of expression and content) that apply to itself and what it distributes. The conceptual indebtedness of semiocapitalism to this reticent and molecular semiotics is perhaps obvious in the form that is distilled into a function and does not (yet) culminate in a distinct thing (not entirely immaterial products), a physically formed substance or an abstraction that is not without a connection to real materiality (not entirely cognitive immaterial labour). Further, what makes this approach molecular is the desemioticizing effect of forestalling the move to substance and well-formedness by maintaining independence from the

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formation of semiotic substance (signs): traits (parts or particles), instead of two sidedness (expression and content), are hypothesized and signs are deterritorialized in the process. An abstract machine directly 'pilots' matter prior to the strata of semiotic distinctions between signifier/expression and signified/content. Traits are 'not yet' formalized into signs like icons, indices and symbols, with their respective objects. In short, Guattari reinvented the terms and relations of Hjelmslevian glossematics, but not only by making form an abstract machine independent of substance. In so doing, Guattari broke the semiological unity form/substance and treated matter not as unformed but as relatively unformed (for instance, like Hjelmslev, scientifically formed, but in Guattari's terms of having a variety of encodings), yet independent of its signifying semiotic formation.<sup>11</sup>

The theory of semiocapitalism received a major conceptual and semiotic impetus when Guattari's imagination was activated by the provocative idea of form-matter relations: 'the mind can wander off in many directions from this beginning'.<sup>12</sup> Guattari's wandering – his famous detours in *L'Inconscient Machinique* – may have started there, but he found many resting places along unmarked ways.

### THE LIMITS OF STRUCTURAL HOMOMOLOGY AND THE CRITIQUE OF FORMALIZATION

Without swerving too violently, then, I will continue with a twofold reflection. There are two essential semiotic resting points along the way to answering the questions 'What is semiocapitalism?' 'What did Guattari contribute to it?' The first is Jean Baudrillard's attempt to find a sign-form distilled from the homology of linguistic sign and commodity; the second is Guattari's effort to describe the formations and bypasses of semiotic substance by the projection of form onto matter in Hjelmslevian terms, but in a way that created a new category of a-signifying semiotics that is perfectly adapted to the information technologies of contemporary capital. Part-signs (particles, traits) are without a fully formed representational dimension of meaning or semiotically formed substance; in this they are akin to signals, although care needs to be taken in not collapsing the signals of a-semiotic or natural encodings (outside the semiotic strata) at the microbiological and chemical levels, and signals of automated, machinic info-technological environments that rest not entirely upon the semiotic strata.

Extrapolating from *Anti-Oedipus*,<sup>13</sup> the connective syntheses of production connect part-signs in an automated network of trigger actions by

giving start and stop orders.<sup>14</sup> Part-signs in a material machinic informatic network are manifest, for example, as start and stop sentinel characters, transmission commands, and data separators on the track of a credit card's magnetic stripe. Connection gives way to disjunction and anti-production when a network is compromised by any number of hacks that visually capture PIN numbers, or intercept communications within a credit network or by means of fake hardware placed in an automated banking device. Disjunctive energy using various deceiver codes or devices disjoin connections so that hacking unfixes and deviates digital communication; there is, here, a process of vacuolization at work. While some of these hacks fall back onto deeply banal processes of redundant bombardment and others on spam, porn or easy-money schemes, some digital pervers get rich from their spam, and other neurotics just herd as many zombie computers into vast criminal armies as is possible, or engage in simple juvenile delinquency. The subjectivities that emerge alongside the info-machine as effects of the mingling of production and anti-production are sometimes Bill Gates and sometimes a 15-year-old from the suburbs; white hats and black hats; hacktivists or netbot herders. Some become rich and powerful; others go to jail and write books about it; many just disappear into adulthood, or are deleted, but perhaps it is closest to the spirit of the conjunctive synthesis to say a little of all is assembled in each.

It is instructive to first turn to Baudrillard for he explains semio-linguistically how semiocapitalism may be described as an 'infinite game of mirrors'<sup>15</sup> or play of negative, structural differences; yet his recourse to linguistic signs is only partially compatible with the semiotic theorizing of Guattari. The latter places greater emphasis on Hjelmslev-Peircean hybrids as an antidote to the imbalance exposed by Baudrillard, among other objections, in seeking non-linguistic 'springs of creativity'<sup>16</sup> against the tendency of linguistic overcoding to be readily recuperable by and in collusion with capitalist power. For Guattari, 'capitalist powers never cease "rethinking" in detail each semiological "allocation" [beginning with children's language training]'.<sup>17</sup> For Guattari, the form-matter relation bypasses the distantiating semiological mediation (linguistically formed substance or signification, and 'the clever illusion that all is representation',<sup>18</sup> in which the signifier cuts off access to the real (fluxes of relatively semiotically unformed matter).

The two-sided commodity was analysed as a familiar form within the structuralism of Baudrillard in his early book *For A Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*. Baudrillard thought he could expose the ideological imbalances lurking in what appeared to be structural correspondences; for instance, the homology between the commodity and the linguistic sign.



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Exchange value and the signifier have a 'strategic value' greater than the 'tactical value' of use value and the signified. Binary oppositional structuration is never symmetrical, since each antecedent term produces its own 'alibi' as its consequent term. Use value and the signified are 'effects' or 'simulation models' of their antecedent terms. They are produced respectively by Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism in terms of exchange value, while semio-linguistics privileges the signifier as its principle of circulation and regulated interplay. Hence, there is a fetishism in the signifier's capacity to provide shelter from a real that is nevertheless prolifically signified. This is the precise meaning of the structural revolution of value: real referentiality is annihilated and simulation of the real wins out.<sup>19</sup>

The consistency between Baudrillard and Guattari is that power invades the sign-form in a number of ways: by privileging one restricted element – a 'transcendent invariable'<sup>20</sup> – that creates dependency because 'the signifier draws together, controls, autonomizes and flattens the signified';<sup>21</sup> by controlling any possible relations with intensive realities by highly artificial constraints – like referentiality – or double formalizations, like syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes; by placing limits on articulations – 'double' as opposed to many; and by producing an impotent subject who ignores the social and political processes that influence expression and content, and the uses of meaning. Trapped in an inward-looking circuit, and beholden to what is inscribed in representation (a cognitarian subject of the statement, or semiocapitalist subject of enunciation). S/he 'rectifies' every nuance and flux by overcoding them in doublets of formalization, blocking 'semiotic praxes' in a disempowering way.<sup>22</sup> Linguistic arbitrariness is also understood by Guattari as a political form of the reproduction of established power through officially sanctioned expression/content packets (a lesson repeatedly drummed into one's head about accepting the dominant codes and adapting to them). For Guattari, signification is inseparable from power: 'All stratifications of power produce and impose significations.'<sup>23</sup> Paraphrasing Guattari, dominant significations – values, roles, small and large identifications from sex to nation, rules of conduct, translations between codes – that are formalized in social systems are conjoined with an automated a-signifying semiotic machine that is itself without any meaning (it produces machinic rather than signifying redundancies) but whose task it is to produce the outcomes desired by the system at issue. Guattari observed that capitalism relies upon and manipulates a-signifying semiotic machines – these are the so-called 'wheels' of the stock market whose ups and downs do not have an essential connection with meaningful symbolic or semiological systems in reinforcing economic stratification through the secretions of affect – the Dow-Jones had a good day!

## GUATTARI'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE THEORY OF SEMIOCAPITALISM

Both Baudrillard and Guattari argue, to quite different ends, for the need to bypass mediating terms in the relationship between semiotic and material fluxes by criticizing the sign's political economy. The important point is that this move clears the way for creative thought and experimentation; for instance, Guattari's theorization of the part-signs of a-signifying semiotics that directly and reciprocally bring together form (abstract machinic semiotic flux, singular and not universal, with the ability to make and unmake connections) and relatively unformed matter, without (apparently) any recourse to a mediating figure (except for the productive machine!), without well-formed semiotic substance, or any representational territory, which seals itself off from the real. A-signifying semiotics does not require semiologically signifying, subjectifying (non-individuated), representational mediation,<sup>24</sup> though it may eventually have recourse to such substances and meanings (other kinds of signification). A-signifying semiotics freely produce plural articulations of techno-material intensities across any domains, without having to refer back to or check in with a fully formed meaning entity; the semio-material reciprocity and conjugation not implying that one side is more primary than the other. But rather, that a-signifying semiotics is precise, refined and rigid.

### CAPITAL IS A SEMIOTIC OPERATOR

With this unique semio-material machinism in mind, I want to consider the changes that semiocapitalism evokes. Capitalism becomes less interested in an older form of physico-social labour defined quantitatively (measured in work-time) and more interested in a non-localizable qualitative process by means of which surplus value may be generated but without work in an industrial sense of the term. Capitalism incorporates into this process 'every semiotic system.'<sup>25</sup> That is to say, all of the social enters production. 'Capitalism,' as Guattari states, 'seizes individuals from the inside'.<sup>26</sup> This formidable production of subjectivity has led Lazzarato to reject the description of contemporary capitalism as a mode of production for the sake of a 'machine of subjectification', which the process of immaterial labour brings to a pinnacle:

On the one hand, the individual brings the subjectification process to its pinnacle, because in all these activities [of self-entrepreneurship] s/he involves the 'immaterial' and 'cognitive' resources of her/his 'self'; while on the other s/he inclines towards identification, subjectification

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and exploitation, given that s/he is both her/his own master and slave, a capitalist and a proletarian, the subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement.<sup>27</sup>

The cognitarian and semiocapitalist are the same self-valorizing entrepreneur, although this overlap does not in any way exhaust the strange and troubling figures of semiocapitalists.<sup>28</sup> Cognitive entrepreneurialism was all the rage during the dotcom mania, and with the businesses created through the investment of intellectual assets like new search algorithms and plans for the next web, alliances with investment brokers and speculators were made. The lustre of financial capital not only turned many beneficiaries of the new economy into market apologists (cyberlibertarians), but introduced the cheap pleasures of daytime and micro-trading. Of course, much of this crashed with the dotcom market bust between 2000–2002, and the acceleration of the real estate market, artificially buoyed by cynical subprime loans, which began to burst in 2007.<sup>29</sup> Consider Bifo's explication of Guattari's cryptic statement:

Capital is not an abstract category, but rather a 'semiotic operator'. What does this mean? It means that while the labour process is fragmented, extended, recomposed and decomposed through deterritorializations of all kinds, the process of valorisation integrates all the fragments of capitalist production not only (not simply) through the abstract functioning of the laws of value, but also through the concrete, direct action of the technologies, allowing the instantaneous movement of information.<sup>30</sup>

There are a number of points worth emphasizing. The first is that Guattari adds that such a semiotization is in the service of the capitalization of power, specific micro- and macro-social relations that assume any number of forms manifested relationally by individuals, groups, by rituals, objects, sexualities, ethnicities. These social relations of power, none of which are written in stone, but exploited by capital, draw attention away from capital as a general equivalent, refocusing on the directness with which, Guattari insisted, semiotization relates to power and how this is manifested under local conditions.

Second, the fragmentation of the labour process or the becoming-machinic of labour. Marx understood, in the famous 'Fragment on machines' of the *Grundrisse* that the automatic system of machinery, unlike the tool wielded skilfully by the individual worker, 'is itself the virtuoso'.<sup>31</sup> Workers become accessories – conscious limbs – of machines. Labour is appropriated by

and objectified in machines, to which living labour remains in a relation of subordination. This makes, Marx thinks, machinery – which absorbs social intelligence and technical advances or social productivity – the ‘most adequate [objectively measurable] form of fixed capital’.<sup>32</sup> As the production process becomes progressively more technoscientific and knowledge is objectified in machinery, the worker’s activity is determined by the machines that have absorbed the ‘social brain.’ At the same time, capital might claim a false, humanist, dimension for the wage regime for, after all, workers are not themselves machines or fixed capital!<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, Marx’s emphasis on the hard materialization of general intellect in fixed capital is being rethought in semio-capitalism and the re-theorization of the form–matter relation.

Recent work on machines has attempted to tease out the implications of the two processes described by Deleuze and Guattari: machinic enslavement and social subjection. In the former, workers are integrated and enslaved as components parts, or pieces of a non-quantifiable machinic process and therein function as relays for fluxes; whereas social subjection still requires a certain distance in the subject’s subjugation, as the user of a machine to which one is subjected, or category of person (salaried or subsidized).<sup>34</sup> Lazzarato develops this distinction quite nicely by specifying that machinic enslavement works with affects, percepts, compartments, imaginations, desires and a-signifying part-signs and places these flush with machines; while subjection is a more social or macro-scale identity, in which alienation is evident and quantifiable.<sup>35</sup> Elsewhere, Lazzarato writes: ‘The machinic register of the semiotic production of Capital operates on the basis of a-signifying semiotics that tune in directly to the body (to its affects, its desires, its emotions and perceptions) by means of signs’.<sup>36</sup> Machinic enslavement and a-signifying semiotics work together. Lazzarato has what I would call a strong, contained sense of machinic enslavement, as opposed to a more porous and weak sense of integration into networks; this may be contrasted with Brian Massumi’s more porous use of the term, especially evident in his writing about transductive television, that is, the affective transmission and reconditioning of spaces of viewership.<sup>37</sup>

Third, Guattari, too, notes a profound passage of work-time into machinic time and automated info-technological exchange in which no measure can account for the blurring of the work/leisure distinction, nor for the ‘portion of machinic subjection entering human labour’.<sup>38</sup> Guattari observes that: ‘Automatized and computerized production no longer draws its consistency from a basic human factor, but from a machinic phylum which traverses, bypasses, disperses, miniaturizes, and co-opts all

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human activities'.<sup>39</sup> Bifo calls this the cellularization of labour: 'Labor is the cellular activity where the network activates an endless recombination'.<sup>40</sup> As production becomes semiotic, precariously employed cognitive workers – on occasional, contractual, temporary bases without guarantees or benefits – engage in labour that involves the elaboration of 'a specific semiotic segment that must meet and match innumerable other semiotic fragments in order to compose the frame of a combinatory entity that is info-commodity, Semiocapital'.<sup>41</sup>

Such segments or 'semiotic artifacts' are highly abstract particles and they have a number of pertinent features:

1. They are fragments or partial, exiting before and below wholes.
2. They are combined and recombined in an integrating network ('the infinite recombination of a myriad of information').<sup>42</sup>
3. Their production and combination is intimately linked to the subjectivity of workers, thus making this kind of labour highly personalized, less and less interchangeable ('Consequently, high tech workers tend to consider labor as the most essential part of their lives, the most specific and personalized'<sup>43</sup>).
4. The production of part-signs and their recombination – connection, coordination and localization/planetarization – takes place on a machinic phylum: 'The digital network is the sphere where the spatial and temporal globalization of labor is made possible'.<sup>44</sup>
5. Work-time is pulverized into 'atoms' and reabsorbed by capitalist networks of production at the 'exact moment' they are required; 'The cycle of production comes into operation only when it is required by the capitalist'.<sup>45</sup>

Simply put, an info-commodity under semiocapitalism consists in the non-exclusive way a-signifying part-signs whose production and passage through digital networks contribute to the development of the machinic phylum which is, for Guattari, the creative historical force of 'selection, elimination and generation of machines by machines'<sup>46</sup> engaging technological and living systems on a networked planet and describing them in both synchronic and diachronic ways. However, a further feature of a-signifying part-signs is that they are signals perfectly adapted to the quasi-material fluxes of information technologies – they precisely trigger, activate and work flush with automated processes of information exchange (i.e. with computer codes and electromagnetic technologies used by the credit and banking systems) and do not require a representational dimension. The collusion between capital and the signifier, cementing social roles and their required significations at the macro- or social level, and allocating

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unassigned affects and sensibilities at the micro- or machinic level,<sup>47</sup> invokes the two processes of machinic enslavement and social subjection. Machinic components like part-signs help to develop the aforementioned phylum within their historical and logical entanglements, but Guattari emphasizes that there is 'diagrammatic potentiality' at play in these knotted components of semiotic-material formations. Not all of this potential is exhausted in being actualized but remains immanent, not as a reserve, but enfolded, 'always looming', pace Massumi, 'always, just'.<sup>48</sup> Surprises and autonomous shifts await construction according to new paradigms – like Guattari's ethico-aesthetic paradigm. Not everyone is so hopeful. As Bifo suggests, the general intellect is in a condition of ignorance in the space at the ends of all futures, yet in this is a hopeful therapeutic poetry of failure that the cognitariat will reconnect with themselves.<sup>49</sup>

Under semiopitalism, it appears that machinic enslavement has reached a peak of sorts, given the integration of processes of subjectification and machinism in the info-webs of the machinic phylum. Bifo, among others, describes the 'digital nervous system' and 'brain-like network' in which cognitive labour is exploited: Cell phones realize, for Bifo:

The dream of capital: that of absorbing every possible atom of time at the exact moment the productive cycle needs it. In this way, workers offer their entire day to capital and are paid only for the moments when their time is made cellular. Info-producers can be seen as neuro-workers . . . The entire lived day becomes subject to a semiotic activation which becomes directly productive only when necessary.<sup>50</sup>

Here, Bifo defines semiotic fragments temporally; this is the first of two key time-based comments he will make. The potential for escaping from the exploitation of semiopitalism looms in the virtuality of the part-signs and autonomous affects relayed by workers enslaved by network life, propped up by Prozac, and primed for competition by corporate spirit building exercises. New resistant paths of part-signs and machinic reinvention escape from semiopitalist substances and formalizations of power.

My central problematic is the relationship between semiotic and material fluxes and whether they connect under this semiotic production of subjectivity. Bifo tells us they do not: 'Semio-capital is capital-flux that coagulates in semiotic artefacts without materializing itself'.<sup>51</sup> The 'internal, mutual communication'<sup>52</sup> that characterizes the human-machine relays within expanding and perhaps generalizable machinic enslavement of the information age; put differently, semiopital enslaves the so-called independent contract worker who writes code for, nominates names, or colours, of characters in video games (or perhaps writes and posts online

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cheats for favourite games); or, social media exploit for the purposes of data mining intrapersonal creative capacities, ultimately recombining many partial contributions into commercially valuable profiles, intelligence for advertising. What we learned from the discussion of a-signification was that semiotic-material 'mutual engenderment'<sup>53</sup> was not subject either to 'substitution' or 'cancellation' by representational simulacra. This focuses attention away from the middle states and on the so-called bypasses of any 'substitute' in form-matter and assists in our understanding of direct relations without supporting 'substances'; the statements noted above by Virtanen, Virno and Bifo indicate that semiotic fluxes or forms or abstract machines are not materialized or embodied. Another way of expressing this, following Virno, is that general intellect is not objectified in machinery. Coagulation without materialization or corporalization is the condition of the semiotic fluxes. This is what Lazzarato flagged as the inability to study, that is, to count, machinic enslavement which applies to production under semicapitalism in which there are direct 'recurrent and reversible'<sup>54</sup> relations between the semiotic capacities of cognitive workers and the framework of neuro-like webs through which signs circulate. The key point at issue is what is meant by materialization or the formation of matter.

## VARIETIES OF MATERIALIZATION

Explaining materialization can't be accomplished by putting scare quotes around 'material' and winking knowingly at the plastic cartridges of video games, DVDs holding special effects, or the feedback forums that co-produce the latest software programs, nor by adopting a general dematerialization thesis when any contact with the internet or mobile media is concerned.

Further, a critical appreciation of the differences between gradations of materialization, for instance, would yield: the form-matter fluxes in automated techno-informatic systems activated by plastic cards bearing magnetic stripes (and why it is not at all necessary to translate this process into semiotic substance or making passwords or PINs subject to interpretations); and affects which enjoy autonomy from functional emotional anchors or perspectives, in other words, free from emotional actualizations and assimilations to categories or even to particular bodies. Autonomy from anchors and semiotic substances are vital to maintain. Both techno-material triggers and autonomous affects share a non-discursive

dimension of unassimilable potentiality, an unmaterialized releasable and transmissible emergent property for the advent of new relations. Yet in both cases they are actualized to different degrees, for that is the virtual's positive, self-changing and creative orientation. With gradation one finds a diverse but nonetheless a-signifying semiosis which may activate semiological or symbolic semiotics from time to time to jump start, focus or impede semiotic production.

There are two conclusions to be drawn from these remarks. First, critical insight into the coagulation of capital flux in semiotic artefacts expresses how perception itself can participate in the process of actualizing virtual part-objects. This was often discussed by Guattari in terms of theoretical objects, whose existence was only subsequently and retroactively affirmed or denied by experimental demonstration, but until then happily subsisted within a theoretical totality.<sup>55</sup> Actualization does not require hard materialization; critical perception or conceptualization is sufficient to make non-material products slow down and pool, settling in semiotic artefacts like the postings of members of 'communities of consumers, who co-produce innovation, diversification and identification with the brand'.<sup>56</sup>

Second, both Guattari and Bifo emphasize that entire circuits and overlapping and communicating assemblages are engaged in the machinic integration of cognitive labour and the capitalistic exploitation of its content. What is this content? It is mental or non-material. When is it materialized? Mental as opposed to manual labour involves a closing of the gap between execution and innovation and a deferral of materialization. Bifo's explanation contains an interesting qualification: 'The materials to be transformed are simulated by digital sequences. Productive labour (labour producing value) consists in enacting simulations later transferred to actual matter by computerized machines'.<sup>57</sup> In this second, temporal qualification, labour thus loses its 'residual materiality' in mental work on abstract 'signs rich in knowledge'.<sup>58</sup> This takes place in a networked environment, where communication (but not only this category because it is often separated from creation, and is as dull and repetitive as some manual work, for example, cyber sweatshops that specialize in building cheap websites and designing info-products that serve as advertising vehicles) is worked with rather than being physically transformed; in the process, connectivity is enriched and extended. Flexibility and fluidity are imposed on such labour by the reticular form that frames, captures, commands, and recombines the fragments produced by it. This is the sense of machinic enslavement mentioned earlier; its devices of recombination are multiplying in the personal digital assistants, laptops and cell phones that accompany us day and night.



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Several features of post-Fordist production are worth mentioning here. Industrial labour does not disappear, it is relocated to regions where wages are low and regulations are lax. Certain segments of cognitive activity follow along and are 'externalized' for the same reasons.

Accompanying Bifo's deferral, geographic marginalization of the moment of hard materialization is the automated support of the processes of recombination so that program languages, data formats, and the rest cohere and combine into a legible frame for an info-commodity. Two automatic systems have been alluded to, mobile devices (giving the necessary illusion of independence and self-enterprise) and techno-financial routines (illusorily autonomous but beholden to shareholder value) that impose rigorous fluidity and 'determine continuous innovation'.<sup>59</sup> These features are precisely those of a-signifying semiotics understood as part-signs of complex networks that trigger routines and sub-programs and work by intimately connecting bodies to credit, spinning affects of trust, perceptions of access within personal banking paradigms, and contributing to the intangible sense of 'confidence' that buoys investors, borrowers and consumers.

Finally, as a theorist of semiocapitalism, Bifo forestalls materialization by means of coagulation in semiotic artefacts because he wants to underline the dependency of cognitive labour on information fluxes in the global networks of semiocapitalism. He does more than suspend the manufacturing moment; he is offering a variation on the Guattarian matter-function relation. What he is suggesting is that 'neuro-workers' plug themselves into terminals of the network form, with its vast pharmacological support battery, not to mention many ideological fictions absorbed from the ideologues of the new economy (corporate cultures of play, creation and labour). This precipitates widespread psychopathologies (Blackberry addiction), drug dependencies and social dysfunctionality, not to mention personal indebtedness and reduced savings. Virno states that general intellect is not objectified into machinery or an 'electronic soul' because post-Fordism introduces a rupture into the relationship between general intellect and fixed capital. But Bifo wants to talk about the 'soul at work', by which he means not a representational substance but the 'soul of Semiocapitalism', which is non-material content, the very sort of semio-commodities under discussion here in the contexts of their semio-digital ecologies, and how it may in some cases wend its way not so much back into but through other distributed nodes of an informatized fixed capital. In this respect Bifo wants to pay close attention to how the machinic arrangements of fixed capital are evolving, and reacting to the semiotization of the production process, in a mutating, artefactual ecology with long tendrils reaching across the globe. Even so, partial manufacturing

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may be spread widely, and these quasi-material fragments coordinated by computerized assembly in another peripheral location: 'the process of production is in *large part* dematerialized'.<sup>60</sup> To be fair, one may also say that production is in some part still materialized, which suggests that semio-material connective syntheses display a-signifying polyvocality and irregularity; while the disjunctive syntheses tend towards two extreme poles of a-signifying semiotization or remnants of industrial materialization, the conjunctive syntheses focus on the kinds and degrees of social subjection and subjectifications of labour.

What Bifo wants to find is evidence of the cognitariat's withdrawal from capitalist networks, and the shapes taken by its independent self-directed organizations. The language of coagulation suggests, then, not a direct and immediate concreteness, but a soft, viscous and centrifugal semiotics of actualization, displaying attention to the divergences of semiotic types, gradients of formedness, variations between abstract and concrete poles, degrees of activity, container effects (artifacts). Coagulation of blood is a chemical process of clogging that requires the internal and active presence of platelets and specific proteins that become sticky. Most importantly, the theory of semiocapitalism can learn from the complexity of actualization, how it contains a measure of inactuality that makes it impossible to exhaustively grasp.<sup>61</sup> It suggests the fundamental fragmentariness of potentiality's manifestations and their mixing and remixing through the capitalistic networks but in ways that confirm openness and multiplicity, before and even after it has been eventually materialized in silicon and wrapped in hard plastic. And it is this always ready intervention that theorists of semiocapitalism want to regain from the capitalist exploitation of non-material products of immaterial labour, pulling out, redirecting and reapplying the potential 'coalesced' in their semiotic actualizations, stealing it away from capital's semio-operations, from evaporating in the chimerical value production of financial capital, and forging a social time distinct from capital time.<sup>62</sup> But coalescence is not coagulation as it is a process of merging that is abstract and static, in addition to requiring an external influence – like air currents merging water droplets, or consonants merging in a new phonetic articulation in our mouths.

## CONCLUSION

Semiocapitalism did not crush Guattari's belief that a re-singularizing combination of social experimentation and new technology was the best

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hope for exiting mass media and entering the universe of post-media. The semiotic fragments produced by a precariously employed cognitariat may be detached from the dominant significations they are given by the abstract machines of immaterial production. Guattari reminds his readers that these fragments 'secrete new fields of reference' and in this rupture of sense 'an existential singularization correlative to the genesis of new coefficients of freedom will become possible.'<sup>63</sup> What curtails the capacity to apprehend and enter such new fields of reference is the devastating effect of semiocapitalism on the general intellect. Subjectivity under semiocapitalism is circumscribed by refrains, some of which have been described by Bifo. The form-matter function is the production of value by means of the formation of the raw material of subjectivity. The attempt to theorize the immateriality of the formation of this matter, with various degrees of substantialization over space and time, was kick-started by Guattari's unbinding of the formation of substance from linguistics and the integration of diverse substances (plural and indefinite), formed, partially formed and unformed, which were typologized in semiological and semiotic types. In short, substance would be both skirted around and exploded and in its place an enunciative substance that included human and non-human expressive materials and consistency-granting contents would emerge. Skirting, swerving, and suspending all indicate that a semiotic processuality is at play (until a limit of the commodity is reached) that is held open and traversed by various transformations, some of which were indicated above as coagulation, coalescence and so on. In tangling the Hjelmslevian net, Guattari prepared the ground for the investigation of how the abstract machines of semiocapitalism decoded subjectivity through info-machinic networks and the management of fluxes at the heart of immaterial labour and production, in the suspended space-time of the 'not yet': recognizing the speeds and slownesses and species of materialization and the relative purities of form-matter contractions. Semiocapitalism is, as Lazzarato underlined, 'a machine of subjectification' in which immaterial labourers are both masters and slaves, self-exploiting, independent single proprietors, in other words, subjectified into being precarious self-entrepreneurs, even though not all of the movements and singularities are extracted in this process. The plateaus of semiocapitalist subjectification may be given names designating their singularities: Benetton, Berlusconi and so on.<sup>64</sup> The important point is that the abstract machine is the foundation for the theory of semiocapitalism, and for reflection on how form and matter contract in the theory of immaterial labour. Guattari's own wily semiotic disobedience with regard to the classic categories and theories helped to refigure how semiocapitalism

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attempts to enunciate the machine of human subjectivity by having it produce, enslaved and subjected to mobile networks, semiotic fragments in the manner of a-signifying particles in circulation. In other words, the direct exploitation of general intellect by semiocapitalism compels subjectivity to enunciate more and more like the non-human machines into which it is increasingly plugged and assembled but not, ultimately, into which it is locked. Yet the struggle against semiocapital's efforts to form subjectivity so that it hangs on a single designation of value and subsumes all the diverse types of valorization – aesthetic, desiring, ecosophical – under surplus value is, Guattari identified, the 'deathly heart'<sup>65</sup> of all universes of value that draws them in and tries to obliterate them. As a semiotic operator capitalism attempts to pump the implosion of value into the raw material of subjectivity, toxifying machinic inventiveness, transversal creativity and devolving enunciative diversity.

### NOTES

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- <sup>2</sup> Hardt, M. (2006), 'Production and Distribution of the Common', in P. Gielen and De Bruyne (eds), *Being An Artist in Post-Fordist Times*. Rotterdam: NAI, pp. 48–9.
- <sup>3</sup> Berardi, F. 'Bifo'. (2009), *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy*. Translated by Cadel, F., and Mecchia, G. New York: Semiotext(e), p. 21.
- <sup>4</sup> Marx, K. (1972), *Grundrisse*. Translated by Martin Nicolaus. New York: Vintage, p. 706.
- <sup>5</sup> Virno, P. (2006), 'The Dismeasure of Art: An Interview with Paolo Virno', in P. Gielen and P. De Bruyne (eds), *Being An Artist in Post-Fordist Times*, p. 24.
- <sup>6</sup> Virtanen, A. (2004), 'General Economy: The Entrance of the Multitude into Production,' *ephemera* 4/3, p. 226.
- <sup>7</sup> Virno, P. (2001), 'General Intellect'. Translated by A. Bove, p. 1. <http://generation-online.org/p/fpvirno10.htm>.
- <sup>8</sup> Guattari, F., and Alliez, E. (1996), 'Capitalistic Systems, Structures and Processes', in G. Genosko (ed.), *The Guattari Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 244.
- <sup>9</sup> Hjelmslev, L. (1969), *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*. Translated by Francis J. Whitfield. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, p. 52.
- <sup>10</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1987), *A Thousand Plateaus*. Translated by B. Masumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 141.
- <sup>11</sup> Guattari, F. (1977), *La révolution moléculaire*. Paris: Recherches, p. 265.
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- <sup>14</sup> Guattari, F. (1995), *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*. Translated by P. Bains and J. Pefanis. Sydney: Power Institute, p. 49.
- <sup>15</sup> Berardi, F. 'Bifo' (2007), 'Schizo-Economy'. Translated by M. Goddard in *Substance* 36/1, 76–7.
- <sup>16</sup> Guattari, F. 'Semiological Subjection, Semiotic Enslavement', in *The Guattari Reader*, p. 146.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.
- <sup>18</sup> Watson, J. (2009), *Guattari's Diagrammatic Thought: Writing between Lacan and Deleuze*. London: Continuum, p. 50.
- <sup>19</sup> Baudrillard, J. (1981), *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*. Translated by C. Levin. St. Louis: Telos Press. See the equations in the chapter 'For A General Theory'.
- <sup>20</sup> Guattari, 'Towards a Micro-Politics of Desire', p. 89.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95–6, 102.
- <sup>23</sup> Guattari, *La révolution moléculaire*, p. 306.
- <sup>24</sup> Guattari, F. (1979), *L'Inconscient machinique: essais de schizo-analyse*. Paris: Recherches, p. 67.
- <sup>25</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 492.
- <sup>26</sup> Guattari, F. (1996), 'Capital as the Integral of Power Formations'. Translated by C. Wolfe and S. Cohen in *Soft Subversions*. New York: Semiotexte, p. 220.
- <sup>27</sup> Lazzarato, M. (2006), 'The Machine'. Translated by Mary O'Neill *European Institute for Progressive Cultural Politics* 3. Online at [www.eipcp.net/transversal/1106/lazzarato/en](http://www.eipcp.net/transversal/1106/lazzarato/en).
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- <sup>31</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 693.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 694.
- <sup>33</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 457.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 456–8.
- <sup>35</sup> Lazzarato, M. 'The Machine', p. 4.
- <sup>36</sup> Lazzarato, M. (2006), '"Semiotic Pluralism" and the New Government of Signs: Homage to Félix Guattari', *European Institute for Progressive Cultural Politics* 1. Online at <http://translate.eipcp.net/transversal/0107/lazzarato/en#redir>.
- <sup>37</sup> Massumi, B. (2002), *Parables For the Virtual*. Durham: Duke University Press, p. 80ff.
- <sup>38</sup> Guattari, 'Capital as the Integral of Power Formations', p. 206.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 207.
- <sup>40</sup> Berardi, *Soul at Work*, p. 89.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

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- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 76.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 89.
- <sup>45</sup> Lazzarato, 'Immaterial Labour', p. 136.
- <sup>46</sup> Guattari, F. (1995), 'So What'. Translated by C. Wiener in *Chaosophy*. New York: Semiotext(e), p. 18; and 'Institutional Practice and Politics', in *The Guattari Reader*, p. 126.
- <sup>47</sup> Guattari, *La Révolution Moléculaire*, op. cit. pp. 236–7.
- <sup>48</sup> Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, op. cit. p. 226.
- <sup>49</sup> Berardi, F. 'Bifo' (2011), *After the Future*, G. Genosko and Nick Thoburn (eds). Oakland: AK Press. See the 'Conclusion: Happy Ending'.
- <sup>50</sup> Berardi, *Soul at Work*, op. cit. p. 90.
- <sup>51</sup> Berardi, 'Schizo-Economy', art. cit. p. 76.
- <sup>52</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. p. 458.
- <sup>53</sup> Guattari, F. 'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution' in *The Guattari Reader*, op. cit. p. 151.
- <sup>54</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. p. 458.
- <sup>55</sup> Guattari, 'Towards a Micro-Politics of Desire', op. cit. p. 84.
- <sup>56</sup> Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, op. cit. p. 58.
- <sup>57</sup> Berardi, *Soul at Work*, op. cit. p. 75.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 76.
- <sup>59</sup> Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism*, op. cit. p. 65.
- <sup>60</sup> Berardi, *Félix Guattari*, op. cit. p. 20.
- <sup>61</sup> Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, op. cit. p. 136.
- <sup>62</sup> Berardi, F. 'Bifo' (2006), 'What is the Meaning of Autonomy Today?' in *Republicart*, online at [www.republicart.net/disc/realpublicspaces/berardi01\\_en.htm](http://www.republicart.net/disc/realpublicspaces/berardi01_en.htm), p. 1.
- <sup>63</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 13.
- <sup>64</sup> See Lazzarato, M. (2007), 'Strategies of the Political Entrepreneur'. Translated by T. Murphy, *Substance* 36/1, pp. 87–97.
- <sup>65</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 55.

## CHAPTER 9

### Relaying a War Machine?

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Isabelle Stengers

At the end of *Chaosmosis*, Félix Guattari wrote: 'I hold out my hand to the future'.<sup>1</sup> Whatever our misgiving and frustrations about our present, this sentence situates us, that is, it situates all of those who are contributing to, or will be reading, this book: 'we' are part of this future Guattari was holding out his hand to. As such, I feel bound by the obligation not to produce a commentary, an interpretation or a testimony. If Guattari was a 'war machine' all by himself, 'the problem of a war machine is that of relaying, even with modest means, not that of the architectonic model or the monument'.<sup>2</sup> Guattari holding out his hand does not demand that we behave like faithful pilgrims visiting the kitchen at La Borde again and again.

To try to take the relay, to try to become part of 'an ambulant people of relayers, rather than a model city'<sup>3</sup> produces a rather particular affect. Relaying corresponds to a different assemblage than commentary on the one hand, and robbery or hacking on the other. More precisely, commenting, if it means thinking-with – that is, becoming-with – is in itself a way of relaying, and it may well be that the machinic assemblage which produces the robber or the hacker is also a relaying assemblage. But knowing that what you take has been held-out entails a particular thinking 'between'. It does not demand fidelity, still less fealty, rather a particular kind of loyalty, the answer to the trust of the hand held-out. Even if this trust is not in 'you' but in 'creative uncertainty', even if the consequences and meaning of what has been done, thought or written do not belong to you any more than they belonged to the one you take the relay from, one way or another the relay is now in your hands, together with the demand that you do not proceed with 'mechanical confidence'. To continue is to produce continuity, and it is always a matter of contingency, contingency being, as we know, the 'only good reason'.<sup>4</sup> But contingency does not

mean arbitrariness – the famous Dostoyevskian motto that if there is no rule defining continuity, everything is permitted. It means experimentation, the subject and object being the inter-assemblage you are part of.

As for any experimentation, there are constraints (not limitations), one being the refusal of what could turn the line of continuity to be produced either into a simple unfolding (as Christians are meant to do when dealing with the history of dogma) or into a line of progress, diagnosing what you perceive as lacking or insufficient and filling-in what you perceive as blanks. Your perceptions are yours, or rather are yours to work with. They are not the sign that, sitting upon a giant's shoulders, you see farther than he did. They have no other reason than the only good one – contingent reason – referring to milieus, connections and encounters.

Another constraint is the refusal to mimic being able to continue what you are unable to. I will not, for instance, fake being able to (or having the desire to) take the schizo fracture as a 'royal road of access to the emergent fractality of the Unconscious'<sup>5</sup>, as I would only parrot what I have read. The question of access to the Unconscious, fractal or not, and – I must add – the adventure of art, which was another passion in Guattari's life, I leave for others to continue. The fact that I cannot share his confidence in their centrality is devoid of any interest. Also I will not fake being contemporary with the great challenges of the Lacanian subversion of the subject, of structuralism or Saussurean linguistics. And it is not because I might somehow know better that I am unable to inhabit this landscape, to relay its complex refrains. Whatever the reason I would give, it would only be an a posteriori rationalization of a primordial contingency: the shift of the zones of concern, which marks any continuity.

Experimenting with a shift of concern, as it is first empirically felt, may be a way to relay, as it may signal the germ of an 'inter-assemblage'. It emphatically does not mean a rupture, as a rupture entails a positional judgment. The experience of 'non-contemporaneity' rather indicates what could become a (modest) means for pragmatically connecting what one relays with other, heterogeneous components.

Such an experience may be marked by the need to slow down, to pay attention, to resist in the idiotic manner typified by Deleuze in his 'What is the act of creation?'<sup>6</sup>, when the Dostoyevskian character is running towards his dying love, that is, let me emphasize, he is caught by an actual, not imaginary, urgency, but nevertheless lets himself be slowed down at every occasion, as if he was unable to inhabit the urgency, as if he maintained the knowledge that there is 'something more important', even if he does not really know what it is. It is crucial that the idiot does not really know what is more important, that he has no message, that there is no



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rivalry or argument, because what haunts the Dostoyevskian idiot slowing down cannot be appropriated; it has the virtual nature of what I would call a 'concern'. This concern manifests itself not by the disqualification of the recognized urgency but by a 'not so fast!' – by the sense that something demands to be thought. A concern is never fully identified: rather, it may unfold into some more or less complex refrain, the transversal character of which is manifest in the experience of 'here again'.

Such a concern did indeed slow me down – for instance, when reading Guattari's characterization of the 'new aesthetic paradigm' as contrasted with the 'proto-aesthetic paradigm'<sup>7</sup> offered by 'territorialized Assemblages of Enunciation' (producing polysemic, animistic, transindividual subjectivity). In such assemblages 'the stranger, the strange, evil alterity are dispelled into a menacing exterior',<sup>8</sup> and 'every drive towards a deterritorialized infinity is accompanied by a movement of folding onto territorialized limits, correlative to a jouissance of the collective for-itself and its fusional and initiatory mysteries'.<sup>9</sup> This characterization cannot be separated from Guattari's urgency, which was to disentangle the novelty of what he felt was coming into existence, a novelty some essential dimensions of which the aesthetic machine would be 'in the best position to disclose'.<sup>10</sup> However, both the 'proto' and the 'best position' activated the 'here again' experience, and the need to slow down. And this was reinforced by the very word 'paradigm' – a dangerous word whether we take it in its linguistic sense or in Thomas Kuhn's sense, as in both cases it may be associated with sameness, with the power to recognize the same beyond diversity. A Kuhnian paradigm indeed delivers what it defines as 'the best position', but it is always related to an actual achievement. Are 'actual' contemporary art practices, but also (and maybe primordially so) their commentators, able not to claim that their adventures are 'paradigmatic', that they confront the very challenges associated with the coming ethico-aesthetic machine?

Slowing down is not criticizing. We are dealing with machinic processes, not with an individual's intentions. My concern is not at all with what Guattari 'personally' thought. It stems, quite explicitly and pragmatically, from the kind of efficacy his propositions may acquire given the 'new' milieu they have now to encounter.<sup>11</sup> We, who contribute to this book or will read it, cannot ignore that most of Guattari's texts and interventions were meant to have an 'activating' efficacy on situations and on groups, while this book will at best refer to such situations and groups.

I am thus writing here thinking in particular of the 'academic' milieu, relative to which Guattari was blessedly an outsider. In 'our' milieu, 'proto' and 'best position' act as quasi-irresistible lures offering the opportunity

to flock around and safely disqualify what would be a regressive move. Whatever the lure, the refrain of progress – ‘we no longer can’ – starts throbbing with pride and determination or nostalgia and regret. If an academic recoding machine was ever to annex Guattarian themes, it would unfailingly plug in at that very point and put the contrast territorialized/deterritorialized to good operational use, continuing the great operation of which the objectivist paradigm is only an aspect: the divide between ‘us’ – we who are fated to adventure in the world without protection and prostheses, *Sapere aude!* – and the others who still cultivate the need for guardians protecting territorialized limits.

