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**MATERIALIST ONTOLOGY
AND THE PROBLEM OF POLITICS**

I. Spinoza
II. Deleuze and Guattari's
Capitalisme et schizophrénie

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims at working out a politics out of the thought of Deleuze and Guattari. The angle taken on this question is ontological. Politics is inseparable from ontology. Every ontology is political and every politics is itself an ontology. The reciprocal relation between ontology and politics has been here identified as the question of their 'parallelism'. This parallelism of the ontological and the political is first to be found in Spinoza's thought. Spinoza can only write an ethics and a politics on the basis of his analysis of substance. In this analysis the thesis of 'parallelism' occupies a central position. Spinoza's theory of the *univocity* of being rests on this principle. This project is rehabilitated by Deleuze and Guattari in their own philosophy as a form of radical materialism. This form of philosophy guided by the principle of 'parallelism' has here been called: *ontological materialism*. Thus, not only is it impossible to understand their politics without grasping their ontology, but the complexities of it will only be understood after a study of Spinoza's ontology itself. For these purposes the thesis has been divided into two parts. The first part concerns Spinoza's thought. The second, concentrates on Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalisme et schizophrénie*. The analysis will concentrate on the passage from the first to the second volume as a translation of the continuities at the ontological level but also on the shifts that from this level necessarily occasion a movement in their conception of politics. This research along the Spinozist lines of the ontology of Deleuze and Guattari allows for their politics to be read as an ethics. In the final outcome the activity of philosophy itself is an ethics.

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INTRODUCTION

The principal idea behind this thesis is that no political theory has a substantial basis without a fully worked out and elaborated ontology. This view is quite opposed to the general conception of politics. In liberal theory, for example, political theory is not grounded in ontology but in anthropology. For instance, social contract theory is unthinkable without its reference to some generalised theory of human nature whether this one is seen as being basically one of co-operation and sociability, as is the case in the work of Rousseau, or as basically competitive, as in Hobbes.

This research approaches this relation between ontology and politics through the work of Deleuze and Guattari. Its originality lies in its effort to demonstrate that one can obtain a rigorous political theory from the specific form of their ontological materialism. Not that this means that one might find there a fully worked out political program, rather, as it is postulated by this thesis itself, descriptions of desire and production, machinic assemblages, and so on, themselves *internally* produce a politics.

This project itself is the result of research already achieved in an MA. The title of this MA was: 'Deleuze and Guattari: from Universal History to Universal Cosmology'. In this research it was argued that one could make a distinction between the two volumes of *Capitalisme et schizophrénie*. *L'Anti-Oedipe* was demonstrated to be still a part of a Hegelian and Marxist conception of history in which capitalism is

designated as a universal truth and thus history as exhibiting teleological finality: capitalism is the death of every society and thus the end of history. In *Mille Plateaux*, on the contrary, there is no appeal to a universal history, rather history is conceived of as non-linear and contingent. Moreover, the parallelism between the social and the psyche that was at the centre of *L'Anti-Oedipe* is consigned only to one or two chapters in *Mille Plateaux*: human history is part of a general cosmology.

The first description of this research at Ph.D. level proposed a deeper investigation of this difference between *L'Anti-Oedipe* and *Mille Plateaux* by returning to Marx and Hegel, and thereby to see how far ontological materialism is indebted, so to speak, to dialectical materialism. However, this present thesis changed the reference from Marx and Hegel to Spinoza. The reason for this change is that one can only explain the materialist ontology of *Capitalisme et schizophrénie* positively through a detailed and in depth analysis of Spinoza's metaphysics. The return to Hegel and Marx, on the other hand, was a *negative* project. In the end it could have only shown what materialist ontology is not rather than what it is. Only through Deleuze and Guattari's Spinozism can one grasp the ontology that underlies their work and from this obtain the thesis of the direct translation of this ontology into a politics.

Thus, this thesis has been divided into two parts. The first part has to do with Spinoza explicitly and the second part concerns itself primarily with Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalisme et schizophrénie*. The theme that guides the continuity between the first and second part of this thesis is the 'parallelism' of the ontological and the political, or in Spinoza's vocabulary, that of substance and ethics. The idea of the univocity of being in Spinoza is rehabilitated by Deleuze and Guattari's project of the affirmation of pure immanence. For them being is horizontality. All appeal to

transcendence is a vestige of theological reasoning. The anomaly of Spinoza in the history of Western thought is the rigorous nature of his immanent explanation of being in the relation between substance to attributes and modes. The language of Spinoza, with its rigorous reasoning and vocabulary, can act as guide or ruler of the interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari's immanent explanations which tend to be more, stylistically speaking, playful and exaggerated.

Thus, this thesis means to demonstrate the proximity of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy to that of Spinoza's through the thesis of the 'parallelism' between the political and the ontological. What do we mean when we say that two things are parallel? This relation can be described in the simplest of terms as follows: 'On peut appeler « parallèles », en effet deux choses ou deux séries de choses qui sont dans un rapport constant, tel qu'il n'y ait rien dans l'une qui n'ait dans l'autre un correspondant, toute causalité réelle entre les deux se trouvant exclue.'¹ However, following Deleuze's warnings about this first sense of the term as it was coined by Leibniz, two further formulas lend to it the stronger use Spinoza makes of it: 'Spinoza donne deux autres formules qui prolongent la première: *identité de connexion ou égalité de principe, identité d'être ou unité ontologique*.'² It is from within this second added sense of the term that the works of Spinoza, and Deleuze and Guattari will be interpreted. The thesis of 'parallelism' forms a line of affinity between these three thinkers. Furthermore, beyond the philosophy of these three thinkers there is an alternative history of ontology that finds itself in the thesis of 'parallelism': *materialist ontology*. This thought does not stand outside classical ontology but is an offshoot of the ontological tradition itself. Insofar as it belongs to this tradition certain specific traits belong to it. In the briefest of ways it can be characterised as follows:

¹ G. Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, (Paris: Minuit, 1968), pp.94-5.

² Ibid.

every *materialist ontology* denies any pre-constituted structure of being or any teleological order of existence and instead unravels itself in a strictly immanent discourse where only a constitutive conception of practice can serve as foundation.³ It is within this line of affinity that this PhD wishes to find its own place. This is, in a certain sense, a philological project, but one that does not have as its ultimate aim merely the dry, and tedious exposition of different thinkers so as to discover apparent similarities and differences. Its aim is the philosophical idea that a properly thought out politics requires and demands an ontology. Without ontology politics is merely an ideology. What gives Deleuze and Guattari's politics such a hardness and consistency, which stands in such opposition to much of the vacuity of current political theory where political aims and descriptions appear to be left to mere whim and opinion, is its foundation in a materialist ontology. It is an interpretation of being as *productive* that gives to a politics of liberation its counterblow against, on the one hand, the smugness of bourgeois triumphalism, and on the other hand, the nihilism of defeated and crushed radicalism. The parallelism of the political and the ontological is the most important lesson Deleuze and Guattari have learnt from Spinoza. The alternative to capitalism is desiring production which is nothing else than the conjunction of the ontological and the political.