As for the word ‘paradigm’, the Guattarian use of the term was clearly an answer to the objectivist paradigm – with objectivism designating not the practices of science (there is no unifying paradigm there), but the injunction to reduce any situation to coordinates that produce a knowing subject defining an object. This is an urgency I recognize and share, but with the concern again that keeping the same word and associating it with a different qualification may induce the idea that there is a candidate to take the same place, a place which rationality, objectivity, method and the like occupy. Again we would be the brains (now the feeling, experimenting, deterritorializing brains [*têtes pensantes*]) of humanity.

The supplicant, demanding and challenging refrain that turns me into an idiot is, like all refrains, a-signifying. The words I can use to spell it out would be ‘please, not again!’ They are not addressed to Guattari, they mark the shift of concern ‘between’. And they have nothing to do with hyper-modernist [or] postmodern positional refrains. I am not ‘post’. I hold no position. I am, rather, situated by the question of the consequences to be created for this ‘not again’.

Experimenting with these consequences means turning the ‘idiotic’ experience of non-contemporaneity into what will be here a (modest) means of relaying Guattari. I will try to make it felt that the pragmatic concern it stems from is consistent with the need for a ‘terrible curettage’<sup>12</sup> associated in *Anti-Oedipus* with schizoanalysis. And it may also be a means of relaying the struggle against the arrow of ‘progress’, which *A Thousand Plateaus* was about when resisting any evolutionist, developmental or functionalist perspective. The two are connected, as the perpetual (not eternal) return of such perspectives (in spite of Darwin’s most difficult and precious demand, that we consider all living species as contemporary) may well be the sign that they have some kind of Antaeus-like capacity of regenerating from any residue neglected by the curettage.

Should not the same concern arise with the very modern tri-partition of creation proposed in *What Is Philosophy?* Is not this tri-partition vulnerable

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to a capture that would designate art, science and philosophy as the finally purified practices that together define creation? Indeed, while art may well be sent back by Deleuze and Guattari to 'ritual monuments of an animal mass that celebrates qualities before extracting new causalities and finalities from them',<sup>13</sup> it is still true that it is art as such, a typically modern category, not religious masses or animistic rituals, that can agree with this transversalizing operation. As for the sciences, it is remarkable that we are not dealing here with nomad sciences but with what was named 'royal science' in *A Thousand Plateaus* – that is, with the modern sciences. And philosophy itself, when characterized as 'absolute' deterritorialization, may well be taken as the 'standard' allowing other deterritorializations to be judged 'merely relative'.

However, in this case, I was able to pragmatically concur by taking fully into consideration that (modern) science and the arts are components in the contemporary question of philosophy for a reason that does not make us the brains of humanity. The reason is good because it is the contingent one that the model of both science and the arts act today in our (academic) milieus as attractors for philosophers, an attraction that they have to resist because this leads to the destruction of philosophy. The concepts of scientific function and of bloc of sensations are, thus, exoconsistent with the concept of concept, the three being inseparably required by the creation of an answer to the situation that forced the question – Fiat, a throw of the dice, never 'the' throw (even if the different throws are formally, not numerically, distinct).

When we deal with *Chaosmosis* as with Guattari's work in general, such considerations do not apply. I am rather indifferent to the question 'was Guattari a philosopher?' because, to me, philosophy is a particular, not royal, practice. I would just remark that the fate of philosophy was probably not Guattari's main concern – and how well I can understand this! His work and activity may well be named philosophy, if one so wishes, but it is not philosophy as it has to survive in our (academic) milieus, but philosophy as a war machine, fearlessly ignoring boundaries and traditional oppositional identifications – we must imagine a schizo Plato, gladly affirming, 'Yes, I am a sophist, so what?' Taking the relay of Deleuze's philosophy is already hard enough, but relaying this quite non-academic war machine demands a lot of idiotic slowing down – as is announced by the motto 'capitalism and schizophrenia'. In order for this motto not to turn into an obscene celebration of capitalism's generalized decoding enterprise, of capitalism as unwillingly destroying what separated us from our 'Truth' (here a schizoid Truth, which the adventure of art would be in the best position to disclose), we have to scrape away with a curette any

residue of Hegel's famous idea about the 'Cunning of Reason', as it was recycled by Marx.

Again, I do not claim that Félix Guattari himself enjoyed the positional safety always associated with the arrow of emancipation (including the postmodern emancipation from the emancipating ideals). That he did not, moreover, is dramatically testified to by his *Three Ecologies*. I rather associate him with the knowledge that the dice must be thrown again, without nostalgia. I even trust Guattari would have taken up my concern, improvised and carried it along into new mutant lines I am unable to imagine. My concern is about what every one of us knows quite well, the stratification that occurs when refrains that were keeping out the forces of chaos, protecting the germinal forces of the task to fulfil and the deed to do, turn into boundaries justifying exclusion and controlling improvisation. Death is a powerful assemblage converter. The question is not about persons but about fear, the fear that may grip us when adventuring outside the circle. It is a fear that is easy to reconstruct in terms of fidelity and betrayal but that rather calls for refrains we would sing under our breath when leaving the circle 'not on the side where the old forces of chaos press against it but in another region, one created by the circle itself'.<sup>14</sup>

Another region, both created by the circle and demanding that we leave it, does not signify a question that would transcend the circle, nor does it turn the 'old' forces – against which the circle was protecting the deed to do, the dice to be thrown – into an illusion. One does not really know what this other region is, because it is a knowledge that is to be created, which means improvising, grafting on to the sheltered working forces what they themselves brought into virtual existence. But one may know that this will involve discriminating and selecting, because from inside the circle all outside forces are indiscriminately threatening. It is thus not a question of rushing outside. It demands what comes as a refrain in *A Thousand Plateaus*: caution must be injected. 'Not wisdom, caution. In doses'.<sup>15</sup>

Cautiously, I will thus attempt a few steps. Three steps in fact, three propositions-grafts, with different demands.

First, I would simply come back to the coupling between Guattari and Deleuze as bearing witness to a crucial aspect of Guattari's own work, for the kind of line of flight he created to escape the proud, hyper-modernist categories of structuralism and Lacanian psychoanalysis without coming back to some form of humanism.

The common feature of modern knowledge practices, starting from Galileo and including structuralism and Lacanism, is to expel philosophers from the territory they found, even if afterwards some are conditionally

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admitted, under stringent conditions of fealty. A typical mark of allegiance is the modern critical posture, when, as Whitehead wrote, ‘the question, What *do* we know? has been transformed into the question, What *can* we know?’<sup>16</sup> By contrast, Guattari’s many entangled practices all depended upon resisting any model pre-defining what we ‘can’ know, and it also meant resisting the famous distinction between ‘epistemology’ and ‘ontology’. As an analyst and as an activist he was dealing with ontological bifurcations, with axiological creations. His war machine was to be able to take along and connect whatever helped him to fabricate what he needed, including philosophy.

This is why I do not think it is a compliment to name what he created ‘concepts’ because it does not do justice to the originality of his connection with Deleuze. This connection was a coupling of ‘orchid and wasp’. I would prefer to celebrate them as a new throw of the dice regarding the relation between philosophy and non-philosophy, as well as a new throw of the dice regarding the adventure of scientific creation taken as a demanding and inventive art of operational consequences. I would thus propose naming what he created ‘operative constructs’, in order to emphasize a positive divergence both from concepts (they were produced in order to operate upon something) and from scientific functions (their construction can never claim to be legitimated by what they refer to).

Until now, I have carefully distinguished the objectivist paradigm from the scientific creation of functions. Objectivism silences the always local and highly selective event, when a reference is created that resists demanding and creative tests. Such an achievement, irreducible to methodology, got its signature with the ‘*doveria*’, which appears in the first Galilean ‘experimental’ sheet (the foglio 116v, sketched in 1608) – ‘if I am right, here is where this ball rolling along my inclined plane *ought to* fall’. This ‘*doveria*’ marks an axiological creation, the demand that the reference should be verified through consequences that follow from it, and only from it. But it is not sufficient here to defend the singularity of the *doveria* against the old, general, theme of nature obeying laws, the event then being smoothed out to the benefit of the monotonous tale of Reason discovering these (objective) laws. When we come to domains where processes of production of subjectivity are at stake, the axiological creation of the *doveria* itself needs a graft that signals a quite different kind of achievement. It is the very challenge Freud had evaded when – with the claim that the psychoanalytical setting gave him the power to demonstrate and disqualify illusions – he kept the authority of the scientific reference.

Resisting the objectivist paradigm and refusing the easy humanist position ('thou shalt not objectivise the subject!'), Guattari achieved such a graft because he did not renounce the art of adventurous consequences that the experimental sciences have initiated, while nevertheless depriving experimenters of their exclusive position – I am the one who is asking the questions! While scientific functions are indeed constructs – but constructs that are reducible to cognitive representations, to answers without a question, without an active, productive intervention – Guattari's constructs require their users to be carried away in a machinic process of pragmatic creation.

To name Guattari's 'concepts' operative constructs is, thus, first of all to insist on the fact that, just like scientific functions, they crucially depend upon actually being put to work in cartographic operations, diagnosing new psycho-social types, experimenting with new tales and modes of intervention. If we recall the Deleuzian analysis of an event in terms of effectuation/counter-effectuation, the worst temptation would be to produce some hierarchical differentiation, as if effectuation was a matter of application only, the 'only' then denoting mechanical application, dominated by recognition. Counter-effectuation is not contemplation. It demands proliferating effectuations, each time associating the event with adventurous new pragmatic consequences. The schizoanalytical curettage is a matter of effectuation.

One demand upon those who would relay Guattari concerns experimental grafts that resist monotonous denunciation, the sad characterization of a state of affairs, or the celebration of what seems to correspond to what then becomes a model. This is at best redundant with the situation (no need to try and compete with Yomango's characterization of itself, for instance), and at its worst, is in danger of evoking redundant molar categories to explain a disappointing failure. If a Guattarian effectuation 'works', it is by avoiding redundancy, that is, by disclosing a situation's potential for deterritorialization, the perception of which is precluded by redundancy. What quantum physicists call a 'removal of degeneracy'.

If I may give a personal example, this is what I experienced when dealing with the very interesting production of collective agency when patients stop being 'patient' and become recalcitrant users, creating new collective assemblages of enunciation that destabilize the very definition of what it is to need medical help. This novelty, however, was also of very great interest for pharmaceutical firms, which invented a quite different meaning for this destabilization: that of an opportunity. Many patients' associations now play a crucial role in the contemporary enterprise of 'disease-mongering', when pharmaceutical enterprises no longer just

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produce new drugs but also new diseases. The 'discovery' of a disease is now a matter of lobbying; it is celebrated as progress by associations of users of the correlative candidate drug. 'Empowered' patients mobilize and recruit, crusading for the recognition of a new disease or disorder with the crucial argument that clinical tests demonstrate some efficacy of a new drug – the drug's efficacy becoming the demonstration of the 'objective' existence of the disease.

In this case, I was saved from disappointment by Guattari's machines. Yes, this was a new machine, even if none of the components it connected and had working together was new. Taking the machine as the syntactic subject produced a 'removal of degeneracy', destroying the temptation to recognize the components, with the very interesting pragmatic consequence that the usual critiques against these components were no longer relevant.

For instance, showing the weakness of clinical tests has some efficacy when it is a matter of addressing the alliance between science and the industry; it has none when addressing patients recruiting other patients because scientific demonstration is then just one piece of what really matters for them: to become able to affirm that they are suffering a 'true' disease, not some indeterminate symptoms that can be explained away in general terms. It is in vain that one denounces medicalization, debunks the 'objective definition of disease' as constructed, because it means siding with the proponents of those general, molar causes, giving help to doctors in disarray and trying to 'moralize' patients who should remain patient. Instead, the very functioning of the machine itself suggests a rather interesting, deterritorializing, 'amoral' answer. What holds together the protagonists of the disease-mongering machine is the difference they all claim – each for their own reasons – between a 'true disease' and an 'illness' to be analysed in terms of social, subjective or whatever factors. This is why the machine needs to bite into the objectivist-moral territory of institutional medicine, which promotes the same difference as a matter of method and legitimacy, but in so doing, the machine radically undermines this territory's authority. A general deconstructive operation leading to the idea that the objective definition of disease is arbitrary may be relevant against this territory where it still maintains a position of authority, but not when it cannot resist getting carried away into a crazy machinic process. In contrast, what may be relevant is that this definition is now a crucial speculative stake for the pharmaceutical machine, which, while producing an unceasing flux of drugs looking for their niche, nevertheless needs to keep a 'disease-centred model' as a crucial tenet (in relation with state agencies for instance) of its functioning. An

amoral 'drug-centred' model, devoid of any nostalgia for the institution the machine is destroying, may be interesting. It would mean activating the collective experimentation with pharmaceutical drugs by users, the collective pragmatic learning of usages, precautions and evaluative criteria: a rather nice case of *curettage*, of resisting the temptation to defend moral territories and going further with the deterritorialization process against stratified modern categories.

One interest of this small example is to emphasize the difference between [schizoanalytic] *curettage* and debunking, critically demonstrating the illusions behind the façade. Yes, collectives of users are vulnerable, and all the more so if they are isolated. They do not need to be celebrated as exemplary. They need rhizomatic connections, which demand a pragmatic milieu, a milieu that neither lauds nor condemns but calmly takes for granted that there is no 'good position' as such, that vulnerability proves nothing because it is the very feature shared in common by all assemblages in our machinic world, and that the worse danger may be the paranoid demand that an assemblage be able to defend itself by its own means.

This will be my first point. Relaying Guattari demands effectuation – and not explanation and illustration, with the ever-recurring set of cases functioning as illustrations, expressive of a common allegiance, or as means of establishing intra-specific critical distances. And it demands the strongest differentiation from critical denunciation (in the name of what?).

My second step is about connections having to resist lines of probability, the lines we follow each time we concur with a majority view. As an example of such a line of probability, I have chosen to take the probable reaction to what is dubbed 'political correctness', with the accompanying majority feeling of cultural, political superiority. For 'us', who are interested in Guattari's propositions, the temptation is strong to concur and deride or denounce 'political correctness' in terms of moralization, the policing of language or repressive US Puritanism. The point is not to take the opposite position and embrace it, but to consider it as a testing case, a particular aspect of a geopolitical divide that may concern us, because it takes two to make a divide.

As for any such divides, there are as many molar, redundant explanations as one can wish for – from the spell cast by structuralist-Lacanian thinking over Latin Europe and the epistemological one cast over US thinkers, to the difference between ancient colonizing powers and a country inhabited by the children of slaves. Be that as it may, in the United States, universality rather than objectivity has been a matter of burning concern. Taking the European majority view over political correctness,



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or accepting as 'normal' the success of the so-called 'French theory' in the United States, means aligning with reassuring homogeneity against possible, but disturbing, rhizomatic connections. Disturbing because we deal with people whose refusal of (white, male, standard) universality has entailed analysing the web of power that marks the use of seemingly innocent words. Each word here is a matter of scruples and thought.

I have myself been exposed to Donna Haraway's recalcitrant sensitivity, for instance about my use of the expression 'crossing the Rubicon', that is, about taking the Rubicon as a metaphor for threshold, and I still hesitate about the relevance of the Roman imperialist point. Undoubtedly, Haraway would have forcefully objected against the dangerous use of 'proto' as one of those prefixes desperately entangled with modern, imperialist claims – in this case that 'we' occupy a position such that what other people do can offer us understanding about where we come from. But hers would not have been a police intervention. I have learned from Donna Haraway's 'situated knowledge' the demand for a knowledge that is actively, deliberately deprived of the power to consider a state of affairs as if it came from nowhere, never forgetting that words must be crafted so as to take into account a power that exceeds all intention, a machinic power we are not allowed to claim innocence about.

Resisting majority dreams means accepting uncomfortable, uneasy connections, that is, connections that need to be made at a cost. In this case, the cost may for instance be to accept exposing ourselves to the burning rage of Haraway reading 'politically incorrect' passages of becoming-animal in *A Thousand Plateaus*:

The wolf/dog opposition is not funny . . . I know that D&G set out to write not a biological treatise . . . But no reading strategies can mute the scorn for the homely and the ordinary in this book . . . D&G continue, "Anyone who likes cats or dogs is a fool" (240, italics in original) . . . D&G go even further in their disdain for the daily, the ordinary, the affectional rather than the sublime. The Unique, the one in a pact with a demon, the sorcerer's anomaly, is both pack and Ahab's leviathan in *Moby Dick*, the exceptional, not in the sense of a competent and skilful animal webbed in the open with others, but in the sense of what is without characteristics and without tenderness (244). From the point of view of the animal worlds I inhabit, this is not about a good run but a bad trip. Along with the Beatles, I need a little more help than that from my friends. Little house dogs and the people who love them are the ultimate figure of abjection for D&G, especially if those people are elderly women, the very type of the sentimental. "Ahab's *Moby Dick* is

not like the little cat or dog owned by an elderly woman who honours and cherishes it. Lawrence's becoming-tortoise has nothing to do with a sentimental or domestic relation . . . But the objection is raised against Lawrence: 'Your tortoises are not real!' And he answers: 'Possibly, but my becoming is, . . . even and especially if you have no way of judging it, because you're just little house dogs' (244). "My becoming" seems awfully important in a theory opposed to the strictures of individuation and subject. The old, female, small, dog- and cat-loving: these are who and what must be vomited out by those who will become-animal. Despite the keen competition, I am not sure I can find in philosophy a clearer display of misogyny, fear of aging, incuriosity about animals, and horror at the ordinariness of flesh, here covered by the alibi of an anti-Oedipal and anti-capitalist project.<sup>17</sup>

Any hand that is held out runs the risk of being bitten, but the fact that the bite is from a woman who defines herself as aging, ordinary and dog-loving may activate a condescending little smile, or else the rush to explain or repair. Both reactions would exclude the rhizomatic possibility enfolded in the 'I need a little more help than that from my friends.' If I quoted Haraway at length, it is not in order to arbitrate or mediate, but in order to recall that a crucial contrast between rhizomatic connections and treelike ones is that the first are never authorized, always made between diverging lines, and belong as such to the register of the event. And if the price of the event is a humoristic 'good bite!', it is a very interesting price to pay because it catalyses new experimental assemblages that may resist and disconcert majority operations of classification.

Haraway's own word for the kind of help she needs and loves unsurprisingly belongs to the register of the homely and the ordinary – cat's cradling, a children's game, apparently, but also a game of which versions exist in cultures all over the world. Two pairs of hands are needed, and in each successive step, one is 'passive', offering the result of its previous operation, a string entanglement, for the other to operate, only to become active again at the next step, when the other presents the new entanglement. But it can also be said that each time the 'passive' pair is the one that holds, and is held by the entanglement, only to 'let it go' when the other one takes the relay. A complex dance indeed, and the help Haraway would have needed was that of another pair of hands, operating upon what she had produced, creating a new entanglement and enabling her to let go what she supported and intervene again in the new situation.

Let us take for example the 'Cyborg Manifesto', which made her famous, even fashionable.<sup>18</sup> Haraway would indeed have benefited from

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some help, not of the redundant kind – emphasizing for instance the convergence between the Cyborg figure and Guattari’s machines as opening the same post-humanist perspective, adding a touch of ‘French theory’ to the fashionable success of the Cyborg – but of the relaying kind: sensitive to both the opportunity and the vulnerability of the Cyborg.

The Cyborg indeed proved vulnerable, hence its fashionable success, when it became a competitive new offering on the market of postmodernity, with the triumphant ring that denotes the perpetual return of the proud affirmation that ‘we’ are able to forego the illusions of yesterday. I can only imagine ‘Guattarian’ fingers, or operative constructs, grabbing the stringy figure and activating the difference between debunking illusions and the hard schizoanalytic operation of *curettage*, relaying the Harawayan cyborg as a raging, utopian, quasi-desperate figure, a figure affirming the need for self-avowed, deliberately crafted myths to subject the great epic of Man to *curettage* – whether that be after the expulsion from Eden, the loss of animal innocence or the destruction of (proto) communism.

The ‘Cyborg Manifesto’ was written during and ‘for’ those Winter Years of the 1980s, marked in the United States by the election of Reagan. It was not just one myth against another. It was a ‘partial’ myth, a ‘might be’, deliberately constructed against plausibility and probability, as a matter of sheer survival. The non-mythic, realist view of a cyborg world would indeed describe ‘the final imposition of a grid of control on the planet, be about the final abstraction embodied in a Star Wars apocalypse waged in the name of defence, about the final appropriation of women’s bodies in a masculinist orgy of war’, a perspective, writes Haraway, that reduces Michael Foucault’s biopolitics to ‘flaccid premonition’.<sup>19</sup>

The fate of the Harawayan cyborg shows that any deterritorializing refrain, however it is crafted, needs help in order not to turn into a territorializing one (yes, we are the ones who can bear being cyborgs). The cyborg as a utopian figure, one completely without innocence, demanded a becoming-minority against its majoritarian capture, marked by the irresponsibility of those who feel justified by what they endorse, some epic, quasi-intolerable truth (like all truths) selecting those who are able to bear it. As ‘oppositional’ it was not to serve as a standard for a molar opposition dominated by recognition among the worthy, but was relaying the characterization by Chela Sandoval of the creation of the pseudo-category ‘women of colour’: the only common point of those it included was to fit in no category, being unable to speak either as a woman or as a black person, or as a Chicana. Theirs was a constructed unity, and, as such ‘women of colour’ marked out a capacity to act not on the basis of

‘natural identification, but only on the basis of conscious coalition, of affinity, of political kinship’.<sup>20</sup>

Guattari’s operative constructs could indeed have benefited from Haraway’s cat’s cradling help. Her cyborg ‘oppositional’ figure is a figure for rhizomatic politics. It is an a-signifying existential refrain, crafted as a figure of hope on the brink of despair, and this hope cannot be separated from the typically US brand of activism that succeeded in surviving the US Winter Years. It was a brand of activism that even reinvented itself during those years, through a deliberate, self-conscious – that is experimental, political and pragmatic – construction of spaces for collectively reclaiming the means of production of mutant subjectivities.

‘Cyborg unities are monstrous and illegitimate; in our present political circumstances, we could hardly hope for more potent myths for resistance and re-coupling. I like to imagine LAG, the Livermore Action Group, as a kind of cyborg society, dedicated to realistically converting the laboratories that most fiercely embody and spew out the tools of technological apocalypse, and committed to building a political form that actually manages to hold together witches, engineers, elders, perverts, Christians, mothers, and Leninists long enough to disarm the state. Fission Impossible is the name of the affinity group in my town. (Affinity: related not by blood but by choice, the appeal of one chemical nuclear group for another, avidity)’.<sup>21</sup>

I claim that in order to relay Guattari, we may benefit from some help, too, not only from the wealth of natureculture imbroglios Haraway has mapped for many years – a positive challenge against the temptation to turn Guattarian machines and other operative constructs into territorial refrains, expressive of a common allegiance – but also from her craft, her practice of the coupled arts of non-innocence and accountability.

Neither the schizo nor the cyborg is accountable. Both are crafted figures and accountability is about the crafting. Haraway does not claim that we are personally accountable, as if we had to face a high court and its transcendent criteria. She claims that it is part of the craft of telling cyborg or schizo stories to produce accountability, that is, to produce both the account and the way to take it into account. Accountability is an art of immanence.

In cat’s cradling Guattari’s *Three Ecologies*, which produces an account of a devastation that resonates between three registers, those of the environment, social relations and subjectivity, taking this devastation into account may demand what comes as a refrain in *A Thousand Plateaus*: caution must be injected. Caution, not wisdom Deleuze and Guattari note, and also, its goes without saying, not the old forces of guilt: caution is a matter of pragmatic concern not of shameful recognition that we would

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be unable to avoid posturing as judges, or as the (now schizophrenic) brains of humanity. There is no fate involved, only danger and the need to craft the consequences of the fact that ours is a triply devastated world – that is, to accept being situated by the question of devastation.

Again, it is a question of relaying. For ‘us’, crafting the way to be situated by this question emphatically does not mean denouncing the way our own practices – art, philosophy, psycho- or schizoanalysis, even the sciences – are threatened, facing today the problem of their survival. This is redundancy, not craft, and worse, it is vulnerable to the temptation of embedding our predicament into some epic logic, as if ‘we’ were somehow what must resist if there is to be a future (see psychoanalysts defining themselves as humanity’s last rampart against barbarity). Crafting may rather begin with wondering why these practices survived while so many others were destroyed, considering them from the point of view of the price they paid for their survival. Diverging prices to be sure, but that may present a common element. Were not these practices, which were tolerated, even encasted as the probe heads of humanity, also domesticated by the arrow of progress?<sup>22</sup> Did they not ratify the destruction of others by presenting themselves as ‘modern’, and describing the others as defined by what they had shed themselves of? From that point of view, the threat against our practices needs no special explanation – it was just a matter of time.

This does not call for feelings of guilt, or for defending some (again, selected) creators against too general an accusation. It is not an accusation at all, rather a possible refrain for the double craft of non-innocence and accountability. It may activate caution, taking into account how easy it is to be captured by a style of account that defines us as predators preying upon others for our self-definition. That is, an account which transforms crossed thresholds into moments of an epic story that separates those who ‘did it’ from the others who did not, and allows the former to understand these others better than they themselves do. It may also come as a refrain if surviving practices learn how to ‘present’ themselves, that is also how to make themselves present in their milieu, in a way that is accountable and non-innocent. This may mean learning to present oneself ‘for’ the destroyed or disqualified ones, a serious and creative curettage, as it entails creating against any claim about a privileged position. To take some examples, the artist as the *voyant*, resisting ready-made perceptions, the scientist as ‘accepting that facts refute his most cherished beliefs’, but also the philosopher as fighting *la bêtise* are all to be recrafted<sup>23</sup> – none is false, but all are silent about those who would complicate these claims and about the violence that left them isolated, like superb greenhouse plants, in a desert landscape.

Finally – and I come now to my last step – it may call for more dangerous moves, for instance, actively taking into account that majority, epic dreams love oppositions and scandal, which confirm that Truth is involved, but hate being exposed to sneer, scorn and jokes – while freely using them against what they define as muddling, parasitic questions, confusing the issue. An antidote against such dreams may be to take the triggering of sneer, scorn and jokes, not scandals, as a marker of possibly interesting rhizomatic connections.

I will take the case of Donna Haraway again. Haraway learned from her success. She has dared a rather unforgivable ‘coming out’, exposing herself to the outrage of both her admirers and the defenders of an untouched, wild, harmonious nature. In *When Species Meet*, she has presented herself as an aging white middle class woman who loves her dogs and worse, is passionately training them and partnering with them in agility sport, going to competitions and rejoicing in successes that are clearly ‘domesticating’ ones.

Recounting her experience, Haraway deliberately actualized her claim that we have to accept non-innocence. Teaming with a dog is non-innocent just like teaming with cyborgs, but the cyborg proposition proved seductive, vulnerable to capture. In contrast, when Haraway affirms that ‘engaging in training (education) is interesting for animals, just as it is for people’,<sup>24</sup> she is bound to provoke scorn, jokes and disappointment, or even outrage from an audience sensitive to problems of domination and suspicious of any proposition entailing that the one who is in the position of serving (the interest of) the other could possibly find an interest in the relation. Haraway is certainly not deriding ‘political correctness’, but she is testing its capacity to function beyond guilt and innocence. Yes, she is de facto responsible, as Cayenne certainly did not ask for competitive training, or need it. But this factual responsibility (a generic one, since so many beings, human and non human, never demanded to be entangled in our dubious adventures) is to be accepted in order to begin thinking and crafting: no guilt again, but the knowledge that there is no ‘good’ position, no way of escaping ‘the mortal entanglements for which we are responsible and in which we respond’.<sup>25</sup>

How to respond, not to Cayenne but in the situation she had created for Cayenne and herself? Haraway was put to the test when she had to accept that she needed to use behaviourist methods – not in order to understand Cayenne, assuredly, but in order to understand her own mistakes, to refrain from fantasizing that Cayenne was a toddler in fur coat, or a native English speaker.

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A test is involved for 'us', too. How do we like our minorities? Raw? Cooked? Running in packs, or enjoying a good run? How do we like our becomings? Wild? Queer? Can the dog/woman training assemblage be described as a rhizomatic connection between diverging lines – as illustrated by the famous case of 'wasp and orchid'? Can the exploration of what Haraway names 'contact-zone of an entangled relationship'<sup>26</sup> be taken as an experimental practice of aesthetic transversality? Is the ethico-aesthetic paradigm open to the indeed deterritorializing challenge to accept an assemblage that has nothing subversive about it, which even implies learning to exercise unflinching authority – while also learning to 'respond to the authority of the dog's actual performance'<sup>27</sup> Can we accept that such an 'objectivist' technique as the behaviourist one may perform the (non-innocent) *curettage* Haraway needed in order to become part of 'a cross-species team of skilled adults'<sup>28</sup> Can we admit the situational non-symmetry implied by Haraway's claim that 'trust is what the human owes the dog',<sup>29</sup> when thinking a 'becoming with', when 'the nonmimetic attunement of each to each resonates with the molecular scores of mind and flesh and makes someone out of them both who was not there before'<sup>30</sup>

A test is always optional, or else one falls into the trap of the epic style, the whole point of which is to select the worthy. The interest of the test I associate with Haraway is that it exhibits its optional character – you can still dislike dogs and competitions; just do not recount it/say so in a way that authorizes others to quote you as a reference. This means caution indeed, a caution Haraway herself lacked on one occasion, at least. Let us take again her *Cyborg Manifesto*. One sentence, the last one, is more famous than all others: 'I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess'. The point, again, is not to criticize. The text contains clear positive allusions to goddess-honouring witches, and even the famous last sentence is truncated, as it begins with, 'Though both are bounded in the spiral dance, I would . . .', the spiral dance being the dance of the contemporary witches. And it cannot be denied either that the goddess revival in the United States has many guises, some clearly evoking harmony, organic wholeness, the denunciation of artificiality. But you never cry with the wolves (or the dogs) with impunity, as they are not interested in what you try to create, only in the fact that you have just given a signal that you are a member of their sneering club. 'Rather than a goddess', closing the text, was sufficient to make it safe and ensure its status as a postmodern classic.<sup>31</sup>

I will not take a counter-position, reclaiming the goddess, as reclaiming is a transformative process, not a position. However, just as I am interested in the Haraway/Cayenne coupling, I am interested in the neo-pagan

goddess-honouring spiral-dancing witches. Not only because in their own words they tell the same tale as Guattari's *Three Ecologies*, but because the very way they tell it craftily challenges the arrow of progress, the modernist refrain 'we no longer can'.

The refrain neo-pagan witch Starhawk produced, 'The smoke of the burned witches still hangs in our nostrils',<sup>32</sup> does not imply our guilt, rather the ultimate triumph of the witch hunters, which is the eradication of the memory of what they destroyed. Witches are no longer associated with the devil, but rather with the birth of 'human sciences', the standard, or unmarked category of which is 'belief'. Belief is what separates scientists from their objects. Both the witches and the witch hunters 'believed'. This is why witch-hunting is to be considered as a cold case – we can no longer be interested in them but for sophisticated discussions about the cleverest way to characterize this eradicated past. But the fear of the witch hunters and the smoke of the burned witches still hang in the air, and hang heavily where this final eradication was produced: academic sneering, jokes and scorn are awaiting those who can be suspected of not preferring to behave as a safely postmodern cyborg.

The contemporary witches I am interested in do not claim the power of defining who were the irremediably destroyed witches. They rather render perceptible the vibration of an unknown – not the sad, ascetic one meant to remind us that their destruction makes it impossible to know what they were, but rather an existential one, bearing on the difference between an irremediable destruction, and an irreversible one. Irreversibility is the triumph of the witch hunters – we no longer can. They experiment (with) the means of reclaiming what was destroyed in the present. It is thus not a matter of reviving what we may be tempted to describe as 'fusional and initiatory mysteries', but of pragmatically experimenting with rituals, of actively disentangling the ancient craft called 'magic' from the Rationalist/Monotheist binary opposition between the natural and the supernatural.

When Starhawk remarks that to recount that the goddess is returning is in itself an act of magic, she crafts a spell the power of which is to disconcert these oppositions, and to open up a strange perspective. What if, instead of explaining away 'magic' in such general, safe, molar terms as performativity, we deterritorialized these terms, characterizing performativity as magic instead? More precisely as residual magic, as what remains when the craft is not cultivated? What if we called magic the craft of assemblage creation? What if the need for caution that insists in *A Thousand Plateaus* was nothing other than the need for the measures of protection that accompany all magical practices, dealing with forces that may devour the reckless fool?



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What if? We would not gain any academic ground – that is certain. Irreversibility is what produces the safe distance which objectivity demands, and the power to disqualify as ‘artificial’, as the product of impotent (and even dangerous, see the Nazis . . . ) nostalgia, anything that can be identified with a denial of the hard facts: we no longer can. . . . In contrast, irremediable means that one does not need the tale of a secret continuity (the transmission of an initiatory tradition, and the allegiance it would command) to experiment (with) the possibility of taking the relay. Fabulation may do if it communicates with experimentation, with the pragmatic creation of assemblages (rituals) that empower what neo-pagan activist witches call reclaiming. They need to reclaim magic, and to reclaim the goddess as an ingredient in the assemblages that enable them to dance the spiral dance under the smoke bombs and claim the Black Block as their welcome (if uncomfortable) partners.<sup>33</sup>

‘She changes everything she touches, and everything she touches changes’ – I love the efficacy of this refrain that quietly escapes the alternative that traces a poisoned continuity from theology to objectivist human sciences – from the question of grace and the power of God to the question of subjects and the structure. Always the same question: how to assign responsibility? What of a coupling of ‘wasp and orchid’ between the song of the goddess and the Guattarian refrain that desire both produces and is produced by assemblage?

Cayenne and the goddess – these are not new standards, entering into rivalry with Artaud or Burroughs! There is no privileged way to respond to the (cautious) trust of Félix Guattari holding his hand out to the future. The one I have chosen here may appear as a rather strange one since it seems to imply that Guattari’s work is threatened by an academic reterritorialization, while the purpose of this book, as I read in the invitation to contribute, is to give due weight to a work ignored by too many. To me, the question associated with the challenge of relaying the operative constructs Guattari crafted is indeed foreign to any concern about due recognition. These constructs are meant to work and produce, to activate a machinic freedom of cartography, which is the very paradigm Guattari offers us. And they were produced outside the academy, while the majority of the contributors to this book are teaching somewhere. The point (again and again) is not to feel guilty, unworthy or ashamed. The point is – as it is everywhere – not to fake but to reclaim, that is also to diagnose the ‘black hole’ that we may fall into, with the machine then producing ‘“individual” group effects spinning in circles, as in the case of chaffinches that have been isolated too early, and whose impoverished, simplified song expresses nothing more than the resonance of the black hole in

which they are trapped'.<sup>34</sup> Guattari related black holes to 'precocious' deterritorialization, and I would claim that the specific strength of the academic territorial assemblages (at least in humanities) is to encourage such precocity, even if afterwards they select away (sorry if they failed the objective ranking evaluation) most of the daring young scholars, who will then spin in circles, singing the song of the bearer of a truth that makes their prosecution self-explanatory.

Cayenne and the Goddess may appear as very tame figures when compared with Guattari's schizos, but as such they act as a challenge against the very temptation to compare. Let us not assume that we are protected by the empirical fact that there are not many of us affirming what we owe to Félix Guattari. Even a group of two has to create protections against majority dreams. Let us not assume that the figure of the schizo (I am not speaking about dealing with schizos, as he did) is bound to be a deterritorializing one. It may as well be reterritorialized as a *nec plus ultra* academic reference for debunking the illusions of normality of the modern Subject again and again. And as such it will be a subject for innumerable academic dissertations by precocious students, just like Artaud or Nietzsche or . . .

For those of us who teach and breathe the academic air, reclaiming the machinic freedom of cartography, which Guattari's operative constructs require, may well mean learning the signature of the black hole that threatens any (academic) relaying, and transforms relayers into sophisticated, spinning babblers: it is the fear of exposing oneself to the accusation of being duped, to compromise oneself with what others may be able to debunk. It may well mean accepting that the smoke of the burned witches is indeed poisoning our milieu, producing faked, conditional freedom. Being true to Felix Guattari's memory does not mean leaving this milieu – poison is everywhere – but crafting the complex refrains that may dispel – and I take dispel with its etymological link with spell – the smoke, that may accompany us when opening the circle and venturing outside without the fear that produces precocious academic chaffinches.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Guattari, F. (1995), *Chaosmosis. An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*. Translated by P. Bains and J. Pefanis. Sydney: Power Institute, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari F. (1988), *A Thousand Plateaus*. Translated by B. Massumi. London: Continuum, p. 377.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1994), *What Is Philosophy?* Translated by G. Burchell and H. Tomlinson. London: Verso, p. 93.

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- <sup>5</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 64.
- <sup>6</sup> A lecture at the FEMIS, transcribed in Deleuze G. *Two Regimes of Madness. Interviews 1975–1995*. New York: Semiotext(e).
- <sup>7</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. pp. 101–3.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.
- <sup>11</sup> My use of the term ‘proposition’ is of Whiteheadian origin and, as such, is related to Guattari’s axiological creationism. A Whiteheadian proposition is not discursive but productive: it dramatizes the ‘lure for feeling’ that any discursive enunciation requires even if it claims to function as communication or to be able to define its own meaning. In other words, a Whiteheadian proposition correlates to understanding, creating, communicating, and relaying, even when a single personal line is involved (‘no thinker thinks twice’, and no proposition can be attributed a meaning that transcends the route of occasions testifying to its luring efficacy).
- <sup>12</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1983), *Anti-Oedipus*. Translated by R. Hurley, M. Seem and H.R. Lane. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, p. 381.
- <sup>13</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, op. cit. p. 184.
- <sup>14</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. p. 311.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.
- <sup>16</sup> Whitehead, A.N. (1968), *Modes of Thought*. New York: The Free Press, p. 74.
- <sup>17</sup> Haraway, D. (2008), *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 29–30.
- <sup>18</sup> See Haraway, D. (1991), ‘A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century’, in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, pp. 149–81.
- <sup>19</sup> Haraway, ‘A Cyborg Manifesto’, op. cit. p. 150.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154–5.
- <sup>22</sup> We follow Massumi, who translates *têtes chercheuses* in Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* as ‘probe-heads’ [Editors].
- <sup>23</sup> In *What Is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari went in this direction as they characterized these practices not in terms of their claims, but in terms of what they have practitioners doing. It seems to me that to be able to do so was a reason for them writing that the question had to wait for ‘the time for speaking concretely’ (p. 1). I dared a speculation about Deleuze becoming able to write *What Is Philosophy?* in ‘Thinking with Whitehead and Deleuze: A Double Test’ (2009), in Robinson K. (ed.) *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson. Rhizomatic Connections*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 28–44.
- <sup>24</sup> Haraway, D. ‘Training in the Contact Zone’, in *When Species Meet*, op. cit. p. 222.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

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- <sup>31</sup> And it even accompanies Haraway in countries where witches and goddesses are quasi-absent. The introduction to the translation in French of *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* is titled 'Cyborg plutôt que déesse: comment Donna Haraway a révolutionné la science et le féminisme' ('Cyborg Rather than Goddess: How Donna Haraway Revolutionized Science and Feminism').
- <sup>32</sup> Starhawk, (1982), *Dreaming the Dark. Magic, Sex & Politics*. Boston: Beacon Press, p. 219.
- <sup>33</sup> Starhawk, (2002), *Webs of Power. Notes from the Global Uprising*. Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers.
- <sup>34</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. p. 334.

## CHAPTER 10

### Gilles-felix<sup>1</sup>

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Antonio Negri

Gilles Deleuze's preface to *Psychanalyse et transversalité* by Félix Guattari is entitled 'Pierre-Félix'. Deleuze was playing on Guattari's two first names to show how a political militant and a psychoanalyst coexisted and confronted each other in the same thinker. For my part, I am calling this chapter 'Gilles-felix,' just as we say 'Arabia *felix*', to refer to a productive place, a common prophetic *topos* – a desert or chaos that decision and circumstances force to be crossed together – that two thinkers, so different from each other, travelled through together, coexisting and confronting each other.

A second point: I will try not to talk 'history of philosophy'. Just like Deleuze, 'I belong to a generation – one of the last – that was more or less killed off with the history of philosophy. The history of philosophy plays a patently repressive role in philosophy, it's philosophy's own version of the Oedipus complex'.<sup>2</sup> Also, like Deleuze and Guattari, I will try to experiment with an approach that does not allow the reading of their 'doing philosophy' [*faire philosophique*] in the context of these 'established powers' which 'are interested in communicating sad affects to us'. These 'established powers' which 'need our sadness to make us slaves'.<sup>3</sup> I will try, therefore, to 'talk politics' from that political space in which Gilles and Félix meet and from which point, happily, they set off on a long march together.

This political space is *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia Volume 1 (A-Ø)*. 'Anti-Oedipus was from beginning to end a book of political philosophy'.<sup>4</sup> Before *Anti-Oedipus*,<sup>5</sup> Gilles Deleuze published *Logic of Sense*, and above all *Difference and Repetition. Theatrum philosophicum*: 'a return which is a fulguration,' said Michel Foucault in a review of both books, 'a fulguration that will be given the name of Deleuze: a new thought is now possible; thought is, once again, possible'.<sup>6</sup> In fact, things are more

complicated and Foucault could have deferred his enthusiasm. It suffices to note that Deleuze himself – between *Difference and Repetition* and his work on *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, which he read to his students at the same time – believed that he had not yet resolved the problem of escaping from structuralism, of escaping from this ‘structure without structure’ in which his thought seemed to be enclosed. In 1967, in an article that François Châtelet would publish in 1972, Deleuze wrote that five characteristics identify structuralism: the fact of going beyond a static or dialectical relation between the real and the imaginary, the topological definition of conceptual space, the differential relation of symbolic elements, the unconscious character of the structural relation, and finally, the serial (or multi-serial) movement of structure itself. And it is clear that even if the philosophy of *Difference and Repetition* fully realized this conceptual apparatus, it could not yet make ‘a new thought’ possible. For a new thought must be productive. How, then, within a defined field of immanence, is it possible to recover a force, an ontological element that might make it possible to escape as much from dialectics as from sterile structural epistemology, by building a relation with the real that would be positive at every point? *Logic of Sense* and *Difference and Repetition* put an end to two traditions that we could find at the heart of structuralism, on the one hand a transcendental philosophy in the phenomenological tradition, and on the other hand that empiricist logic which, since David Hume, considers perception to be the only means of knowing, and the ‘common noun’ the only definition of the concept. But all of this is still not enough. Where is the place in which a symbolic, creative and inter-subjective active force crosses the real and the imaginary at the same time? Where is the agent that, from the starting point of the symbolic, reactivates the spatial topologies and virtualizes them? Where is the ‘structuralist Hero’? This is the problem.

It is worth highlighting the fact that this problem had an instant political echo in the philosophical debate of that time, a debate concentrating on the critique of the mechanical relation between *Unter-* and *Uberbau*, and on the theme of the reproduction of the social and its eventual revolution. We arrive thereby at the heart of a philosophical debate that was largely dominated, even in the most original trends, by the ‘Leftist’ revisionists of official Marxism. Guy Debord and Henri Lefèbvre have cleared the terrain that revolutionary surrealism had already shaken up at the end of the 1930s. And the great cultural institutions are attracted by this critical assemblage: the *Ecole normale supérieure* in the Rue d’Ulm, first of all, where professors and students wrack their brains to understand how to impose revolutionary innovation on structure. But unlike Althusser, Foucault

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and Derrida, Deleuze was not a student of the *Ecole normale supérieure* in the Rue d'Ulm. To solve the same problem, he changed streets. This is where Gilles-felix begins; this is where the event occurs. The 'structuralist Hero' appears, throwing Molotov cocktails: it was May 1968.

And so it was at the corner of the street, in the Latin Quarter in Paris, that Félix Guattari appeared. Until then, Félix had worked on the unconscious, referring explicitly to Lacan. He had, however, at that time, begun to break away from the master. Finding inspiration in the experiments he undertook with Tosquelles (who had likewise worked for a long time with Fanon) and above all with Oury, at the La Borde clinic and in institutional psychotherapy groups, Guattari ceased to believe that it was possible to isolate the unconscious in language or to structure it along signifying horizons. The unconscious is, on the contrary, linked to the whole social, economic and political domain. The objects of desire are determined as a reality that is coextensive with the social domain (and thus with the one defined by political economy). They are shown to be a transversal flux that invests and disinvests all relations – and it is here that the 'libido' appears, as such, the essence of desire and of sensuality. It is from this perspective that Guattari proposes the concept of 'desiring-machine'. It invests the chains of the signifier and of causality and breaks them apart, by freeing their latent potentialities.

Deleuze: 'I was working solely with concepts, rather timidly in fact. Felix had talked to me about what he was already calling "desiring machines": he had a whole theoretical and practical conception of the unconscious as a machine, of the schizophrenic unconscious. So I myself thought that he'd gone further than I had'.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, Félix brought much more than his critique of Lacanianism and his schizoanalytical inventions to his meeting with Deleuze. He brought – and it is here that he was ahead of Deleuze – the complexity of the work and the richness of the militant experience of the communist Left of the 1950s and 1960s. The 'desiring-machine' was born there, between the resistance to the nameless practices of the Komintern, and the brotherly fight with the insurgents of Algeria, in the communion between the workers' struggle and militant solidarity with Vietnam. It is at the heart of revolutionary practice that theory appears as schizoanalysis and group practice as 'mass analyser'. Much importance has been given to the fact that in this effort by Félix (taken up by Deleuze) one could find the radical critique of all dogmatic continuity in Marxist-Leninism (not to mention the conception of bureaucratic centralization and its repressive consequences). Not enough importance has been given to the evidence that, with them, and by analogy with what was produced by the Freudian school, if the

doctrinal 'third internationalism' freed, but above all castrated, revolutionary forces, it was then necessary to radicalize the violence of liberation and to push it towards a 'fatal solution'. In this episode there is more Marx, more Lenin than the arrogance of the history of philosophy would ever like to admit. It is not by chance that in 1990 Deleuze would write: 'I think Félix and I have remained Marxists'.<sup>8</sup> I would like to correct this, by interpreting it: I think that we have remained communist.

Let us return to *A-Ø*. The result of this is a revolutionary tendency that has nothing to do with resentment, with dialectical necessity, with teleology anymore . . . an absolutely anti-Platonic work. To use the vocabulary of Popper, Gilles-felix is Plato's worst enemy. Eros is indeed desire. No transcendence is implied anymore. It is not half misery and half wealth, but the destruction of every medium or mediation, and the recognition of an imminent and constructive force. The Empedocles of Hölderlin triumphs over the flames of Etna. Communism is renewed as the desire of the masses.

All of this produces an exceptional book, in the proper sense of the term, a political book. The subtitle is *Capitalism and Schizophrenia Volume 1*. It is a programme that will be completed ten years later with *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia Volume 2 (ATP)*, Gilles-felix's masterpiece. In *A-Ø*, there is already a profusion of new concepts as well as old concepts that are turned around: desiring machines, bodies without organs, lines of flight, nomad, machinic, full bodies, decoding, immanence, consistency, transversality, refrain, signifier/non-signifier, flux, deterritorialization, reterritorialization, molar and molecular, and so on. But as in every great political work, one fundamental concept is constantly developed: power is not order but productivity – power, as in Spinozist politics; the 'body without organs', again as in Spinoza ('After all, is not Spinoza's *Ethics* the great book of the *BwO?*').<sup>9</sup> The anti-Hobbes blossomed here, in a communist season.

Starting from these beginnings, then, there is a re-reading of universal history, a re-reading starting from the organization of power: the primitive age, despotism, capitalist society. I must confess, to my great embarrassment, that the first time I read *A-Ø* I wondered if, in those chapters, the authors were not going mad. Today, reading them again (and this is what I suggest to my own readers), I cannot avoid recognizing that those points of view are extraordinarily current and that they establish concepts such as the globalization of capital, the flexibility of movements of the workforce and the development of machines of domination on the global horizon which have become banal. And even more current is the resistance proposed by Gilles-felix in this new field of analysis and struggle.



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*A-Œ* is at the same time both a reversal of dialectical Marxism and a reversal of Freudianism; it is also the reversal of the Freudo-Marxism which flourished at the time, that of Herbert Marcuse among others, established during a moment of thinking in 1968. It was a shameful Hegelianism, a determinism of alienation and repression which left hardly any option that was not mystical or aesthetic: one-dimensional man. Liberation and repression were the two key concepts of Freudo-Marxism: if repression was necessary, liberation became superhuman. Psychoanalysis – even Lacanian psychoanalysis – spoke the language of the great repression linked to the Oedipus complex and to the signifying chain. And the Marxists were unable to imagine a revolution as anything other than a way of reorganizing productive forces. In view of these vulgates, *A-Œ* makes everything break apart: there was no reason to want a nice proletarian normalization, but instead what should have been sought was a creative principle in the maddest madness, that is, schizophrenia. But are we not all schizophrenics? It was the founding doubt proposed.

It is not that there is no longer any reason to resist, nor that the concept of struggle has lost its meaning. But their programme and their object were profoundly modified: they were re-centred on the question of subjections, with all that they imply, the concept of production of subjectivity. All of this referred back to a new phase of analysis of capital, to that phase which has become current and necessary today, that phase whose point of departure is the definition of the predominance of immaterial capital. Consequently, it is impossible today to understand the structure of work without *A-Œ*. Indeed, politicians and intellectuals do not understand it today any more than they did in the past, and they rack their brains trying to grasp work as a signifier. But it is the opposite: what is work other than the expression of a desire? And what is exploitation other than the control of desire?

From that point, we can see in *A-Œ* the first ‘new’ philosophy, born of the conjuncture of May 1968, but, of course, not in the sense of the ‘new philosophers’. *A-Œ* showed that May 1968 was not the end of a period, but rather the beginning of another phase. And the effects of *A-Œ* continued: in anti-psychiatry and feminist milieus; but they also contributed to the constitution of this sort of common philosophy, a certain ethical intelligence, through which the critique of contemporary society has been formulated since.

How would it be possible, today, to think without knowing that the imperial machines that dominate us are made fragile by always more strongly subjectified unconscious investments? And how would it be possible to resist if we did not know that the ‘naked full body’, the ‘body

without organs', can be set against the over-codification of territories by the despotic machine? How could we react in an ethical way if, after the death of Man, we were not capable of building a new humanism that would be antagonistic towards the cynicism and the piety of capital? '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 . . . This age of cynicism is that of the accumulation of capital'.<sup>10</sup> And how would it be possible to hope if we did not know that nomadism, hybridization and mutation invest the bodies of the multitude and create a generation of barbarians who are stronger than any lord?

*A-Ø* is, thus, not only the event of May 1968 but also the point at which the critique of structures of modernity tends to turn into a critique of the postmodern: not in the weak sense, as the dominant ideology has presented the concept, but rather through the insurrectional figure which has begun to attack the empire of globalization. Postmodern, like that new world of production and its antagonisms, like the mobility and violence of powerful subjectivities which inhabit it and which construct places of singularity like a genuine counter-empire of desire.

After *A-Ø*, two conceptual characters begin to incarnate this strong post-modern along the path taken by Gilles-felix: Kafka and Coluche. Kafka or Coluche are interchangeable characters on the radiant path of desire traced out by Deleuze and Guattari against the new forms of subjection put in place by the 1970s, at the time of the movement's defeat and afterwards. They are genuine 'intercessors' who open up words, who split things open 'to free the earth's vectors'.<sup>11</sup> Our two friends were working on *A Thousand Plateaus* at this time; Kafka and Coluche henceforth become the 'heroes of post-structuralism' – the Jew who understands the impossibility of speaking German or Czech, the Italian who understands the impossibility of speaking French, and both of them experiment with the impossibility of not speaking; and yet, 'creation occurs in bottlenecks'.<sup>12</sup>

But the real bottleneck is political, the politics that the 1980s prefigured and which takes form in the weak [form of the] postmodern, in which any grip on the ontological level loses its potential and in which control passes, here, through the rhetoric of 'human rights', and there, through the failure of 'real socialism', to act in the overflowing globalization. Only the madness of Kafka or the gibes of Coluche could succeed in demystifying this machine of sadness; with them desire is dressed up or metamorphosed to produce some truth – in a theatrical yet ontological way – on this new stage of the absurd.

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We are, then, in an intermediary situation, between *A-Œ* (and its violent claiming of the libido) and *ATP*: how can ontological substance be given to desire? The theatrical *monstruum* introduces metamorphoses, where metamorphosis begins to appear as an ontological procedure of desire. And we need these very monsters, which embody the field of immanence and give reality to the arborescences of desiring rhizomes.

Is it possible to give ontological substance to desire? It is by this conjecture and by their positive reply to the question that Gilles and Félix wrote *ATP*. That is, 'Of the Ontology of Desire', or 'Of Desire as Metamorphosis'. A gallery of *monstrua* marks the passage to the postmodern: it is these that we must face. How? By recognizing them as such, by resisting, by putting their machine out of order. But above all, by laughing about it. 'Of Laughter' – this is what we could call the introduction to *ATP*. Bakhtin, one of Gilles and Félix's favourite authors, had already understood this when he looked for the surplus of life which gives meaning to language, in the terrestrial, and even better, in the belly of the human. This place remains essential for anyone who crosses either the desert or chaos, or who experiences institutions or prison, the history of philosophy or psychoanalysis, political economy or theology. And if he still has some breath left in him, he laughs about all of this. To laugh is to detach oneself, to take some distance, 'I laugh therefore I am'. It is above all through his laughter that we identify the conceptual character; the surveying [*survol*] is always ironic. Thus, sad powers can be definitively overcome.

Laughter grasps the gap between the signifier and the non-signifier and highlights the gap between structure and desire – but this gap is not only epistemological, it is invested with desire; it is, therefore, real – ontological and powerful, as *A-Œ* showed us. This is where *ATP* took root, working precisely on this gap, revealing its power, by proceeding towards a first ontological construction. An ontology 'from the bottom up', that is resolutely anti-Platonist, not analytic but synthesizing, not a deduction but an induction, an ontology of metamorphoses. Therefore, a political work, for as much as politics is defined as ontological, as it always is by Gilles-felix, or, better, as intervention in being to identify within it another virtual form (which is always possible). Thus, *ATP* is 'entirely a work of political philosophy'.

Earlier we alluded to three fundamental political problems proposed by *A-Œ*: (1) a reflection on the object of social struggles, that is, from the struggle against exploitation to the struggle against subjection; (2) a shifting of the system of transformation from centrality to multiplicity; (3) anticipation of the deterritorialization of movements, that is, the critique of spaces of power (Nation-State) and the imperial perspective. Each of these questions traverses the field of analysis of *ATP*.

It is with the theory of expression and of assemblages that the theme of subjection is proposed. The plane of consistency of expression proposed here is in fact coextensive with that of the production of subjectivity. Singularity is thus the *primum* and the whole machinic process can be followed only around its deployment. Being, and history, too, are thus conceived as production and the products of subjective assemblages. The theme of 'exploitation', which always implies an 'outside' that determines it, is thus found to be emptied of all consistency, unless it is reformulated with pertinence inside the rapport between subjectivities and signs of power [*puissance*].

The shifting of the revolutionary apparatus from centrality to multiplicity is proposed through the theory of the rhizome and of networks. It is the rhizome that dominates space. The rhizome is a force, a phylum that opens onto a horizon of uncontrollable arborescence – and, in this process, singularity is increasingly singularized. We thereby find ourselves immersed in a group of systems that produce signs, and that are constantly changing. Becoming is the result of the innovation which arises from the magma of expression, and in a way, it is the solution to the war, but with the fact that situations of conflict are nonetheless re-opened. It is only by confronting this context and by re-appropriating it that transformation becomes possible.

Finally, in this field in which all subjectivities and all events have genealogy as their framework, all determined space is broken. There is only a single surface before us: a surface full of anfractuosités, of ruptures, of constructions and of reconstructions; a permanently folded and refolded territory. One single direction, one single teleology: the growing abstraction of relations, which combines with the complexity of arborescences, with the development of rhizomes, and with the expansion of conflicts. The old categories of sovereignty (but also the class struggle on the national scale) are completely outmoded here. It is a new world that is described. A postmodern that is absolute, neither weak nor smooth, nor one-dimensional – quite the contrary, it is a world of caves, of folds, of ruptures, of reconstructions, where subjectivity is applied to understanding above all its own transformation, its shifting, where the highest abstraction reigns. And this abstract field is the field of a new desire.

But *ATP* is not only the renewal, the development, the great panorama of this sketch of the postmodern that we already find in *A-Œ*. In this scenario, *ATP* is above all attached to the subjectification of resistant singularities. *ATP* finds its specific dimension by transforming this description into a perspective of rupture: that is, by building the war machine that dissolves phenomenology in ontology and models ontology on pragmatic mechanisms of production of subjectivity.

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Pragmatics and micro-politics find themselves constituted in nomadology. This means that the horizon of war is delimited by pragmatic powers. The historical world, constituted in terms of a geology of action, emerges from a geology of morals, a properly untiring and unceasing morality. Produced from conflicting arborescences, subjectivities are nomad, that is, free and dynamic. As we know, subjectivities are organized through machinic assemblages – thus, as war machines. War machines represent the molecular tissue of the human universe. Ethics, politics, sciences of the mind, become one and the same thing here: war machines interpret the project, and constitute the human world, by discriminating between desire and anti-desire, between freedom and necessity. And once again it is rhizomes and arborescences – but given meaning. It is choice in war that determines the meaning of historicity. But what is meaning on this completely immanent horizon, on this absolutely non-teleological stage? It is the expression of desire; it is the enunciation and organization of desire as event, as discrimination against all transcendence, as hostility towards any blocking of becoming. Politically, the war machine is defined as positivity because it poses itself against the state. Deleuze-Guattari reinvented the sciences of the mind, while attacking the last vestiges of historicism, of Hegelianism and their conception of a mind that is sublimated in the State. The molecular order, facing the state, and in particular facing the state of late capitalism, spontaneously organizes a molar system, and it necessarily becomes an opposition force: society against the State, or better, all desiring subjectivities and their infinite arborescences, on the nomad rhythm of their arrival, against any fixed, centralizing and castrating machine. In reality, it is only from the pragmatic point of view that we can grasp and appreciate the subjectivity and the meaning of historicity: the point of view that subtends nomadology is a genuine ‘philosophy of praxis’. Being nomad in the order of produced and fixed history means constantly producing machinic assemblages of enunciation that open onto new rhizomatic arborescences, and that purely and simply constitute the real. Politics thus becomes the setting up of micro-assemblages, the construction of molecular networks that allow desire to be deployed and, by means of a permanent movement, make up the matter of pragmatics. Pragmatics *in* micro-politics and *of* micro-politics is the only operative point of view for historicity: pragmatics as praxis of desire, micro-politics as the terrain of subjectivity, a terrain that is constantly travelled across and is to be travelled across indefinitely. Neither this alternation between points of view nor this convergence of constructive determinations is ever at rest. The aim of the molar order is to absorb the force of desire and to remodel the systems with the sole aim of blocking the pragmatic flux of the molecular.

However, the molecular flux is indiscernible, seeking constantly to shake up the systems of blockage and to open the way to historicity. But what is revolution? It is to make an event of this infinite process. The political argument of *ATP* is that which makes the molecular system of desires resist the molar order, avoid it, circumvent it and flee from it. The state is neither reformed nor destroyed: the only possible way to destroy it is to flee from it. A vanishing line or line of flight, organized by the creativity of desire, by the molecular infinite movement of subjects, by a pragmatics reinvented in each instant. Revolution is the ontological event of refusal and the actualization of its infinite power.

*ATP* constructs the terrain on which the materialism of the twenty-first century is redefined. *What Is Philosophy?*, the pedagogical essay published by Deleuze-Guattari in 1991, as an appendix to *ATP*, sheds light on this subject. This synergy of analyses of science, philosophy and art, which was inexhaustibly deployed in *ATP* with an exuberance worthy of the ontological matter studied, is here transformed into a pedagogical illustration, a vulgarizing of the conceptual mechanisms that are at the basis of *ATP*'s process of exposition. In this popularizing essay, methodological, theoretical and practical functions are defined with ultimate clarity. We believe it is possible to identify here (in *ATP* seen via the pedagogical essay) the fundamental elements of renewal of historical materialism, according to the new dimensions of the development of capitalism, that is the maximum plane of abstraction (the 'real subsumption' of society in capital) to which it leads and on which social struggles today are reformulated. Without forgetting that, in Gilles-felix's philosophy of the sciences of the mind as well as in historical materialism, we find the same ethical and political demand for liberation of human power. What then is the productive context in which we evolve and starting from which historical materialism can and must be renewed as the basis of the sciences of the mind? What is the fabric that underlies this manifesto?

*ATP* offers an explicit answer to this question. Throughout the range and complexity of the book's analyses, it sketches that very plane that Marx tendentially identified in his 'Fragment on machines' in the *Grundrisse*, and that he defined as the society of the 'General Intellect'. It is a plane upon which the interaction between man and machine, society and capital, has become so narrow that the exploitation of paid work, work that is material and quantifiable in time, becomes obsolete, incapable of determining a valorization, the miserable basis of exploitation facing the power of new social, intellectual and scientific forces upon which the production of riches and the reproduction of society leans exclusively. *ATP* registers the realization of the tendency analysed by Marx and develops historical

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materialism from inside this new society. It makes an attempt therefore at the construction of this new subject that reveals the power of work, which is at the same time social, intellectual and scientific. A subject-machine that is also a productive force; a plural and disseminated subject that nonetheless becomes unified in the constitutive drive of the new being – and vice versa, and in every sense. What is fundamental here is the total dislocation of the valorization of production, in the passage from the sphere of direct material exploitation to that of political domination (over social interaction between the development of collective subjectivity and intellectual and scientific power of production). In this dislocation, social interactivity is itself subjected to the molar contradiction of domination, and it is also exploited: but antagonism is carried to its highest level, it acts by means of a paradoxical implication of the exploited subject. Confronting Foucault's analyses of power, Deleuze highlights the passage from 'disciplinary society' to 'the society of control', a fundamental characteristic of the contemporary State-form. Today, in the context to which *ATP* refers, domination, while remaining permanent, is as abstract as it is parasitical and empty. Carried to its highest degree, the antagonism is emptied as such, and 'social command' becomes useless. The control of productive society is therefore an immediate mystification: it no longer even has the dignity that the function of organization had taken on – in a way co-natural with the figure of the exploiter – in disciplinary society and the disciplinary State-form. If this is so, the productive work of the new social subject is at once revolutionary, always liberated and innovative. It is on this basis that historical materialism is renewed, implicitly in the phenomenology of *ATP*, explicitly in the methodology elaborated in *What Is Philosophy?*

Above all, historical materialism is a science. The pedagogical opus-cule tells us that scientific activity is formed from 'partial observers' that assemble 'functions' on 'planes of reference'. Can historical materialism be anything other than what promotes the 'proletarian point of view' and what makes the critique of contradictions the plane of reference? Or anything other than the shifting of a partial subject at the centre of a tendency that materially translates a grid for reading the real? And in this instance, that of capitalist development as a global referent for all the contradictions that determine the movement of abstract work? The plane of reference is still the world of real subsumption, of the complete submission of society to capital. Work is the rhizome that produces the real, which is the passage of the molecular order to the molar order in the course of development, which irresistibly crosses war and which – in war – defines liberation. The plane of reference is the *Umwelt* of social work and of its contradictions.

Philosophy's place is there – to the extent that it is pragmatic, ethical and political. The 'partial observer' of science becomes the 'conceptual persona' of philosophy. Can this conceptual persona be anything other than the new figure of the proletariat, the *General Intellect* as subversion – that is, a new figure of the proletariat which is all the more reunified as social and intellectual power of production as it is diffuse in space (a Spinozist 'multitude' in the proper sense of the term)? The philosophy of Deleuze-Guattari mimes the new reality of the modern proletariat, gives emphasis to the figure of its necessary subversion. On the one hand therefore, the conceptual persona duplicates the real, makes it appear in its conflicting dynamism and in the realization of its tendential movement. On the other hand, by presenting itself as desire, as unmanageable utopian production, the proletarian conceptual persona makes an implacable and permanent break with all the material references to which it is subjected. The 'plane of immanence' which philosophy constructs is a permanent insurrectional project, operated through an absolute surveying [*survol*] of the real, by the radical untimeliness of the contact between molecular order and molar order, by the untimely actuality of resistance.

Art (for there is also an art of revolutionary thought) collaborates with this dynamic of transformation and of subversion of the concept in an essential way, by composing the different planes of the imaginary and by referring them constantly to the urgency of praxis.

The didactic outline of *What Is Philosophy?* highlights the guiding themes constructed in the Dionysian phenomenology of *ATP*. But with what richness! What I mean is that the bringing together of the two works is not at all an identification, as though the second were only a chapter of the first. On the contrary, it is a matter of marking the differences, which are all to the advantage of *ATP*. For *ATP* (in spite of the functional reduction that we have made of it in our demonstration) does not constitute only a phenomenology of an extraordinary richness, of the conceptual persona of the *General Intellect* – half machine, half subject, entirely machine, entirely subject. *ATP* also constitutes a revolutionary experience. Through the re-exhibition of this extraordinary casuistry that only the great revolutionary episodes are able to propose, we find assembled both the 'years of desire' and the *Erlebnisse* of 'changing life' which followed 1968. It is said that there exists no book that retraces 68 – but this is not true. That book is *ATP*. It is the historical materialism in actuality of our epoch; it is the equivalent of Marx's *The Class Struggles in France*. If the text never ends, never satisfies itself with definitive conclusions, this is because (as it is with its equivalent in Marx's thought) it brings out a new subject whose mechanism of formation is unfinished, but which has already acquired



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its consistency in the plurality of realized micro- and macro-experiments, ethico-political experiments, that are in every case meaningful. *ATP* is the drive of a collective body, of a thousand singular bodies. The politics expressed here concerns the communism of the Spinozist *multitudo*, that of the devastating mobility of subjects on the stage of the recently constituted global market, that of the most radical democracy (of all subjects, including the insane), directed like a weapon against the state, the great organizer of the exploitation of workers, of the disciplining of the mad, of the control of the *General Intellect*. *ATP* makes explicit reference to the diffuse and autonomous social struggles of women, of young people, of workers, of homosexuals, of dropouts, of immigrants . . . from a perspective in which all the walls have already fallen down. This richness of movement constitutes the framework in which the scientific point of view and the definitive construction of the concept become possible. For this concept is an event, and the system of concepts is the fracture of the geology of action through a genealogy of desire-event.

The conditions of reconstruction of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, from the perspective of a theory of expression and in the framework of a historicity that is at the same time the movement of being and the point of incidence of the subject, are thus given. Here is one example: the treatment reserved for the history of philosophy in *ATP* and in *What Is Philosophy?* and the methodological hypotheses which are developed there. The historiographic continuity of history and of philosophy is dissolved here, as is its ontic teleology – philosophical historicity is thus treated simply as historicity, understood as a singular confrontation between thought and the current question of being. The history of philosophy itself can only be understood, can only be reconstructed, as event, as untimeliness or as present inactuality [*inactualité présente*]. Philosophy is always a Spinozist *scholium* of the deployment of the real. The outline of the sciences of the mind would therefore always be horizontal, interdisciplinary, articulated on the event, stratified by the interrelations of its multiple elements. But where is the past and what produced it? In fact, the rhizome of the present and of creativity is opposed by machinic phyla, which are both results and residues of the past at the same time. But the science of the mind is born where those machinic phyla are consumed in the determination of a new creation, or a new event. Material determinations, their accumulation, and the opaque base of the past make up a dead ensemble that only living work revives and that reinvents the new machines of subjectivity. When this does not take place, the past is dead, and is even our prison. *ATP* is the materialist theory of socialized work [*le travail social*], understood as a creative event of the thousand subjects that open up to the present reality

on the basis of a machinic conditioning that this same work has produced and that only living and current work can valorize anew.

If vitalism thus revised, if the theory of expression and absolute immanentism are at the basis of the reconstruction of the sciences of the mind, then what, on the contrary, allows us, from this perspective, not to get lost once again in scepticism or in some form of weak reading of value? Nothing is further from *ATP* than the temptation to make some element of the internal process, even being itself, absolute, to avoid relativist drifts. However, what allows the sciences of the mind to be reborn, to renew the logical and ethical power of materialism, is the concept of surface, of ontology open to historicity, taken as present subjectivity. Let us look back for a moment: when Heidegger posed the ineluctable reversal of the ontic into ontology, of historiography into historicity, he at the same time made this reversal the logical rupture of the refusal of fate, the only signification of what already exists. The Heideggerian operation constitutes a blocking of life. It is an extreme pushing of the metaphysical approach towards a point of arrival. Heidegger is a Job who, contrary to what happens to Job in the Bible, seeing God, remains blind. In *ATP*, on the contrary, seeing God, in the Spinozist manner, means to effectuate once again the methodological reversal of the ontic into the ontological, in a new perception of being – of open being. Not to reaffirm God, but to exclude Him definitively, not to grasp an absolute, but to consider *omnino absoluta* the construction of being: from the work of singularity, operating in human work. Rhizomatics, the sciences of man, centred on the present, can be reconstructed. The sciences and thus the planes of reference, philosophy and thus the planes of consistence, the sciences of man and thus the convergence of these approaches, approximations of the event, ethical charges that traverse ontological machines, subjective assemblages that are more and more abstract.

Ten years later, we can still read *ATP* as a fully operational phenomenology of the present; but it is above all necessary to see in it the first philosophy of the postmodern. A philosophy which, plunging its roots into the alternative, immanentist, materialist option of modernity, proposes the bases that make it possible to reconstruct the sciences of the mind. And because *Geist* is brain, and because the ‘brain’ has become (as Marx foresaw, with the crisis of capitalistic, transcendentalist and idealist modernity) *General Intellect*, *ATP* announces the rebirth of an historical materialism worthy of our era. The latter awaits the revolutionary event that will identify it.

At this point all that is left for us to do is to ask ourselves how, throughout their work, the different positions of the two authors were able to

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coexist? How was the thought of each able to nourish itself from the meeting of their singularities?

Nobody could deny that their philosophical positions were different. We have already spoken about the discordance between their paths when they first met, of the difference in their methodological routes and of their different disciplines. These differences remained and each of us, even while reading their works written together, can recognize passages that belong to different fields. And even towards the end of their collaboration (and of their life) the differences were never attenuated. Ever since his book *The Fold* – and he also highlighted it in his collection of *Essays Critical and Clinical* – Deleuze has brought to the surface that Bergsonian ascendancy of his thought, which on other occasions had either been forgotten or else left in silence. As for Guattari, in *Cartographies schizoanalytiques* and in *Chaosmosis*, he seems to set off once again, on the adventure of the seeker of signs in the realm of the unconscious – that a permanent nostalgia for his early research on autism brought to light at every moment – and to the wild experience of crafting new words: an avid internal impulse wishing to decipher the link between *parole* (speech) and dream which is constantly manifested. But to my mind, none of this has any importance – except for those historians of philosophy who, like parochial thinkers, always try to separate Deleuze from Guattari to save the former from the abyss into which Félix pushes him and to reinsert him in the sacred history of philosophy. However this little game is practically of no interest because with Gilles-felix it is impossible to establish a distinction on the level of thought; the differences feed the unity, critique and the clinic act according to the same system. In the Homeric poems who can separate Achilles from Ulysses? ‘If the hero of the Iliad is a hero of form and thus of force, the hero of the Odyssey is a hero of the event and thus of intelligence’.<sup>13</sup> Who could separate Ulysses/Gilles from Achilles/Félix? Furthermore, we could not even distinguish them because the path they have taken together is a prophetic path – and I mean ‘prophetic’ in Spinoza’s sense of the term, that is, something that resembles the action of ‘he who creates a people’. In these three or four books that together they left to us, they created a people of concepts which create a split with the present and prefigure the future; they constructed systems that allow language to move within being; and above all they reopened ontology to politics. Thus, utopia began to live in the pragmatism of desire and the joy of the construction of being in thought. Thus, the result of Gilles-felix’s path together is a desiring multitude, which is no longer ‘city’, nor ‘people’ nor ‘democracy’, nor ‘constitutional state’, but precisely multitude, a prophetic people. To conclude, let us look at the

world around us and contemplate the misery of contemporary politics as philosophers and let us do what 'Gilles-felix' did: let us laugh, with the laughter of Pantagruel.

*Translated from French by Shane Lillis  
and revised by Andrew Goffey*

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This essay first appeared, under the title 'Gilles-felix', in Alliez É., Cohen-Levinas, D., and Proust, F. (1998), 'Gilles Deleuze. Immanence et vie, Actes du Colloque organisé par le Collège International de Philosophie (25–27 Janvier 1997)'. Special issue of the journal *Rue Descartes*, 20. Published in book form in 2006 by PUF.
- <sup>2</sup> Deleuze, G. (1995), *Negotiations*. Translated by M. Joughin. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 5.
- <sup>3</sup> Deleuze, G., and Parnet, C. (1987), *Dialogues*. Translated by H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam. London: Athlone, p. 61.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.
- <sup>5</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1983), *Anti-Oedipus*. Translated by R. Hurley, M. Seem and H. Lane. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press. Hereafter referred to as *A-Œ*.
- <sup>6</sup> See Foucault, M. (1977), 'Theatrum Philosophicum', in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*. Translated by D. Bouchard and S. Simon. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 196 [translation modified].
- <sup>7</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, op. cit. p. 13.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.
- <sup>9</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1987), *A Thousand Plateaus*. Translated by B. Massumi. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, p. 171. Hereafter referred to as *ATP*.
- <sup>10</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit p. 225.
- <sup>11</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, op. cit. p. 134.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133 [translation modified].
- <sup>13</sup> Diano, C. (1994), *Forme et évènement*. Paris: Editions de l'Eclat, p. 49.

## CHAPTER 11

### A Schizoanalytic Knight on the Chessboard of Politics<sup>1</sup>

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Anne Sauvagnargues

Throughout his life Félix Guattari worked on preventing the identification of subjectivity with a personal identity, and on replacing the classical subject – conceived as a closed, monadic person – with modes of collective and political subjectification. He proposed rethinking the ensemble of productions of subjectivity from a clinical angle, and re-evaluating them as a function of their capacity to promote spaces of freedom. In doing so he carries out a singular philosophical undertaking, one indissociable from a critical practice that he called schizoanalysis.

Doubtless he was not the only thinker of the post-war generations to make the subject the result of a social production, an interpellation: Lacan and Althusser, Deleuze and Foucault also pushed their theoretical advances in this direction. But Guattari proceeded to the dissolution of every individual conception of the subject, following a political and analytic axis which is irreducible to the propositions of Lacan, from whom he very clearly kept his distance, or to those of Deleuze, with whom he developed a fine collective oeuvre, in friendship and generosity. In reality, Guattari opens up a problematic field with entirely new and singular conceptual operators, which conjugate the contributions of Marx, Sartre and Lacan.

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How is one to describe these productions of subjectivity? Such is the problem that Guattari deals with in *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*,<sup>2</sup> and it is especially valid for current capitalistic production, for the sociopolitical

analysis of the present. It is a matter of making oneself capable of countering the harmful effects of the dominant system, or of ecologically stimulating its beneficial aspects. Subjectivity – an unconscious collective production for which he reserved the term ‘collective assemblage’ – must in every case be understood as plural, heterogeneous and machinal [*machinale*].

The whole problem towards which the final part of his oeuvre converges is that of a re-singularization of the productions of subjectivity that we undergo, without always decoding or inflecting them correctly. The most urgent task concerns the analysis of machines for the production of subjectivity that are active in our society. Since the end of the 1970s, we have been subjected to Integrated World Capitalism (IWC),<sup>3</sup> the latest avatar of globalized post-industrial capitalism, which decentres the nuclei of power of structures productive of goods and services, to move them towards structures that produce signs, the control of information (media, advertising, opinion polls) and subjective codings, which Guattari called ‘semiotics’.<sup>4</sup>

This ambitious programme comprises a whole new political history of social assemblages, considered from the point of view of their semiotic codings, insofar as they concern earlier formations, whether capitalist or not, as much as contemporary formations, with their specific alloy of economic, legal, technico-scientific semiotics, which produced their specific subjective effects with their own tools.<sup>5</sup> This analysis of the current phase of capitalism led Guattari to theorize the subjective and cognitive capital of societies in relation to the Earth, in its factual and singular existence. Human history doesn’t concern the spiritual odyssey of the mind but rather the adventure of the planet. Following Bateson, Guattari opens thinking onto ecology, freeing the latter of its grumpy and backward-looking connotation of the preservation of nature, to open it up to a veritable clinical analysis of culture, with the *Three Ecologies* in 1989, an ethics of the Earth able to arrange the ecology of social bodies with that of mental states and environmental apparatuses.<sup>6</sup>

This diagnostic function is characteristic of the theoretical operations of Félix Guattari, veritable takeovers [*coups de force*] which leap and shift from one theoretical domain to another, like a knight on a chessboard. It entails a new description of theory, but also a new practice of science, which derives from Guattari’s conception of transversality, which he presented very early on – in 1964 – as the discursive complement to his therapeutic approach. It forms the spearhead of his theoretical offensive. Concepts and practices have to give up the discourse of the Master, the universalist ambition of stable, fixed, static doctrines. There are no

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universal concepts, only theoretical takeovers that respond to practical necessities and are produced in the interstices of fields of knowledge, on the lines of their frontiers, their fracturing and renewal.

With Guattari, transversality first of all designates a practice, that of the type of organization (figure of a group) which individuates and organizes itself by avoiding the hierarchical, structuring and traditional connections of vertical submission and horizontal conjunction. Guattari opposes acephalous, transversal organization, which multiplies diagonal connections, to vertical layers (of the command–obedience type) and horizontal relays of the same order (which also suppose the existence of hierarchized levels). He does so with the strategic goal of thwarting power formations that so easily betray ‘groups and groupuscules’. Practically, it is a matter of thwarting power formations, theoretically, it is a matter of revoking their two guiding concepts: that of sovereign centralization, justifying the exercise of power in the form of domination, and that of totalization, the belief determining the exercise of domination, as that is what presides over the figure of the sole, central, unifying and centralizing power. In other words, groups resisting oppression, and especially organizations on the left, are not the last to reintroduce into their mode of functioning the elements of domination that they apparently aimed to combat. Guattari draws from this an operative distinction between subjugated groups – groups that function hierarchically – and subject groups – groupuscules attempting the transversal path, capable of producing themselves in a singular mode, avoiding the deathlike effect of rigid hierarchies.<sup>7</sup>

By means of this analysis of the power phenomena that work over subjugated groups, Guattari – in phase with the analyses of Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* – refuses the scheme of an auto-centred power, exercising its mastery starting from a centre of domination. In Guattari, the concept – formed on the basis of the practice of institutional analysis – is immediately political, but practically it concerns the political critique of the psychiatric institution, whose apparent therapeutic vocation is necessarily impeded by the phenomena of practical and theoretical domination (the institution of madness and the domination of the universal signifier), which work it over in reality. That Guattari, taught by Freud and especially Lacan, contests the representation of an individual-power, given as a constituted entity, is not at all surprising. One equally sees very well how his analytic training led him to contest the unitary representation of the Self, and hence that of the person-subject. But he draws from this critique of the subject a directly political consequence: if the critique of individuation is valid for physical, psychic or collective individuals, it is valid as much for the organization of the social as for biological and material bodies. As

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a consequence, it contests the very principle of a-centred organization and carries the critique of the unity of the self onto the political terrain of a stake of power, at the heart of theory. The polemic against the representation of the subject as person is immediately ramified in the form of a political critique of centred organizations and of an epistemological critique of authoritarian conceptions of theory.

Elaborated as a practical concept, to elaborate a psychotherapeutic solution, the concept of transversality becomes a war machine against rational and centred epistemologies. By applying a political critique to the epistemology of rational systems, Guattari contests the unitary, homogeneous and authoritarian model of the organization, preferring to it a type of system with multiple, a-centred connections, the allure of which – the tendency to privilege margins and hybridizations – testifies to a new alliance between practice and theory. There is nothing surprising about that, as the concept of transversality itself results from a hybridization of discourses, from a pragmatic concept of theory, tool box and bricolage, which favours the junction between the critique of the theory of the Ego (psychoanalysis) and group practices (the sociology of power), from an operative militant standpoint. ‘That is how one can succeed in transmuting concepts with different origins: psychoanalytical, philosophical, etc.’, not with the factitious humanist concern of completing a general panorama of culture, but in a guerrilla assault, seeking how ‘to get out when one has been cornered in a given place’. That is how Guattari posits philosophy, in terms that are simultaneously analytic, political and ethical.<sup>8</sup>

### SCHIZOANALYSIS

The ‘encounter of psychoanalyst and militant’<sup>9</sup> in Guattari leads him to carry out the analysis of relations of power and of desire at the heart of a theory of the social. Thought is practical; it begins from real struggles. This immersion in the historical milieu is signalled by the use of a political lexicon, even in his research on psychotherapy. His interest in the critique of psychiatry and of the institution of the asylum responds to the militant and anti-establishment injunction that feeds the upheaval of May 1968, which he actively participates in, and which, like a detonator, precipitates his speculative thinking towards the real movements, the political tensions and the concrete reality of madness in its institutional universe.

Guattari describes himself as torn between his ‘diverse places’, a Marxist militant of a Trotskyist descent, Freudo–Lacanian at work, Sartrean in the



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evening when he tries to theorize. His disparate references join together the militant practice of leftist organizations, institutional psychotherapy with Jean Oury at La Borde,<sup>10</sup> and analysis in the Lacanian camp, Lacan – whose seminars constitute for him, as for the whole of his generation, a decisive experimental theoretical laboratory – being his analyst. At the same time, this heterogeneity guarantees that it demands the transversality of his approach.

Engaged with Jean Oury in the application of analysis to the treatment of psychotics at the La Borde clinic, in the framework of institutional therapy deriving from Tosquelles,<sup>11</sup> Guattari conceives the unconscious as a desiring machine, plugged directly into the political and historical dimension of the social. This grafting of psychoanalysis and politics, in keeping with Tosquelles's position, which demanded that one walk with one Freudian foot and one Marxist foot, inscribes him in the current of Freudo-Marxist endeavours. But by giving back to the unconscious its historical viewpoints and by reformulating the theses of analysis from a Lacanian point of view, Guattari oriented himself very early on towards a radical critique of psychoanalysis, a double movement of the transformation of analytic practice and of an interest in schizophrenia, which results in the invention of schizoanalysis and equally develops in the work that he undertakes with Deleuze, from *Anti-Oedipus* to *A Thousand Plateaus*.