³ The term 'materialist ontology' was set out in this thesis prior to becoming aware that it is employed and defined by M.Hardt. Not unsurprisingly, given the proximity of terrain and inspiration, he does so in very similar terms to ours in the sense of what has already been said and in that it is a part or sideline of the ontological tradition itself to which also belong Lucretius, Marx and Nietzsche. He further, demarcates Deleuze's position from a Heideggerian return to being. See: M.Hardt, *An Apprenticeship in Philosophy, Gilles Deleuze*, (London: UCL Press, 1993), p.xiii. The differences between Heidegger's and Deleuze and Guattari's work on ontology will not be treated in this thesis but it is nonetheless a key issue with regards to the definition of the contemporary task of philosophy. This task as defined by *materialist ontology* centres around the problem of constitution and represents a critique of the phenomenological position. For an excellent analysis and debate of this question see: E.Alliez.

Part I : Spinoza

The thought of Spinoza has never ceased to be alive since its first inception in 1677. Every century has awakened to a different and new figure of Spinoza. Thus, throughout time his thought has been given many different interpretations. For example in the XVIIIth century the image that predominates is that of the atheist rationalist, in XIXth century it is the more mystical, religious and pantheist readings that abound until the XXth century when we finally see emerge the figure of Spinoza as the « revolutionary ». It seems that every time philosophers have occupied themselves with Spinoza it is never a case of a 'return' but of a re-beginning. Despite the position of marginality Spinoza and his thought have endured with regards to society, as when he was excommunicated from his Jewish community, and to academia for his work was hardly commented or taught before our century, his philosophy has proven to have an amazing potential of renewal.⁴ Thus, even if we place ourselves within one same period of time or country we still find a great diversity of readings.⁵ Yet, it is in the context of the various readings that flourished in France after the 1960's that Deleuze's own interpretation, and thus this thesis, find their place. Deleuze's reading of Spinoza was mainly inspired and confronted to the readings of Bergson, Alquié, Gueroult, Moreau, as his forbearers, and of Althusser, Macherey, Matheron, Balibar, Tosel and Negri as his contemporaries.⁶ It is amongst

De l'impossibilité de la phénoménologie, Sur la philosophie française contemporaine, (Paris: Vrin, 1995).

⁴ For a discussion on the rejection of Spinoza from his Jewish community and the question of censorship linked to *marranism* see: *I.S.Révah, Des marranes à Spinoza*, (Paris: Vrin, 1995).

⁵ For a detailed account of Spinoza's reception in different countries such as Italy, Soviet Union, Germany, England, France in the XXth century as well as its relation to marxism, psychoanalysis and the sionists see: edited by Olivier Bloch, *Spinoza au XXème siècle*, (Paris: puf, 1993).

⁶ For a good description of the relations amongst French academics' work on Spinoza around this time see: edited by W.Montag & T.Stolze, *The New Spinoza*, (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

them that Deleuze's own interpretation marked its originality and gained recognition within the line of spinozist studies. To a certain extent the affinities with the last group of philosophers are greater for there is a certain Marxist horizon that links them together. However, their work is unthinkable without that of their peers. All these thinkers in France around that time compose a *milieu* breeding certain readings of Spinoza and where Deleuze's must be included. Therefore, this first part has been divided into two sections. The first section is an interpretation of Spinoza's *Ethics* and *Political Treatise*. The second section concentrates on Deleuze and Negri's reading of Spinoza.

The first chapter of this section on Spinoza's *Ethics* and *Political Treatise*, although it tries to detach itself from an overtly deleuzian reading, does find its *milieu* in those same thinkers that compose the world of Deleuze's reading. Other interpretations such as Russel's or Popper's in the English speaking world have not been taken into account, neither have the readings of Leo Strauss or the sionists. This thesis is not an exegesis of the works on Spinoza but attempts to determine what a *materialist ontology* would entail in terms of its link to the spinozist ontology of Deleuze and Guattari. For, the philosophy that is produced in *Capitalisme et schizophrénie* has three voices: Deleuze, Guattari and Spinoza. One cannot understand this work without having read in depth the work of Spinoza and the 'parallelism' that lies at the heart of this system. In this first chapter, however, the terms of the 'parallelism' are returned to their original vocabulary of substance and ethics, and the guiding theme is the idea of the univocity of being.

In this section, Spinoza's two works are analysed through the threefold distinction of being, expression and ethics. But what is fundamentally repeated in this work is the identity of the ontological and the political. Spinoza can write an

ontological work called *Ethics* because there is no difference of kind in his theory between ontological investigation and ethics. Spinoza's analysis of affects can only be understood through his theory of substance. Equally, Spinoza's politics or theory of natural rights must be understood in connection to his analysis of substance and affects, that is to say, his politics is inconceivable without his ethics.

In the second section of this part (chapter II of the thesis) is established the thesis of 'parallelism' as it is developed in Deleuze and Negri's reading of Spinoza. Both thinkers demonstrate in their own way the thesis of 'parallelism' as being central to Spinoza's thought and to their project of a radical materialism. In this chapter it is argued that each of them approaches the parallelism of the ontological and political orders differently. Deleuze demonstrates this parallelism from the side of ontology whereas Negri does so from the side of the political. The point of contrasting their work is not to oppose them for they are in many ways very close to each other. The extent of their proximity can be measured not only through their approaches to Spinoza but also in Negri's most recent work with Hardt wherein the thought of Spinoza and of Deleuze and Guattari's are cardinal to their project. Rather, precisely because of their proximity, it is meant to bring out the singularity of Deleuze's interpretation of Spinoza.

Part II : Deleuze and Guattari

This part is divided into three chapters. Three main tasks are outlined in this part. First, prove the centrality of Spinoza to Deleuze and Guattari's ontology and project of *Capitalisme et schizophrénie*. Secondly, address through a very careful reading of the latter work, the basis for the subtle differences between the first and

second volume, that is to say, between *L'Anti-Oedipe* and *Mille Plateaux*. Lastly, explicate the notion of 'practice' from the perspective of *materialist ontology* itself.

The third chapter of this thesis uses the threefold distinction that had already been at work in the analysis of Spinoza's thought in order to illuminate the complexity of the ontology of *L'Anti-Oedipe*. Thus, the application of the schema of being, expression and ethics corresponds to the analysis of desire, production and schizoanalysis respectively. The three terms invoke in their order the ontological, the epistemological or critical, and the political. Yet, it must be remembered at all times that, what is properly political in this type of thought is the articulation of these three terms in a relation of perfect continuity. This has its basis and foundation in Spinoza's rigorous immanent materialist ontology. Deleuze and Guattari are *spinozists* insofar as they apply Spinoza's concepts to a *different* field. This field is the analysis of desire and its repression in the axiomatics of capitalism. Let us be clear, that this difference does not entail on their part a critique or distancing from Spinoza, as though their project were meant to be an improvement on his. Here philosophy cannot be thought in terms of progress, rather it is a *transformation* or *translation* of his language into their political experiment.

The fourth chapter treats the passage from *L'Anti-Oedipe* to *Mille Plateaux*. Thus, it first of all translates the ontological terms of the first to those of the second in order to establish the continuities between them. The ontological language of *L'Anti-Oedipe* of desire, production and schizoanalysis is translated into that of abstract machine, machinic assemblage and plane of consistency of *Mille Plateaux*. However, the aim will also be to show the differences between their ontologies. The materialist ontology of *L'Anti-Oedipe* is much closer to the historical analysis of the parallelism of the social and the psyche which, as has already been pointed out, is a fundamental

Hegelian Marxist reading of history. In *Mille plateaux*, on the contrary, this materialism extends beyond the mere analysis of human societies through all the different strata. In this sense one could argue that the latter book is closer to the spirit of Spinoza than the former.

Likewise, it is possible to analyse the different possibilities of a politics given in the two volumes. In the first, in the analysis of the difference between subject-groups and subjected groups, one can discern in the background a latent concept of 'class consciousness' where the schizophrenic has usurped the proletariat as the vehicle for revolution. In *Mille Plateaux*, on the contrary, there is no clear commitment to political groups or groupings. Thus, it is perhaps better to speak here of an ethics rather than a politics. Once more, this volume seems closer to Spinoza than the first. Ethics, in Spinoza, is the objective or even imperative to augment one's power to act and to think, that is to say, of our *puissance*. In *Mille Plateaux*, ethics is a matter of becomings and following lines of flight that completely break free from all the determinations that decrease or freeze our power to act and our power to think. Becomings and lines of flight are synonyms of augmentation in our *puissance*.

The work of the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde is also examined in this same chapter. His work on micro-sociology helps understand Deleuze and Guattari's notion of micro-politics in particular due to the subtle shift it represents with regards to their notion of schizoanalysis in *L'Anti-Oedipe*. From this work the notions of the molecular and molar, and of the outside that were already present in the first volume can be brought to another level, one that moves their project somewhat closer to its immanent ends. Thus, this chapter can close with a definition of 'micro-politics' that moves away from the still too anthropomorphic sphere of schizoanalysis into the more impersonal, but nevertheless revolutionary, forces of the infinitesimal.

The fifth and final chapter treats of the question of 'practice'. The movement from thought to practice has usually taken the shape of a process of self-justification and legitimisation. Within this process, or this image of thought, the passage from thought to practice, to politics, is regarded as being obvious. The activity of philosophy as redefined by Deleuze, on the other hand, is precisely to think about this image of thought and supply its critique. This is 'thinking philosophically about the political', or it is philosophy's 'political vocation'.⁷ It is precisely because of this vocation of theirs that Deleuze and Guattari name the critical, creative and revolutionary forces of thought a 'war machine' and that they effectuate a radical critique of the State and its forms through their notion of 'apparatus of capture'. Thus, the middle section of this chapter analyses the relation between the war machine and the State Apparatus of Capture.

The heart of this chapter centres on the notion of 'becoming'. This notion cuts through all binary distinctions and oppositional thinking. Becomings and multiplicities constitute the basis on which 'practice' is reinterpreted ontologically as the only stuff micro-politics is made of. The question of micro-politics hinges on a becoming-minoritarian. This means to think minorities out of their standard political representation. Defined as a zone of indeterminacy the immanent limit of becoming is a becoming impersonal. In a manner, which is closest to spinozist ethics, the subject becomes a door to the forces of the impersonal and only persists in its relation to them through life and through death, as the absolute affirmation of life.

⁷ Both quotes are citations from Paul Patton, *Deleuze and the political*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 1, 3. In this work, with which this thesis shares many traits in common, Patton presents Deleuze and Guattari's contribution to political philosophy by giving to *What is Philosophy?* a position of absolute centrality. Despite our proximity to Patton's work, this thesis does not focus on this text. However, it is on this terrain that the discussion of the present thesis could find its own prolongation. It does indeed point to one possible way of continuing the project here began.

Part I

Spinoza

Chapter I

Spinoza's three expressions: the ontological, the ethical and the political

Ideally a reading of Spinoza should follow the order of his publications. As is well known, the writing of the *Ethics* was interrupted by the publication of the *Theological-Political Treatise*¹. However, this thesis will only analyse the *Ethics* and the *Political Treatise* and will only refer to this work of Spinoza. Thus, this chapter will follow the order of the books in the *Ethics*. Lastly, it will consider his *Political Treatise*. Spinoza's last political writings were drafted once the *Ethics* had already been concluded, yet, they remained uncompleted due to Spinoza's untimely death. Book I of the *Ethics* describes an ontology of substance in which being is understood as singular, immanent, and univocal, and in terms of infinite productivity. In book II of the *Ethics*, Spinoza attacks Cartesian dualism in terms of the essential compatibility of

¹ Negri gives a central role to the genesis of the *TTP*. Spinoza's interruption of the writing of the *E* alters what he is to write in books III, IV and V of the *E*, he argues. The *TTP* does not simply represent a parenthesis in Spinoza's work. This interruption is in fact a refoundation of it. This produces the two layers of the *E*. One of the altitudes of metaphysical speculation of books I and II. The other, after having concerned itself with the reality of historical mystification and genesis of institutions, of bodies and affects. See: T.Negri, *L'Anomalie sauvage, puissance et pouvoir chez Spinoza*, (Paris: puf, 1982), pp.161-63. Despite the importance Negri gives to a study of the *TTP* he also argues in his other book on Spinoza for a rupture between the *TP* and the *TTP* if we undertake a political analysis of his work as for example when we concentrate on the notion of democracy. See: T.Negri, *Spinoza subversif*, (Paris: Kimé, 1994), pp.40-41, 60-63.