Guattari gets this double direction from institutional psychotherapy, which makes the care of patients pass via reform of the institutions – in the first instance, asylums – of which they are the subjects. Reducing the gap between the private dimension of the Freudian unconscious and the sociopolitical constitution of subjects, institutional psychotherapy acts on actual institutions by reforming therapeutic structures. Its political dimension opposes it to hospital psychiatry, to the administrative, legal and medical management of the abnormal in the social body. But it also opposes it to psychoanalysis, to the analytic theory of the processes of constitution of consciousness from unconscious fluxes.

There is actually an analysis of the *psyche* of a Marxist inspiration here. It posits consciousness in its material dimension of social production and historicizes the Freudian unconscious, whose economy of drives ought to be directly connected to social apparatuses instead of being kept in a separate sphere, an 'empire in an empire'. It assigns an experimental value to madness, maladjustment and psychosis, which contains a political stake and a value for culture. Following Foucault and the analysis of madness as the limit of reason, for Guattari, schizophrenia becomes the operator of a transformation of the *socius* that reflects back on modes of social subjectification.

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To the extent that it designates the hyletic process that every society gives form to, schizophrenia in the normal sense doesn't only indicate a pathology of capitalism: it becomes necessary to correlate sociopolitical analysis with a psychoanalysis that has exchanged its reference to the unitary and personal *psyche* for a hyletic flux that requires that one give it the name *schizoanalysis*.

Schizophrenia, then, becomes the generic name for diverse processes of subjectification. That explains why schizoanalysis, precisely because it concerns the political analysis of mechanisms of production of subjectivity, and singularly those of capitalism,<sup>12</sup> first engages [in] a critique of psychoanalysis, of its restricted conception of the unconscious, abusively reduced to a psychic entity or to the linguistic signifier.<sup>13</sup>

However, schizophrenia continues to designate the suffering schizophrenic that Guattari intends to relieve. It then takes on the sense of the maladjustment of a hyletic matter to its being given social form, and thereby signals a failure or a residual incapacity of a different type, that of the mad catatonic, locked up in hospital. Schizophrenia thus occupies two levels: as the matrix of processes of subjectification it designates the hyletic flux offering itself up to all social forming; as the halting of the socialization process it designates the individual misfortune of the schizophrenic, refractory to oedipalization. But one really must see – and this is what complicates the analysis – that one cannot take the schizophrenic state as a pathological individual given. It indicates the reaction between a state of desire and the social status that is conferred on it by the type of 'care' imposed on the schizophrenic.

An actual schizophrenic is not a nature but an unfortunate social actor, or, rather, the disarmed patient who suffers from 'the alienation which, not the schizophrenic, but the people for whom it is such a big deal simply to play a game of cards in the presence of patients, find themselves in',<sup>14</sup> the psychiatric institution in its entirety. One must thus clearly distinguish between schizophrenia as a process of desire and a generic name for hyletic flux, and the interned schizophrenic, the *patient* produced by the repressive asylum; 'therapy' and social normalization.

### THE PRIMACY OF PSYCHOSIS: LACAN AND GUATTARI

To grasp the status of desire in Guattari, to bring out the very particular junction that he establishes between the clinic and social critique, and to understand how he can make schizophrenia the name of a desiring

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machine that is irreducible to Oedipal social forms, one must return to the status of psychosis, and to the decisive impetus of Lacan. It is because he was trained by Lacan that Guattari carries desire onto an impersonal plane that is immediately collective and that allows him to avoid any synthesis between individual desire and social repression (or liberation), such as one finds in Marcuse or Reich.

Guattari retains from Lacan the idea that there is no individual desire, that the libido remains an indeterminate flux as long as it is not articulated trans-individually, even if, for him, this trans-individual dimension does not consist of a symbolic signifier, but arises from real relations of production that vary for each society. There is, then, in Guattari a Lacano-Marxism which distinguishes him from previous attempts at joining psychoanalysis and Marxism and at contesting the social order although he retains the motive. He categorically refuses the principle of an opposition between the individual and social coding. Desire is not independent from a relation between hyletic fluxes and always social desiring machines, it is always relative to the social, and does not arise from a private, individual or personal dimension that one could refer back to the superstructure of mentalities and unconscious representations. If there is desire, it belongs to the regime of production, to the infrastructure, to the material plane of the effective relations of social production.

This is because for Guattari, desire is not the hyletic flux itself, but, in conformity with Lacan, the assemblage of this flux. It is simply that their positions on this assemblage differ: a cutting [*coupure*] of the flux for both, but in the form of a symbolic structuration by the inscription of the signifier for Lacan, and in the form of desiring machines through a-signifying and material coding for Guattari. To grasp the divergence between the two authors and to understand how desire does not play on the level of individual spontaneity, but at the level of the machine that 'cuts', one must go further into the Lacanian theory of psychosis, returning to its epistemological status and its articulation of desire to the law – for which Guattari substitutes the social production of desiring machines.

From Lacan's teaching Guattari retains the idea that psychosis is not a deficiency but a process that is perfectly independent of neurotic repression and better fitted to informing us about the unconscious syntheses constitutive of the subject. Psychosis formed the problematic field in which Lacan himself situated his 'return to Freud' as a 'beyond Freud' on the following two points: the signifying assemblage as symbolic order; the place of the father as major signifier, the Big Other that founds the order of the symbolic. Guattari recognizes the importance of this theoretical position, but displaces and criticizes it in turn.

Doubtless Lacan contributes to a detaching of the modes of production of subjectivity from any individual reference to an act of consciousness. By articulating the Freudian unconscious with the findings of linguistics so as to accentuate the rhetorical character of the primary process, Lacan divests the symbolic plane of any subjective intentionality. The unconscious symptom, the unconscious in its entirety, must be said to be 'structured like a language',<sup>15</sup> which doesn't signify that Lacan applies analyses of a linguistic type to the rhetoric of the unconscious, but on the contrary, that the distinction between signifier and signified in Saussure or the theory of shifters in Jespersen and Jakobson, can only become effective on the basis of the position of the unconscious, which is constitutive of differences in language [*langue*] in the same way as it is of the structuration of the subject.<sup>16</sup>

Lacan takes hold of the Saussurean analysis of the signifier and signified, and its take-up by Lévi-Strauss:<sup>17</sup> the signified is a continuous amorphous flux that can only make sense from the moment that a signifier cuts into and confers on it a binary term-to-term coupling with relative signifiers, to which the chain of signifieds starts to correspond. The major signifier cuts into the amorphous mass of floating signifieds, constituting them in their position as signified, and becomes 'the point around which all concrete analysis of discourse must be exercised': Lacan calls it the quilting point [*point de capiton*], in a Platonic reference to the weaving of discourse – not that produced by the action of the craft of weaving (weaving of threads, continuous weft) but that of the mattress maker, who pins down the continuous stuffing from the outside with a tufting button, and violently imprints on it this extrinsic topological structure that twists it in a fold of determinate subjectification.

This quilting point-signifier exceeds the linguistic domain of reference: it is non-linguistic, extra-propositional, psychic and it is from this quilting point that the floating lines of signifieds and symbolic signifiers – among whose numbers figure linguistic signs (among others) – can be articulated. Lacan calls it the major signifier, the phallus or the Name-of-the-Father.

Guattari takes up this quilting point but transforms it decisively by upsetting the ordered chain of signifiers and signifieds and refusing the authoritarian break/cut [*coupure*] of the major signifier, for which he humorously substitutes the transversal minority of the desiring machine, which also cuts into fluxes but which doesn't function in the signifying order of the symbolic or discourse. Hence the opposition between signifying, structural semiologies and a-signifying machinic semiotics: Guattari opposes on a term-by-term basis, the machine, in the social order of production, and structure, in the symbolic order of signifiante. In sum, Guattari does

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to Lacan what Marx once did to Hegel: he stands Lacanian theory on its feet by inverting it, from logic to the real.

The decisive point of Lacanian theory concerns this doubling of the signifier, which appears once in the chain of relative signifiers and once as the Big Other signifier. This is the second point on which Lacan's return to Freud constitutes a transformation of Freudian theory. Lacan draws Freud in the direction of a preponderance of the paternal function, a guarantor of the difference of the sexes, the bearer of the phallus. The phallus is not anatomical but signifying. In sum, Lacan transposes the second Freudian topic (id, ego, superego), which is too anatomical for his taste, because it poses objects that are already totalized onto a structural grid that allows the parental instances of identification (the superego) to be transformed into signifying tensors, logical and topological places that converge on the place of the phallus. This is the great inheritance of Freud that his epigones covered up, according to Lacan, because they were focused on object relations, when they weren't transforming analysis into an exercise in the adaptation of the ego. For Lacan, it is a matter of avoiding the object relation, which privileges the imaginary position of the phantasm and is organized around the mother-child relationship. Only the phallic function allows this. Now this analysis of the paternal function and the doubling of the signifier, accompanied by the absolute transcendence of the major signifier, is made possible by psychosis, thereby implying the relativity of the Oedipus complex, which is only applicable to neurosis.

The analysis of psychosis reveals this quilting point. In other words, psychosis reveals, much more clearly than neurosis, the structuring virtue of a signifier that is irreducible to the order of discourse, but it indicates it negatively. Psychosis is the structure in which the introduction of the signifier is lacking. What is remarkable about psychosis is that structuring by the signifier doesn't play its role. What psychotic foreclosure reveals is that the quilting point has blown up. There is no better way to say that the Oedipus complex affects the imaginary signifying structuring of the neurotic and doesn't concern psychotic structuring. Lacan's return to Freud proves to go well 'beyond Freud', and on this point, Guattari is Lacan's successor, not Freud's.

Hence, two consequences that Guattari very forcefully draws. In the first place, this primacy of the signifier entails the relativity of the Oedipus complex, because it is only functional as a-signifying structure, for a subject already articulated by triangulation and submitted to a symbolic order and not for a foreclosed subject. Oedipus is not operative for psychoses, thereby signalling a historicity of the Oedipus complex that Guattari makes

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reflect on the signifier as such. Guattari very clearly draws from Lacan's teachings the necessity of a critique of the Oedipus complex, which he carries out with Deleuze in *Anti-Oedipus* in 1972.

### MARX AGAINST LACAN: THE PRIMACY OF THE SIGNIFIER AND THE PLACE OF THE FATHER AS FIGURES OF SOCIAL DOMINATION

But, in pursuing this Lacanian impulse, Guattari separates from Lacan and criticizes the signifier itself. The phallus imposes the law that stimulates and animates desire. Lacan only reduced the imaginary complex of imaginary individual desire so as to posit the symbolic signifier as phallus in the order of the difference of the sexes, as symbolic Law in the imaginary order of desire. Oedipus only has significance because it sketches out obliquely the place of the father, not that of a man, but that of the major signifier, which pins down the floating chains of signifiers and signifieds to its structuring lack, arranging desire in the signifying lack of the law and imposes the symbolic order which is lacking on the psychotic. Lacan suggested that Freud discovers the Oedipus complex everywhere because 'the notion of father, closely related to that of the fear of God, gives him the most palpable element in experience of what I've called the quilting point between the signifier and signified'.<sup>18</sup>

Guattari retains the urgency of criticizing Oedipus from Lacan, but he gives a radically different version of it. Lacan reduces Oedipus to a misleading step in the symbolic topology of the constitution of the subject. Guattari understands it as a liberation of desire, something that would make Lacan smile if Guattari had not, like him, proposed that there exists no spontaneity of desire, no desire anterior to its social coding. But on this coding, as with the transcendence of the law that this liberation takes aim at, the two authors differ. The very choice of a clinical teaching oriented towards paranoia for Lacan or oriented towards schizophrenic depersonalization for Guattari, the militant distrust with regard to the power of the law already indicates this. Guattari senses the urgency of getting away from the Lacanian position. But Guattari does not limit himself to the Deleuzian critique of the law as transcendent invariant and of desire as lack; he understands the law as a positive structure of social domination, a point of view that is missing in Deleuze. It is with Marx and his critique of the law and of right that one must resume the critique of the signifier. From this angle, the literary analysis of Kafka doesn't only imply a

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contestation of the Oedipal status of literature – Kafka, like Proust, both appearing as major Oedipal figures, who one very freely pushes back into a neurotic relation to the law – and a refusal of all Oedipalization of literature or of art. Above all, it implies a direct confrontation with the transcendent position of Lacanian law, and the term ‘minor literature’ envelops a critique of the major signifier.

Lacan thus plays an important role in the theory of the desiring machine: it allows the object of desire to be thought as a non-human “object”, heterogeneous to the person, below the minimal conditions of identity, escaping the intersubjective coordinates as well as the world of meanings’.<sup>19</sup> The second pole, that of the Big Other signifier, contributes to the theory of the desiring machine, which takes up directly its function of cutting and coding flows as *constitutive* operations of desire. But the signifier big A should be the object of the same critique as was valid for Oedipal structuring, its socio-cultural anchoring is comparable to that which allowed Lacan to mock Oedipus.<sup>20</sup> It should, thus, be the object of the same materialist and political examination, instead of being posited as an expression of culture. Lacan seemed entirely disposed to doing so,<sup>21</sup> but he didn’t go in this direction, which places the unconscious in relation to history and to politics.

Guattari thus criticizes Lacan starting from a Marxist analysis. The signifier is also historical. It is not given for all time to the human constitution. Lacan is indeed right to treat the Oedipus complex as an imaginary myth, and he doesn’t have any difficulty in destroying the pretensions of the phantasm to the benefit of the (collective) symbolic structure. But by introducing the phallus as an ahistorical major signifier, he doesn’t notice that he erects an even more destructive myth. The efficacy of the phallus projects the existence of an analogous complex onto every subject, one which doesn’t tell stories about parental figures (marrying Jocasta, killing Laius – and reading Sophocles) any more but about castration, the anxiety of producing oneself as a socially sexed being, a story that inscribes desire in the law: no transcendent phallus without castration anxiety. Castration anxiety is treated by Guattari as a complex that is comparable to that of Oedipus. Having accomplished the reduction of the phallus to the castration complex, the critique that was valid for the Oedipus complex as imaginary identifier cannot fail to apply to the castration complex, and Lacan didn’t follow his analysis through to the end.

Secondly, according to Guattari, the Signifier now acquires an historically determined inscription: it arises from despotic social formations and its very historicity invalidates Freudian analysis, which isn’t valid for a universal psychism but only for the determinate social formations

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of fin de siècle Austria. Reducing Oedipus to the literate phantasm of a Viennese bourgeois, Guattari has no difficulty pursuing the analysis and invalidating the major Signifier as an even more archaic structure of domination. It is henceforth its role as marker of power – a consideration that is entirely absent from Lacan’s work – that will polarize the critics. The Lacanian determination of psychosis as foreclosure didn’t only serve to reveal the insufficiencies of Oedipal psychoanalysis: in a ricochet movement it not only condemns the primacy of the letter and of the law that theoretically qualifies foreclosure but above all its interpretative usage. It leads Guattari to separate from psychoanalysis once and for all.<sup>22</sup>

### DESIRING MACHINES AND THE REFUSAL OF FREUDO-MARXISM

Guattari brings about a double displacement: he opposes the machine of real production to symbolic structure, and among social realities he distinguishes between productive realities (machines) and produced realities (structure). Then he qualifies structures as oppressive and assigns an ‘anti-productive’ value to the results produced. The libidinal reality of desire classifies it among the productive forces, whereas the family, a social form historically linked to property, is not only an anti-productive residue but another structure considered to be oppressive. It doesn’t make do with forming desire, but subjugates it within a form of social domination. In this way, Guattari transforms Lacanian psychoanalysis using Marx, as structure arises from the anti-productive forces of subjugation and the unconscious from the real forces of production, but at the same time it is opposed to the Marxist vulgate of a separation between material infrastructures and superstructural representations.

By separating subjectivity and individual existence, Guattari couples Marx and Lacan in a singular manner. Subjectivity is not an ideational effect of the structural or signifying type, it is manufactured, it is machinal [*machinale*]. Such is the polemical meaning of the concept of machine that Guattari proposes very early on, and which he opposes to Lacanian structure, conferring on it a pragmatic effectiveness that is clearly politically engaged, in conformity with his militant activity. It is not a question for him of restricting himself to the intellectual plane. Deleuze attaches a ‘particular importance’ to this text, which signals the failing of the concept of structure, that is, its abstract formalism.<sup>23</sup>

It is in this way that Guattari can dissociate the concepts of individual and subjectivity. Corporeal individuals undergo modes of social



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subjectification, such that the body of a material individual is always the seat of different, disparate, heterogeneous, often rival modes of subjectification, but which all compete with more or less harmony or inadequacy in the production of social individuals. The individual is, thus, the result of modes of subjective social production. The example of language shows this abundantly: all human individuals-subjects socialized by language [*langage*] have undergone the coding of a system of language [*langue*], which subsists externally to individuals, even if it doesn't exist outside speakers and the ensemble of material apparatuses that code it. The written traces, thanks to which it subsists, are deprived of living speakers. With regard to unconscious subjective formation the individual-subject thus finds itself placed in the position of a result, a product or a *terminal*, to borrow the fine expression that Guattari utilizes in 1984. If the individual really exists corporeally in an 'individual' manner, it only functions through the trans-individual programmes that inform it, educate it, govern it, and with which it interacts. The individual must be conceived as a terminal. The individual terminal is thus a consumer of subjectivity. The relation between the individual and the unconscious social mode of subjectivity should be conceived in the following manner: the individual is modelled by modes of subjective production and these latter are not at all ideational, as the structuralists pretend. They cannot be summed up as effects of language, signification, nor even as signifiers, but they are of the order of a-signifying material production. 'Subjectivity is manufactured just as energy, electricity, and aluminium are'.<sup>24</sup>

*Translated by Andrew Goffey*

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This essay first appeared in *Multitudes* 38 under the title 'Un cavalier schizoanalytique sur le plateau de jeu d'échecs politiques'.
- <sup>2</sup> Guattari, F. (1989), *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*. Paris: Galilée.
- <sup>3</sup> Guattari, F., and Rolnik, S. (2007), *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*. Translated by K. Clapshow and B. Holmes. New York: Semiotext(e).
- <sup>4</sup> Guattari, F. (2000), *The Three Ecologies*. Translated by I. Pindar and P. Sutton. London: Athlone, p. 48.
- <sup>5</sup> Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, op. cit. p. 48; Deleuze, G., Guattari, F., and Foucault, M. (1973), 'Chapitre V: Le Discours du plan' in Fourquet F. and Murard L. (eds) *Les Equipements du pouvoirs, Recherches*, 13: 183–6.
- <sup>6</sup> Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, op. cit. p. 41.
- <sup>7</sup> Guattari, F. (1972), 'La psychotherapieinstitutionnelle' in *Psychanalyse et transversalité*. Paris: François Maspero, p. 42.

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- <sup>8</sup> Guattari, 'La psychothérapie institutionnelle', op. cit. pp. 42–5.
- <sup>9</sup> Deleuze, G. (1972), 'Trois problèmes de groupe', Preface to Guattari *Psychanalyse et transversalité*. op. cit. This preface was translated as 'Three Group-related Problems' in Deleuze, G. (2004), *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*. New York: Semiotext(e) [TN].
- <sup>10</sup> On La Borde, see 'Sur les rapports infirmiers-médecins' in Guattari *Psychanalyse et transversalité*. op. cit. pp. 7–17; Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*. op. cit. pp. 135–7; Oury, J., Guattari, F., and Tosquelles F. (1985), *Pratique de l'Institutionnel et politique*. Vigneux: Matrice Editions.
- <sup>11</sup> It was François Tosquelles who, forced to Saint-Alban by the war but engaged in resistance, founded institutional psychotherapy in 1940. Ten years later, after the fragmenting of the movement, which had been somewhat artificially held together by the experience of the Resistance and the Liberation, Jean Oury set up at La Borde and took up Tosquelles's experiment again, around a modest group of 40 or so people, including residents. On institutional psychoanalysis, see Oury, Guattari and Tosquelles, *Pratique de l'Institutionnel et politique*. op. cit. On La Borde, see Polack, J-C., and Sivadon-Sabourin, D. (1976), *La Borde ou le droit à la folie*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy.
- <sup>12</sup> *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* are both subtitled 'Capitalism and Schizophrenia'.
- <sup>13</sup> Guattari, F. (1986), *Les Années d'hiver 1980–1985*. Paris: Barrault, p. 274.
- <sup>14</sup> Guattari, in 'Capitalism and Schizophrenia', an interview with Vittorio Marchetti, in Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1952–1974*, op. cit. p. 241.
- <sup>15</sup> Lacan, J. (1977), 'The Field and Function of Language', in *Ecrits: A Selection*. Translated by A. Sheridan. London: Routledge, p. 65.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202 [and footnote n. 1 p. 245, TN].
- <sup>17</sup> Lévi-Strauss, C. (1987), *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*. Translated by F. Baker. London: Routledge.
- <sup>18</sup> Lacan, J. (1993), *The Psychoses. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book III 1955–1956*. Translated by R. Grigg. Routledge: London, p. 268.
- <sup>19</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1983). *Anti-Oedipus*. Translated by R. Hurley, M. Seem and H. Lane. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, p. 360.
- <sup>20</sup> 'Yet the Oedipus complex cannot run indefinitely forms of society that are more and more losing the sense of tragedy'. Lacan *Ecrits* op. cit. p. 343.
- <sup>21</sup> Lacan, *The Psychoses*, op. cit. pp. 269–70.
- <sup>22</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. p. 90.
- <sup>23</sup> Deleuze, 'Three Group-related Problems', art. cit. p. 203.
- <sup>24</sup> Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 47.

## CHAPTER 12

### Repression, Expression, Depression<sup>1</sup>

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Franco 'Bifo' Berardi

#### REPRESSION

##### *The Repression – Liberation Dialectic*

The cultural landscape of the 1980s, which was organized around the notion of anti-authoritarianism, is dominated by a dialectic of liberation and repression. In a Hegelian and Marxist context, the historical process is interpreted as a process of the liberation of a possibility for expression that is included in the present order of things, while remaining compressed, perverted and, properly speaking, repressed.

The general curve of the process is sketched out according to the Hegelian architecture of negation and of the negation of negation. Even Freud's thought, while coming from an epistemic field with an entirely different origin, conceives the historical process beginning from a notion of repression. In his essay *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud can thus write:

At this point we cannot fail to be struck by the similarity between the process of civilisation and the libidinal development of the individual. Other instincts are induced to displace the conditions for their satisfaction, to lead them into other paths. In most cases this process coincides with that of the *sublimation* (of instinctual aims) with which we are familiar, but in some it can be differentiated from it . . . it is impossible to overlook the extent to which civilisation is built up upon a renunciation of instinct, how much it presupposes precisely the non-satisfaction (by suppression, repression or some other means?) of powerful instincts. This 'cultural frustration' dominates the large field of social relationships between human beings. As we already know, it is the cause of the hostility against which all civilisations have to struggle.<sup>2</sup>

Freud, therefore, considers repression as an irreducible element, one that constitutes social bonds. Halfway through the twentieth century, between the 1930s and the 1960s, European critical thought questioned the link between the anthropological dimension of alienation and the historical dimension of liberation. The historical theses presented by Sartre in *The Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960), a work directly influenced by Freud's thought, recognized the anthropologically constitutive (and, therefore, irreducible) character of alienation. Marxist thought, in its historicist and dialectical version, considers alienation on the contrary as a historically determined phenomenon that one could overcome through the abolition of capitalist social relations. In 1929, Freud anticipated the elements of this debate, by criticizing the naivety of dialectical thinking:

The communists believe that they have found the path to deliverance from our evils. According to them, man is wholly good and is well-disposed to his neighbour; but the institution of private property has corrupted his nature . . . If private property were abolished, all wealth held in common, and everyone allowed to share in the enjoyment of it, ill-will and hostility would disappear among men . . . I have no concern with any economic criticisms of the communist system; I cannot enquire into whether the abolition of private property is expedient or advantageous. But I am able to recognise that the psychological premises on which the system is based are an untenable illusion.<sup>3</sup>

I don't wish to reopen the debate between existentialism and historicism, or between Marxism and psychoanalysis, which concerns the historians of the twentieth century. Above all, I would like to signal the existence of a common philosophical context, a shared analytic premise, constituted by the identification of modern civilization as a system founded on repression.

For Freud, modern capitalism, like every system of civilization, is founded on the necessary repression of individual libido, and on an organization that passes via the sublimation of collective libido. This intuition is stated in a different fashion by twentieth-century thinking. In the field of Freudian psychoanalysis, this discontent is constitutive and irreducible, and psychoanalytic therapy sets out to cure the neuroses that it produces through language and through anamnesis. The philosophical tradition of existentialism shares this Freudian conviction concerning the unsurpassable dimension of constitutive alienation and the repression of the libido and of the drives. On the contrary, in the context of anti-authoritarian Marxist thinking, repression must be considered a socially determined

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form that social action can eliminate by liberating the productive and desiring energies that the real dynamic of society contains in itself.

The anti-authoritarian thinking of the 1970s arises from the Freudian conceptual sphere, even if it enlarges it and overturns its historical horizon. In *Eros and Civilization* Marcuse proclaims the actuality of a liberation of collective Eros. Repression reduces the potentialities of technology and of knowledge and prevents them from being fully deployed, but critical subjectivity develops its action precisely by creating the conditions of possibility for libidinal potentialities and the potentialities productive of society to be fully expressed and for the pleasure principle to be entirely realized.

The analysis of modern society is mixed together with the description of disciplinary apparatuses that orientate social institutions and public discourse towards repression. The recent publication of Foucault's course at the Collège de France in 1979 (and particularly the publication of his lectures devoted to the birth of biopolitics<sup>4</sup>) obliges us to displace the centre of Foucault's thinking from repressive discipline to the creation of apparatuses of biopolitical control, even if in the works devoted to the genealogy of modernity (notably *The History of Madness*, *The Birth of the Clinic* and *Discipline and Punish*) Foucault remains faithful to the 'repressive' paradigm in his own way.

### *Desiring Thought*

Despite the openly proclaimed abandoning of the Freudian field in *Anti-Oedipus*, even Deleuze and Guattari occupy the theoretical field opened up by Freud in 1929 in *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Desire is the motor of the movement that traverses society as well as the trajectory of singularity, but desiring creativity must continuously confront the repressive war machines that capitalist society deploys in each niche of existence and in the imaginary. The Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of desire cannot be reduced to a reading of a 'repressive' type. In *Anti-Oedipus*, desire is opposed to lack. The lack on which dialectical philosophy was built, and on which the fortunes (or misfortunes) of twentieth-century politics were made, arises from dependency and not autonomy. Lack is a product of the economic, religious and psychiatric order.

Processes of erotic and political subjectification are not born out of lack but from desire as the locus of creation. From this point of view, Deleuze and Guattari allow us to understand that repression is only a projection of desire. Desire is not the manifestation of a structure, but it can create a thousand structures. Desire can crystallize structures, transform them into

obsessive refrains. Desire creates the traps that capture desire. And yet, in the analytic apparatus that is constituted through Foucault's genealogy and through Deleuzo-Guattarian creationism, it is a vision of subjectivity as a form of repressed desire which wins out over repressive social sublimation. An anti-repressive, or better still, an expressive vision.

The relationship between structure and desire is the essential element leading Guattarian schizoanalytic thinking out of the orbit of Lacanian Freudianism. Desire cannot be understood, starting from structure, as a possible variant that depends on the invariant of the psychic matheme. Creative desire produces infinite structures, and also those that function as repressive apparatuses, among others.

The notion of 'repression' doesn't play any role in the philosophical texts of Deleuze and Guattari, but defines the background for the reception of their thinking, as well as the effect that it produces in the context of anti-authoritarian culture. In the 1960s and 1970s the concept of repression persisted in all discourses with an anti-authoritarian inspiration. In this context, the political significance of desire is opposed to the repressive apparatuses. But this thinking often ended up becoming a conceptual and political trap. In 1977, for example, the Italian social movement (after the wave of arrests which followed the insurrection of the months of February and March) chose to unify around the theme of repression, with the rally that took place in Bologna in September. This was perhaps a conceptual error: by choosing the theme of repression as the principal subject of our discourse, we entered into the narrative machine of power, and we lost the capacity to imagine different forms of life, independent from power. But at the end of the twentieth century, every problematic of repression seemed to dissolve and disappear from the scene. The pathologies of our epoch are effectively no longer the neurotic pathologies produced by the repression of the libido, but rather the schizoid pathologies produced by the expressive explosion of *just do it*.

### *In the Sphere of Semiocapital*

Jean Baudrillard, whose name was for a long time a sort of taboo, offers a different perspective in the field of desiring thinking. In his work from the beginning of the 1970s (*The System of Objects*, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, *Requiem for the Media* and, finally, *Forget Foucault*) Baudrillard affirms that desire is the motor for the development of capital, that the ideology of liberation corresponds to the domination of the commodity, and that the new dimension of the imaginary is not that of repression but that of simulation, the proliferation of simulacra, of seduction. In

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expressive excess, Baudrillard identified the essential core of the overdose of the real: 'The Real is growing like the desert, "Welcome to the Desert of the Real". Illusion, dreams, passion, madness and drugs, but also artifice and simulacrum – these were reality's natural predators. They have all lost energy, as though struck down by some dark, incurable malady'.<sup>5</sup> Baudrillard anticipated a tendency which has been affirmed in the course of recent decades: in his analyses, simulation modifies the relationship between subject and object, by keeping the subject confined in the subaltern position of submitting to seduction. The actor is no longer the subject, but the object. As a consequence, the whole problematic of alienation, of repression and of the discontent that they produce, disappears.

In one of his last, and most frequently cited texts, devoted to disciplinary and control societies, Deleuze seems to call into question the conceptual architecture that the Foucauldian notion of discipline derives from and to take the same direction as that taken by Baudrillard since the start of the 1970s.<sup>6</sup> But I don't wish to compare the thinking of the simulacrum and the thinking of desire here (a comparison which is nevertheless worth pursuing). I would like instead to study the psychopathological background that begins to emerge in the years in which industrial society gives way to semiocapitalism, that is to say, to a capitalism based on immaterial labour and the explosion of the infosphere.

Overproduction is inherent in capitalist production, because the production of commodities does not respond to the logic of the real needs of humans, but to the abstract logic of the production of value. But in the sphere of semiocapitalism, overproduction is manifest specifically as semiotic overproduction: an infinite excess of signs circulates in the infosphere and individual and collective attention is saturated by it.

Baudrillard's intuition turned out to be significant in the long term. The essential pathology of the coming time is not produced by repression but by the drive to expression, by the generalized obligation to express. In the first video-electronic generation, the most widespread pathologies are not those of repression but those of hyper-expression.

When we take an interest in suffering in the present epoch, in the forms of discontent of the first network generation, we are no longer in the conceptual field described by Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents*. The Freudian vision posits a hidden dimension at the origin of pathology. Something is hidden, something disappears in repression, access to something is forbidden to us.

What seems evident today is the fact that at the origin of pathology, one no longer finds this hidden dimension, but rather hyper-vision, the excess of visibility, the explosion of the infosphere, the overloading of stimulation

produced by information. The technological and anthropological context starting from which we understand the genesis of contemporary psychopathologies is not that of repression but that of hyper-expression: disturbances of attention, dyslexia, panic. Pathologies that perhaps signal new modalities in the elaboration of information, but which for now are manifest in the form of suffering, discontent, marginality.

### EXPRESSION

#### *Expression, Proliferation, Cyberculture*

In *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*,<sup>7</sup> Deleuze introduces a new approach, situated outside and beyond the conceptual horizon of the dialectic or of Freudianism. In the introduction to his book, Deleuze interrogates the sense of expression: 'expression is, on the one hand an explication, an unfolding of what expresses itself, the One manifesting itself in the Many . . . Its multiple expression, on the other hand, involves Unity. The One remains involved in what expresses it, imprinted in what unfolds it, immanent in whatever manifests it: expression is in this respect an involvement.'<sup>8</sup>

Emanation and the development of something that is implicit, but also complication and creation. The notion of 'expression' is situated at the crossover of Spinozist notions of *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata* and constitutes an essential junction between Spinoza's thinking and that of Hegel. Hegel (as Deleuze recognizes in his introduction) considers expression to be a process through which something appears which cannot be reduced to *explicatio*, but which implies a *complicatio*, a novelty.

The question of expression is central in the Deleuzo-Guattarian thinking of creativity. In the text 'Millions and Millions of Potential Alices',<sup>9</sup> initially published as the introduction to the book *Radio Alice, Radio Libre*,<sup>10</sup> Félix Guattari wrote: 'imminent danger. Watch out! The slightest line of flight can make everything explode. Special surveillance of little perverse groups propelling words, turns of phrase and attitudes able to contaminate whole populations'.<sup>11</sup> The danger of which he was speaking was the danger that the liberation of expression constituted for power. Access to the media – to radio, offset printing, and to video – by a proliferating quantity of groupuscules, constituted the condition for an overthrowing of the powers that be: 'in Bologna and in Rome, the fires of a revolution that bears no relation to those that have hitherto disrupted history have been lit, a revolution that will not only sweep away capitalist regimes but the bastions of bureaucratic socialism too'.<sup>12</sup> Guattari is speaking here of proliferation: he



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was already thinking of a post-media era. In the 1970s and 1980s, when the media gained power over minds, Guattari envisaged a post-media era. By that he understood that, through the proliferation of collective assemblages of enunciation, multiplied and amplified by technology, the frontier between the universe of sources of information and the universe of reception was rapidly disappearing: 'Alice. Radio line of flight. Theory-life-practice-group-sex-solitude-machine-tenderness-caress assemblage'.<sup>13</sup>

In speaking of Radio Alice and of the explosions of creativity linked to the electric media of the period, which were in the process of becoming mass media, it is evident that Guattari clearly imagined the future of the network. The word 'network' had already been a part of Guattari's vocabulary for a long time, and when the free radios allowed the possibility of a proliferation of vectors of communication to be glimpsed, he saw in this proliferation a possible line of flight vis à vis all forms of power: not only the form of capitalism that existed at the time but equally diverse forms of bureaucratic socialism.

It is only today, more than 30 years afterwards, that one can understand just how right he was. Bureaucratic socialism in its various forms was disrupted and finally collapsed, thanks, precisely, to the proliferation of media, which set off an irresistible deterritorialization of the imaginary and the social. Even capitalism was disrupted by the proliferation of the media and the imaginary, but its reterritorializing power turned out to be infinitely superior to that of bureaucratic socialism, which collapsed, while liberal capitalism was reborn from its ashes with a renewed power and a multiplied capacity for expansion.

But if we want to understand how capitalism has been able to react to its political and cultural crisis, to the workers' struggle of the 1960s and 1970s, to the wave of refusal of work which traversed the global system of production of the time, we will have to deepen the problem of expression and the link between expression and repression. A social system founded on expression was in the process of taking form in the 1970s and 1980s, while a new assemblage of communication was beginning to appear, beginning with the popular diffusion of the tools of electronic communication: the screen, the radio, the computer, the video-camera.

In the 1990s, this technological assemblage will find its full expression in the construction of the internet, an industrial and economic – but also a creative, linguistic and expressive – production. Guattari had conceived the deployment of the network through the notion of proliferation and the idea of a post-media society, since the invention of the network exceeds the distinction of emission and reception (at least at a conceptual level, but also in a concrete fashion in its first phase).

*Power and Saturation*

A reterritorializing dynamic of capitalism, which codes fleeing segments according to the principles of value, competition and accumulation, corresponds to the powerful deterritorialization created by the network. Forms of power redefine themselves. They were organized as a function of the principle of repression, they now follow the principle of expression. If today, with several years distance, we observe the functioning of the forms of power that preceded the explosion of proliferating creativity and the functioning of those that followed it, we can see that they follow two entirely different models. We have passed from a form of power founded on consensus to another, founded on saturation.

Consensus-power presupposes the slow rhythm of the circulation of information: the flux of information advances slowly, crossing society in depth, fabricating consensus vis à vis fundamental statements of power, and violently represses demonstrations of opposition. The stake of this dynamic is the production of sense. In the sphere of saturation-power, sense no longer generates any conflict, because it is erased, forgotten, eliminated. The impossibility of elaborating sense is the foundation and the purpose of the proliferating organization of communication. The flux of information accelerates progressively, to the point of no longer reaching conscious awareness.

In an essay called 'Learner-based Listening and Technological Authenticity',<sup>14</sup> Richard Robin, a researcher at George Washington University, studied the effects of the acceleration of vocal utterance on listeners' understanding. Robin recorded radio broadcasts of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union in the dying years of socialist power and then recorded other broadcasts in the first years of Boris Yeltsin's Russia, in 1993. Listening to his recordings, he discovered that the speed of vocal utterance had doubled, shifting from three words a second in 1988 to six words a second in 1993. In between, there had been a shift from a regime founded on consensus, which imposes adhesion to the dominant sense and represses opposition, to a regime founded on the fragmenting of sense and the acceleration of the flux of enunciation.

In his study, Robin calculated the number of syllables pronounced every second and found that as the rhythm of vocal utterance accelerates, more syllables are pronounced every second and, subsequently, the amount of time for critical re-elaboration by the listener shrinks. The speed of the utterance and the quantity of signs transmitted in the unit of time determines the time available for a conscious re-elaboration of the message on the part of the listener.

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Robin's observation has very interesting consequences for understanding the passage from an authoritarian form of power founded on persuasion (like the totalitarianisms of the twentieth century) to a form of diffuse biopolitical power (like the contemporary info-cracy). Totalitarianisms are founded on consensus: the citizens must understand the president, the general, the 'Führer', the 'Secretary', the 'Duce'; only one source of information is authorized; dissident voices are censored. The info-cratic regime of semiocapital is, on the contrary, founded on an excess and an acceleration of fluxes of information, and makes sources of information proliferate to the point that they become undecipherable and insignificant.

This change implies a transformation of the pathologies linked to forms of power: if the predominant pathology in modern society was the neurosis produced by repression, today the most widespread pathologies have a psychotic character. The hyperstimulation of attention reduces the capacity for critical interpretation, but equally reduces the time available for understanding the other, the body of the other and his or her discourse, which endeavours to be understood with succeeding.

## DEPRESSION

### *Depression and Chaosis*

Why, at a certain moment, does sadness prevail, and why do the fragile architectures of collective happiness collapse, one after the other? That is the question that Félix Guattari asks himself on the last page of the last of his books, which appeared in 1992, shortly before his death:

In the fog and miasma that obscure our *fin de millennium*, the question of subjectivity is now returning as a leitmotiv. It is not a natural given, any more than air or water. How do we produce it, capture it, enrich it and permanently reinvent it in a way that renders it compatible with Universes of mutant value? How do we work for its liberation, that is, for its resingularisation?<sup>15</sup>

Some months earlier, in 1991, his penultimate book, written with Gilles Deleuze, *What Is Philosophy?* had been published.<sup>16</sup> These two books have many themes in common, especially those of chaos and of old age. It is a matter of two themes that are very close, as one might notice.

We require just a little order to protect us from chaos. Nothing is more painful, more distressing than a thought that escapes itself, than ideas that fly off, that disappear hardly formed, already eroded by forgetfulness or precipitated into others that we no longer master.<sup>17</sup>

Chaos takes hold when the world goes too quickly for our mind to appreciate its forms, to grasp its sense, when the flux is too intense and too rapid for it to be apprehended. Crushed by this speed, our mind is seized with panic, troubled by the uncontrolled movement of psychic energies that are a prelude to depression. In the introduction to *What Is Philosophy?*, a fantastic, wrenching book written on the edge of an abyss, Deleuze and Guattari evoke old age. Old age opens the doors to a chaomotic wisdom, one capable of elaborating, with all the necessary slowness, the infinite speed of fluxes. 'Chaos chaotises' and undoes all consistency in the infinite: the problem of philosophy is that of constructing planes of consistency without losing the infinity from out of which thinking materializes. The chaos of which it is a question here has a mental and physical existence:

Not only objective disconnections and disintegrations but an immense weariness results in sensations, which have now become woolly, letting escape the elements and vibrations it finds increasingly difficult to contract. Old age is this very weariness: then, there is either a fall into mental chaos outside of the plane of composition or a falling-back on ready-made opinions.<sup>18</sup>

Chaos is a milieu that is too complex for the interpretative grids available to us to decipher, in which fluxes that are too rapid for the mind to elaborate circulate. Subjectivity, or rather the process of subjectification, constantly confronts chaos. It is constituted precisely in this incessant confrontation with an infinite speed out of which the conscious organism draws the elements necessary for the creation of a *cosmos*, of a provisional, variable and singular order. But subjectivity doesn't simply choose the chaos that immobilizes it: chaos is an adversary, but equally an ally: 'It is as if the *struggle against chaos* does not take place without an affinity with the enemy'.<sup>19</sup>

How can one elaborate the infinite speed of fluxes without also suffering the effect of disaggregation produced by panic? Concepts, artistic forms, friendship are the operators of speed that allow us to understand what is infinitely rapid in slowness, without losing infinite complexity, without falling back on the banality of opinion, of communication, of redundancy.

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The process of subjectification produces the semiotic, artistic, emotional and political assemblages thanks to which the chaosmos becomes possible. For example, art creates semiotic apparatuses capable of translating the infinite speeds of the fluxes of the real into the slow rhythms of sensibility. Deleuze and Guattari call these sensible translators ‘chaoids’:

Art is not chaos but a composition of chaos that yields the vision or sensation, so that it constitutes, as Joyce says, a chaosmos, a composed chaos – neither foreseen nor preconceived. Art transforms chaotic variability into *chaoid* variety, as in El Greco’s black and green-grey conflagration, for example, or Turner’s golden conflagration, or de Staël’s red conflagration. Art struggles with chaos but it does so in order to render it sensory, even through the most charming character, the most enchanted landscape (Watteau).<sup>20</sup>

*Becoming subject* is not a natural process but it unfolds in a social, economic and mediatic context that is continually changing.