the body and the mind in one substance, and begins an analysis of the affections of the body. This is then interrupted by the political writings of the *Theologico-Political Treatise* where Spinoza develops two fundamental arguments. One, for the utter separation of theology and philosophy.² And the other, for a politics based on natural right where this one is interpreted in terms of power rather than in terms of reason.³ This emphasis on praxis or practical thought at the end of the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, feeds back into the project of the *Ethics*. Thus, parts III, IV and V of that work focus upon: the distinction between affects and affections, *conatus*, composition and decomposition of bodies in relation to other bodies, and finally, the organization of the State. Thus, Spinoza's own itinerary moves from an ontological analysis to a political one, where the political content emerges from the ontological definitions, and it is not thought in contradistinction to them. Finally, in the *Political Treatise* we have the suggestion, and it is only a suggestion due to Spinoza's untimely death, that the absolute State is democracy. We shall see in the following chapter that this is very important to Negri's political understanding of Spinoza's philosophy.

² See: B. Spinoza. *Traité Théologico-Politique*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1965), Preface, p.25, Ch. XIV.

³ *Ibid.*, Preface, p.26, Ch. XVI.

I. The Ontology of Substance

As M. Allendesalazar Olaso suggests, perhaps the best way to find a path through the first book of the *Ethics* is turning to its appendix.⁴ The first paragraph gives a complete summary of Spinoza's definition of God as follows:

I have now explained the nature and properties of God: that he necessarily exists, that he is one alone, that he is and acts solely from the necessity of his own nature, that he is the free cause of all things and how so, that all things are in God and are so dependent on him that they can neither be nor be conceived without him, and lastly, that all things have been predetermined by God, not from his free will or absolute pleasure, but from the absolute nature of God, his infinite power.⁵

We shall therefore use this quotation as a guide to our interpretation.

⁴ M.Allendesalazar Olaso, *Spinoza, filosofia, pasiones y politica*, (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988), pp.44-56.

⁵ B.Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. by Samule Shirley, (Cambridge : Hackett publishing co., 1992), p. 57.

I.1 Substance must necessarily exist -

"that he necessarily exists"

The origin of substance as a philosophical concept is to be found in Aristotle. The simplest definition of this word is that substance is that which can exist independently.⁶ For Aristotle, there were many substances, horse, dog, Socrates, and so on.⁷ For Descartes, there are only three substances that have independent existence, and that is thought, extension and divine substance.⁸ Spinoza's endeavour is to show that from the independence of substance it necessarily follows that there can only be one substance and that this substance must exist. This substance is God, and thought and extension are merely two of its infinite attributes. Descartes can make a distinction between divine substance and the substances of thought and extension because he still thinks of God in terms of transcendence, that is to say, there remains with Descartes an absolute difference between God and his creatures.⁹ For Spinoza this difference is not epistemological but ontological. Spinoza's argument would be that this difference, if it is seen as an external difference, would imply something other than God, and thus would undermine the absolute independence of substance itself.¹⁰

The absolute independence of substance also demonstrates that it must necessarily exist. If substance did not exist autonomously then its existence would have to be caused by something else otherwise it would mean its non-existence. This would imply that there would have to be something other than substance, thus,

⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* in *The Works of Aristotle*, (Oxford: 1910-52). For a discussion on the originality of this question at the time it was first enunciated in relation to the foundation of the new science of *ontology* see: P. Aubenque, *Le problème de l'être chez Aristote*, (Paris: puf, 1997), Ch. I.

⁷ Op. Cit., *Metaphysics*.

⁸ R. Descartes, *Méditations métaphysiques*, (Paris: puf, 1988).

⁹ Ibid., *méditation troisième*, pp. 53-80.

¹⁰ Op. Cit., *Ethics*, definition 6, Book I, p. 31.

likewise, its independence would be annulled. The cause of the existence of substance therefore must be immanent. Thus, the proof of proposition 7: "existence belongs to the nature of substance." (P7 EI). If substance cannot be produced by anything else, for this would deny the definition of substance itself (*def.3* EI), then substance must be self-caused. The very nature of substance, its essence, therefore necessarily involves its existence, following from the definition of substance. To understand the moves within this argument, one must grasp that Spinoza is ridding philosophy of any transcendence.¹¹ What is must exist, for if it did not, then something else must exist which causes it not to exist. There can be no such "other" without there being more than one substance. Thus, Spinoza must show that it makes no sense to speak of there being two or more substances.¹²

¹¹ 'La méthode de Spinoza n'est ni abstraite ni analogique. [...] S'il faut en fin donner un nom à cette méthode, comme à la théorie sous-jacente, on y reconnaîtra facilement la grande tradition de l'univocité. Nous croyons que *la philosophie de Spinoza reste en partie inintelligible, si l'on n'y voit pas une lutte constante contre les trois notions d'équivocité, d'éminence et d'analogie.*' G. Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème d'expression*, (Paris: Minuit, 1968), p.40, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, (New York: Zone Books, 1992), p.48.

¹² Op. Cit., *Ethics*, proof P5 EI, p.33 and proof P13 EI, p.39.

I.2 There can only be one substance -

“that he is alone”

The belief that there is more than one substance arises from a confusion of attributes with substance itself.¹³ Thus, an attribute is taken to be a substance rather than the expression of substance. Thus, the names given to God, as Spinoza indicates, are confused with the substance of God itself.¹⁴ If an attribute were another substance, then there would be something independent of substance itself. But if substance is absolute then there can be nothing other than it.¹⁵ Thus, all attributes must express the same substance. Nor should it be thought that these attributes divide substance into different spheres of being.¹⁶ If a part was a substance, then it would have to be infinite and self-caused. But there could not be more than one substance that is infinite and self-caused.¹⁷ It would be absurd to say that there were two infinities.¹⁸ Likewise, it makes no sense to think of a part distinct of the whole, for this would mean there

¹³ Ibid. P4 EI, p.33.

¹⁴ As M.Hardt points out, Deleuze's reading of univocity in Spinoza is based on this shift of the traditional way of linking the attributes of God to divine names into the problematic of divine expression where the attribute is given a more active role. See: M.Hardt, *An Apprenticeship in Philosophy, Gilles Deleuze*, (London: UCL Press, 1993), p.63. In a completely different, opposite context, the work of Leo Strauss sees in Spinoza's new sense of the attribute in his study of the *TTP* the keystone for a defence of liberalism. See: L.Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965).