### *The Old Age of the World*

These two books appeared at the beginning of the 1990s, the years of passage beyond the modernity of the twentieth century. These years announce the epoch of the dissolution of the community of happiness and the formation of a new system of production in which the structures of solidarity disappear, the links of the world of the worker are destroyed by technical innovation, work becomes precarious and collective intelligence becomes the object of an ambiguous process of subjecting, one that is difficult to decipher.

It was in these years that Guattari once again confronted the problem of the production of subjectivity. Modernity constructed ‘chaoids’: tools for sensible, conceptual and political translation and transformation. As old age approaches, the two authors discover the process of dissolution of modern chaoids and perceive the signs of a new appearance of chaos. Perhaps their old age was the old age of the world? Demographers confirm for us that aging is the destiny of the planet. The demographic curve has already slowed down in its course. Fifty years ago, it was predicted that size of the human population would reach 12 billion, but we now know that it will not exceed 9 billion. The falling birth rate prevails in all regions of the planet, except in the Islamic world.

In the years that followed 1989, after the sudden and ephemeral hope for a period of world peace, and the equally sudden reappearance of war,

were the years of a dramatic, painful and obscure change. The carnage in ex-Yugoslavia, and the disappearance of the Soviet Union announced the return of a nationalism subsequently incarnated in the figure of Vladimir Putin. The fanaticism of Islamic fundamentalism was asserted as the political identity of a large part of the 'wretched of the earth'. The ecological catastrophe was announced as an inevitable prospect after the summit at Rio de Janeiro, when the American president, George Bush Sr. announced that the American way of life was non-negotiable. In these same years, Guattari registered an accumulation of signals that announced the barbarity of new forms of fascism and the new violence produced by the victory of capitalism on the planetary scale. The line of conceptual creation was displaced, fragmented and recomposed in new directions, often losing itself and becoming less directed and less recognizable.

Depression. One will not find this word in Guattari's texts. It remains in the margins as if it was a subject that was incompatible with the creative energy that animated his work, his research and his existence. But if one reads the last chapter of the last book co-authored by Deleuze and Guattari, one notices that it is a matter of a discourse on depression, on confusion, on the darkening horizon: one sees chaos emerge. Depression is the *bête noire* of modern culture, because youth and energy are the conditions for the unfolding of the history of modern culture, from *Sturm und Drang* in Romanticism to the revolutionary aspirations of anarchists and communists, the surges of nationalism in the nineteenth century and then the fascisms of the twentieth. Energy is the necessary premise for the machine of production and growth to function.

Perhaps today the moment has come to refound Utopia, which in modernity was always the expression of youth and energy. It is a matter of conceptualizing a 'senile' Utopia of slowness, of the abandoning of the economic paradigm of growth. Only by overturning the sense and rhythm of Utopia will it be possible to avoid the current aging of the world manifesting itself as depression.

Depression implies a change of speed. Only if language, culture and politics can interpret and translate into signs the slowing down that is necessary and urgently demanded by the psychic and social organism, will depression be able to evolve towards a new, happy form of exchange of human and world.

### *An Aesthetic of the Refrain*

*Chaosmosis* marks the beginning of a reflection that Guattari has left us as an inheritance so that we might continue to develop it. It concerns the

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creation of a singular *cosmos*, that is to say, the continual reconstruction of desiring energy beyond depression, beyond the obscure (but also illuminating) experience that it constitutes.

There is a form of truth in depression. And, in fact 'the *struggle against chaos* does not take place without an affinity with the enemy'. Depression is the vision of the abyss of the loss of sense and, like political creation, poetic creation and conceptual creation constitute the paths of 'chaosmotic' creation, as the construction of bridges over this abyss. Friendship, love, sharing and rebellion.

*Chaosmosis* is a book that endeavours to overcome chaos through creation, which seeks the practical levels (aesthetics, philosophy, schizoanalysis, politics) that might enable the singularization of chaos, the slowing down of its infinite speed. Philosophy creates concepts, and concepts are chaoids capable of cutting out a singular cosmos. Art, on the other hand, is a singular composition of chaos by the elaboration of forms, gestures, milieus that take on body concretely in the space of vision, communication, projection.

With the expression 'aesthetic paradigm', Guattari refers to the privileged position that sensibility has acquired in our epoch, as the exchanges of production and communication lose their materiality and emerge in the space of sensible projection. Aesthetics is the discipline that is interested in the syntony between the human and his or her milieu, a syntony that is troubled today by the excess of information, semiotic inflation, the saturation of all the recesses of attention and of consciousness. Art registers and signals these troubles, but it also goes looking for possible new modalities of becoming, and aesthetics appears at the same time as a diagnosis of the pollution of the psychic sphere and as a therapy for the relation between the organism and its world.

Guattari institutes a privileged link between the aesthetic and the psychotherapeutic dimensions. The problem of the relationship between chaos and the singularity of lived time thus becomes decisive. To cling to the temporal flux, the mind has to be able to construct its own temporalities: these singular temporalities, which enable us to orient ourselves, are called 'refrains'. The notion of the refrain takes us to the heart of the schizoanalytic project: the refrain is the singular temporality, the niche of individuation in which one can create a cosmos.

Philosophy, art and schizoanalysis are singular practices of chaosmotic creation, which make refrains that constitute the map of an existence emerge from infinite chaos. But refrains can 'harden', be transformed into semiotic, ritual, sexual, aesthetic or political obsessions. On the one hand, the refrain protects us from the chaotic current of the 'infosphere',

from the semiotic fluxes that carry us off like a storm: that is how one can construct one's own path, one's own sphere of signs, of affects, of sharing. But on the other hand, the refrain can become a cage, a rigid system of references and of obsessively repetitive existential paths.

Schizoanalysis intervenes at precisely these points of neurotic hardening of the refrain. Analysis here is no longer understood as the interpretation of symptoms and the search for a latent content that pre-exists the neurosis, but as the creation of new foci of attention, which can induce a bifurcation, a deviation of the path, a rupture of the closed circuit of obsessive repetition and open a new horizon of possibility for vision and for experience. *Chaosmosis* is situated in a historically precise dimension, that of the fog and miasma that began to spread at the start of the 1990s and which, today, a long time after, seems to have invaded every point of the infosphere, the atmosphere and the psychosphere.

It has become difficult, almost impossible, to breathe and we are effectively suffocating. One suffocates every day and the symptoms of this stifling are disseminated all along the paths of everyday life and the highways of planetary politics. We don't have much chance of getting out, and we know it. There aren't any trustworthy maps any more, there aren't any desirable destinations either. There is no alternative to capitalism: becoming semiocapitalism, it has swallowed not only forms of life but also thought, imagination and hope in the grinding machinery of exchange value.

Maybe we should put the theme of old age at the centre of our discourse, as Deleuze and Guattari do in the Introduction to *What Is Philosophy?* Old age is no longer a marginal and rare phenomenon, like it was in the times when the old man or old woman was considered the bearer of knowledge that was precious for humanity. Today, old age is becoming the tendentially dominant social condition, and at the same time, the condition that metaphorically expresses the depletion of energy that is hitting humanity. Libidinal energy diminishes when the world becomes too rapid for one to be able to apprehend it in the long times of emotion, and when entropy seizes hold of the cerebral tissue. The decline of libidinal energy and entropy are two phenomena that advance together. Alzheimer's disease becomes the metaphor for a future given over to forgetting, whereas the new video-electronic generations seem to have been swept away by whirlwinds of panic, and sunk into the spiral of depression.

The problem of sensibility is, then, confused with the problem of politics, and the redefinition of an ethical prospective cannot be dissociated from it. At the start of the new century, the end of modernity is revealed to be the end of humanist heritage. Hypercapitalism is in the process of



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distancing itself from the heritage of the West and its supposed 'values'. But the consequences of this phenomenon are terrible: capitalism without the heritage of the Renaissance and without the heritage of the Enlightenment is a regime of pure, unlimited, inhuman violence.

The mind must go to work in conditions of economic and existential precarity. The time of life is subjected to work by an action of fractalization of consciousness and experience which breaks the coherence of lived time. The psychosphere becomes the scene of a nightmare, and the link between human beings gives up its surface of humanism. The universality of modern reason gives way to a violent logic of belonging. For brains decomposing in the infosphere, God appears as the only path to salvation, transforming as always into an infernal trap. Religious fundamentalism and the cult of purity are mixed with ignorance and depression, and feed ethnocentrism and nationalism.

The global panorama islamizes [*s'islamise*] in different forms: submission becomes the dominant form of relation between individual and group. Whereas the collective dimension abandons all forms of desiring energy, and is reduced to a skeleton of fear and necessity, adhesion to the group becomes compulsive and obligatory. And conformism is the last shelter for souls without desire or autonomy.

## REPRESSION (AGAIN)

In July 1977, when in Italy hundreds of intellectuals, students, workers and young people were imprisoned, I fled to Paris and tried to organize a riposte with Félix Guattari. We decided then to organize a rally on repression, against repression for that September. It was an error. It was an error on my part most of all: by proposing this colloquium, I led my friend Félix astray, and together we shifted the discussion to a plane that, in the long term, proved harmful. Even if police repression had struck the popular movement, and even if the consequence of this repression was the appearance of terroristic impulses, which would subsequently be manifested in a disastrous fashion, we should not have focused our attention on the question of repression. We should have thought about the future potential that this movement bore within it, we should have foreseen the crises that were looming, and prepared the collective imagination for the technological and mediatic mutation that was going to come.

The situation of the time implied openings onto the future, and we have to recognize that this anti-repressive choice constituted a limitation of our

vision. Can we think of the future alternatives hidden in the folds of the past? In the month of July 1977, we wrote the text of an appeal against repression in Italy and against the 'historical compromise' between the PCI and the Christian Democrats. The appeal was signed by Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Philippe Sollers, Maria Antonietta Macciocchi and Jean-Paul Sartre, among others. In Italy it had a powerful effect, and the reaction of Italian intellectuals was divided. The opposition of intellectuals was manifest on an international level for the first time and opposed Western capitalism and Soviet oppression with the same force. For the last time, perhaps, the French appeal raised the question (that is so strictly linked to twentieth-century history) of the role of intellectuals in society.

The September rally was an event without any real consequences. Tens of thousands of people turned up in Bologna. There were enormous gatherings, colloquia and theatrical representations in the street, political meetings and concerts. It was an explosion of joy rather than rage, but in a certain sense it marked the end of the history of Italian movements and opened the phase of the drift into terrorism and of state action to crush dissident social forces. During the period of the rally, people turned up in Bologna almost in the expectation of a magic formula that might open up a new history, an egalitarian and libertarian history, one worthy of the future. Everyone was trying to avoid violence, catastrophe, isolation and the undoing of all solidarity. We didn't find the magic formula, and we know all the rest.

Capitalism's counter-offensive was imminent and in the years that followed it struck against the social composition of the working class on a planetary scale. The cultural counter-revolution was looming, and in the 1980s, it opened up the path to individualism, to heroin and to solitude.

In the reconstruction of events fabricated by journalists and historians, one ended up using the expression 'the years of lead' to refer to the 1970s in Italy, without making any distinction. But the years of rebellion and insurrection were not years of lead. One can only say that of the years that followed the defeat of the social movements and which erased the traces of this cultural explosion in the life of people and the city.

But the memory of these years has not been extinguished, because the hope for a world in which friendship prevails over competition, joy over oppression and boredom cannot be extinguished. That is why '77' is always on the horizon. It is the revolution to come.

*Translated from French by Andrew Goffey*

### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This text is a synthesis of three papers given at three successive conferences on the work and thought of Félix Guattari: at the Akademie der bildenden Künste, in Vienna on 4–5 May 2007; at the Université de Paris VIII on 15 March 2008; and at Middlesex University in London on the 17–18 April 2008.
- <sup>2</sup> Freud, S. (1999), *Civilisation and its Discontents*, in the *Standard Edition XXI*. London: Vintage, p. 97.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.
- <sup>4</sup> Foucault, M. (2008), *The Birth of Biopolitics. Lectures at the Collège de France 1978–1979*. Translated by Graham Burchell. London: Palgrave.
- <sup>5</sup> Baudrillard, J. (2005), *The Lucidity Pact or the Intelligence of Evil*. Translated by C. Turner. Oxford: Berg, p. 27.
- <sup>6</sup> ‘Postscript on Control Societies’ in Deleuze, G. (1995), *Negotiations 1972–1990*. Translated by M. Joughin. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 177–82.
- <sup>7</sup> Deleuze, G. (1990), *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*. Translated by M. Joughin. New York: Zone.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.
- <sup>9</sup> Guattari, F. (1977), ‘Des millions et millions d’Alice en puissance’, in *La Révolution moléculaire*. Paris: Recherches.
- <sup>10</sup> Guattari, F. (1977), ‘La laboratoire de sociologie de la connaissance’ in *Radio Alice Radio Libre*. Paris: Editions Jean-Pierre Delarge.
- <sup>11</sup> Guattari, ‘Des millions et millions d’Alice en puissance’, *op.cit.* p. 143.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.
- <sup>14</sup> Robin, R. (2007), ‘Learner-based Listening and Technological Authenticity’ in *Language Learning and Technology* 11.1: 109–15.
- <sup>15</sup> Guattari, F. (1995), *Chaosmosis. An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*. Translated by J. P. Bains and J. Pefanis. Sydney: Power Institute, p. 135.
- <sup>16</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1994), *What Is Philosophy?* Translated by H. Tomlinson and G. Burchell. London: Verso.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 204–5.

## **PART 4**

### Ethico-aesthetic Effects

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## CHAPTER 13

### From Aesthetic Autonomy to Autonomist Aesthetics: Art and Life in Guattari

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Stephen Zepke

Félix Guattari is a modern-day Nietzsche; his last work echoes Nietzsche's famous cry: 'Art and nothing but art! It is the great means of making life possible, the great seduction to life, the great stimulant of life'.<sup>1</sup> Deleuze argued that Nietzsche 'demands an aesthetics of creation' where artists are the 'inventors of new possibilities of life'.<sup>2</sup> It is in this sense that art has, according to Guattari, 'an eminent place' and 'privileged position'<sup>3</sup> in relation to philosophy, science and politics. Politics, Guattari complains, currently lacks the 'existential impact of art',<sup>4</sup> it doesn't have art's 'force for seizing the creative potentiality at the root of sensible finitude – "before" it is applied to works, philosophical concepts, scientific functions and mental and social objects'. It is this force 'which founds the new aesthetic paradigm'.<sup>5</sup> Art's 'existential impact' (Guattari says art 'grabs you by your throat') comes from expressing this productive power in the construction of new social and subjective realities. As a result, he tells us: 'Aesthetic machines offer us the most advanced models for resistance against the steamroller of capitalistic subjectivity'.<sup>6</sup> In fact, he goes even further: 'artists today', he claims, 'constitute the final lines along which primordial existential questions are folded'.<sup>7</sup> The primordial question for Guattari is the autonomous production of subjectivity beyond the capitalized territories to which it is assigned. In his late work, he argues that this production is primarily aesthetic, and that art offers us the model for its creation and proliferation.

Guattari's affirmation of aesthetic creation as the contemporary paradigm of political resistance draws on the Italian *autonomia* movement's struggle for autonomous production, but his interest in art and artists clearly departs from *autonomia's* emphasis on the worker and work as

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the subject and site of revolutionary practice. So, while Guattari follows *autonomia's* claim that capitalism subsumes all productive processes, he maintains that some 'psychotic' and 'unconscious' aspects of these production processes 'involve a dimension of autonomy of an aesthetic order'.<sup>8</sup> For Guattari, autonomous aesthetic production is an art-work, a process in which a sensation produces new forms of life 'before' being semiotized and subsumed by capitalism. As such, the art-work is a 'refusal of work' in the autonomist sense inasmuch as it resists being instrumentalized and exploited by art's institutions, but this is not a refusal of art per se, and in fact Guattari's affirmation of the autonomy of aesthetic production offers an alternative to the usual autonomist strategies of refusal and sabotage. Rather than an *exodus*, Guattari proposes a *proliferation*, and this, as we shall see, provides an alternative to that contemporary art and theory which has, often under the influence of *autonomia*, taken up the avant-garde affirmation of non-art as art's only possible political trajectory. Guattari's aesthetics has been used as a support for this renewal of the political efficacy of anti-art, but this not only misrepresents Guattari's position, but is inadequate for thinking through what 'political art' within the aesthetic paradigm might mean today.<sup>9</sup> As I hope to show, Guattari's art-work will take us beyond the avant-garde dialectic of art and non-art, and so beyond the autonomist insistence on refusal and exodus as the conditions of autonomy.

Guattari follows the *autonomia* reading of Marx's 'Fragment on Machines' that claims the distinction between fixed and variable capital no longer provides an adequate explanation of capitalism's production of surplus-value. Surplus-value in 'Integrated World Capitalism' (IWC, Guattari's term for globalization) is not simply the monetary profit extracted from labour-time, but is also the continual development of the mechanisms controlling the production and reproduction of subjectivity. These biopolitical systems operate primarily through a process of 'semiotization'<sup>10</sup> that continually 'apprehends' the decoded and deterritorializing material flows of what Deleuze and Guattari call 'desiring-production', and 'consigns them to the universe of subjective representation'.<sup>11</sup> In this way the sign subsumes desire by replacing production with reproduction within an 'immanent system where each act of production is inextricably linked to the process of antiproduction as capital'.<sup>12</sup> As a result, capitalism and desire are 'one and the same production process',<sup>13</sup> but on one side their semiotic interface produces the machinic enslavement of subjectivity by capital, while on the other desire achieves an autonomous production, an 'enrichment of potentialities' where 'the whole exceeds the sum of the parts', producing a 'machinic surplus-value'.<sup>14</sup>

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This will be the political stakes at play in art: will its innovations be instrumentalized and subsumed in a new capitalist axiomatic, or can it produce an autonomous machinic surplus-value? At this point Guattari's championing of art as his political weapon of choice appears Quixotic,<sup>15</sup> inasmuch as it must confront 'a sort of collectivization of capitalism,'<sup>16</sup> a ubiquity of the axioms producing 'capitalistic subjectivity (the subjectivity of generalized equivalence)'.<sup>17</sup> The two significant operators of this general equivalence are money and signs, which deterritorialize previous modes of valuation, and reterritorialize sign-qualities onto sign-quantities (commodities).<sup>18</sup> The production of a quality is thus standardized and subsumed in an '*alienated enunciation*',<sup>19</sup> a discursive statement that erases any polysemic and phatic elements so it can be communicated (i.e. sold) through what Guattari calls 'scriptural machines and their mass-media avatars'. In its contemporary forms, this amounts, he says, 'to an exchange of information tokens calculable as bits and reproducible on computers'.<sup>20</sup> This alienation of the polysemic and material elements of the sign in the 'dictatorship of the signifier' demands in response, Guattari argues, an 'a-signifying' semiotics in which signs re-establish connections with deterritorialized material fluxes. Such signs – produced by art – create sensations that escape their subsumption by individualized, subjective experience and signification to express a 'collective assemblage of enunciation' encompassing all its constitutive elements, human and non-human.<sup>21</sup> What is important to emphasize however, is Guattari's argument, once more echoing *autonomia*, that

precisely because it intervenes on the most functional levels – sensorial, affective and practical – the capitalist machinic enslavement is liable to reverse its effects, and to lead to a new type of machinic surplus-value accurately perceived by Marx (expansion of alternatives for the human race, constant renewal of the horizon of desires and creativity).<sup>22</sup>

Guattari's interest in art as autonomous production is a relatively late development, as we can see from the book he wrote in 1985 with Antonio Negri called *Communists Like Us*. Although the book argues for 'redefining work as creative activity' in order to 'establish autonomous modes of expression',<sup>23</sup> its primary commitment is to 'work' and the 'worker' as the ontological mode of production: 'the revolutionary transformation occurs', Negri and Guattari write, 'in the creation of a new subjective consciousness born of the collective work experience – this moment is primary, all stakes are won or lost here, in the collective creation of subjectivity by individuals'.<sup>24</sup> But the new subject created through work,



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Negri and Guattari propose, is 'no longer crystallized in the form of private property, and does not consider the instruments of production as ends in themselves, but as means for attaining the happiness of singularity and its expansion in machinic rhizomes – abstract and/or concrete'.<sup>25</sup> It is in this sense that Guattari will retain a commitment to the autonomy of work, but in *Chaosmosis* it takes on an aesthetic value, meaning politics no longer begins from the refusal of work but from the production of an art-work. Guattari's 'aesthetic turn' acknowledges the way aesthetics has become an increasingly important factor in post-Fordist labour and production. However, what I wish to focus on here is his affirmation of modern art's autonomy from existing social structures as a condition of its political power. This raises the question of contemporary art, and the political efficacy of its post-conceptual immersion in wider processes of social and subjective production. Although some Autonomist thinkers such as Paolo Virno see this as a positive development, and one that includes art – or at least 'aesthetic production' – within the realm of work,<sup>26</sup> Guattari, as we will see, perversely insists on the autonomy of artistic production.

The art-work is the political agent of a bio-aesthetics, it is an artistic and singular event whose repetition creates a proliferating rhizome. Guattari takes the term 'autopoiesis' from the biologists Varela and Maturana, who use it to describe the entwined development of an autonomous organism and its environment. Autopoiesis emerges as a 'reciprocal relation' between local components and their global whole: 'An entity self-separates from its background', Varela argues, as an expression by which 'the autopoietic unity creates a perspective from which the exterior is one'.<sup>27</sup> This relation of reciprocal determination, which is 'enlarged' by Guattari to include 'aesthetic creation',<sup>28</sup> means that an art-work is not only an expression of its 'environment' but its simultaneous construction through, as Varela calls it, a process of 'world-making'.<sup>29</sup> This is what Negri and Guattari called 'the collective creation of subjectivity by individuals', and what Guattari will come to call 'micropolitics', although in his later work it is the autopoiesis of the art-work rather than labour that achieves the 'realization of autonomy'.<sup>30</sup>

Although Guattari borrows the concept of autopoiesis from biology, he finds it at work in traditional artistic expressions and their aesthetic consumption, which he describes in a surprisingly ecstatic register:

A block of percept and affect, by way of aesthetic composition, agglomerates in the same transversal flash the subject and the object, the self and the other, the material and the incorporeal, the before and after . . .  
In short, affect is not a question of representation and discursivity, but of

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existence. I find myself transported into a Debussyist Universe, a blues Universe, a blazing becoming of Provence. I have crossed a threshold of consistency. Before the hold of this block of sensation, this nucleus of partial subjectification, everything was dull, beyond it, I am no longer as I was before, I am swept away by a becoming other, carried beyond my familiar existential Territories.<sup>31</sup>

We should not be surprised by this ecstatic tone, nor by Guattari's examples, as his bio-aesthetics have a distinctly modernist feel to them. The autopoietic affect emerges through an encounter that dissolves subjective consistency, and produces a new surplus-value, a quality that expresses its environment by constructing its 'beyond'. In this sense, Varela's description of autopoiesis is apt: 'What the autopoietic system does – due to its very mode of identity – is to constantly confront the encounters (perturbations, shocks, couplings) with its environment and treat them from a perspective which is not intrinsic to the encounters themselves'.<sup>32</sup> In other words, an autopoietic art-*work* is a 'nuclei of differentiation', an expression of its environment in an autonomous 'perspective', a perspective that expresses its (capitalist) environment by opening it onto an aleatory future. But what are the actual conditions of emergence for an autonomous art-*work*, how is this 'singularization' produced?

Guattari was deeply influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin's early writings on aesthetics, which he extends to include social production. Bakhtin argues that an aesthetic object emerges from a process that first of all 'isolates' something from its self-evidence in the world, giving it an 'active indetermination' within reality.<sup>33</sup> This 'completion as disjunction'<sup>34</sup> is the art-*work's* 'isolating or separating function'<sup>35</sup> an 'aesthetic rupture of discursivity'<sup>36</sup> that frees words or images from their representational function, and puts them into a sudden proximity with the spectator. This encounter produces what Guattari calls a 'partial object' or 'enunciative substance',<sup>37</sup> a de-formed material whose relation to its 'content' (its meaning or function) has been broken, allowing it to express and expand the affective and ethical multiplicities embodied by the spectator. As a result, the flows of expression and content come together in the aesthetic object, an entirely contingent 'Debussyist Universe' where every shimmer of notes is the singular evocation of my beyond. The aesthetic object is in this sense 'alive', according to Bakhtin, because its 'content' is in a state of becoming, forming, he says, a 'self-sufficient . . . segment of the unitary open event of being'.<sup>38</sup>

Guattari's use of Bakhtin's aesthetic object is not only compatible with Varela's account of autopoiesis, but also echoes his description of Loius

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Hjelmslev's linguistics, which places the a-signifying art-work in the midst of capitalism's flow of images and other signs. Here, Deleuze and Guattari claim, a substance is formed when two deterritorialized flows (in Bakhtin's terms the 'de-framed' aesthetic object and the aleatory affects produced from its encounter with the 'spectator') come together so that the first defines a content and the second, an expression. These flows of content and expression reciprocally determine each other in a process constituting figures, or non-signifying signs, 'flows-breaks or schizzes that form images through their coming together in a whole, but that do not maintain any identity when they pass from one whole to another'.<sup>39</sup>

As a result, Deleuze and Guattari argue that Hjelmslev's break with the signifier in favour of non-signs causes 'content and expression to flow according to the flows of desire' and so 'constitutes a decoded theory of language about which one can say – an ambiguous tribute – that it is the only linguistics adapted to the nature of *both* the capitalist *and* the schizophrenic flows'.<sup>40</sup> The difference between capitalist semiotization and the autopoietic art-work is therefore internal to the bio-political sign, and is that between a cliché or new axiomatic quantity and a singular and unquantifiable quality, or sensation. In this sense, 'Only expression gives us the method',<sup>41</sup> because it is only through expression – expression *qua proliferation* – that singularization becomes collective. But this process does not pass from one term to the other, singularization to collectivization, but rather expression escapes semiotic quantification precisely because its singular quality *does not stay the same*, and the Debussy-sensation is in this sense a becoming that produces 'polyphonic' or 'multiplicatory'<sup>42</sup> affects. This 'semiotic polycentrism'<sup>43</sup> enables the aesthetic sign to generate singular affects on a collective level, and is what Bakhtin calls the 'immanent overcoming' of the material object in its transformation into an aesthetic object or work of art.<sup>44</sup> In the aesthetic paradigm the art-work is a 'unity without identity', a 'flux-schiz' that 'carries us to the gates of schizophrenia as a process'.<sup>45</sup> The 'mutational becomings' of this 'multi-headed enunciative layout'<sup>46</sup> encompass and erase distinctions between group and individual, and between human and non-human, and opens experience onto an infinity of virtual Universes/futures. At this moment of ontological 'interface' – or chaosmosis – art-works produce surplus-value, and so achieve a 'reappropriation, an autopoiesis, of the means of production of subjectivity'.<sup>47</sup>

Although Guattari often privileges art and artists as the expressive mechanisms of art-work, he is also careful to point out that the production of aesthetic machines 'is not just the activity of established artists'. Rather, autonomous aesthetic production is a new will to art, a 'subjective

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creativity which traverses the generations and oppressed peoples, ghettos, minorities'.<sup>48</sup> Whether inside or out of institutions, art will have to, if it is to have political effect, overcome its capture in the 'deeply reactionary' institutions of 'culture'. Culture, Guattari tells us,

is a way of separating semiotic activities (orientation in the social and economic world) into spheres to which people are referred. These isolated activities are standardised and capitalised to suit the dominant mode of semiotisation – they are cut off from their political realities. Culture as an autonomous sphere only exists in terms of markets of power, economic markets, and not in terms of production, creation, and real consumption. . . . There is only one culture: capitalistic culture.<sup>49</sup>

Culture is a form of semiotization that separates production from consumption, confining aesthetic machines within institutions, where they can be exploited. In this sense, Guattari's description of 'culture' echoes Peter Bürger's canonical definition of art in bourgeois society: 'the progressive detachment of art from real life contexts, and the crystallization of a distinctive sphere of experience, i.e., the aesthetic'.<sup>50</sup> Like Bürger, at least in this respect, Guattari sees the emergence of the cultural 'subsystem' of art, and its increasingly integrated relation to other capital flows, as capturing 'autonomous' aesthetic production. As Guattari notes, 'there is more and more economic activity in art, which is a collective will to crush art',<sup>51</sup> art is 'apprehended' by the 'money and the market, capitalism's true police'.<sup>52</sup> Although institutions participate in this process, and attacking their division of labour and valuation process is important, institutional critique is only an aspect of Guattari's aesthetic paradigm. For Guattari, art-*work* doesn't 'refer to institutionalized art, or to its works manifested in the social field',<sup>53</sup> and precisely for this reason its main function is not *exodus* in the sense some art theorists influenced by *autonomia* have suggested. Guattari's is not, in my opinion, simply the theory of contemporary avant-gardist practices that makes art's rejection of the institution, and its flight into non-art, a militant politics. Art qua autonomous aesthetic production is always already 'outside' the institution, but this 'outside' can also be encountered within an institution, and indeed within the most traditional of its objects.

As a result, Guattari doesn't begin his analysis by condemning and rejecting the traditional art-object for its complicity with cultural institutions. By focusing on production rather than its institutionalization, Guattari avoids the dialectical move of the avant-garde, which politicizes art by demanding non-art. With this deft step, Guattari rejects the almost

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compulsory starting point of contemporary discussions of the political efficacy of art. Guattari, instead, offers a qualified form of institutional critique, an 'institutional therapeutics'<sup>54</sup> as he calls it, which attacks the broader system of relations from which 'art' gains its cultural value, but in a fundamentally Nietzschean sense (at least as Deleuze describes it, as 'a principle of internal genesis'<sup>55</sup> or re-valuation of value), by affirming the pathic and a-signifying dimensions of sensation that emerge within the institution as its own autopoietic vectors of transformation.

It is important to note at this point that Guattari models the method of autonomous aesthetic production on traditional artistic practices: 'One creates new modalities of subjectivity in the same way that an artist creates new forms from the palette'.<sup>56</sup> For Guattari, the painter creates a new sensation, a surplus to what exists, an infinite, aleatory and proliferating expression constructing new futures. This process is at once ontological and aesthetic, inasmuch as it involves the way 'sounds and forms are arranged so that the subjectivity adjacent to them remains in movement, and really alive'.<sup>57</sup> In doing this, Guattari seems to prefer the 'fine-arts' to mass culture, which he sees as a 'subjectivity-producing machine' working through 'pre-established encoding, and modes of manipulation and remote control'.<sup>58</sup> For Guattari, popular cultural forms such as rock music are 'ambivalent': on one side they are a force of 'uniformization' operating through 'the production and distribution of goods',<sup>59</sup> but on the other, as with punk, they succeed in 'borrowing everything from the dominant oppressive systems to constitute elements in a process of singularization, a 'vector of molecular revolution', which can subvert the modelization of subjectivity.<sup>60</sup> Both high and low art can produce machinic surplus-value, inasmuch as 'capitalist culture' subsumes both of them.<sup>61</sup> This process is not premised on the negation of art, or its institutions, but on the *art-work's* power of singularization-proliferation. This is the rule of micropolitics and seems to set the highest possible bar for art: 'to create the finite that restores the infinite'.<sup>62</sup> Although this sounds rather grand (and not a little bit Romantic), Guattari consistently points out how easily and unexpectedly it might happen, and from what insignificant means. 'Revolution', he writes, 'creates trouble out of events that common sense would say were quite unimportant. . . . Will the revolution to come celebrate its principles from something said by Lautréamont, Kafka or Joyce?'<sup>63</sup> But despite this optimism, Guattari can also be bleak, and many years later he will matter of factly state, 'It's not at all clear how one can claim to hold creative singularity and potential social mutations together'.<sup>64</sup>

If we are to understand how art and social mutation might be practically connected today, we need to account for what seems to be major

discrepancy between contemporary art and Guattari's work. Guattari repeatedly rejects the theoretical and conceptual turn of art after the 1960s, and consistently maintains that art is always a question of sensation, including conceptual art.<sup>65</sup> That Guattari's insistence on sensation is problematic in relation to contemporary art was immediately obvious. In 1992, just after the publication of *Chaosmosis*, Olivier Zahm, a young curator and critic, tells Guattari that defining art as a being of sensation 'seems limited in relation to actual artistic practices'. Zahm goes on to argue, quite rightly, that contemporary art 'is no longer defined by the pre-eminence granted to the material, or to a medium and its tradition, but by the multiplicity of languages that use conceptual materials'.<sup>66</sup> This is a crucial point, and raises the question as to whether Guattari's ontology of art is compatible with contemporary art practices born of the rejection of painting in the 1960s, and their subsequent embrace of conceptual content and strategies.<sup>67</sup> Guattari's response to these contemporary art practices could perhaps be summed up by the following comment: 'The important thing is not the invention of a new medium of communication but *the invention of a new kind of relation with what is communicated*'.<sup>68</sup>

In fact, Guattari sees this new relation as being 'invention' itself, understood as the production of proliferating expressions. It is only as such that art-as-sensation produces 'an existential singularization correlative to the genesis of new coefficients of freedom'.<sup>69</sup> This model, or as Guattari calls it this 'meta-modelling',<sup>70</sup> of political resistance is no doubt modernist in its emphasis on 'rupture' as the key operation constituting a 'tradition of the new'. Not only is Guattari's insistence on art-as-sensation problematic when applied to the conceptual and linguistic emphasis of much contemporary art practice, but the model of 'rupture' is quite different from that of an 'exodus' into non-art proposed by the avant-gardist advocates of activist art.

There are, in fact, specific reasons for Guattari's interest in modernist artistic practices, which places them at the centre of his autonomous aesthetics. The first of these is the way modernism developed through a constant experimentation with its own materials, a process of immanent critique that did not lead to the transcendental a priori of art, à la Greenburg, but to a singularized sensation capable of catalysing autonomous production outside the realm of art. Guattari explains:

The incessant clash of the movement of art against established boundaries (already there in the Renaissance, but above all in the modern era), its propensity to renew its materials of expression and the ontological texture of the percepts and affects it promotes brings about if

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not a direct contamination of the other domains then at least a highlighting and a re-evaluation of the creative dimensions that traverse all of them.<sup>71</sup>

This then, is the first rule of meta-modelling: to affirm 'a machinics of existence whose object is not circumscribed within fixed, extrinsic coordinates; an object that can, at any moment, extend beyond itself, proliferate or abolish itself within the Universes of alterity with which it is compossible'.<sup>72</sup> It is precisely the formal elements of painting, its non-discursive 'pictorial matter', that creates pathic affects as 'instances of self-productive subjectivity'.<sup>73</sup> Guattari's examples are not exactly fashionable: paintings by Balthus, Modigliani or Pollock. But nevertheless, these painters manifest what Guattari sees as the 'phenomena of rupture in the plastic arts', which extend well beyond the break they make with the tradition of painting, and enable us to 'perceive artistic relations in totally different situations'.<sup>74</sup>

Consistent with Guattari's 'modernism' is his suggestion that art's 'phenomena of rupture' and its proliferation through sensation needs the social 'autonomy' afforded modernist art in order to emerge. This autonomy is not guaranteed by the institution, but by the fact that art's 'creative potentiality' exists 'before' its subsumption by semio-capital, giving it its 'privileged place':

Fabricated in the socius, art, however, is only sustained by itself. This is because each work produced possesses a double finality: to insert itself into a social network which will either appropriate or reject it, and to celebrate, once again, the universe of art as such, precisely because it is always in danger of collapsing.<sup>75</sup>

As a result, art should not, Guattari argues, embark on transdisciplinary work such as attempting to produce concepts. This, he claims, is 'a facile intercommunication of the different disciplines. It is the myth of interdisciplinarity. . . . But it just doesn't work like that!' Minor politics is only possible when art is itself, when it experiments with sensation as part of the 'singularization of each of the disciplines'. It is only in this way that 'deterritorializations can be thought, and abstract machines can establish communications between systems of thought'.<sup>76</sup> The collectivization of art's material experiments, the autopoietic proliferation of its sensations on the social level, is only possible through their greatest possible singularization, a process aided and abetted through their continuing isolation and affirmation as art. In this sense, art's 'function of autonomy'<sup>77</sup> is not

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only immanent to the social and political dimensions, but a necessary condition for its effective political operation. This 'refoundation of political practice'<sup>78</sup> on aesthetic autonomy, or, to be less dramatic, this micropolitics of sensation, can be seen, Guattari suggests, in the paintings of Modigliani:

Modigliani saw faces in a way that perhaps nobody had dared to do before then. For example, at a certain moment he painted a particular kind of blue eye that completely changed what we might call the 'faciality machine' that was in circulation at the time. This microprocess of transformation, in terms of perception and practice, was taken up by people who perceived that something had changed, that Modigliani had changed not only his own way of seeing a face, but also the collective way of seeing a face. This process preserved its vitality, its revolutionary character, in a certain social field, at a certain moment in time, and for a certain period.<sup>79</sup>

For Guattari 'political art' is a process of sensual singularization, one that requires the preservation of art as an autonomous universe, but only in order to achieve what art theory from Bürger to Rancière has posed as its opposite, the immanence of art and life in social production. This understanding of aesthetic autonomy affirms the *art-work* in modernist terms, but it places the *art-work* directly within and against the machinic enslavement of capitalist semiotization. As a result, Guattari affirms two traditionally opposed artistic positions in order to invent a new line of aesthetic resistance; an autonomous *art-work* produces an existential surplus-value or sensation that has the ability to open the social field onto a new future. For Guattari, the 'surplus-sensation' implies the paradoxical situation of art being immanent to life precisely in the sense that it is autonomous from it.

Guattari's autonomous aesthetics cannot be restricted to any particular style or method of artistic production, because artistic production is a method of meta-modelling that can appear in any mode of aesthetic singularization. This is finally the ontological necessity of micropolitics, it is by definition utterly democratic. 'Intellectual and artistic creativity,' Guattari writes, 'like new social practices, have to conquer a democratic affirmation which preserves their specificity and right to singularity'.<sup>80</sup> The aesthetic paradigm will be at its most democratic when it is at its most diverse, inasmuch as aesthetic micropolitics is the affirmation of art's right to exist everywhere.<sup>81</sup> As Guattari says: 'The quality of base material matters little here, . . . it's like the situation of a painter who buys his paints



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at the same store. What matters is what she does with them'.<sup>82</sup> So what should the artist, or for that matter the psychoanalyst or political militant (who, Guattari suggests, should also draw their meta-modellings from the methods of art), do with their materials?<sup>83</sup> They must use them to resist, to resist the very system of production/consumption we all inhabit, and which is forever working to subsume our inventions and innovations, especially perhaps when these are art. Despite the obvious differences then between Guattari and *autonomia*, they share this fundamental political horizon of resistance, an ontological horizon that on the one hand acknowledges capitalism's bio-political immanence to life, but nevertheless affirms an autonomous mode of production that surprisingly, even miraculously, perseveres. For Guattari this mode of production creates real sensations incarnating an infinite potential for freedom, a mode of production he calls art. Perhaps art is finally the last mode of production that is sufficiently schizo to evade the 'cogito of communication' that determines our lives. As Deleuze and Guattari put it: 'We do not lack communication. On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation. *We lack resistance to the present*'.<sup>84</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche, F. (1967), *The Will to Power*. New York: Random House, p. 542.

<sup>2</sup> Deleuze, G. (1983), *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 102–3.

<sup>3</sup> Guattari, F. (1995), *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-aesthetic Paradigm*. Translated by P. Bains and J. Pefanis. Sydney: Power Institute, pp. 54 and 101.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112. Similarly, in *A Thousand Plateaus* aesthetics seems to come 'before' politics when Deleuze and Guattari suggest that 'property is fundamentally artistic' because it is a result of the refrain. Their example is the territorial markings of animals such as coral fish.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90–1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13. Italics added.

<sup>9</sup> The main exemplars of this tendency are Maurizio Lazzarato, Brian Holmes and Nicolas Bourriaud. See Lazzarato, M. (2010), 'The Practice and Anti-Dialectical Thought of an 'Anartist'', in *Deleuze and Contemporary Art*, edited by S. O'Sullivan and S. Zepke. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 100–15; Holmes, B. (2008), *Unleashing the Collective Phantoms, Essays in Reverse Imagineering*. New York: Autonomedia; Bourriaud, N. (2002), *Relational Aesthetics*, translated by S. Pleasance and F. Woods. Paris: Les presses du reel.