¹⁵ Confusions arise from this sort of position. For example with Descartes when pure intellect appears twice under a different form: once as the essence of thinking substance and another time as a mode of this substance. The consequences of such confusion also lead to the conclusion that there is no other reality than a geometrical one outside of intellect. Thus, Gueroult defends cartesian substance by drawing a distinction between the genetic procedures arising from the *cogito* to those arising from the direct intuition of the ideas of things. See: M.Gueroult, *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons. I L'âme et Dieu*, (Paris: Aubier, 1968), pp.76-118.

¹⁶ Although, Gueroult believes Spinoza's concept of attribute is stolen from Descartes, he concedes to Spinoza to be closer to Euclide's *Elements* in the rigor of his definitions. Thus, there is no confusion in Spinoza between attributes, modes and substance as we may find in Descartes. This is due to the fact that there is only one substance which is a thought that finds its inspiration in the scholastics. Even if the question of its unity becomes the new site of complexities this one seems to stand clearer from confusions. See: M.Gueroult, *Spinoza I - Dieu*, (Paris: Aubier, 1968), pp.107-169.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.166.

¹⁸ Op. Cit., *Ethics*, sch. P15 EI, pp.40-43.

could be a whole without parts (*proof*, P12 EI). Attributes, for example Descartes' thought and extension, should not be considered as separate substances, but as immanent to the one substance. Otherwise, they would have independent existence. But only one substance can be self-caused and all other attributes or individual things (in Spinoza's terminology modes), must have their cause in it. Something must either be conceived in itself, and only one thing can be conceived in this manner, or it must be conceived through another thing. To treat attributes or modes as separate things is to fall into the error of thinking that they can be conceived in themselves. An attribute is an expression of substance and a mode is the manner in which an attribute expresses itself. But in this expression there are no divisions within being. Substance is not higher than its attributes or modes nor are the modes and attributes lower to substance. Rather, modes and attributes are immanent to substance, and the cause of substance itself is internal. Thus, again we can see that Spinoza's project is to think being without any appeal to transcendence. What is, is God, but God is nothing more than what is in its infinite complexity.¹⁹

¹⁹ P.Macherey in his analysis of Proposition 11 of Book I argues that its importance is not that it introduces the concept of God but that the reference to the name of God is that: 'elle révèle ainsi que ce sur quoi on avait raisonné depuis le commencement n'était autre que "Dieu", ce qui signifie réciproquement que Dieu n'est lui même rien d'autre que ce dont il a été question dès le départ, à savoir la nature des choses considérée dans la plénitude de son envergure globale telle que celle-ci est définie par le rapport de la substance à ses attributs.' P.Macherey, *Introduction à l'Ethique de Spinoza. La première partie, la nature des choses*, (Paris: puf, 1998), pp.99-100. [Thus, it reveals that what we had been reasoning about from the beginning was nothing other than God which reciprocally means that God himself is nothing other than what it has always been about, that is to say, the nature of things considered in the plenitude of its global breadth inasmuch as this one is defined by the relation of substance to its attributes.

I.3 Substance is infinite -

*“that he is and acts solely from the necessity of his own nature,
and that he is the free cause of all things and how so”*

Since God is the most perfect thing, since only one substance can be maximally perfect, it follows from this definition that it has infinite properties: “From the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinite things in infinite ways” (P16 EI). One way of defining the infinite is in relation to the finite. Thus, the infinite is seen merely as the negation of the finite, the negation of determinations or limits. Spinoza rather understands the finite as limitation. Thus, something is finite when it can be limited by something else of its own kind: “A thing is said to be finite in its own kind (*in suo genere finita*) when it can be limited by another thing of the same nature.”(Def.2 EI) He does not understand, however, the infinite in terms of an opposition to the finite, that is to say, as something *negative*.²⁰ In other words, God as opposed to his creatures. Rather, the infinite is to be understood as the productivity of being.²¹ The infinite is not opposed to the finite rather a finite thing is an expression of the infinite causality of God’s power. Here, substance or God is to be understood as an efficient cause: “God is the efficient cause of all things that can come within the scope of infinite intellect.” (cor.1P16 EI). Efficient causality is to be distinguished from

²⁰ It is not as though substance (God) was infinite and the modes (creatures) were finite. Modes are both finite and infinite. There is a relation of symmetry between substance and the modes. See: Op. Cit. *Spinoza. I – Dieu*, pp.58-64.

²¹ From Proposition 15 EI, the axiomatic character is somewhat left behind and its rational implications through a properly causal deduction begins. The deduction that follows from the affirmation that all things are in God develops the schema of productivity or power (*puissance*) insofar as these have their principle in God itself. God’s creation, thus has nothing to do with the traditional sense that is given to creation. The scholastics’ categories of “*natura naturans*” and “*natura*

teleology. The power of God is not to be conceived as being *outside* of those things that it causes to exist since this would mean that they would be other than God.²² This, in turn, would mean that there would be more than one substance, and this contradicts the proof that there is only one substance. Thus, creation, or to use a non-theological language, attributes and modes, are the *expression* of God's infinite power and are not opposed to it, or distant from it. God is not something transcendent, but is the self-expression of immanence in its infinite productivity, *natura naturans*. All things flow from the necessity of God's nature, but they should not be seen as a limitation. For if it were a limitation then this would be a constraint on God's power. But, what could constrain this power but another infinity or perfection? And, the existence of two infinite perfections does not make any sense, or it is absurd, as Spinoza likes saying.

naturata" help explain this productivity of being or productive ontology in Spinoza's thought. See: Op. Cit., (Macherey 1998), pp.135-38.

²² Infinite intellect is not to be understood in the traditional way as predetermining or teleological. God creates out of necessity but this one is a free necessity that expresses itself in creating. Macherey explains this by further referring to the *TTP*. See: Op. Cit. (Macherey 1998), pp.154-159.

I.4 Substance is immanent -

*"that all things are in God and are so dependent on him
that they can never be nor be conceived without him"*

Spinoza's concept of substance not only implies a notion of being as infinite productivity, but also that being is material. Materialism, here, should not be confused with a mechanistic view of matter, since this very conception of matter has its source in Descartes' mistaken dualism of thought and extension. Rather, Spinoza's materialism lies in the fact of his commitment to an immanent and internal causality.²³ The distinction between spirit and matter has its origin in the anterior concept of a transcendent God, for spirit can only be distinguished from matter because God and man, who is the image of God, is separate from nature. The opposition between spirit and matter is merely a faint echo of the theological opposition between God and his creatures. But, if the cause of being is internal to being itself, then there can be no absolute distinction in terms of being between a cause and its effect. Rather, the effect is immanent to the cause and thus, as Spinoza writes: "whatever is, is in God and nothing can be nor be conceived without God." (P15 EI). God is nature and nature is God: *Deus sive natura*. In other words, infinite productive being is nature, or nature is infinite productivity. The immanence of God means that the only distinction that can be drawn out can no longer be that between the creator and its creatures. Here, Spinoza is against the whole theological tradition which cannot think of God, except as some kind of transcendence. But, any distinction must be drawn out from within nature

²³ For a lengthy discussion on where to situate Spinoza's materialism see: A. Tosel, *Du matérialisme de Spinoza*, (Paris: Kimé, 1994), pp.128-132.

itself. Nature would then be distinguished into production (*natura naturata*) and producibility (*natura naturans*):

by *natura naturans* we must understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself, that is, the attributes of substance that express eternal and infinite essence; or God insofar as he is considered as a free cause. By *Natura naturata* I understand all that follows from the necessity of God's nature, that is from the necessity of each one of God's attributes; or all the modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered things which are in God and can neither be nor be conceived without God. (sch.P29 EI)

From all this it follows that God must be the immanent cause of all things and not the transitive cause: "God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things" (P18 EI). Of course, this follows once one accepts the singularity of substance. For, the only causality that coheres with the notion of a single substance, is an immanent or efficient causality.²⁴ Final causality, for example, implies a split between cause and effect which itself contradicts the univocal nature of being.²⁵

²⁴ For a long discussion of God as efficient causality see: Op. Cit., M.Gueroult, *Spinoza. I – Dieu*, pp.298-299.

²⁵ Doctrine according to which there is a finality in the world that is superposed to efficient causality: *Dictionnaire de la langue philosophique*, (Paris: puf, 1992), p.716.

I.5 Substance's absolute productivity -

*"that all things have been predetermined by God,
not from his free will or absolute pleasure,
but from the absolute nature of God, his infinite power."*

Only God exists from the necessity of his nature, therefore the existence of anything else is dependent on an external cause, and this is itself dependent on an external cause, and so on. In the end, all these causes have their existence only because of the first cause. Again, it must be stressed that this causality is to be understood as an immanent causality. Thus, the first cause is not external to the other causes rather these causes have their existence in the first cause. In this manner we can say that everything has its being in God. In terms of Spinoza's terminology individual things "are nothing but affections of the attributes of God, that is, modes wherein the attributes of God find expression in a definite and determinate way." (*cor.*P25 E1) From this it follows that, nothing in existence can be contingent since everything depends upon the necessity of God's nature. If something was contingent then it would not follow from God's nature and this would mean that there was more than one substance which contradicts the univocity of being. Free will, therefore, even God's free will, is an illusion of the human imagination. We must not confuse the infinity of God's power with some form of capriciousness. Free will and the intellect, which have been considered as absolutes by other philosophers such as Descartes for example, must on the contrary be thought of as modes of the attribute of thought. The attribute of thought itself expresses the eternal and infinite essence of substance. Thus, God cannot be said to have created the world from an act of freedom, since this would

be to confuse a mode with an essence. One way of thinking of this is that by implying that God acts from free will we insert a difference between nature and God. In other words, God could have created nature with a different final cause.

For Spinoza, on the contrary, nature is the expression of God, not distinct from God. Thus, nature follows from the necessity of God's nature. Thus, what is produced by God in its infinity could not be otherwise than it is: "Things could not have been produced by God in any other way or in any other order than it is the case." (P33 EI). Since there is no distinction between God's essence and the productivity of being, then God's essence must be his very power, and whatever can be conceived within this infinite power must exist. It is important, as we will see in what follows, in the movement from the ontology of substance to politics, that in Spinoza's system being is thought of in terms of power, and that this power is understood in terms of an immanent causality. There is no vertical dimension within Spinoza's thought rather being is to be understood as an infinite complexity, an infinite productivity without finality. This notion of being as singular, immanent, univocal and, above all, as productive, seems to us absolutely essential to understanding the later project of Deleuze and Guattari, and their elaboration of a productive desire in *Anti-Oedipus* and a "machinic assemblage" in *Mille Plateaux*.

II. Epistemological Parallelism

Spinoza's anti-Cartesianism extends not only to the critique of God as an extrinsic substance opposed to creation that consists of the two substances: mind, property of man alone, and substance extension, property of the universe in general. It also extends to this very opposition between the human species on the one hand (as a thinking thing), and the rest of the material universe. What is particularly striking is that the moment in which the philosophy of subjectivity is born in Cartesian metaphysics, although in the particular case of Descartes God still has a distinctive place, there emerges in Spinoza's work, almost immediately, a critique of the centrality of the subject. This is the reason why in our own age which might be characterized as post-Subject, that is to say, where the Kantian and phenomenological paradigm in which the subject is the first starting point is increasingly being questioned, many have turned to Spinoza to help them elaborate this critique. We might characterise Spinoza's thought, in the most forward manner, as the abolition of all transcendencies within metaphysics for the sake of a plane of immanence. One side of this process is the annihilation of the distance between the activity of God and the product of this activity, that is to say, it is the abolition of any transcendence of being. In the case of Spinoza, this leads to a materialist ontology in which an immanent God is indistinguishable from Nature itself. The other side of this project is the abolition of the distance between the mind and the body. It is the abolition of the transcendence of the mind, or the soul, in relation to Nature whereby the subject occupies the position

of the God of old. In this section of the first part, I wish to analyse the union of the mind to the body as it is explained and described in book II of the *Ethics*.

In Cartesian dualism the human being is conceived of as being made up of two absolutely distinct substances, mind and matter. Mind is conceived of as being whole, active, and free. Matter as being passive, and utterly determined by the mind. In this sense, the body of a human being is utterly inanimate until it is animated by the soul. The body is purely a mechanical apparatus. As everybody knows there are great problems with this model.²⁶ If the mind and the body are absolutely distinct substances it is impossible to see how they could communicate, and Descartes tries to resolve this problem by the implausible recourse to the "pineal gland".²⁷

There are two ways in which Spinoza overcomes this dualism. One is through an ontological argument and the other through an epistemological argument. The ontological argument should already be familiar to us from the first section of this part. Descartes' problems arise because he views extension and thought as two different substances, rather than as attributes of one and the same substance. For Spinoza, there is only one substance that, as we have seen, is singular and indivisible. The body and the mind are merely modal existences of the attributes thought and extension that are only two attributes, the only ones human beings can perceive, of the infinite attributes of infinite substance. The human being is not an exceptional being in relation to the

²⁶ The mind is defined as indivisible and the body as divisible. Thus, the first problem is to confuse these two orders since this would be to fall into error and the second would be to give absolute priority to one of the orders. See: M. Gueroult, *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons. II, L'âme et le corps*, (Paris: Aubier, 1968), p. 126. Spinoza's critique of Descartes attacks this double problem.