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- <sup>10</sup> Guattari, F., and Alliez, E. (1984), 'Capitalistic Systems, Structures and Processes', in Guattari F., *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*. Translated by R. Sheed. London: Penguin, pp. 273 and 275.
- <sup>11</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1983), *Anti-Oedipus*. Translated by R. Hurley, M. Seem and H. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 337.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 245.
- <sup>14</sup> Guattari and Alliez 'Capitalistic Systems', art. cit. p. 274 (translation modified). On machinic surplus-value, see Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. pp. 232–6.
- <sup>15</sup> A Quixoticism perhaps shared with *autonomia* texts, which as Sergio Bologna describes them, share two elements (the first of which must be replaced by art or aesthetics in Guattari's case); 'It's not clear which was greater: the paean to the working class, or that to the capitalist capacity of subsuming this working class from the point of view of its components.' Quoted in Wright, S. (2008), 'Mapping Pathways within Italian Autonomist Marxism: A Preliminary Survey', in *Historical Materialism* 16, p. 114.
- <sup>16</sup> Guattari, F. (1996), 'Capital as the Integral of Power Formations'. Translated by C. Wolfe and S. Cohen, in *Soft Subversions*. New York: Semiotext(e), p. 211.
- <sup>17</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 22.
- <sup>18</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. pp. 241 and 248.
- <sup>19</sup> Guattari, F. (2006), *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*. Translated by K. Gotman. New York: Semiotext(e), p. 43.
- <sup>20</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 104.
- <sup>21</sup> Guattari, F. (1996), 'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution'. Translated by G. Genosko in *The Guattari Reader*. Edited by G. Genosko. New York: Basil Blackwell, p. 152.
- <sup>22</sup> Guattari, 'Capital as the Integral of Power Formations', art. cit. p. 220. Art, Guattari argues, is an 'ethico-political extension' of 'capitalist subjectification', which 'can cause its own eviction by heterogeneous, multicentred, polyphonic, polyvocal approaches, installing itself outside pre-coded equilibriums'. See Guattari, F. (1987), 'Cracks in the Street', in *Flash Art* 135. Translated by A. Gibault and J. Johnson, p. 85.
- <sup>23</sup> Guattari, F., and Negri, A. (1990), *Communists Like Us*. Translated by M. Ryan. New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 13 and 15.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 19. Steve Wright, in his authoritative account of the Autonomist movement, dates Negri's interest in 'creativity directed towards the reproduction of the proletariat as antagonistic subject' to his 1976 book *Proletari e Stato*. See Wright, S. (2002), *Storming Heaven, Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism*. London: Pluto Press, p. 166.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 40.
- <sup>26</sup> See Virno, P. (2009), 'The Dismasure of Art: An interview with S. Lavaert and P. Gielen', in *Open No. 17, A Precarious Existence*, pp. 79–80.
- <sup>27</sup> Varela, F. (1992), 'Autopoiesis and a Biology of Intentionality'. Online at: <ftp://ftp.eeng.dcu.ie/pub/alife/bmcm9401/varela.pdf>, p. 7.
- <sup>28</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 93.
- <sup>29</sup> Varela, 'Autopoiesis', art. cit. p. 8.

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- <sup>30</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 7.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.
- <sup>32</sup> Varela 'Autopoiesis', art. cit. p. 7.
- <sup>33</sup> Bakhtin, M. (1990), 'The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art', in *Art and Answerability, Early Philosophical Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Translated by K. Brostrom. Austin: University of Texas Press, p. 275.
- <sup>34</sup> Guattari, F. (1996), 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects', translated by J. Schiesari and G. Van Den Abeele in *The Guattari Reader*, op. cit. p. 166.
- <sup>35</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 14.
- <sup>36</sup> Guattari, 'Cracks in the Street', art. cit. p. 86.
- <sup>37</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 26.
- <sup>38</sup> Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art', op. cit. pp. 275 and 306–7.
- <sup>39</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. pp. 240.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 242–3.
- <sup>41</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1986), *Kafka, Toward a Minor Literature*. Translated by D. Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 16.
- <sup>42</sup> Guattari, 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects', op. cit. p. 166.
- <sup>43</sup> Guattari, 'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution', op. cit. p. 153.
- <sup>44</sup> Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art', op. cit. p. 297.
- <sup>45</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. p. 244.
- <sup>46</sup> Guattari, 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects', op. cit. pp. 160–1.
- <sup>47</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 13.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.
- <sup>49</sup> Guattari, F., and Rolnik, S. (2008), *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*. Translated by K. Clapshow and B. Holmes. New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 21 and 33.
- <sup>50</sup> Bürger, P. (1984), *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Translated by M. Shaw. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 23.
- <sup>51</sup> Guattari, 'Guattari and Contemporary Art', in this volume.
- <sup>52</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. p. 239.
- <sup>53</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 102.
- <sup>54</sup> Guattari, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*, op. cit. p. 13.
- <sup>55</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, op. cit. p. 91.
- <sup>56</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 7. For similar formulations, see Guattari, F. (2000), *The Three Ecologies*, translated by I. Pindar and P. Sutton. London: Athlone Press, p. 52; and Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 74.
- <sup>57</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 133.
- <sup>58</sup> Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 23. Deleuze and Guattari are clear: 'We are not referring to popular or populist artists'. Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1987), *A Thousand Plateaus*. Translated by B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 381.
- <sup>59</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 97.
- <sup>60</sup> Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 73.
- <sup>61</sup> 'In my view', Guattari says, 'there is no such thing as popular culture and high culture. There is capitalist culture, which permeates all fields of semiotic expression'. Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 33.

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- <sup>62</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1994), *What Is Philosophy?* Translated by H. Tomlinson and G. Burchell. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 197.
- <sup>63</sup> Guattari, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*, op. cit. pp. 202–3. See also Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, op. cit. p.18, and Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, op. cit. p. 44.
- <sup>64</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. pp. 130–2.
- <sup>65</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, op. cit. p.198; Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 95; and Guattari, F. (2011), 'Guattari and Contemporary Art', in this volume.
- <sup>66</sup> Guattari, 'Guattari and Contemporary Art', in this volume.
- <sup>67</sup> I have dealt with this question in more detail in Zepke, S. (2009), 'Deleuze, Guattari and Contemporary Art', in E. Holland, D. Smith and C. Stivale (eds), *Gilles Deleuze: Image and Text*. London: Continuum, pp. 176–97.
- <sup>68</sup> Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 383.
- <sup>69</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 13.
- <sup>70</sup> For an excellent account of Guattari's 'Meta-modelling', see Watson, J. (2009), *Guattari's Diagrammatic Thought, Writing Between Lacan and Deleuze*. London: Continuum.
- <sup>71</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 106.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.
- <sup>73</sup> Guattari, 'Cracks in the Street', art. cit. p. 85.
- <sup>74</sup> Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 383.
- <sup>75</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 130.
- <sup>76</sup> Guattari, 'Guattari and Contemporary Art', in this volume.
- <sup>77</sup> Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 74.
- <sup>78</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 120.
- <sup>79</sup> Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 260. For the discussion of 'faciality' on which this passage draws, see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. pp. 176 and 198.
- <sup>80</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 129.
- <sup>81</sup> Guattari's use of the term 'democratic' can be understood as meaning 'heterogenic', a very specific usage that is clearly at odds with Deleuze and Guattari's critique of democracy. See Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* op. cit. pp. 106–8.
- <sup>82</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 20; and Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 72.
- <sup>83</sup> Guattari suggests that 'practical psychiatry' must 'converge with the perspective of the art world' (*The Three Ecologies*, op. cit. pp. 41–2) and that 'The remaking of politics must pass through aesthetic dimensions, and is inconceivable . . . without the advancement of a new art'. (Guattari, F. (1996), 'Subjectivities for Better and for Worse' in *The Guattari Reader*, op. cit. p. 202).
- <sup>84</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, op. cit. p. 108.

## CHAPTER 14

### Going to the Cinema with Félix Guattari and Daniel Stern<sup>1</sup>

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Raymond Bellour

Some years ago, when I regularly attended – in his apartment on the Rue Saint-Sauveur – what were the last seminars of Félix Guattari, I discovered (through my friendship with Danielle Sivadon) Daniel Stern and his *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*. Convinced that Stern's thinking could help me in what I had for a long time been seeking, something to shed light on a great many films, Danielle lent me her copy of the book, and I have worked with it ever since. As precise as the translation seemed to me, I nevertheless wanted to check a certain number of terms in the original English text. Félix had a copy, and immediately lent it to me. So he had read this book, which first appeared in 1985, even before the French translation was published in 1989 – and he had read it very closely. The numerous notes made throughout the text, as well as those grouped together on the book's flyleaf, and then the few pages, so eloquent and rare, that he devoted to Stern in *Chaosmosis*, testify to this. I was never able to give this book back to Félix, who died suddenly a few months later. So I have kept it in memory of him, and so as to continue to work on an author, whose elaboration of notions, in its very great singularity, seems to entertain a close relationship with the grand conceptual reveries elaborated by Guattari, in his *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*, in particular.

We owe to Francis Vanoye the first learned attempt, at least in France, to address emotion in cinema.<sup>2</sup> He proposes a two-part division. On one side, there is a series of emotions founded 'on the primacy of sensation', which stop on themselves, causing a 'blockage of the emotional cycle' and, as a result, effects of pure reiteration. Thus fear, surprise, novelty, joy. On the other side, 'against this background, more complex figures

consisting of fictional elements (situations, characters, places) and cinematic elements (actors, filmic forms) often stand out as well. So it is a different group of emotions that is solicited (sadness, anger, affection, anger, desire)'. We see clearly that only the latter truly interest Vanoye, in proportion to the experiences – between films and their spectators – that are in this way deepened. Opposing a 'regressive' emotion to a 'progressive' emotion, he looks for the modalities of construction that seem to him to be conducive to the flourishing of the second; he borrows – in more or less the same gesture – the trails blazed by the analysis of film in order to reformulate them in terms of affectivity, insisting precisely on the reflexive and thereby almost ethical supplement induced by emotion. But this is always presented through these psychological determinants, which a long tradition built.

Serge Daney's move is altogether different, even if, just like Vanoye, he was inspired by the modest title of Sartre's book; he uses it as he likes in order to create his own 'little theory of the emotions'.<sup>3</sup> Out of his haphazard viewing of films and according to the ardent necessity of getting to the very heart of his love for cinema, the improvised circuits by which Daney relates himself to emotion hardly make it easier to apprehend. We can nevertheless express this 'theory' in three principles. The first seems like a conclusion: 'Since that word (emotion) ends up summarizing everything that I expect from the cinema'.<sup>4</sup> Emotion is that 'everything' that must be discerned in a chain: 'Sensation-Emotion-Feeling-Idea. Diverse articulations between these simple words, which everyone understands'. Emotion would be in each case 'the tipping over from one register to another'. These words open onto the second principle: emotion survives, it is expectation and the unexpected itself, 'it arises along the road, at mysteriously precise moments'. The examples that Daney gives here, of slowing down and acceleration, in two films loved by all (*The Night of the Hunter*, *The Saga of Anatahan*), only serve to make him specify what he says everywhere else: emotion arises from rhythm, from rhythms so various, they act like a music, and this music is one of shots. Perhaps we have never spoken of the shot, of shots, with an intensity as loving and exact: 'The love of the shot is the love of interstices in which to get stuck, hidden or welcomed by the unwinding film'.<sup>5</sup> Finally, the last principle, the very heart of the 'theory', formulated in the text in which it announces itself while playing as such: 'It's the camera movement in reverse, that which takes place *in the body of the spectator*, that one could call "emotion"'.<sup>6</sup> 'In reverse' thus designates the mysterious effect of response by which the film moves or seems to move within the body; and the term 'camera movement' is all the more incisive, as the example then given

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by Daney arises from the memory of a static shot (in Nicholas Ray's *In a Lonely Place*). It's a matter of first defining the movement, of the camera or not, that comes from the film as from a body, and to which it returns in folding the spectator's body onto itself. This movement can equally well be a pause, a freeze-frame or freezing of the image; let us here go no further than the freezing of the image, the toppling of the movement of which opens it up to thought. Daney extends the vision in this way: 'a film's "maturation" time in the body and in the nervous system of a spectator in the dark'.<sup>7</sup>

But how does one build, if not a theory of this theory, then at least a vision likely to echo this tangle of bodies? Thus we arrive at Daniel Stern and his *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*.<sup>8</sup>

All of this is to finally account for an indelible impression, one initially provoked by an encounter, already so long ago, with this book: to my astonished eyes, the book discovers the experience of the cinema spectator. Daniel Stern's infant *is* the film spectator.

This book, writes the author, 'is a working hypothesis about infants' subjective experience of their own social life' (4). It is therefore a construction through which to create 'a dialogue between the infant as revealed by the experimental approach and as clinically reconstructed' (viii). The notion of a 'sense of self', defined as 'simple (non-self-reflexive) awareness', orients the endeavour (7). There are four senses of self that develop and combine from birth through the emergence of language. 'These senses of self are not viewed as successive phases that replace one another. Once formed, each sense of self remains fully functioning and active throughout life. All continue to grow and coexist' (11).

Each of the decisive concepts that stimulate each sense of self, according to their own particular impact, shed light on one of the aspects of intensive emotion imprinted at the heart of cinema. Let us, first of all, enumerate them in chronological order of appearance: *amodal perception* and *vitality affects*, for the sense of an emergent self (for the infant from birth to age of two months); *evoked companions* for the sense of a core self (from two to six months); *affect attunement* for the sense of a subjective self (from 7 to 15 months). The sense of a verbal self that begins beyond that, with reflexivity, corresponds to the way in which intensive emotion finds, to use the terms chosen by Stern, a systematic and symbolic dimension to couple with.

Let us first make three remarks. In general, Stern doesn't feel any need to stand in opposition to psychoanalysis, about which he is fully knowledgeable. What does he say to us at the threshold of his great enterprise? Quite simply this:

Many of the tenets of psychoanalysis appear to describe development far better after infancy is over and childhood has begun, that is, when speech is available. This observation is not meant as a disconfirmation of psychoanalytic theory; it is a suggestion that psychoanalytic theory has been misapplied to this earlier period of life, which it does not describe well. (11)

Of course, such an affirmation is enough to pose a radical reversal of perspective, as soon as the stages of earliest childhood are worked out over the course of the book as just so many preconditions for any formation of one's life – without owing anything anymore to the ambiguities caused by various psychoanalytic visions of the 'pre-Oedipal'. Thus, a chronological reversal is carried out in relation to 'merger- or fusion-like experiences described in psychoanalysis', which become secondary to the formation of one's first senses of the self (70). Furthermore, without necessarily describing it as a 'stage', the view one takes of oneself, at the age of 18 months, the infant recognizing his own image in the mirror, becomes one of the figures of the 'conceptual self', who, in Stern's conception, comes after older and more fundamental 'selves' (162–65). Such a way of seeing things has the advantage of advancing the conditions of a change, however radical they may be, without making a *tabula rasa* out of what is displaced, and therefore without prejudging articulations that could thus ensue.

It is also essential that, as a measure and suggestion of what he seeks to grasp, Stern insistently takes the experience of art: literature and music above all, but also dance and sometimes cinema. To make palpable the difficulty encountered by any attempt to handle that which by nature eludes consciousness and verbal transmission, he emphasizes that we can only allude to, rather than really describe, this experience of the infant – 'although poets can evoke it' (27). In that direction, far though he may be from psychoanalysis, Stern draws on its tradition, in the sense that, for Freud, art is always what comes before and after, as at once proof and echo.

But, for all that, this is not a matter of aiming for an application, in the strict sense of the word, of Stern's concepts and descriptions, in the sense in which psychoanalysis was meant to be 'applied', and in fact was applied to cinema (in the exploration of apparatus effects as much as narrative frameworks and shot configurations). It's more a matter of considering an analogy for the ontological, perceptual, and environmental reality of the situation – the room of a child or in a cinema – where the world is at every instant composed and re-composed for the spectator just as it is for the baby, in view of the learning of something new,



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in relation to which minimal regularities are felt. In this, the analogy furnishes us with a frame that redefines the impression of reality: a cinematic effect lived like the double of the endlessly renewed genesis that was the constitution of the world for the smallest child – and thus offers a perspective from which to consider the differences in regime that provoke the emotions. It's therefore a matter of a micro-elemental analogy due to the processes of the formation of images (and sounds) and their effect as bodies and on the body, according to an affective, non-psychological logic.

One expression in Stern's evocation of the infant in the earliest days of life is striking at the outset: 'alert inactivity'. So we observe that in phases the baby does something else instead of giving in to his immediate needs or being fully active. The term employed to describe such moments, 'time "window"' (39), brings to mind the famous Bazinian 'window on the world'. Of the three large features listed by Stern and other researchers to show that from birth the infant seems to be interested in the exterior world, let us especially remember – alongside the orientation of the head and sucking – the importance of the gaze. Contrary to what was believed for too long, 'newborns arrive with a visual motor system that is mature in many respects. They see reasonably well at the right focal distance, and the reflexes controlling the eye movements responsible for object fixation and visual pursuit are intact at birth' (40). Already attracted to faces, the infant can therefore discern a smile, 'regardless of whose face it is on' (41); and, thus, without one ever being able to separate the properly cognitive aspect from its affective dimension.

So much is this the case that it is a little bit excessive to make, as François Roustang does, this nascent child in the world, at the beginnings of an emergent self, into an a priori 'non-spectator', under the justified pretext that he enters into relation with the whole.<sup>9</sup> We see Roustang's aim clearly, within his perspective of reversing psychoanalysis according to a redefined hypnosis: the subject of the gaze, of the mirror and of the drive, which psychoanalysis built ad nauseum – and which film theory carried to extremes. However, if one wishes to understand that a film spectator – who, in order to be the prey for the dividing forms that the cinematic apparatus seems to incarnate, nonetheless remains modelled by a foundational experience of a sensitive nature – becomes possible in the grown child and then the adult, then we must postulate that this first insistence on the gaze proves to be rather vital – as much for originally being indissociable from the other senses, as for then seeming to make itself autonomous. This is the paradoxical and unique attraction of

the cinema, offering itself through the senses at a distance, seeing and hearing, and yet presupposing all the other senses, in this mimesis of the total world in which it is invested: a duplicitous apparatus through which the distance is reversed as it is harnessed. Thus, we can perceive the forever emblematic shot in [Bergman's] *Persona*: when the already grown child touches with his hand the barely moving matter of two immense female faces, only outlining one of them, his mother and another who could be her. Here, we slip from the gaze to the touch that the gaze seems to exclude yet contain, all of the senses mixed up. Touching the image, one approaches the first concept that Stern develops to describe the sense of an emergent self: *amodal perception*.

Here we can only refer back to the detail of some extraordinary pages where there is, according to a very varied weaving of experiments, the confirmation of 'the infant's capacity to transfer perceptual experience from one sensory modality to another' (47). This is an 'innate, general' capacity, which therefore contradicts the previously staged and serialized modes of learning. Stern particularly emphasizes the force of expansion of the 'haptic-visual transfer' (48) and the surprising links that form between the 'visual and auditory modes' (49). But the essential thing, which remains mysterious, relates to the fact that this capacity for the translation of one modality into another allows us to infer an amodal representation, resulting from an encoding within the representation and in that way from its most abstract qualities. Stern specifies: 'These abstract representations that the infant experiences are not sights and sounds and touches and nameable objects, but rather shapes, intensities, and temporal patterns – the more "global" qualities of experience' (51) (and, thus, the variations of sonorous and luminous intensity, the properties of duration, pulse, rhythm).

This is the perspective that opens onto the second and, no doubt most central, of the concepts introduced by Stern: *vitality affects*. These arise more directly, says Stern, from 'encounters with people' (54); and their primary force is distinct from the 'categorical affects' through which we have, for such a long time and especially since Darwin, wanted to endow the human emotions with a recognizable sense. These are the discrete categories that let us classify affective experiences (happiness, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, surprise, etc.). Their number varies according to different authors, as do their combinations. They are at the same time visible and psychological, and suppose the expressive translation of an interior sensation. They are considered innate, and thereby universal, despite possible cultural variations.

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The vitality affects that Stern opposes, or rather adds, to these categorical affects present first of all the particularity of not entering into the categorical taxonomy:

These elusive qualities are better captured by dynamic, kinetic terms, such as 'surging', 'fading away', 'fleeting', 'explosive', 'crescendo', 'decrecendo', 'bursting', 'drawn out', and so on. These qualities of experience are most certainly sensible to infants and of great daily, even momentary, importance. It is these feelings that will be elicited by changes in motivational states, appetites, and tensions. (54)

Stern thus employs the equivalent 'feelings of vitality' (54) several times. The second feature of vitality affects is – through their variations themselves, their unlimited changes – to be more constant than categorical affects; their discontinuity is the index of their regular presence at the heart of experience. They can thereby arise just as easily in the presence as in the absence of the categorical affects. Stern develops the example of one of the terms he chose at the outset in this way:

Various activation contours or vitality affects can be experienced not only during the performance of a categorical signal, such as an 'explosive' smile, but also in a behavior that has no inherent categorical affect signal value; for example one can see someone get out of a chair 'explosively'. One does not know whether the explosiveness in arising was due to anger, surprise, joy, or fright. The explosiveness could be linked to any of those Darwinian feeling qualities, or to none. (56)

And he adds – with a crucial sense of the human and experimental variety, to which the cinema alone among the arts finds itself responding entirely, through its unique capacity for reproducing movement as fictive arrangements of life itself – 'There are a thousand smiles, a thousand getting-out-of-chairs, a thousand variations of performance of any and all behaviours, and each one presents a different vitality affect' (56). Here we see once again Merleau-Ponty's intuition about cinema as the art most apt 'to express man through his visible behaviour'.<sup>10</sup>

So the third characteristic of vitality affects promptly appeals to artistic reference. To clarify their expressiveness, Stern takes as an example the spectacle of puppets, following the multiplications of movements that compose their limited capacity to embody conventional affects. But music and modern dance particularly interest him. He insists on the fact that the choreographer tries to convey a way of feeling more than a particular

feeling, and that dance thus reveals multiple vitality affects, ‘without resorting to plot or categorical affect signals from which the vitality affects can be derived’ (56). Stern thus makes the spectator an analogue of the child who is his or her precursor: observing the behaviour of his or her parents, the latter would find him- or herself in a comparable situation, because their action ‘expresses a vitality affect, whether or not the act is (or is partially coloured with) some categorical affect’ (56). Better, the infant perceives acts much more exclusively in terms of vitality affects than does the adult; and this is what the adult obscurely remembers, finding the posture as soon as it is held out to him. ‘This global subjective world of emerging organization is and remains the fundamental domain of human subjectivity. . . . it is the ultimate reservoir that can be dipped into for all creative experience’ (67).

To read Stern correctly, one would have to understand that amodal perception, anchored in experience to the point of informing it, acts more like a matrix of possibilities of which the vitality affects appear as the actualizations or – to use his subtle but evocative term – the ‘activation contours’. All of this is based on a generalized effect of correspondence among the senses, which virtualizes so many of the affects to infinity (‘There are a thousand . . . ’). This explains that, however unconscious they are, *a fortiori* in this mythical age of life, vitality affects can, it seems, be circumscribed and named, drawn off from everything they outline the body of – as we see in the works of art of which they become an inalienable part. Never exactly localizable, amodal perception is, by contrast, the manifold force that acts through everything it implies at the level of form, intensity, number, or rhythm.

These are the forces inherited by the most synthetic of fundamental concepts created by Stern to punctuate the infant’s odyssey, from his first to his fifteenth month: *affect attunement*, which marks ‘the sense of a subjective self’. On one hand, attunement is an effect regulated by a generalized cross-modality; on the other, vitality affects ‘become essential to an understanding of attunement’ (156). With this word, Stern means to identify the mutation that occurs, as soon as the child approaches the age of nine months, in the relation formed with the mother (as is specified at the beginning of the book, ‘mother’ designates ‘the primary caregiver’) (21). From an ‘imitation-like behaviour’, specific to the dialogue formed since birth, the ‘mother’ then adopts a new mode of behaviour that makes her child a true partner in intersubjectivity (140). Stern insists on how difficult it is to isolate affective attunement, which is often embedded in other behaviours; but he gives a few nearly pure examples of it, of which the first and last are worth citing: ‘A nine-month-old girl

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becomes very excited about a toy and reaches for it. As she grabs it, she lets out an exuberant “aaaah!” and looks at her mother. Her mother looks back, scrunches up her shoulders, and performs a terrific shimmy with her upper body, like a go-go dancer. The shimmy lasts only about as long as her daughter’s “aaaah!!” but is equally excited, joyful, and intense’. / ‘A nine-month-old boy is sitting facing his mother. He has a rattle in his hand and is shaking it up and down with a display of interest and mild amusement. As mother watches, she begins to nod her head up and down, keeping a tight beat with her son’s arm motions’ (140–141).

We can bring out three main characteristics of attunement in this sharing of affect as follows. First of all, there is a singular mode of imitation via correspondence. Next, there is the cross-modal nature of this correspondence (from a cry to the dance of a body, from one body part to another with rhythmic equivalences). Finally, there is the most delicate one, ‘the match appears to occur between the expressions of inner state’ (142), that is, between emotional states that are expressed through aspects of behaviour. Stern insists on the fact that imitation, properly speaking, does not permit partners to refer to the internal state, while attunement, through the reconstruction of the event that it carries out, aims for ‘the quality of feeling that is being shared’ (142). From this comes the at once creative and largely non-thematized nature of attunement. Though one can attune to discrete categorical affects, it is above all vitality affects that elicit attunements, according to the same three fundamental dimensions of intensity, rhythm, and form (in all imaginable combinations). Attunement thus becomes a sort of putting into action of multiple vitality affects, characterized by their a priori variety as much as by their continuity accorded to the functions of life.

So much is this the case that Stern, hardly prone to philosophical back-up, then invokes Aristotle and his doctrine of sensory correspondence, in order to insist on the unity of the senses, based on the ‘sixth sense, the common sense, . . . that could apperceive the qualities of sensation that are primary (that is amodal)’ (154). And this unity based in life finds in art its place like its proof. Stern formulates the question in terms of the transposition of the properties of perception to emotion, through the capacity to regroup the modalities of rhythm, intensity, and form, in a gesture, for example, felt as ‘forcefulness’, that is, as a vitality affect (158). And that is precisely what the work of art does, through a virtualization of the sensation that the arrangement of its elements makes possible, seeming to ‘present an aspect of felt life’ (158). Stern thus invokes – across painting, sculpture, photography, music and dance – this effect of virtual sensation, the model for which comes to him first of all by way of Baudelaire and

his 'correspondences', and which he also extends to the cinema, in a long footnote dedicated to 'sound-sight coordination' (155–56), in which he dwells on Eisenstein and Disney. Pursuing his comparison between art and behaviour, he poses his central question in this way: 'Is it possible that the activation contours (intensity in time) perceived in another's overt behaviour become a virtual vitality affect when experienced in the self?' (158). He answers by once again dissociating, in painting, for example, the conventional elements specific to categorical affects, analogous to conventional forms and representations, from the '*rendering*' of these forms (159). That is, in the case of a painting, 'the exact treatment of the Madonna's robe and the background, how the colours contrast and harmonize, how the linear and planar tensions are resolved – in short, how the forms will be handled. This is the domain of style' (159). From this comes a frontal equivalence between, or a transposition of, vitality affects in spontaneous behaviour and artistic style. As regards style, the translation from perception to sensation/feeling thus involves 'the transmutation from "veridical" perceptions (colour harmonies, linear resolutions, and the like) into such virtual forms of feeling' (159). (He gives the example of 'calmness.')

Hence the term 'expressionism', by which Stern finally describes attunement at the beginning of social life, and which makes it into 'a precursor to the experience of art' (160).

Cinema immediately seems to fill the frame of such a vision. On one hand, in the variety of its components (the image and the modalities of the soundtrack incorporated into it), it produces – from the simple reality of the world to its fictionalization – the constant illusion of a sensory attunement between the elements of the world, just as it does between the bodies that are deployed in it. All the resources of the shot, from the frame to the movements that move it, either in their inner limits, or their animation through the camera movements – all the resources of the shot and of series of shots serve the sustained deployment of vitality affects, under the pretext, and according to the inclinations, of psychological affects, supporting identifications with characters, with the fiction. Here again, a film like *Persona* owes its unique strength to the fact that its story, in its content as much as in the forms that develop it, is presented as an enormous attempt at an attunement between its two heroines fixed in their shared solitude. The situation is such that one of them has stopped talking and the other thus lays herself bare in having to constantly make her out, through a sort of cross-modal energy that the most minor aspects of the film seem to never finish expressing and putting into action. From this comes the value of the address that *Persona* thereby offers more or less constantly to the spectator. For attunement seen in this way only makes sense if it is

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being produced for the spectator's bodies, in which this virtualization of sensations is completed. Stern indeed says, inspired by Susanne Langer,<sup>11</sup> that sensation/feeling offered in art is an appearance, an illusion. It is only in the cinema that it is an illusion, according to its specific apparatus [*dispositif*], a projection that at once seems more or less to give life itself and to inspire belief in it. These virtual forms of sensation, resulting from vitality affects under the pressure of attunement, are the proven guarantors of 'the camera movement in reverse, that which takes place *in the body of the spectator*'. And if Daney chose to call this movement 'emotion', it is because it affirms the internal dimension of consciousness, due to what thereby suddenly comes out, of the film and of the self. It is the affect of the mind surveying [*survolant*] that of the body, as Deleuze underlines.

We are thus as close as possible to what a reading inspired by psychoanalysis would describe as the primary processes, at the very heart of their secondary elaboration. Here is what Stern's approach and, in a different way, Deleuze's and Guattari's, properly touch on in a more direct, real way, by outlining another aspect to the relation of understanding and desire between the world and its subjectification, as well as other limits and other dynamics between the conscious and the unconscious.

Yet another of Stern's central concepts – the concept of 'evoked companions', which one could imagine coming from a Henry James novel, or from its resonance with Blanchot – is thereby outlined, according to a virtuality close to that which governs amodal perception, but on a different level. In the originary social world that Stern attempts to describe, evoked companions arise with 'the sense of a core self' (boasting its two components: 'self versus other', 'self with other'), before 'the sense of a subjective self' and after 'the sense of an emergent self' (immediately after vitality affects have started to be constructed). A sense that, Stern forcefully reminds us, is never a 'concept of', 'knowledge of', 'awareness of', but rather 'the palpable experiential realities of substance, action, sensation, affect, and time' (71). From roughly two to six months, during the period that is 'perhaps the most exclusively social period of life' (72), it is a matter of coming closer to 'an experiential sense of events' (71). In integrating the self-invariants' (94), one notion is needed: the *episode*, 'a small but coherent chunk of lived experiences' (95), the building block of experiential memory. The episode only seems to have a 'generalized' meaning: rather than a specific memory, it 'contains multiple specific memories', it is a 'structure . . . closer to an abstract representation'. It therefore bears on 'the likely course of events, based on average experiences' (97).<sup>12</sup> Deploying the reality of the episode in interpersonal life, Stern thus introduces the idea of 'Representations of Interactions that have been Generalized'

(RIGs). These multiplied RIGs that form so many prototypes (or 'flexible structures') (110) are what thereby regulate experience, and Stern thus lays out this formula: 'Whenever a RIG of being with someone (who has changed self-experience) is activated, the infant encounters an evoked companion' (111).

One important thing, which the word 'evocation' presupposes, is that this recollection of a 'companion' can take place in solitude just as well as it can through the relation itself. Thus there proves to be a dimension of construction, which we can call fictive, in the deployment of social reality, through the integration of events that are at once successive and recurrent, ordered in time. It is a matter of a time oriented from the past toward the future that thereby guarantees the initial integrity of the core self. The interest of a perspective founded in this way on the episode and the event, however elementary and barely conscious they are in this early period of life, is that it opens a way towards what Stern finishes by describing, in a later study, as the 'narrative model'.<sup>13</sup> He thus starts from the singular and indivisible building block formed by the episode entered into memory, in order to develop a progressive integration of 'moments' that inform representation. Distinguishing the 'Lived Moment' (which the vitality affects to a large extent qualify), the 'Remembered Moment' and the 'Represented Moment', Stern thus constructs a sort of logical odyssey tending toward 'higher blocks of order', leading to the beginning of the fourth and last sense of the self that is in his book's journey 'the sense of a verbal self', opening onto language and the symbolic. It is striking that this progression then leads Stern to borrow a series of words coming from the cinema: script, sequence, scenario.<sup>14</sup> The 'scenario' lends itself to a hierarchisation similar to that of the moments: itself in turn lived, remembered, represented, as so many 'blocks of construction' (42). In this way moments and scenarios are integrated in an 'operating model' ('a level to order representation'), still unconscious and non-verbal, yet opening at around the third year the path to the emergence of the Narrative Model: that is to say, 'the story of the operating model that one tells to oneself or an other' (43).

Of this narrative model, Stern says at once a lot and very little. But he does say three essential things: just as the various senses of self are called into coexistence all throughout life, so the narrative model does not suspend the operating models that pre-exist it ('They coexist in relative harmony or disharmony all throughout life' (43)). Next, a singular narrative model can bring together several operating models. Finally, it can mix many elements originating from the experience of others ('family histories, myths, lies, secrets'), into personal historical experience (which



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only defines the operating model) that is to say, the narrative model opens itself to culture.

Thus, from the minimal episode figured in terms of the evoked companion, to the beginnings of the elaboration of the narrative model, there is organized a possible genesis of what we call, depending on the case, narration, narrative or fiction. Its originality lies in making fictitious every clear-cut differentiation, that is to say, posing a reality of essence or of autonomy, between the scenario element and its activation contours, to speak like Stern or, to speak like so many others, between narrative moments or events and that which responds to them as forms and figures.

This is not to say that all films are immediately narrative, regardless of the degrees and modes of what they might narrate. There are abstract or non-figurative films just as there is so-called abstract painting (for example, Peter Kubelka's *Arnulf Rainer* or Paul Sharits's *T.O.U.C.H.I.N.G.*). There are also films whose documentary image is more the result of the pure flow of an image-matter than of any *mise en fiction* (e.g. Michael Snow's *La Région centrale*). In either case, the only 'story' of these films is that of the succession of their images, of the material event or events that are constructed there, and of the forms and image of time that is thereby imposed. In Stern's terms, they are situated – excepting the symbolic dimension specific to the apparatus of cinema, like that of the art they testify to – on the pure elementary levels of amodal perception and of the vitality affects that deploy it, without giving a real grip on discrete affects, which are always more or less linked to figurative and narrative content. On the other hand, as soon as the human figure enters the scene, and *a fortiori* as soon as the slightest fiction is outlined, there is an entire correlation between what we believe we read as an image and what we believe we live as a narrative.

That is what André Parente saw so well, when he took from the rear the conviction by which Deleuze, in trying to hard to get away from the hold of semiology and theories of language and from the philosophical implications of representation, came to think that 'narration is only a consequence of the apparent images themselves, of their direct combinations, never a given'.<sup>15</sup> On the contrary, says Parente, leaning in particular on the idea in Blanchot of 'narrative voice' and on a view of narrative as 'event itself':

Narration and the narrative are not consequences of the images and neither are they the results of utterances and language processes underlying utterances. . . . Cinematic narrative, like the images and utterances that compose it, is the result of narrative/imaging processes.<sup>16</sup>

These processes are ‘the operations that explain why events and objects constitute images and cinematic utterances, with these then in turn constituting reality’. We see how, in another language, these words agree with Stern’s vision, with the intertwining he describes, from the first months of life, between the integration of sensible qualities and the process of placing into memory the episodic forms that correspond to them. Moreover, one is struck that the conception of the event developed by Deleuze in *The Fold* seems, in its turn, to implicitly thwart the divide introduced in *The Logic of Sensation* between the figural and the figurative or (according to Bacon’s words) between sensation and narration, which one finds redeployed in other terms in his books on cinema. On the contrary, with its four conditions or components that he unwinds starting from the intervention of a screen in chaos,<sup>17</sup> the Leibnizo-Deleuzian event, inspired by Whitehead, appears very close – despite the gap in vocabularies and intellectual traditions – to both the vision of Blanchot called on by Parente and to the assemblages through which Stern constructs the beginnings of the world for the infant. In order to successfully link thoughts and terms, one is struck just as much that the theory of the fold links up again directly with certain aspects of the great books conceived earlier by Deleuze with Félix Guattari (in particular the crucial coupling of the molar and the molecular); and that finally the latter, in his last book, *Chaosmosis*, wrote some crucial pages in order to show to what extent Stern’s conceptions entered in consonance with his own constructions, as much on the plane of an ‘ontology’ of subjectification as on the plane of the ‘aesthetic paradigm’.<sup>18</sup>

*Translated from French by Paul Fileri and Adrian Martin*

NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This text was first translated for the journal *Rouge*, whom the editors thank for their permission to publish it here. The original text, entitled ‘Le dépli des émotions’, first appeared in the journal *Trafic* 43 (Autumn 1982) and a modified version of it was later published in 2009 in *Le Corps du cinéma. Hynoses, émotions, animalités*. Paris, P.O.L.
- <sup>2</sup> Vanoye, F. (1991), ‘Esquisse d’une réflexion sur l’émotion’, *Cinémaction* 50, 1989, 183–91.
- <sup>3</sup> Serge Daney on Wim Wenders’s, *Paris, Texas*. See Daney, S. (1986), *Ciné Journal*. Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, pp. 53–255. Let us recall that Sartre’s essay was entitled *Outline of a Theory of the Emotions* [TN]. See Sartre, J.-P. (1948), *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*. Translated by B. Frechtman. New York: Philosophical Library.

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- <sup>4</sup> Daney, S. (1993), *L'Exercice a Été Profitable, Monsieur*. Paris: P.O.L., p. 95. 'Emotions' is the title given to this section (pp. 95–6).
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32–3. Above all, see pp. 22–5, which compose a small sensitive treatise on this love of the shot.
- <sup>6</sup> Daney, *Ciné Journal*, op. cit. p. 254.
- <sup>7</sup> Daney, *L'Exercice*, op. cit. p. 20.
- <sup>8</sup> In order to limit the references to footnotes, citations of Stern are given directly in the text. The most recent American edition is Stern, D. (2000), *The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology*. New York: Basic Books.
- <sup>9</sup> 'The infant cannot be a spectator, for he cannot see, hear, touch, feel, without entering into reaction with the thing. Because he does not have access to reflection, he cannot objectify himself, thus objectify the world. He is included as an actor in the part of the world he apprehends.' Roustang, F. (1994), *Qu'est-ce que l'hypnose?* Paris: Minuit, p. 36.
- <sup>10</sup> Maurice Merleau Ponty, cited in Lherminier, P. (1960), *L'Art du cinéma*. Paris: Seghers, p. 141.
- <sup>11</sup> Langer, S.K. (1967), *Mind: An Essay in Human Feeling*, vol. 1. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- <sup>12</sup> Stern here adopts the point of view of several researchers who consider 'Generalized Event Structures (GERs)' to be 'basic building blocks of cognitive development as well as of autobiographical memory', p. 97.
- <sup>13</sup> Stern (1990), 'Engagements subjectifs: le point de vue de l'enfant'. Translated by Elisabeth Fivaz, in A. Carel, J. Hochmann, and H. Vermorel (eds), *Le Nourrisson et sa famille*, pp. 30–45. References for citations are similarly given directly in the text. [TN: The translations from articles in French are mine.]
- <sup>14</sup> 'The script . . . would be the model of this sort of unity [*unité*] composed of different prototypical moments of an invariant sequence. Here is a simple example of it: (1) the baby approaches the mother; (2) the mother orients her body and prepares to receive the approach; (3) the baby raises its arms to be carried; (4) the mother adjusts her position in an appropriate manner'. Stern calls this unity a 'Lived Scenario' (p. 41).
- <sup>15</sup> Deleuze, G. (1989), *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. Translated by H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 27. Trans. modified.
- <sup>16</sup> Parente, A. (2005), *Cinéma et Narrativité*. Paris: L'Harmattan, pp. 5–56 (this book is an abridged version of a dissertation written in 1987 at the University of Paris VIII).
- <sup>17</sup> These are respectively extensions ('one element is stretched over the following ones, such that it is a whole and the following elements are its parts'), intensities (timbres, tints, values, etc.), individuals or prehensions (which permits subjectification), eternal objects or 'ingressions' (the identity of the object across moments). *The Fold*, op. cit., p. 77ff.
- <sup>18</sup> Guattari, F. (1995), *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*. Translated by P. Bains and J. Pefanis. Sydney: Power Institute, pp. 6 and 65–6.

## CHAPTER 15

### Nothing Is Established Forever

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Pascale Criton

Nothing is established forever. Undoubtedly, it is the need for an angle of attention that would constantly mesh with states of transformation, with a movement that is 'in the making', that characterizes and distinguishes the force of Guattari's thought. Productive instability is the mainspring for a processuality that is continually questioned by the existential, the ethical, by a transitive subjectivity that is invented and is discovered while it is being expressed.<sup>1</sup> Critical of techno-centric and scientific rationality, Guattari turns to the resources of a polyvalent aesthetics for which he shapes the multiple sources and their reciprocal resonances: from the ethical to the artistic, from the unconscious to the political, from social practices to therapeutic approaches. As vectors of a creative processuality, the bearers of the 'ethical and aesthetic' paradigm invite us to produce a difference capable of opposing the unreality of a homogenized subjectivity. And, undoubtedly, in this new paradigmatic context, art is called on with a very particular confidence because it is no stranger to the competence linked to experimentation, and the ethics of creation.<sup>2</sup> The domain of art is thereby 'resituated' in a plural paradigmatic field, its techniques of 'rupture and suture' valorized, as well as its practices of 'reframing', which can give a meaning to a universe subjected to the empty signs of a universalizing subjectivity. This is because the regimes of signs of global mass-mediatization interfere with the processes of subjectification and of semiological components: *how* do we feel, *how* do we represent ourselves, *how* do we determine ourselves?<sup>3</sup> Faced with capitalist subjection, Guattari invites us to set subjective re-appropriations in motion: 'transversal tracings', 'partial enunciators', 'existential nuclei', 'matters of choice', modalities that no reference determines a priori. This is the question regarding a 'machinic' affiliation, that of the territorializing/deterritorializing *refrain*,

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meshing with flows, but not subjected to molar dominants, continually injecting a relation into the desire of another order, infinite humour, the force of a creative subjectivity.