²⁷ Of course, Descartes' problem is not only to demonstrate the union of the mind and the body but its substantial character. He does so in his *Physics* with the notion of the 'pineal gland'. However, this new enquiry on human biology points to a different sort of truth that has nothing to do with the truth of geometry and physics, nor with pure understanding. It has to do with the clear and distinct aspect, or quality this organ can produce. Thus, to the enquiry concerning the truth of the understanding will follow an enquiry concerning the truth of lived experience. See: *Ibid.* pp. 123-156.

universe, but is merely an element, or to use Spinoza's language, a conjunction of two modes within an interrelated whole.

To say that the human being is merely one part of a whole is not to say that it is merely a material element within a material whole, for this would be to confuse substance with one of its attributes, namely, matter or extension. Thus, Spinoza, unlike some contemporary thinkers, does not solve Cartesian dualism by simply asserting that there are only material processes, that is to say, "brain activity". Part II of the *Ethics* is concerned with the parallelism between the mind and the body and precisely not with their confusion, and it is this parallelism that we need to investigate.

The attributes thought and extension should be considered as two autonomous orders. This is because in Spinoza's system one attribute cannot be used to explain another attribute. The sphere of extension forms an autonomous chain of cause and effect, and likewise the sphere of thought forms an autonomous chain of cause and effect: "when things have nothing in common, one cannot be the cause of the other." (P3 EI). It is this parallelism which Descartes mistranslates as a dualism and thereby asserts the privilege of one order over the other, in other words, the capacity for the soul to determine the body. Spinoza, on the contrary, does not translate the independence of attributes into a transcendence. From the viewpoint of substance, the autonomous series of causes and effects of extension, and the autonomous series of cause and effect of thought, are expressions of the same substance. Thus, thought and extension are equal: "The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things." (P7 EII). Everything depends on how we interpret "same as" in the above quotation. Thought and extension are the *same* substance perceived under different attributes. In the same way a mode of extension, that is to say a body, and a mode of thought, that is to say an idea, are one and the same thing but merely

expressed in two different ways. Here Spinoza is combating the philosophical view that ideas belong to a different sphere of being than objects, or vice versa. Ideas and objects are merely the modes in which the attributes express themselves in expressing one and the same substance. An idea of a table is not different from a table, in the sense of an ontological difference rather the difference is immanent to being in the ways that being can be expressed. Spinoza explains this by saying that in God, God's intellect and the objects of that intellect, are identical. Thus, the circle which exists as an object and the idea of that circle are the same thing merely expressed through different attributes: "a circle existing in nature and the idea of the existing circle -which is also in God- are one and the same thing, explicating the different attributes." (*sch.P7 EII*). This equality of the order of things and the order of ideas should not be confused with a unity. Spinoza is not arguing that the body is the mind, or the mind is the body, for this would be to confuse attributes with substances. Rather, the body is a completely different expression of substance just as the mind is. This is anti-Cartesian because on the one hand the body is seen as being independent of the mind, and at the same time it is also equal to the mind. The independence rests upon the autonomy of attributes and their equality upon the univocity of being.

Until now we have only been discussing the mind and body from the viewpoint of the attributes of extension and thought. This only makes sense of the ontological parallelism but does not quite explain epistemological parallelism. What we must realise is that part II of the *Ethics* concerns essentially the definition of the human mind. It is here that the epistemological parallelism is significant.²⁸ What is the human mind? The human mind contains ideas of things: "that which constitutes the actual

being of the human mind is basically nothing else but the idea of an individual actually existing thing." (P11 EII). The parallelism occurs because Spinoza argues that if anything changes in the object of the idea then the idea will also change. In other words, any changes that occur in the body, modes of extension, also change the idea of that body: "whatever happens in the object of the idea constituting the human mind is bound to be perceived by the human mind." (P12 EII). The parallelism between the object and the idea of the object is therefore mediated by the mind. Or, if one prefers, the conjunction between the object and the idea is actualised in the human mind.²⁹ Thus, for Spinoza, the union of the mind and body exist to the extent in which the body is an object of the human mind: "man consists of mind and body, and the human body exists according as we sense it." (*cor.*P13 EII). If the human mind is nothing but the body as object of that mind, then for Spinoza the only way to understand the mind is to understand its object. In other words, to understand the mind one must understand the body, and the more one understands the body, the more one understands the mind. This is quite opposite to Descartes who argues that understanding is only possible through the clear and distinct ideas of the mind, and that the body is only a source of untruth and falsity. For Spinoza, on the other hand, there is a parallelism between the complexity of the body and the excellence of the human mind: "I will make this general assertion that in proportion as a body is more apt than other bodies to act or be acted upon simultaneously in many different ways, so is its mind more apt than other minds to perceive many things simultaneously." (*sch.*P13 EII). This is why for Spinoza the study of the human mind requires a physics of the

²⁸ Deleuze will argue that this epistemological parallelism is secondary in relation to the ontological parallelism. See G.Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, (Paris : Minuit, 1968), pp. 99-113. We shall discuss this later in the second part of this chapter.

body.³⁰ This physics of the body essentially understands it in terms of motion, rest and speed, in which individual things are made up of different bodies having causal relationships between them. Thus, Spinoza defines the human body as "composed of very many individual parts of different natures, each of which is extremely complex" (*post. 1 EII*).

Spinoza, however, does not just think that the human mind is composed of complex ideas whose objects are themselves complex, in this case the complexity of the human body and its relations to other bodies. He believes that ideas do not only have actually existing things as their object, but that an idea can have another idea as its object. This means that the mind can have itself as an idea. Spinoza argues that there exists the same parallelism between the idea of the mind and the mind itself, as there exists between the mind and the body: "the idea of the mind is united to the mind in the same way as the mind is united to the body." (P21 EII). The proof for the parallelism between the mind and the body is that the body is the object of the mind, the mind being the mediating term. In the same way, Spinoza argues that the idea of the mind must also be united to its object, which in this case is the mind itself. Any dualism is avoided by arguing that the idea of the body and the body itself do not belong to different spheres of being in the same way as the idea of the mind and the mind itself do not belong to different spheres of being. Thus, for Spinoza there are not three kinds of reality such as thing, idea and self-consciousness, but one and the same reality which is merely expressed in different ways. Thus, the thing is merely the expression of substance through the attribute of extension, and the idea, substance

²⁹ For a long discussion of mind or consciousness in Spinoza see chapter V on the essence of man in: M. Gueroult, *Spinoza II - L'âme*, (Paris: Aubier, 1974). For his analysis of P12 as necessarily linked to P36 of EI, see in the same book: *Ibid.*, pp. 131-32.