It would seem that, from the analysis of Vinteuil's little phrase, music acquires a 'machinic' dimension redistributing the order of sensations, so much so that 'a whole micropolitics of conformity to the dominant models is thus threatened with its irruption'.<sup>4</sup> Guattari insists on the heterogeneous consistency of music, the semiotic field with which it is composed, its incorporeal, abstract dimension, its contaminating ductility, transversal to categories. The analysis of perceptual overlapping in Marcel Proust reveals the possibilities of an open semiotics that brings the representation of space and bodies, and the sudden emergence of a heterogeneous transversality, into play.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the process of 'putting into refrain' [*ritornellization*] is born. An agent of deterritorialization, the functions of the *refrain* are transversalizing: 'the *refrain* will not cease to come out of itself, or to transversalize, and it will drive the Narrator to operate a genuine, durable micro-political mutation'.<sup>6</sup> As a vector for a heterogenesis, the *refrain* captures and deterritorializes autonomous components and reassigns them according to new couplings . . . including complex *refrains*' which make possible an immensely increasing complexity of subjectivity, of harmonies, of polyphonies, of counterpoints, of rhythms and of existential orchestrations up to now unseen and unprecedented'.<sup>7</sup> Guattari analyses the spatial and temporal mobility of music (which is distributive, partitive), its intensive dimension (which is pathic, transferential) and its energetic dimension (degrees of rapidity and slowness). He discovers the most diverse effects of sound, from the cry to the work, from the animal to the machine, from the natural to the urban. It is a thought that is, once again, close to music because it is preoccupied with the complex tangle of several kinds of time: partial temporalities, temporal transversalities, synchronies, modularities of tempi (ways of 'beating time'), isomorphy. Finally, music is convoked as a semiotic matter that escapes discursivity and produces its regimes of signs through discontinuities and re-linkings, by virtue of transitive logics and of its particular modes of articulation.<sup>8</sup> On a wider level, it has to do with a search for abstract modes of operating that must not remain techno-centred: time, which is sensitive to the determinations and relations, is a matter of complexity and temporal irreversibility, in direct relation to the potentiality of events. The coordinates of a diagrammatic thought (codings and transcodings), will aim to make semiotic assemblages of every kind emerge, whose referents are re-assignable at any moment.

No doubt the "ritornellizing" affect which subtends this plural thought gains consistence in part in its reference to a *sound* heterogeneity. A

constructivist joy rises to the surface here, with – in certain respects – a quasi-musical conception of machinic subjectification: subjectivity is ‘polyphonic’, the existential ‘hook’ [*accrochage*] is ‘rhythmic’, its operating mode is that of the ‘refrain’, and also in its references to polyvocality and ‘incorporeal’ exchanges, beyond the discursive. As Daniel Stern (who Guattari often cites) underlines, music is a matter of an affect of *vitality* intimately linked to movement that is decisive for the elaboration of a mobile and interactional self.<sup>9</sup> In return, music is summoned where we did not suspect it to appear, seized in its relation to the outside, multiple. This thinking of heterogenesis invites a community – that is at the same time ethical, aesthetic and political – in which Guattari sees a mutating function, to experiment with subjective and processual creativity.<sup>10</sup> It is the creativity of an ontological heterogenesis found at the level of aesthetic affects, capable of producing *incorporeal exchanges* and *deterritorializations* that mesh with material reality, technical and political reality, but also, subjective representations conceived according to the transversal (dis)position of a paradigmatic field that is transitive and never established forever.

It is on this ethical, transversal and trans-categorical axis of heterogenesis that Guattari takes a position that resonates, and is co-intentional, with the dynamisms of artistic work: if he names what drives it, the artistic gesture – the *autopoiesis* of aesthetic affects finds itself augmented, put into perspective. It is on this axis, henceforth passing through the middle, no longer belonging to one domain or another, but concerning a making, a *processual vector*, that I would like now to evoke some notes and reflections that I have expressed within my musical work. From my point of view, to set out the impersonal stakes of that which deterritorializes, is to put the accent on relations that are not pre-established, notions that question the movement, the energy and the modes of sensitive subjectification in space and time. Those of a transversal apparatus that rests on ‘eventness’,<sup>11</sup> that redistribute hierarchies and that play with a spatial and temporal variability. Those that pose the question of the body, of the polyvocality of signs and tend towards a multiple space, to the point of questioning the form of the event and the concert. But also, from the perspective of the ‘preliminaries’ of writing, the initiation of a virtual workbench [*spatium*] that governs the conception of tools, of processes of autonomization, of diagrammatic approaches. For example, what processes of the autonomization of gesture, of sound components, of functional re-attributions such as those of micro-tempered chord systems or of new sound/source correlations are. And, of course, everything that contributes to the experience of new relations with non pre-established re-linkings – spatio-temporal continua,

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molecularization of the material, reference to a material-force – which Guattari elaborates with Deleuze, indicating the experience of a subjectivity that is itself multiple and heterogeneous.

### THE CHOICE OF SOUND EVENTNESS

How do the points of view of eventness and transitive modalities define relations, terms and functions anew? The recurrent and transversal question of *movement*, for example, requires a search for representations, tools and technical solutions, and encourages relations that are renewed to according circumstances and contexts. This concerns, in particular, the search for a position regarding energy and dynamisms and what I will call the ‘preliminaries’ of writing. Towards what kind of representations of movement will music turn to sensitize new relations of space and time? The question of movement crosses a large and polymorphous semiotic field, which covers the domain of ‘physical beings’ just as much as that of ‘chemical bodies’ or ‘psychic realities’. From different angles, movement poses the question – from the perspective that interests us here – of material-force relations that preside over the formation of a temporal *event*. The systems of relation in which movement will take a certain form (and not another) will depend on the spatial and temporal modalities which characterize that particular movement:

Out of habit, we evoke sound as relating to something known, like an instrument, a voice, or noises. We identify the concrete sounds of real life because they remind us of something that we can pinpoint: the sound of bells, the sound of the train, footsteps on the gravel. However, a multitude of variables come into play to make up the sound that comes to me of that train, according to whether it is slow or fast, heard from the inside or the outside. In the same way, the furtive steps of children playing on the gravel pathway are strongly distinguished from the rhythm of the ritual stroll of elderly people. Each sound signal is a specific event, produced by circumstances and determinations that are deployed in a particular space and time. Sound signals are indissociable from the conditions that provoke them: forces, tensions, energies, materials, structures, as well as the physical environment in which they are emitted and propagated: exterior, interior, following more or less dense, smooth or porous surfaces, by which they are reflected or absorbed.

These factors together constitute a chain of spatial and temporal determinations that contribute to the specificity of a piece of sound information, in the open meaning of everything that is audible (even before what we call music). Sound is an essentially heterogeneous reality, a multiplicity made up of contingencies and determinations, of magnitudes, of dimensions which increase and decrease according to the event that is in process. The materialized event and the (dynamic) temporal form that it takes results from data and constraints that participate in the distribution of specific energetic modalities. *Acoustic multiplicity*, as I would like to propose here, integrates all of the factors that shape the sound and the potentiality of the spatio-temporal variables that will be specified in a particular sound event.

The expression of dynamic and evolving forms has to do with a piece of information and an energetic, constituent description that is in constant becoming. Energetic materializations, like thermodynamic modellings, instruct us by means of their topological and morpho-dynamic dimension. This dynamic and topological point of view will allow us to consider that it is force that takes a certain desired form-event (and not the contrary). For a long time, force was made to take a desired form (mechanical conception). We can henceforth understand and test the forces from the point of view of energy and of the processualities of which they are capable (flux, energy). The material that is then liberated is in direct relation to forces; it is a *material-force*, not to be confused with a material-form, subject to constraining formal principles.

This spatio-temporal 'morphogenesis', in constant transformation, is interesting from the point of view of its expressive potentiality and of its circulation, from the concrete to the abstract, from the physical to the psychic. This point of view, which I might call 'pre-material'<sup>12</sup> to music, is open, virtual, and makes it possible to establish relations between physical forces said to belong to 'nature' and mechanical or artificial figures, between a disposition of a psychical order and the physical energy of an instrumental gesture. Indeed, there is neither any logical nor any material transitivity between these registers. I can, however, establish an immediate relation, a sort of diagrammatic map between these dynamisms of different categories, which can be useful to me from the point of view of musical composition.

### *Towards a Transversal Polyvocality*

Mobility, elasticity, variation of fluidity and energy come in a variety of traits and variables which all have to do, I believe, with the abstract



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expressivity of the *inflexion*, whether it be in natural elements, words, bodies, ideas or sounds. *Inflexion* is an interesting source, that of a priori unassigned action, which engenders a modification (folding, bending, inclining, reversing) and is understood in very diverse orders of things, from the body to geometry, from the plasticity of the line to musical sounds, from variations of intonation to forms of flowing of liquids, from mathematical artefacts to indexed characters. Inflexion is trans-categorical. It operates dynamic modifications according to various orders, to the extent that mechanical or artificial figures mix with the instrumental accent and the gestural impulse, and the inflexion of meaning correlates (or not) with that of sound. If there is no logical or material transitivity from one order to another, diagrammatic modalities can nevertheless bring together series or borders belonging to the one and to the other. It is from such a point of view, which I previously called 'pre-material' to music, that it seems to me possible to speak of a certain joining together of dynamisms.

### *Subjectivity and Event*

Whether it involves the mobility of relations and their distribution, plastic and gestural variability, or the inflexion of the voice, the dynamic point of view directs the articulation of sound data towards a constructivism of energy variables. The expressivity of 'the action in the making' is deployed according to spatial and temporal determination or 'dramaturgies' of the event. The notion of *event* concerns musical writing on the level of a modular approach to variables capable of sensitizing new forms of time. We can propose the hypothesis of an expressive production, of a kinetic, topological *circulation* that overlaps these categories. According to a number of determinations, an event is specified and becomes sensitive. If any 'subject' appears, it would concern 'wandering states' in the very act of overlapping, of incorporeal exchanges contracting the signs of *how* to a certain extent. *How* the wind is propagated in the sails, *how* fire consumes the heath. The dynamic a-signifying dimension questions the *how* and would have to do with pure relations of speed and of direction, intensive indications for an expressive circulation.<sup>13</sup>

For example, in a piece created following my reading of Nathalie Sarraute, I arranged a circulation going from the inflexion of sound to words and gestures. *Elle est mignonne* [She is Cute]<sup>14</sup> plays in relay on the mobility of inflexion, at the intersection of sound, sense and the playing of the instruments. Rather than relying on the continuity of a text, it is a matter of expressive traits, bits of words, gestures and sensations, subject

to reciprocal encroachments, to the point that a circulation of a-signifying traits intimately re-links phonetics, propagation and gestures. Voices, interwoven in the 'dialogues', are indiscernably mixed with instrumental fluctuations. Elasticity is the stake of technique, passing from one edge of vocal, instrumental and semantic inflexions to another, diverting information from sense to the benefit of sound, making each 'action' appear like an indication of movement.<sup>15</sup> Gestures (micro-events, modes of instrumental playing) become patterns in themselves. Trimmed in their duration, their directionalities and their extremely precise characteristic extensions, they take their place in the narrative like 'doubles'. These multiple expressive gestures, action-inflexions, dynamic micro-events are re-linked in a continuity of movement, the humoristic variation of a *quasi-elastic* force that continually unfolds and winds up again, stretching and hollowing out, abandoning itself by means of fragile, strange figures.

We know the importance of gesture in Sarraute's work: from repetition to 'acting out', the psychical dimension is not dissociated from the impulse, as present in the 'manners of speaking' as in the expressivity of the movement which leads to such a situation, to such an irrepressible repetition.<sup>16</sup> Different dynamisms – whether they are psychic, physical, organic (muscular or nervous impulses), inorganic (little motivations, pendular movements or mechanical movements) – overlap in the inflexion. And we pass from the one to the other: animalcules, composite bodies, dramaturgies of gesture-sound-sense that arrange a vacillating line, that 'of words taken up again a thousand times with all their intonations . . . and then what is neither image nor speech, nor tone, nor a single sound . . . but rather movements, brief relaxations, leaps, crawls, withdrawals, experimentations'.<sup>17</sup>

What have I done? This gesture that means nothing  
 This unfortunate movement  
 An automatic gesture<sup>18</sup>

#### SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL VARIABILITIES

To each sensitive individuation the question of movement presents itself in a new way. Musical writing incorporates the data of the movement through a patient work of autonomization of signs, to the extent that force-form relations circulate from sounds to signs, from gestures to tools and to representations of time and space. The determinations can be

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precisely noted in the domain of digitalized sound, according to micro or macro scales and multiple diagrammatic operations. Constitutive relations of movement can be composed at the level of the writing of the sound data, and also on the level of the gesture that produces the sound: the movement is composed even in the writing of relations to space, from the projection-diffusion of the sound event to its propagation in a space of reception.

### *Sound/Space Reciprocities*

The material-force is shaken, forces and excitations of all sizes flow, apprehendable at multiple points, on their surfaces and in their consistency, according to the forms that they constitute by continuity and imbrications. The approach of a co-extensive reciprocity of sound and of space rests on an approach to acoustic multiplicity and of sound eventness. What are the possible modalities of an infinite variation (mobility and simultaneity) of events in the interwoven space of structures and materials, circulating inside-outside? The role of membranes (and of everything that divides space into two or multiple parts) is essential for sound, from the reality of the instrumental to that of systems and of physical beings in general. The point of view of propagation, which is the condition of sound, concerns everything that emits and transmits sound, from the instrument to the building, from outside to inside. The borders between these domains of different sounds, of *sound* in general, and of music over the last decades are no longer exclusive. Already Varèse defined music as ‘organized sound’<sup>19</sup> and introduced the world to noises: since then, sound has become an object of composition (its description, its production, its components, its restitution) and music today tends towards sound and its multiple forms, and thereby towards a production of sound that is not exclusively, instrumentally ‘normed’ – that is, reserved for the classical instruments inherited from the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, these very vast categories that are sounds and sound in general can today be ‘instrumented’: captured, analysed, modelled, redistributed . . . as soon as they are invested in by musicians.

### *Towards a Multiple Space*

How is one to inhabit a space in a plural way? How is one to construct the auditory scene of a multiple and simultaneous space? The place of listening (place of observation) is a variable that can be positioned in space according to diverse propositions and can tend towards becoming

'autonomized'. This idea goes all the way back to the infantile wish to enter into and to go through things, bodies, materials (the invisible man, etc.). It is true that in general, a stereophonic listening, just like the frontal disposition of the audience grouped facing the stage, aims at a centred, optimal listening. These positions induce a focalized, exclusive listening, one that is attentive and concentrated, but not a driving force. The emission/reception pair is localized in a unique controlled space. Quite differently, the latent ubiquity of a 'multipoint' listening experience will be all the more sensitive as the points of space are diversified and differentiated and also to the extent that the sources (voices, instruments, transmissions, restitutions) are dispersed and in movement. The auditory scene, then, supposes multiple listening points, even a mobile, wandering listening.<sup>20</sup> The result is a fictive, recomposed space, in movement, one in which listening oscillates and is constructed, in a mobile, unstable, uncertain depth. The subjective experience of the interweaving of acoustic fields, of a real space is doubled and recomposed in a paradoxical way, a *heterotopia* to borrow Foucault's term.<sup>21</sup>

### *The Autonomization of Gesture*

The instrumental gesture is often assigned to transmitted technical figures: how we play staccato, how we strike the notes, how we hold the bow, the plectrum or the bell. The majority of these figures testify to a mechanistic conception, inherited from the eighteenth century, stabilized with a view to favouring the tuning of sound, avoiding parasitic sounds, noises, imprecise sounds. The dominant identity of the pitches is dictated by the exclusive hierarchy of consonance, in view of which the body folds while organizing the control of emission, amplitude, and duration. The contrary would be to start from the gesture and the conditions of production of sound, or to manage the gestural processuality, which makes other expressive emissions possible.<sup>22</sup> In the movement towards a topology of the gesture and of its notation, the gesture itself becomes cardinal, generative, the expression of a force and a regulator of the studied acoustic performance at the same time. An assemblage of movement and energy, at the border of the body and the instrument, the dynamic scene goes from mechanical to elastic, from nervous impulse to the most abstract fluxes. The speeds, amplitudes and dynamics are no longer there to obtain 'notes', but rather to seize the singularity of multiple states and intensities of movement: impulses, comings and goings that are more or less stable or unsettled, little motivations whose flexibility is sometimes latent, sometimes on the verge of exhaustion.

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### *An Interactive Description (Energy)*

What has the interactive description of physical beings<sup>23</sup> modified in the domain of representations of sound? As soon as the activity of time and its multiple scales is taken into consideration, the identity of the note becomes relative. The transition between components that are spectral (sensation of pitch) and variables that are non-harmonic (transitory) becomes hybridized: below the scale of the note the activity of micro-variations, molecular exchanges, and micro-temperaments appear. Energetic transformations allow miniscule variations of time and of movement, for reasons of expressivity above all. During the 1980s, separate from the sound synthesis approach, micro-tempered systems allowed me to work in detail on thickness of timbres, to produce multiplied scales of relation,<sup>24</sup> to the extent that movement, orientations, inflexions could be shaped according to quasi imperceptible directionalities. In terms of energy, a difference, no matter how small, is always involved in an active balance. Thus, miniscule operations playing on mobility, flexibility and fluidity move away from the stability of the 'identity of the note'. Their recomposition (re-linking) according to speeds of flow and directional fluxes was thus made possible.<sup>25</sup>

### FORMAL, SECTIONAL HETEROGENEITY (SPATIO-TEMPORAL CONTINUA)

### *A Virtual Workbench (Spatium)*

I have evoked the idea of *movement* and of its possible declinations (inflexion, gestures, strokes), from the point of view of energy (variables, sensitivity to the conditions), of its deployment in space (propagation, simultaneity) and of its effect on an autonomization of the gesture, a multiple space and a mobile listening. On what plane do these disparate series meet? How can the production of a line of transversality be prepared for action? How can a 'machinic potentiality' be founded that will preserve the open weaving of relations and avoid restrictive frameworks?

Like Deleuze, Guattari gives great importance to the elaboration of a plane of consistency or a plane of composition.<sup>26</sup> What does it mean to compose music? From a certain point of view, it is about operating a constant stream between a register that concerns techniques and practices on the one hand (including instinctual, transferential and existential lead-ins), and on the other hand a register that concerns abstract, logical and

projective data. On the one hand, written music sets apart a space which is 'out of time',<sup>27</sup> in which representations and virtual operations are elaborated, such as those of the projection of ideas, of structuring, diagrams, logical operations, as well as the tools for generating sound. And on the other hand, space experienced 'in time', that of the physical realization of music. The two are closely linked: it is on this level of intertwining that any technical or expressive invention will appear. This relational space is pre-material: its contents are not yet determined.<sup>28</sup> It is thanks to the initiation of a virtual workbench [*spatium*] that it becomes possible to create connections between logical propositions and practical solutions, between an 'abstract' geometry and a physical reality. This somewhat artisanal coming and going must in my opinion remain open. It is here that the emergence of a poetics, the possibility of an expression that goes hand in hand with technical invention, comes into play. The workbench itself is conceived according to the event studied and produced.

### *Pansonority and Abstract Plane*

*Everything resonates [tout sonne]*, said Ivan Wyschnegradsky,<sup>29</sup> establishing the idea of a fluid 'pansonority' such 'that there exists no single point where there is no sound'. The intuition of pansonority is manifested in the apperception of a fluid sound milieu separated from all virtual sound relations in which everything is immersed, even though it is not fully perceived, 'just like the air that we breathe'.<sup>30</sup> Wyschnegradsky's ultra-chromatism introduces the idea of an abstract plane (an *absolute sonorous continuum*) and of a field of individuation (multiplicity of *continua*) that weave and striate the space of relations. The general idea of divisibility (numerical schemas) and of structuring schemas applies to all the 'access points' of sound material. The particularity of this approach is to render an infinitely renewable distribution of sound space accessible, without the latter being pre-established. The notion of the sound continuum, in Wyschnegradsky's ultra-chromatic filiation, does not prejudge the sound idea (all the physical potentiality of the sound relations must be virtually accessible), nor the logical idea (all specifications and typologies – or schemes – are possible), nor the compositional idea (all lateral relations and partitive re-linkings are conceivable). Certain aspects of these theoretical and methodological options can, retrospectively, allow us to think about new applications and about an extension of the notion of *continuum*. Ultra-chromatism has yielded a logical plane on which everything has a number.<sup>31</sup> The unity of the system is 'digital/numerical' and was so well before computers and sound synthesis. The notion of schemas and of

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the topological space of relations inverts the usual position of the status of qualities in music. Structuring schemas are first in terms of qualities since we are looking for a quality that we do not possess. The hierarchies, coherences, filiations and relationships are the result, the legible series that do not, however, involve lateral dependence between them. For, as we have seen, the continuum on which these operations are actualized has no physical existence. It is an ideal plane, the full potentiality of all sound relations.

### *Spatio-Temporal Continua*

Thanks to the dissociation between the logical plane and a non-organized (yet organizable) physical potentiality of sound relations, the notion of continuum makes it possible to establish very diverse links between parameters and levels of conception of the material, and to integrate the spatio-temporal dimension of sound. From energy to frequencies, from morphologies to durations, the notion of spatio-temporal continua makes it possible to define types of space (vectorial, Euclidian, evolutionary, frequential), to be able to pass from the one to the other, and to create new continua. The schemas for the determination of time and space, preliminary to new kinds of continuities, make it possible to define specific types of objects, laws of things, metrics, etc., integrating the data of the analysis and of sound synthesis. They can just as easily produce sound varieties as apply to the generation of conceptual tools or to the renewal of the idea of the instrument.

Regarding rules of composition, the opposition between consonance and dissonance was erased to make way for re-linkings on a trajectory that no longer has any reference to a centre. The models, grids or maps are sought for what they produce, but remain relative, expressing a point of view, an angle of folding. Topographic schemas of qualities adhere to no exclusive model but rather participate in an inclusive modelling, which is continually modified, and continually accepts new integrations. It is a method of creation, a pragmatic elaboration, a support for a process of production of varieties, available for future selections and combinations. It is possible to consider, in this perspective, that the plane of composition is anchored in an abstract plane of thought, from which audible matters are engendered. It is a space to be organized, which quite simply involves technique, pragmatics and aesthetics. It is no longer a fixed and restrictive space but instead a potential space on which relations, selections, deductions and variations are implemented. The idea of an unlimited (abstract, not yet real) plane is a decisive act in thought, which calls upon

the prospective exercise of different types of domain, from intuition to the knowledge of the physics of sound in general.

*Molecularization of Material*

Electronic synthesis, the analysis of the frequency distribution of tones and digital techniques have all made it possible to valorize the constitution of sound signals: these respond to a configuration of complex relations and are the expression of a state of relations between variables. The sound element itself is a compound of variables (frequencies, intensities, durations), displaying evolutionary and interactive behaviours. The sound element can thenceforth be considered a decomposable and recomposable *compound* that can always be exposed to transformations. Its imprint is the expression of a state of variables that are conserved (maintaining equilibrium) or that modulate (modification of only certain variables, i.e. vibrato) or that are transformed into another state of relations (transition or rupture). They are spatio-temporal varieties that can, today, with new tools for analysis, be seized in fixed positions, or followed in transformation in time. Are these varieties finite or infinite? We are faced with a plurality of variables that must be differentiated or controlled. The relations have to be established, the *continua of relations* must be constructed. Only the discretization of material allows us to constitute new compounds and to regulate their temporal variation.<sup>32</sup> From my point of view, discretization, the molecularization of material is a preliminary for access to mobility, to a processual sound material. The molecularization of sound material permits access to a variety of continua, to a line of unlimited variation of sound relations.

Thus a *transversal continuity*, or a continuity of re-linking, appears which articulates heterogeneous elements that can even belong to different categories and classes. The spatio-temporal variations thus produced make up a line or an evolutionary interpenetration of compounds of ‘frequencies-durations-intensities’ and compounds of ‘speeds-dynamics-amplitudes’. But also, as we saw earlier, a deterritorializing line of ‘word-sound-gesture’ or ‘multipoint listening – plural space’.<sup>33</sup> This supposes the possibility of considering, abstractly, unformed materials to which functions are assigned and it calls into question the a priori of the preformed element. From this perspective, measures, schemas and functions of category are intimately linked to writing. To create a material does not consist in conforming to pre-established models but rather to experimenting with linking systems in order to make possible varieties of *continuum* appear. The measures and ordering functions [*fonctions d’ordre*] will, therefore,



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of necessity inform the vibratory potential material and give concrete expression to the varieties of *continua of relations*.

## CONCLUSION

To follow Guattari's path is to be driven by an interest in experimentation, by the work of an active disjunction, of a broadened, inclusive consciousness, which makes the leap towards trans-categorical continuities possible. With regard to art, Guattari gives words to the processualities that exist and thereby links them to a plural outside, giving them back a framework, breath and necessity, placing artistic practices at the root of the existential, of ethics and of responsibility – so much so that the arts enter into the generalized process of reappropriation of modes of enunciation, like shifters, like catalysts, or the active nuclei of experimentation. The practices of singularization, of 'rupture and suture' analysed by Guattari are therein enhanced, spread to other fields, becoming trans-categorical. Heterogenesis spreads from the psychic to the political, from the individual to the collective, from the impersonal to the fluxes. And no doubt the trans-categorical (transversal) efficacy of the ethico-aesthetic paradigm takes on a quite particular ethical and political meaning here, that of an adjacent posture, always coupled, always meshing with reality, deflecting any unique, already traced line. The pragmatics of incorporeal events targets unconnected, unstable, heterogeneous spaces for new transversal continuities that testify to creative processualities of subjectification.

*Translated from French by Shane Lillis  
and revised by Andrew Goffey*

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> 'Nothing is established forever. No stage, no complex is ever fully overcome, never fully passed. Everything stays in view, available to every re-use, but also to every tumble'. Guattari, F. (1979), *L'Inconscient machinique*. Paris: Recherches, p. 220.
- <sup>2</sup> 'The new aesthetic paradigm has ethical-political implications because to speak of creation is to speak of the responsibility of the creative instance with regard to the thing created, inflection of the state of things, bifurcation beyond pre-established schemas, once again taking into account the fate of alterity in its extreme modalities'. Guattari, F. (1995), *Chaosmosis*. Translated by P. Bains and J. Pefanis. Sydney: Power Institute, p. 107.

- <sup>3</sup> With Deleuze, Guattari analyses how the exercising of modern power ‘implies processes of normalization, modulation, modelling and information that bear on language, perception, desire, movement, etc.’ Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1987), *A Thousand Plateaus*. Translated by B. Massumi. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, p. 506.
- <sup>4</sup> Guattari, *L’Inconscient machinique*, op. cit. p. 272.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 251; Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. pp. 15–8.
- <sup>6</sup> Guattari, *L’Inconscient machinique*, op. cit. p. 63.
- <sup>7</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 17.
- <sup>8</sup> Guattari refers to Bakhtin’s analyses concerning processes of singularization of music. See Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 14.
- <sup>9</sup> Stern distinguishes ‘vitality affects from the ‘traditional or Darwinian *categorical affects* of anger, joy, sadness, and so on’. They are ‘dynamic, kinetic qualities of feeling’, and ‘abstract dance and music are examples par excellence of the expressiveness of vitality affects’. Stern, D. (2000), *The Interpersonal World of the Infant: A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology*. New York: Basic Books, p. 55, 156 and 56. More generally, pp. 53–61 [TN].
- <sup>10</sup> ‘How can we, in this sensory submersion in a finite material, hold together an embodied composition (be it the most deterritorialized, as is the case with the material of music, or the material of conceptual art), and this hyper-complexity, this autopoiesis of aesthetic affects? . . . an ontological heterogenesis all the more vertiginous when combined, as it is today, with the proliferation of new materials, new electronic representations, and with a shrinking of distances and an enlargement of points of view’. Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. pp. 95–6.
- <sup>11</sup> The French – *évènementialité* – doesn’t have a direct translation. Adapting and extending the translation of the neologism *évènementiel* (‘evental’) would have resulted in ‘eventality’. ‘Eventness’ is still ugly but perhaps less so [Editors’ note].
- <sup>12</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. pp. 157–8.
- <sup>13</sup> Guattari suggests that the machinic subject appears with and at the same time as the production of ‘incorporeal entities’, given in the creative instant. Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 17. On the processuality of consistence, see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. pp. 287–92.
- <sup>14</sup> Criton, P. (2005), *Ell est mignonne*. Strasbourg: Musee d’Art Moderne et Contemporain.
- <sup>15</sup> Present in the intonation of the spoken voice, inflexion experiments with the phonatory flexibility of the resonators of the vocal canal (whatever the characteristic of the technique: spoken, sung, and all its intermediaries).
- <sup>16</sup> Asso, F. (1995), *Nathalie Sarraute, Une écriture de l’effraction*. Paris: PUF, pp. 124–5.
- <sup>17</sup> Sarraute, N. (1956), *L’ère du soupçon*. Paris: Gallimard, pp. 8–9.
- <sup>18</sup> ‘Qu’ai-je fait? Cegeste qui ne veutrien dire/Ce mouvement malheureux/Un geste machinal’.
- <sup>19</sup> In his well-known essay, ‘The Liberation of Sound’ [TN].
- <sup>20</sup> Criton, P. (2009), *De l’autre côté du miroir*. Music in situ, Villa Savoye, June 2009.
- <sup>21</sup> Foucault, M. (2009), *Le corps utopique, Les hétérotopies*. Paris: Nouvelles Editions Lignes.

## THE GUATTARI EFFECT

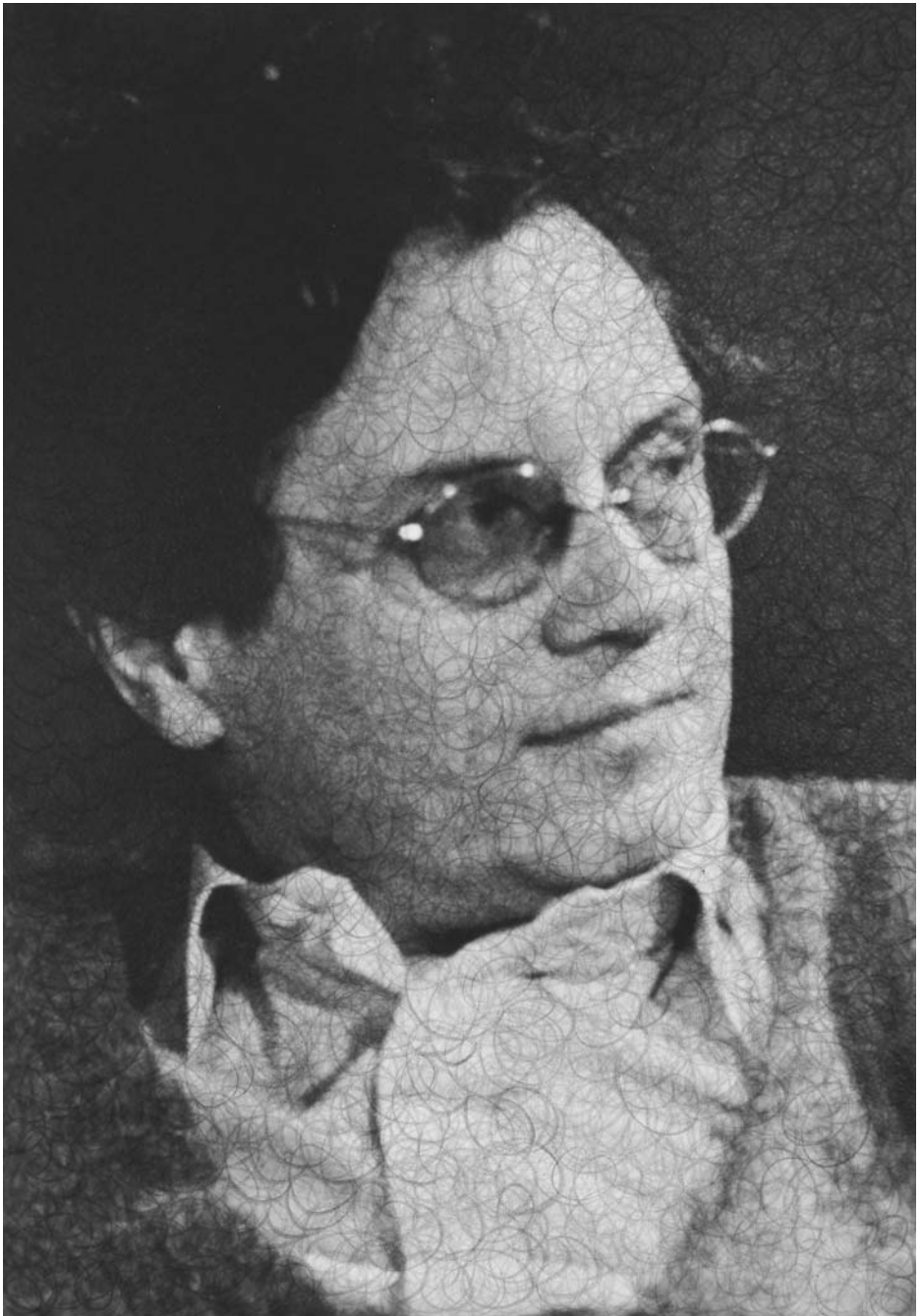
- <sup>22</sup> Criton, P. (2006), *Plis pour violoncelle*. Paris: Editions Jobert.
- <sup>23</sup> Prigogine, I. (1982), *Temps, physique et devenir*. Paris: Masson.
- <sup>24</sup> Micro-tempered systems give access to intervals that are smaller than a semi-tone. The octave (or any other reference interval) can be divided into 36, 72, 96, etc. intervals. The 1/12th tone temperament that I used on fretted stringed instruments divides the octave into 72 intervals.
- <sup>25</sup> Solomos, M., and Delume, C. (2003), 'De la fluidité du matériau sonore dans la musique de Pascale Criton', in 'Le matériau, voir et entendre'. *Revue Rue Descartes* 38. Paris: PUF, pp. 40–53.
- <sup>26</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. pp. 293–4.
- <sup>27</sup> I refer here to the expressions 'in time' and 'outside time' used by Xenakis to distinguish between these two registers. Cf. Xenakis, I. (1994), *Kéleütha*. Paris: L'Arche, p. 68.
- <sup>28</sup> 'The creation of a transversal line depends on the double movement of an abstract pre-material plane, or plane of *consistency* on the one hand and logical elaboration plane or *organization* plane on the other hand. The two are indissociable, linked in a movement of reciprocal production, they never cease to exchange'. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. pp. 292–300 and 326–329 et seq.
- <sup>29</sup> Ivan Wyschnegradsky (1893–1979), Russian composer and pioneer of microtonality, elaborated in 1920 an ultra-chromatic sound system that went up to 72 divisions per octave.
- <sup>30</sup> Wyschnegradsky, I. (1996), *La loi de la pansonorité*. Geneva: Contrechamps.
- <sup>31</sup> 'Every sound relation, every vibratory relation has a number . . . the nature of each ultra-chromatic interval is revealed in acoustic analysis; its qualities depend on the numerical relation of the sound vibrations that characterize it, which determines whether it belongs to an entire number or to  $n\sqrt{1}$  form of number'. Wyschnegradsky, *La loi de la pansonorité*, op. cit. pp. 119–124 and 113–115.
- <sup>32</sup> Criton, P. (2005), 'Mutation and Processuality in the Musical Thought of Horacio Vaggione', *Contemporary Music Review* 24/4: 371–81.
- <sup>33</sup> 'Music is a creative, active operation that consists in deterritorializing the *refrain*. . . . Does it remain territorial and territorializing, or is it carried away in a moving block that draws a transversal across all coordinates?' Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. pp. 331 and 333.

# **CHAPTER 16**

## Félix Portraits 2010

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Annie Ratti

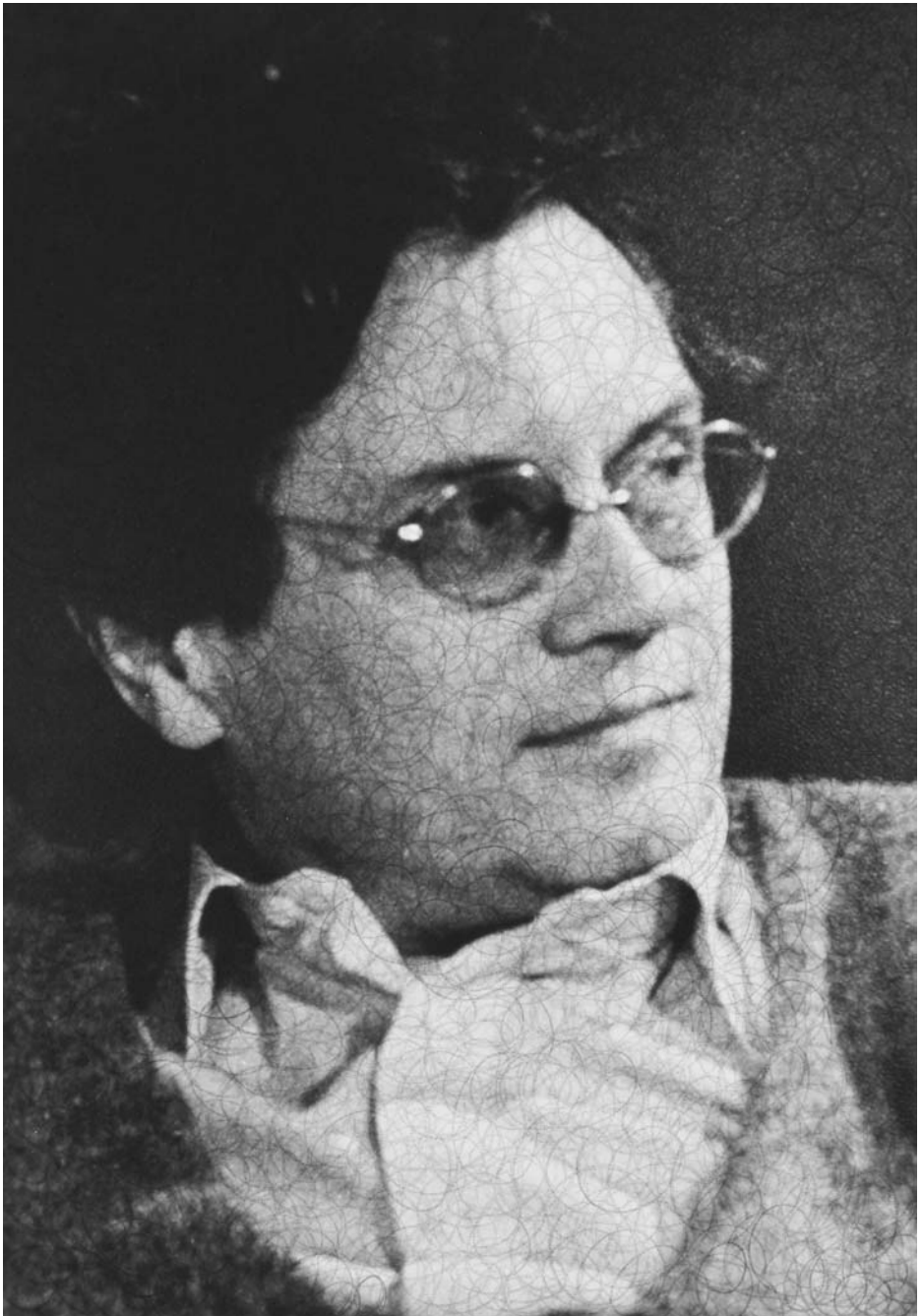


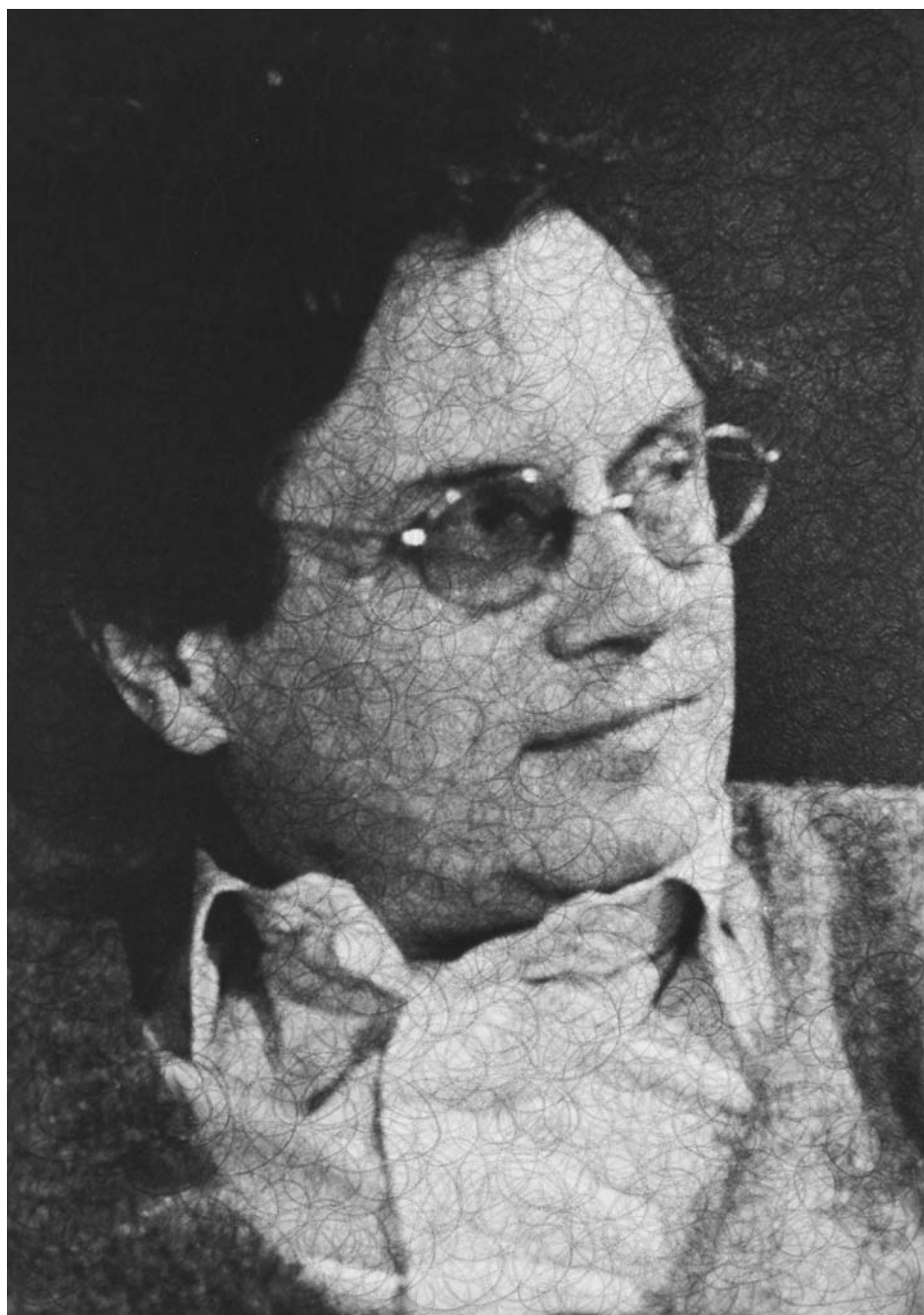
















## Conclusion: The Guattari–Deleuze Effect<sup>1</sup>

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Éric Alliez

Guattari is an amazing philosopher, particularly when he is talking about politics, or about music.

Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*<sup>2</sup>

Is there a hope for philosophy, which for a long time has been an official, referential genre? Let us profit from this moment in which antiphilosophy is trying to be a language of power.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka*<sup>3</sup>

The *Guattari–Deleuze Effect* then, so as to compress into a single syntagm the efficacy of the Guattari Effect *in and by* Deleuze. Because by celebrating a militant exit from philosophy in Guattari’s name alone, this discourse would inevitably miss something that is of a quite different nature and which should in fact found it, from the point of view of a first Guattari Effect of/within the Deleuzo–Guattarian adventure. The *effect* obliges us to come back to it, not so as to conclude, but to start again. It is, in effect, a matter of a critique and clinic of philosophical discourse undertaken as a theoretical practice of *transversalization* – ‘on the absolute horizon of all creative processes’ where political experimentation as such originates, from a Guattarian perspective that gives it a radical new meaning. That is to say: experimentation as the politics in and of thinking oriented by the analysis of capitalism – and ultimately, to employ a phrase used by Deleuze in order to specify the alterity of *Anti-Oedipus*, as the *political philosophy*<sup>4</sup> of a theory-practice whose reality principle is the advance and return of politics on and in the philosophical Idea according to which ‘to think is always to interpret’.<sup>5</sup> It is in rupture with the latter, in so far as it *returns* it in a cartography of effective relations of force, which involve this conception of philosophy in which its ‘highest art’ is that of ‘interpretation’.<sup>6</sup> A rupture,

## CONCLUSION: THE GUATTARI-DELEUZE EFFECT

the politics of which is the stake that opposes experimentation to interpretation in the very movement in which the 'critique of philosophy' exceeds the philosophy of representation<sup>7</sup> alone so as to imply an entire *clinic of the social sciences*. For if Deleuze sees Guattari as putting an end to his own long-term project of expanding philosophy to artistic thought and intensifying its interpretive regime so as to penetrate it with its own outside (which *forces* it to think, under the constraint of sensibility), it is because Guattari brings along an altogether different potentiality (and entirely different effect) which by 1968 is felt to be urgently necessarily. Namely: to make philosophy exit itself [*faire sortir la philosophie d'elle-même*] by means of a project of *decoding* that affects its textual functioning and its logic of sense at the same time as it invests in the destruction of codes, a destruction whose process capitalism presents in a historical narrative inseparable from the *semiotic machination* of the subject. Consequently, Deleuze will engage the Guattari Effect in a becoming-political of philosophy, exited from itself so as to acquire an absolute power of decoding within the social field, and whose *first effect* would be to undo the image of philosophical thought by cracking the codes of its material-ideal form of interiority. So it is no longer a matter of suggesting another form of *expression* and a new *style* for the book 'of philosophy' (in accordance with the famous warning in the Foreword of *Difference and Repetition*: 'The time is coming when it will hardly be possible to write a book of philosophy as it has been done for so long'),<sup>8</sup> but rather of opposing to it an other regime of production that *incorporates* it into the material milieu by *plugging* it into the *machinic* reality conditions of the most exterior and the most interior forces.

Machine-Book, flow-book, a book/non-book that schizophrenizes philosophy by plunging it into a general semiotics impelled by the schizophrenization of the field of the unconscious that is coextensive with the social field. For this 'new kind of book' is required in order to break with the 'style of philosophy', insofar – Deleuze explains in 1972 in a Nietzschean intervention updated to the anti-interpretive tenor of *Anti-Oedipus* – as with philosophy 'the relation to the exterior is always mediated and dissolved by an interior, in an interior' that calls for a hermeneutic reading casually commingling the codings that informed the bookform: sacred, bourgeois-contractual, institutional. Deleuze continues: 'Hooking up thought to the outside is, strictly speaking, what philosophers have never done, even when they were talking about politics, even when they were talking about taking a walk or fresh air. It is not enough to talk about fresh air, to talk about the exterior if you want to hook thought up directly and immediately to the outside'.<sup>9</sup> There are distant echoes here of the philosopher's earlier observations in *The Logic of*

## THE GUATTARI EFFECT

*Sense* on the ‘ridiculousness of the thinker’ who, ensnared in the meshes of the structuralist logic of a psychoanalysis of sense,<sup>10</sup> discovers that no manner of serial game will hold up any longer to the schizophrenic reality of the Body-without-Organs that materializes all forces – beginning with words, which become physicalized and burst through the surface of meaning, swept into the depth of this ‘vital body’ whose every intensity Artaud succeeded in introducing into ‘literature’.<sup>11</sup> The ‘ridiculousness of the thinker’ is that he does not know how to *do philosophy* in the present without a structuralist logic of sense, even though he suspects he will have to renounce it if it is to cease being ‘abstract’, if he is to attain a ‘politics’, a ‘full guerrilla warfare’<sup>12</sup> that is no longer beholden to the supplementary perspective of a ‘practice in relation to the products that [structuralism] interprets’ (for the symbolic, the first tell-tale criterion of structuralism, is ‘the source, inseparably, of interpretation and creation:’ *structural interpretation*).<sup>13</sup> One takes full measure here, in the negative, of the contingent necessity of the Guattari Effect, because no other ‘book’ will emerge from the Body-without-Organs without an operative principle of ‘a writing inscribed on the very surface of the Real’ that prises the bolt of structure and offers up a *radically political* alternative to the games of seriality. This would mean the machinic development of transversality, which conforms to the distribution of the unconscious throughout the entire social body by implementing a new pragmatics of the knowledges *that deterritorialize philosophy as much as it incorporates them into an artificial communism of ontological production* whose radically post-Nietzschean openness is properly Guattarian. To quote Guattari, from one of his working notes sent to Deleuze in July 1970 under the heading ‘Power Signs’: ‘The sign is the site of the metabolism of power. . . . If Nietzsche’s *force* constitutes a *structural field*, the *machinic will to power sign* constitutes *discontinuous artificiality* [Deleuze underlines the entire sentence]. The eternal return of the ‘machinic’ *is not the mechanical repetition* of the same in the same but an eternal return *to* machinism, as the *being of production* and the *production of being*, as the artifice of being and the irreducible character of the bricolage of being’.<sup>14</sup> ‘So, merger between the most artificial kind of modernism and the naturing nature of desire’. And elsewhere: ‘the real is the artificial – and not (as Lacan says) the impossible’.<sup>15</sup>

Such would be the thunderbolt of the first paragraph of *Anti-Oedipus*, which begins by turning thought into a war-machine against the order of philosophical discourse in its ‘essential relation to the law, the institution, and the contract’.<sup>16</sup> All academic codes are shattered so as to untune philosophy to the machinic disorder of the *it [le ça]* (‘It is at work everywhere. It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks. . . . Everywhere it is

## CONCLUSION: THE GUATTARI-DELEUZE EFFECT

machines – real ones, not figurative ones. . . . Hence we are all handymen: each with his little machines'). This is also why the *theme* of desiring production – defined by the *fact* that 'production as process overtakes all idealistic categories and constitutes a cycle whose relationship to desire is that of an immanent principle'<sup>17</sup>– *de-structures* the Book-Form to sweep the reader into a machine-book in which 'there are not two planes of expression and content but one single plane of consistency (= plane of machinic filiation)',<sup>18</sup> according to the Guattarian leitmotiv, in which we are called upon to *produce* our own *transversal connective and disjunctive syntheses*. For if 'we cannot accept the idealist category of "expression" as a satisfactory or sufficient explanation', it is also because the reader must be integrated/disintegrated into a 'machine of a machine' movement of that nature, a 'law of the production of production' in which, 'far from being the opposite of continuity, the break or interruption conditions this continuity: it presupposes or defines what it cuts into as an ideal continuity'.<sup>19</sup> It is in such a way that the intensive and energetic writing of *Anti-Oedipus* shifts the entire unconscious production process onto the reading/montage of a 'writing *inscribed on the very surface of the Real*: a strangely polyvocal kind of writing, never a bi-univocalized, linearized one; a transcursive system of writing, never a discursive one'.<sup>20</sup> This helps explain why Deleuze, in his 'Letter to a Harsh Critic' (1973), where he reflects at length on his conception of an other reading (an 'intensive way of reading, in contact with what's outside the book, as a flow meeting other flows, one machine among others, as a series of experiments') whose only question is 'Does it work, and how does it work?' (the very first sentence of *Anti-Oedipus* declares so, that *it is at work!*), with a reader able to approach the book as 'a little non-signifying machine' (that is to say, a reader seized by the Guattari Effect relayed here by Deleuze) – that is, this helps explain why Deleuze chose to describe his encounter with Guattari by means of a succinct but unequivocal: 'Out of that came *Anti-Oedipus*'.<sup>21</sup>

That is what triggered the second period in Deleuze's biography, when it became a matter no longer of doing *Philosophy* [*faire de LA philosophie*] (from an overdetermined relation to its history – even if both *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* did indeed put that history into 'variation', and 'pervert' it through this 'strange art of surfaces' introduced by the Stoics and radicalized by Lewis Carroll), but of producing a *political* critique and clinic of philosophy. The philosophical affirmation of the univocity of the real is measured here by 'pure reality breaking through' (68 is the *Number of the Beast*), which makes something 'new' flow by producing break-flow effects that link – while unbinding (the immanence of disjunctive synthesis) – a deviation inherent to the desiring machine, *which only works by*



## THE GUATTARI EFFECT

*breaking down*.<sup>22</sup> And it is the non-metaphorical existence of the desiring machine – to which the critical (of capitalism) and clinical (with regard to schizophrenia) undertaking of philosophy is attached, as to its transcendental plane, its plane of consistency<sup>23</sup> – that demands a new definition of the activity of thinking, one that effectively conjugates machine and desire. Deleuze summarizes this materialist revolution in thought concisely with a strange singular: ‘A philosophy amounted for me, then, to a sort of second period that would never have begun or got anywhere without Félix’.<sup>24</sup>

A political philosophy of a new kind then, dependent in every way on a *schizo-analysis of philosophy* whose experimental protocol would be drawn up in the anti-genealogical terms of the rhizome-book, as a three-step operation. First, Kafka is substituted for Proust (‘How can we enter into Kafka’s work? This work is a rhizome, a burrow’: such are the first lines of *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, ‘a Kafka experimentation without interpretation or significance’<sup>25</sup>) – not without Proust having previously been machined in the dimension of his *transversality*.<sup>26</sup> Then, the rhizome itself stands as a Pop-philosophical manifesto with its principles of connectivity and heterogeneity, of a-signifying rupture and mapping of real multiplicities: the map is opposed to the tracing as an experimentation that is ‘flush with the real’ is opposed to structural and/or genetic interpretation (*Rhizome*). Finally, it is taken up again, in modified form, in the opening to *A Thousand Plateaus* where philosophy is predominantly defined as a ‘logic of multiplicities’, the *anoedipal* consequence of desiring production. A *queer vitalism*<sup>27</sup> the protocol for which was set out in *Anti-Oedipus* with this ‘pure multiplicity, that is to say, an affirmation that is irreducible to any sort of unity’ which exploits the fact that there are only ‘peripheral’ totalities [*il n’y a de ‘totalités qu’à côté’*] in the transverse section that ‘re-embodies’ a body without organs by imposing a radical *socialization* of philosophy.<sup>28</sup> And Deleuze and Guattari’s last book, *What Is Philosophy?* – a question that can only be asked once the ‘desire to *do* philosophy’ has passed, and whose association with Guattari’s name seems to have surprised some – is no anomaly in this regard, its rich rhizomatic writing very much put into the service of a geophysics of the concept. Its ‘connective’ constructivism is inseparable from a plane of non-philosophical, *chaos-motic* immanence, a concept into which thought plunges in order to borrow ‘from the chaos [of] determinations with which it makes its infinite movements or its diagrammatic features’.<sup>29</sup> A schizo-philosophy with no other internal necessity than that of conjugating its absolute deterritorialization with the relative deterritorializations of capital so as to suppress it as an internal limit and return immanence against it.<sup>30</sup>

## CONCLUSION: THE GUATTARI–DELEUZE EFFECT

Having reached this point of crystallization at lightning speed, we have to slow down. Indeed we are going to have to rummage through the toolbox of the man Deleuze introduces in 1972 – the very year *Anti-Oedipus* was published, in his Preface to *Psychanalyse et transversalité* – as the encounter, in an ‘Anti-Self’ with ‘schizophrenic powers’, of a political activist and a psychoanalyst: Pierre and Félix, Pierre-Félix Guattari. These powers, which Deleuze emphasizes in order to immediately show how this turns psychoanalysis upside down and are part of an effort to re-evaluate psychosis, in an analysis of desire and the unconscious whose latency is coextensive with the social field, ‘entailing ruptures in causality and the emergence of singularities, sticking points as well as flights’. It is in such a manner that the Guattarian appropriation of Lacan (primacy of psychosis, the object ‘a’ that Guattari cuts away from its function as symbol of lack and its relation to the law in order to liberate a form of machinic ‘group’ subjectivity whose stake is the ‘subjective consistency’ of ‘social enunciation’ geared towards ‘revolutionary rupture’) *disappears* in favour of ‘the difference here with Reich’, which precipitates (Deleuze again) ‘*the transformation of psychoanalysis into schizo-analysis*’. A reader of *Psychanalyse et transversalité*, looking through Deleuze-tinted spectacles cannot but be struck by the coupling effect thus produced in relation to *Anti-Oedipus*, whose archaeology (archaeology, as Foucault explains, allows for the analysis of ‘the very forms of problematization’) and genealogy (which is geared towards ‘their formation out of practices’<sup>31</sup>) are here rendered *in practice and in real time* (both books were published the same year). As though the genealogical dimension produced from Guattari’s analytical–political practices – to which Deleuze devotes the substance of his preface (the encounter between a political activist and a psychoanalyst) – allowed for the analysis of the *medial* formation of *Anti-Oedipus* on the very level of this *unity* of a plane of expression and content that propels their machinery (the archaeological dimension) by the sheer fact that ‘political economy and libidinal economy are *one and the same*’. It is therefore all the more important to acknowledge the ‘rights of the schizo-flow’ which, Deleuze argues, never ceased to propel Guattari and which Guattari managed to elevate to a ‘metaphysical or transcendental point of view’ whose transversality (between ‘pure theoretical critique’ and ‘concrete analytical activity’) amounts to a ‘machine of desire, in other words, a war-machine, an analyser’. And Deleuze concludes (we are quite ready for this) that the book, consequently, ‘must be taken in bits and pieces, like a montage or installation of the cogs and wheels of a machine. Sometimes the cogs are small, miniscule, but disorderly, and thus all the more *indispensable* [my emphasis]’. He then points – at the

## THE GUATTARI EFFECT

very end of his preface – to the particular importance of two texts from *Psychanalyse et transversalité*: ‘a theoretical text, where the very principle of a *machine* is distinguished from the hypothesis of structure and detached from structural ties (“Machine and Structure”), and a schizo-text where the notions of “sign-point” and “sign-blot” are freed from the obstacle of the signifier’. Where it is *literally* given to read that the *semiotic* critique of structuralism attacked at its linguistic core (signified/signifier) *machines* the problematization of *Anti-Oedipus* by placing the Deleuze/Guattari encounter under the very heading of this schizo-text, whose wording is as though purloined by the pen of Deleuze: ‘*D’un signe à l’autre*’, which could be literally translated as ‘From One Sign to Another’.<sup>32</sup>

It is important to remember here that the development that leads Deleuze from *Proust and Signs*, in which interpretation rules as the *forced* master of the image of thought, to *The Logic of Sense*, where it is brought back into serial play, is in part owing to a *generational coefficient*, a *generational transference* marked by structuralism, which Guattari dodges, *politically*, by means of the ‘*coefficient of transversality*’ that institutional psychotherapy brought him to posit as the ‘object of the endeavour of a subject group’ (as opposed to ‘subjugated group’, in an *after-Sartre* effect) and ‘of an analytic process’ able to break with the ‘unconscious control of our fate’ tying the latter to an *eternal symbolic order*.<sup>33</sup> A new starting point is necessary: ‘the definition of the subject as unconscious subject, *or rather as collective agent of enunciation* [my emphasis]’ in order to avoid ‘reifying the institution, and for that matter society as a whole, as a *structure*’ – which is what an unconscious *said* to be ‘structured as a language’ threatens to do.<sup>34</sup> To be found in the same article, in passing but very much of its essence, is a critique of a Heideggerian philosophy founded on a ‘biunivocal correspondence between being and language . . . that makes the investigation drift towards a series of articulations posited as fundamental, like fencing ‘cuts’ aimed at the very possibilities of expression’. More generally, Guattari speculates a little further on in the text: ‘Doesn’t postulating the existence of a social subjectivity and institutional objects, as we are doing, lead straight to the question of the nature of the philosophical object?’ (*Réflexions pour des philosophes au sujet de la psychothérapie institutionnelle*). And it is precisely in ‘From One Sign to Another’<sup>35</sup> that structure, or ‘being-for-structure’, whose internal logic is not of the same nature as the desire that lies at the ‘root of subjectivity’, is opposed on this very question to the *machine* and to a ‘being-for-the-sign’ irreducible to the internal logic of signifying chains. Far from the ‘inexorable signifying battery’ ordaining everything down to ‘the finest poetic subtleties’, the latter would include the brute, non-signifying materiality of the sign in ‘a one-of-a-kind sign prototype that would

## CONCLUSION: THE GUATTARI-DELEUZE EFFECT

alone account for the entirety of creation'. So Guattari, in a process of continual negotiation with the Lacan of 'The Purloined Letter',<sup>36</sup> understands the *signifying break* as a *subjective break of the signifier* that no longer depends on a-historical 'linguistic effects' (this would help break out of the 'structuralist dead-end' and the 'Althusser operation'), because it is clear that 'it can just as easily be played on a tom-tom, or written with one's feet, as in the expression "voting with one's feet" when, say, choosing to walk out the door of a conference'. Which, as Guattari immediately emphasizes in a side note to another 1966 intervention means 'an idea of the sign closer to Hjelmslev's "glossematics" than to [the] syntagmatics' of Saussure and Jakobson.<sup>37</sup> This is important since it is through Hjelmslev that Guattari would manage definitively to break free from Lacan (and break Deleuze free from Lacan), the Lacan of whom he would later say that he 'flattened everything by choosing to work with the wrong linguistics'.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Hjelmslevian glossematics sets forth a distinction between the planes of expression and content that is not reducible to the gap between signifier and signified, insofar as *the sign is at once and the same time the sign of a substance of content and the sign of a substance of expression*. A flow-substance adapted to the deterritorialized nature of both capitalist *and* schizophrenic flows. Hence the principle of a semiotization of matter and a materialization of the sign which eliminates any form of dualism between form and substance, in a double deterritorialization that *machinates* language in an *a-signifying* direction 'that works flush with the real'.<sup>39</sup> Guattari would develop this semiotic machine further in his 'meta-modellings', as a micropolitical relation between the form of expression and the form of content, but that already at this early stage lays down its plane of immanence as the reality condition of those strange Guattarian figures, which are, to borrow from *Anti-Oedipus*, 'no longer effects of a signifier, but schizzes, points-signs or flows-breaks that collapse the wall of the signifier, pass through and continue on beyond'.<sup>40</sup> (Note that it is Guattari himself who playfully signalled to Deleuze that 'the brilliant Hjelmslev rejoins the no less brilliant notation [of] from "One Sign to Another"'.<sup>41</sup>) This also helps us understand why Deleuze chose to invert the order of presentation of the two texts highlighted at the end of his preface. For the solution of machinic *destruction* suggested to Deleuze by Guattari in 'Machine and Structure' in order to break out of the aporias of *The Logic of Sense* ('to relate exclusively to the order of the machine' the differentiator of the heterogeneous series used by structure as its principle of emission of singularities: *The Logic of Sense*, Eighth Series: 'Of Structure'), namely *to place the machine at the heart of desire*<sup>42</sup> thereby establishing 'subjective change' as 'the distinctive trait of every order of production' (whereas structure's

## THE GUATTARI EFFECT

representative mode is an *anti-production system* here equated with Marxist theory's 'relations of production'), goes hand in hand with the 'opening up of a pure signifying space where the *machine would represent the subject for another machine*'. That is to say, we are still caught within a machinic *interpretation* of the Lacanian object 'a' – which threatens to 'break into the structural equilibrium of the individual like some infernal machine'<sup>43</sup> – but which nevertheless enlists representation so as, ultimately, to summon back the 'purest' signifier in a kind that Lacano-Marxism pushed, here and there, to its limits. The difference is that this signifier, broken off from the symbolic order of structure,<sup>44</sup> has no 'possible written form' in history as a site of the unconscious or marker of 'the class struggle at the very centre of unconscious desire'.<sup>45</sup> Hence once more the importance of the warning with which Guattari's presentation begins and which would become the matrix of his work with Deleuze: that this proposed distinction between machine and structure '*is based solely on the way we use it*'.

That being said, the fullest possible use of this distinction – following Guattari himself – ultimately demonstrates the impossibility of locating a Guattari Effect outside the Deleuzo–Guattarian – or *Guattaro–Deleuzian* – adventure.

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It remains that the *collective assemblage*, a conspicuous case of multiplicity transformed into a theoretical-practical concept opposed to structure, is a concept *signed* Guattari, given how directly its genealogy echoes his 'group-subjects' and the *collective agent of enunciation* we saw emerge with its 'coefficient of transversality' (in a violently anti-structuralist context, as we will recall, which Guattari would time and time again call back to attention and intensify, because the driving characteristic of structuralist formalization is to *cut off the production of statements from their collective assemblages*<sup>46</sup>). It might in fact be interesting to *develop* Guattari in his Effect, on the basis of this operating concept to which he relentlessly returned, in a sustained articulation with the concept of 'desiring machine' (which for its part would vanish from the writings signed Deleuze and Guattari following *Anti-Oedipus*, replaced, precisely, with the concept of 'assemblage'). For that matter, it is worth noting that in the immediate aftermath of *Anti-Oedipus*, the Deleuze and Guattari writing machine would shift its efforts towards an initial exposition of the various aspects of the concept of assemblage around which the entire book on Kafka and minor literature would be constructed (where the question of the *political construction* of 'minority power', which will be developed in *A Thousand Plateaus*, is

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sketched out). This is because 'an assemblage, the perfect object for the novel, has two sides: it is a collective assemblage of enunciation; it is a machinic assemblage of desire. Not only is Kafka the first to dismantle these two sides, but the combination that he makes of them is a sort of signature that all readers will necessarily recognize'.<sup>47</sup> Kafka, Guattari's favourite author, would thereby offer him a pretext to develop an intensive politics of deterritorialization of language and its markers of power, mapping onto the *micropolitical* question of enunciation the constitutive articulation of *Anti-Oedipus* between machine and desire, which submitted philosophy to a constructivist regime of permanent experimentation (and *social experimentation*). For there is 'no machinic assemblage that is not a social assemblage of desire, no social assemblage of desire that is not a collective assemblage of enunciation'. The statements produced by such an assemblage would serve as its *cogwheels*; its proliferating singularity on a plane of immanence that has to be constructed would be able to *pre-empt* the collective conditions of enunciation by shattering forms, by marking ruptures and new junctures. In other words, 'an *expression machine* capable of disorganizing its own forms [starting with the *philosophical form!* Author's note], and of disorganizing its forms of contents, in order to liberate pure contents that mix with expressions in a single intense matter'<sup>48</sup> – into which an assemblage can plug itself, plug its becomings-revolutionary.

The claim here is that the Guattari Effect depends in every respect on this *expression machine*, which he would never cease to *bear witness to* (in his analysis practice as well as in his polyphonic immersion in a multitude of group-subjects) and to think (*to enact*)<sup>49</sup> in a *speculative signesthesia* whose experimental protocols are revealed by his schizoanalytic cartographies (within and beyond the work that carries that title) in terms of a micropolitics of semiotic assemblages. For the 'miracle' of capitalism is the production of a *capitalistic subjectivity*, whose contemporary semio-mediatic subjugation is ample evidence that it has managed to 'pilot language, as it is spoken, as it is taught, as it is televised, dreamt, and so on, in such a way that it remains perfectly adapted to its own evolution'.<sup>50</sup> Thereby becoming – from an economic perspective – the miracle of Integrated World Capitalism and its sign-producing structures, which constitute its primary *production* because in them the mode of production relates *directly* – that is to say: *machinically* – to the relations of production (the machinic enslavement of the media era replaces ideo-semiological subjection).

Hence the pressing urgency of what Guattari called a 'mental ecology' in his *Three Ecologies*, tying it to a 'logic of intensities, or eco-logic'. In brief, this would mean promoting a re-appropriation of the means of

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production of subjectivity by first decentering the question of enunciation from its linguistic structuration (exiting Language [sortir de la langue]) and orienting it instead toward the heterogeneous expressive materials (Hjelmslev's 'non-semiotically formed matter') on which the operators of discursivity are founded, at the cost of the machinic interfaces of this 'abstract material of the possible'. Guattari restitutes the Deleuzian name of 'virtual' to this abstract material of the possible, according to the principle of an 'ecology of the virtual' which would make his a *new aesthetic* (or, better, 'proto-aesthetic') *paradigm*: 'that of the creation and composition of mutant percepts and affects'.<sup>51</sup> A unique exercise of the *cartography of assemblages* would ensue, in which the external point of view gives way to a heterogenesis of the existent that equates the abstract-concrete machinic exploration of otherness, at its point of maximal precariousness and possibility, with the destruction of the entropy of signification equivalences that characterizes the capitalistic Universe. 'The emphasis is no longer placed on Being – as general ontological equivalent, which, in the same way as other equivalents (Capital, Energy, Information, the Signifier), envelops, encloses and de-singularizes the process – it is placed on the manner of being, the machination producing the existent, the generative praxes of heterogeneity and complexity'.<sup>52</sup> The genesis of enunciation is itself caught up in this movement of processual creation, which inscribes practice in a theory identified as an ontologico-political constructivism, the first affirmation of which *intersects* its condition of reality *at the very level of the forced transformation (or the forcing) of (Deleuzian) biophilosophy into (Guattaro–Deleuzian) biopolitics*<sup>53</sup> – that is to say 'before being, there is politics'.<sup>54</sup> The consequence is addressed to the philosopher: 'Being does not precede machinic essence; process precedes the heterogenesis of being'.<sup>55</sup> The syntagm 'political ontology' must, then, be machined to do justice to the politics of ontology, or the 'onto-logic' (in Guattari's words) opened up by process in a practice that doesn't come after but, in a certain way, *before* – as the opening of the problem of being at its most constitutive level of the (machinic) conversion of the virtual into the possible.

Guattari–Deleuze had warned us: in so far as the machine is a *desiring* machine and desire is *machined*, the machine is not a metaphorical figure. But now it is with this Guattari–Deleuze Effect, with the *a-disciplinary* politics of the concept updated to the era of the molecular revolution of a Machine-Thought, 'centred on the analysis of capitalism and the ways it has developed',<sup>56</sup> that we must *make*, that we must 'create something new', which would be defined less by the intra-historical contradictions of capitalism than by its 'lines of flight' (into *capitalism and schizophrenia*): between history and being. It is less a matter of a philosophical transposition of major

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into minor than of a minor problematization of philosophy 'itself', which thus definitively escapes from the history of philosophy, because it undoes philosophies of history on their own, diachronic, terrain (becomings *double* history), in making possible and necessary theoretical-practical experimentation as the post-historical politics of becomings in a *thinking of crisis*. A politics – without *telos*<sup>57</sup> but not without 'strategies' – which projects us all the more *really* (critically and clinically) beyond the too-conventional figures of a 'thinking of resistance'.<sup>58</sup>

*Translated by Eric Anglès  
and revised by Andrew Goffey*

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> A first version of this text was presented at the Institut Für Medienwissenschaft of University of Bochum on 11 January 2010, on the invitation of Erich Hörl, who also translated it into German. It was then translated into English by Éric Anglès for the journal *Schifter* 16, April 2010. This version formed the basis for a lecture given as part of the series on 'Deleuze et les politiques', organized by Ali Akay in Istanbul, with the support of the Institut Francais, on 31 May 2010.
- <sup>2</sup> Deleuze, G. (1995), *Negotiations*. Translated by M. Joughin. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 26.
- <sup>3</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1986), *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*. Translated by D. Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 27.
- <sup>4</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, op. cit. p. 170.
- <sup>5</sup> Deleuze, G. (2000), *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*. Translated by R. Howard. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 97.
- <sup>6</sup> Deleuze, G. (1983), *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Translated by H. Tomlinson. London: Athlone, p. 4. It is the machinic taking into account of the social reality of these forces that shatters the notion of interpretation, which they had, from the outset, allowed to be defined from an entirely Nietzschean (but still too *abstract*) point of view as the *evaluation of forces which take hold of a thing and define its sense*.
- <sup>7</sup> According to the movement of thinking that led Deleuze from the Nietzschean critique of Kant to an anti-representative philosophy of difference and repetition, via the post-romantic appropriation of the Proustian literary experience. Hence 'it may be that Proust's critique of philosophy is eminently philosophical', whereas art is the exclusive domain of an experimentation which interpretation precisely defines the 'problematic' character. cf. Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, op. cit. p. 100.
- <sup>8</sup> Deleuze, G. (1994), *Difference and Repetition*. Translated by P. Patton. London: Athlone, p. xxi.
- <sup>9</sup> Deleuze, G. (1972), 'Nomadic Thought,' *Nietzsche aujourd'hui* conference; republished in *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974* (2004), New York: Semiotext(e),



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- p. 255. The walk in the fresh air is a direct reference to the beginning of *Anti-Oedipus*, which makes politics arise from the knowledge implied in its (non) textual functioning. In relation to Deleuze-Deleuze, and as briefly as possible: the affirmation of the immanence of the outside loses its abstract (and post-romantic) connotations here so as to be *political concretized*. Or better still: to affirm its conditions of reality, which carry with it a *political ontology*, that is to say, a radical new bio-political ex-plication of the ontological question.
- <sup>10</sup> Deleuze, G. (1990), *The Logic of Sense*. Translated by M. Lester. New York: Columbia University Press, is presented by Deleuze in his Preface as a 'logical and psychoanalytic novel'. Translation modified.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 13th and 22nd series.
- <sup>12</sup> The quoted italics are Deleuze's, in 'Porcelain and Volcano', *ibid.*, 22nd series, p. 158
- <sup>13</sup> Deleuze, G., 'How Do We Recognize Structuralism?' (1972 – but written in 1967), republished in *Desert Islands*, *op. cit.* pp. 191 and 173. Note that Deleuze's article ends with the observation that criteria leading from the subject – subjected to structure – to praxis are 'the most obscure – the criteria of the future', a future dependent in every way on a mysterious 'structuralist *hero*'.
- <sup>14</sup> Guattari, F. (2006), *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*. Translated by K. Gotman. New York: Semiotext(e), p. 224.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99 and 149. The Nietzschean philosophy of becoming is no longer the fact of a philosophy of expression with a transcendental-empiricist purpose but the retrojection of a constructivist pragmatics that differentiates itself from the 'structural field' by the machinic affirmation of desire.
- <sup>16</sup> Deleuze, 'Nomadic Thought,' *op. cit.* p. 259.
- <sup>17</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1977), *Anti-Oedipus*. Translated by R. Hurley, M. Seem and H.R. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 1 and 5.
- <sup>18</sup> Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
- <sup>19</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 36.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.
- <sup>21</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, *op. cit.* p. 7.
- <sup>22</sup> 'Desiring machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down'. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, *op. cit.* p. 8.
- <sup>23</sup> A *machinic* plane of consistency, as developed in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In his 'Notes on the plane of consistency' Guattari immediately relates the latter to the 'continuum of the machinic phylum', to then oppose the machinic to the axiomatic, which would arise from 'the structure of representation'. Cf Guattari, F. (1977), *La Revolution moleculaire*. Paris: Recherches, p. 321.
- <sup>24</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, *op. cit.* pp. 144–5, 136–7.
- <sup>25</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*, *op. cit.* pp. 3 and 7.
- <sup>26</sup> In the second edition of *Proust and Signs*, under the sign of 'The literary machine' (which is the title of the part added in the second edition), one can read that 'interpretation has none other than a transversal unity'. The affirmation that 'the modern work of art doesn't have a problem of meaning, it only has a problem of use' pushes interpretation to its infinitive, (post)structuralist limit ("interpreting", pure and without a subject'), p. 166.
- <sup>27</sup> To use the expression of Claire Colebrook in 'Queer Vitalism', *New Formations* 68, 2010.

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- <sup>28</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. p. 42–3 (with the return of the Proustian literary machine). Let us recall that in the article ‘How Do We Recognize Structuralism?’, where Deleuze basis his argument on the transdisciplinary ambition of structuralism, structure was the locus of multiplicity (‘every structure is a multiplicity’) and gave rise to ‘the *complete détermination* of singular points’ (reference). This introduces a certain tension with regard to the open system required by the ‘differenciating’ function through which Deleuze sought to appropriate the Lacanian signifier. On this last question, see Sauvagnargues, A. (2009), *Deleuze. L’empirisme transcendantal*. Paris: PUF, pp. 188–194.
- <sup>29</sup> Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1994), *What Is Philosophy?* Translated by H. Tomlinson and G. Burchell. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 1 and 50.
- <sup>30</sup> See the chapter on ‘Geophilosophy’ in *What Is Philosophy?* where it is philosophy, re-assembled since *Anti-Oedipus*, which is now charged with ‘carrying the relative deterritorialization of capital into the absolute’.
- <sup>31</sup> Foucault, F. (1985), *The Use of Pleasure*. Translated by R. Hurley. London: Penguin, p. 12. Translation slightly modified.
- <sup>32</sup> Deleuze, ‘Three Group-Related Problems’, in *Desert Islands*, op. cit. pp. 193–203.
- <sup>33</sup> Guattari, F. (1984), ‘Transversality.’ Translated by R. Sneed. *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*. London: Penguin, p. 20. First published 1964.
- <sup>34</sup> ‘*La psychothérapie institutionnelle*’, 1962–1963.
- <sup>35</sup> ‘From One Sign to Another’, first published in 1966, but whose argument, according to Guattari, was sent to Lacan in 1961.
- <sup>36</sup> This reference is equally fundamental for Deleuze in ‘How Do We Recognise Structuralism?’, where it is the criterion for the ‘empty case’ and in *Difference and Repetition*. In his seminar of 1968–1969 Lacan will go so far as to consider that the *Seminar on ‘The Purloined Letter’* ‘forms the entrance point’, ‘defines the threshold’ for the doublet constituted by *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*. See Lacan, J. (2006), *Seminaire XVI. D’un Autre à l’autre*. Paris: Seuil, p. 219. Did not Deleuze affirm that ‘to make the empty case circulate . . . is the task of today?’ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, op. cit. p. 73. Translation modified.
- <sup>37</sup> Guattari, *Molecular Revolution*, op. cit. p. 181.
- <sup>38</sup> And he explains ‘Lacan was wrong to identify displacement and condensation with Jakobson’s metaphor and metonymy on the level of primary processes. He is turning everything into linguistics, he is diachronizing, crushing, the unconscious’ Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, op. cit. p. 152, 73.
- <sup>39</sup> Cf Bosteels, B. (1998), ‘From Text to Territory. Felix Guattari’s Cartographies of the Unconscious’, in Kaufman, E., and Heller, K.J. *Deleuze and Guattari. New Mappings inn Politics, Philosophy and Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 162. On Guattari’s (critical) machination of Hjelmslev, see first of all the notes grouped together in *The Anti-Oedipus Papers* under the title ‘Hjelmslev and Immanence’, pp. 201–23. The Guattari–Deleuzian representation of Hjelmslev in *Anti-Oedipus* eliminates every critical element so as simply to celebrate in his linguistics the ‘concerted destruction’ of structuralism and its attachment to the signifier. See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. pp. 242–3.
- <sup>40</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. p. 242.
- <sup>41</sup> Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, op. cit. p. 204–5.

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- <sup>42</sup> It must be pointed out that in *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze made a punctual use of the vocabulary of the machine, with regard to the (incorporeal) production of sense related to structure. It is also in the 11th series (Of Non-Sense) that Freud appears as the 'prodigious discoverer of the machinery of the unconscious'. See Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, op. cit. pp. 71–3.
- <sup>43</sup> We encounter that expression again in *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. p. 83.
- <sup>44</sup> Because the 'essence of the machine is precisely this operation of the *detachment of a signifier* as representative, as "differenciator", as a causal break that is heterogeneous to the structurally established order of things'. Félix Guattari 'Machine et structure' in *Psychanalyse et transversalite*, op. cit. p. 243.
- <sup>45</sup> Guattari in *Molecular Revolution*, op. cit. pp. 111–9.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24. On this point, there is a profound convergence between Guattari and Foucault (the Foucault of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and its critique of structuralism).
- <sup>47</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, op. cit. Chapter 9 'What is an Assemblage', pp. 81–8.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82, 28.
- <sup>49</sup> This is the term proposed by Bruno Bosteels to translate the verb *agencer* (Bosteels art. cit. p. 166).
- <sup>50</sup> Guattari, *L'Inconscient machinique*, op. cit. p. 28.
- <sup>51</sup> Guattari, F. (1995), *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-aesthetic Paradigm*. Translated by P. Bains and J. Pefanis. Sydney: Power Institute.
- <sup>52</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. pp. 24, 109.
- <sup>53</sup> One may read the opening of *Anti-Oedipus* as a sort of recapitulation: 'Producing-machines, desiring-machines everywhere, schizophrenic machines, all of species life' (Deleuze and Guattari, op. cit. p. 2). I'm going very quickly here because I have developed this biophilosophical/biopolitical theme at length in a certain number of articles. I will signal here the most recent: Alliez, E. (2006), 'Anti-Oedipus – Thirty Years On (Between Art and Politics)', in Fuglsgang, M., and Sorensen, B.M. (eds), *Deleuze and the Social*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- <sup>54</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. p. 225.
- <sup>55</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 108.
- <sup>56</sup> Deleuze, *Negotiations*, op. cit. p. 171.
- <sup>57</sup> Evidently this is the major difference of Deleuze and Guattari with regard to the political philosophy of Antonio Negri, which posits the principle of a teleology in-forming the subjectification of 'becoming-revolutionary'.
- <sup>58</sup> If Deleuze makes use of this terminology in his *Foucault* it is also because it must be related to Foucault following an order of reasons that affirms the primacy of power over desire from the outset. See the important footnote devoted to Foucault in *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. p. 585.

## Contributors

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**Franco 'Bifo' Berardi** is a writer, media-theorist and media-activist. He founded the magazine *A/traverso* in 1975 and was part of the staff of Radio Alice, the first free pirate radio station in Italy (set up in 1976). He has published a number of books, including, in translation, *Felix Guattari: Thought, Friendship, and Visionary Cartography*, *Precarious Rhapsody* and *The*

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**Andrew Goffey** works at Middlesex University in London, is a writer and translator and does research on the myriad links between philosophy, science and culture. The author (with Matthew Fuller) of *Evil Media* (MIT,

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**Antonio Negri**, formerly Professor of State Theory at the University of Padua, is an independent researcher and writer. As an activist-philosopher, he has always been involved in processes of social and political transformations. His many works in English include *The Savage Anomaly* (Minnesota, 1991), *Insurgencies* (Minnesota, 1999), *Time for Revolution* (Continuum, 2003); he is the author with Michael Hardt of the trilogy *Empire* (Harvard, 2000), *Multitude* (Penguin, 2004) and *Commonwealth* (Harvard, 2009). He published with Félix Guattari *Communists Like Us* (Semiotext(e), 1985).

**Peter Pál Pelbart** is a philosopher and professor at the Catholic University of São Paulo in Brazil. He is the author of a thesis on the time-image in Deleuze, published as *O tempo não-reconcilado* (Perspectiva, 1998) and of a study of the relations between philosophy and madness, *Daclusura do foraaoforadaclusura* (Brasiliense, 1989). He is the organizer of the Ueinzz theatre company, a company made up of psychiatric patients, and is a member of the *Association Résistance/Création*.

**Jean-Claude Polack** is a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, and worked for more than a decade alongside Jean Oury and Felix Guattari at the La Borde clinic. He currently practices as part of a collective of analysts in Paris and, with numerous friends, patients and 'non-patients', has run an association for people with psychotic illnesses for the last ten years. He is the author of numerous books and is the director of publishing of the journal *Chimères*, set up by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. He is also the co-director of a film about Francois Tosquelles.

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Box NY (2006), Kunststhaus Bregenz (2006), 4th Seoul Media International Biennale Seoul (2006), Wijnegem Belgium (2004), Gwangju Biennial (2004), Musée d' Art Moderne de Saint Etienne (2004). Publication: *Annie Ratti*, Ed. Charta Milan (2006).

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