³⁰ For an interesting interpretation of Spinoza's physics in the context of feminist reading see: Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality*, (New York: Routledge, 1996).

expressed through the attribute thought. In the case of the idea of the mind, the parallelism is slightly different, in that both the idea and the idea of the mind are expressed through the same attribute thought: "the idea of the mind and the mind itself are one and the same thing, conceived under one and the same attribute, namely thought." (*sch.*P21 EII).

Corresponding to these two relations, the relation between the idea to the object, and the idea to the idea, there are two kinds of knowledge. The first type of knowledge is the mind's perception of the body: "the mind does not know itself except insofar as it perceives ideas of affections of the body." (P23 EII). This knowledge, Spinoza argues, does not involve adequate knowledge, and thus, is only a confused and distorted idea of the body: "I say expressly that the mind does not have an adequate knowledge, but only a confused and fragmentary knowledge of itself, its own body, and external bodies." (*sch.*P29 EII). The problem, then, for Spinoza, is how we move from inadequate to adequate knowledge, the latter being the second type of knowledge.

Like Descartes, Spinoza does not have a correspondence theory of truth but sees truth as adequation, that is to say in terms of clarity. The difference between Spinoza and Descartes, is that Descartes' concept of the "clear and distinct" is merely a representation of ideas, whereas for Spinoza to know something is to know its cause, and therefore, adequate knowledge is knowledge of the cause of ideas. To know something is to know what causes our ideas, which goes back to our power to think. To have an adequate idea is to know the links of causes and effects that produce that idea. A confused idea is merely an idea that is ignorant of its causes: "when we gaze at the sun, we see it as some two hundred feet distance from us. The error does not consist in simply seeing the sun in this way but in the fact that, while we do so, we are

not aware of the true distance and the cause of our seeing it so." (*sch.P34 EII*). The error here is not a failure of an idea to correspond to an exterior thing, which will be a correspondence theory of truth, but the failure to recognise the true cause of an adequate idea of the distance. This cause itself is an idea. We must underline again the fact that the order of ideas is autonomous for Spinoza. A correspondence theory of truth, and all the problems involved in that theory is dependent upon a dualist metaphysics. Spinoza's specific stance is to ask the question of how can this autonomous reading become an adequate form of knowledge? This relates to the ability and power each of us has to think. How to produce adequate ideas, therefore, becomes an ethical question. How does one increase one's power to think?

Due to the ontological parallelism we have already discussed we realise that the power to think is dependent on relations between bodies. The power of the human mind is in proportion to the complexity of the relations in which a body finds itself: "the human mind is capable of perceiving a great many things, and this capacity will vary in proportion to the variety of states which its body can assume." (*P14 EII*). Thus, for Spinoza, there is a direct correlation between the power to think and the power to act. In this manner, the ontological and epistemological problems of dualism and their overcoming in a radical immanence directly flow into the question of bodies which is the topic of the third part of the *Ethics*. This question is as much a political question as an ontological one and thus it should not surprise us that Spinoza turns to writing the *Theological-Political Treatise* before he goes to finish the *Ethics*.

III. The Power of Bodies

One of the best ways to understand Spinoza's thought is by seeing its opposition to Cartesian metaphysics. This is because Cartesian metaphysics exhibits a double dualism, where it posits two kinds of transcendence. The first kind of transcendence, which is sometimes lost in the interpretation of Descartes because of the mistaken belief that he has broken with any theological prejudices, is the absolute separation between God and his creation. One should not forget that Descartes' project of subjective constitution of objective being is completely dependent on the transcendence of God's essence, in other words, his infinite being, which is opposed to man's finite being. Spinoza, on the other hand, places man, as any other mode of Nature, within *infinite being*. The second kind of transcendence, which is present in Descartes' metaphysics, is the split between man's being and the rest of material nature including his own body. This split corresponds to Descartes' division between the substances of extension and thought. Thus, in reality, for Descartes, there are three kinds of substance: God, thought and extension. Spinoza argues that extension and thought are not independent substances but *attributes* of substance, and that they are only two of the infinite attributes of substance, since perfection, that is to say God, knows no limits. Descartes' division between extension and thought rests upon this theological prejudice: that man has a special place as the image of God within Nature. Or, as Spinoza puts it in the preface to book III of the *Ethics*, "they appear to go so far as to consider man in Nature as a kingdom within a kingdom."

This "apartness" of man is given an ethical slant by Descartes in his theory of the passions. Since the soul is seen as being outside of Nature and, thus, as higher to Nature, the passions of the body are seen as being under its control. Emotions are therefore only seen as something negative, or as a lack within being as such.³¹ For Spinoza, on the contrary, man is a mode of the attributes thought and extension that express one and the same substance, which is God or Nature. Thus, man is not different from other modes essentially but only in matter of degree.

Nature is to be seen in terms of God's power. Thus, every individual thing is to be interpreted as an expression of this power. Every individual thing has power to the extent in which it preserves its own being. Spinoza calls this self-preservation *conatus*. With respect to every individual thing, including the human individual, *conatus* belongs to the body's power to act: "each thing, insofar as it is in itself, endeavours to persist in its own being" (P6 EIII). A being is nothing else but this persistence: "the *conatus* with which each thing endeavours to persist in its own being is nothing but the actual existence of the thing itself" (P7 EIII). What is important to underline in Spinoza's account, is that this persistence is not to be understood in terms of a rational mind which is abstracted from Nature itself. The power to act is as much an expression of what the body can do as what the mind can think: "nobody as yet has determined all the body's capabilities: that is, nobody as yet has learned from experience what the body can and cannot do." (*sch.* P2 EIII). Thus, what Spinoza is interested in book III of the *Ethics* is the analysis of the body's power to act. What power to act means here, in terms of the body, is not spontaneity but the ability of the body to be affected. To be affected in such a way as to increase its power or to be affected in such a way as to decrease its power. Of course, the parallelism which is

³¹ See: R.Descartes. *Les passions de l'âme*, Première partie, (Paris: puf, 1988), Art. 17 onwards.

instituted in part II of the *Ethics* means that, to the extent that the body's power to act is decreased or increased so too the mind's power to think is decreased or increased: "whatsoever increases or diminishes, assists or checks, the power of activity of a body, the idea of the said thing increases or diminishes, assists or checks the power of thought of our mind." (P11 EIII). The existence of affects in our mind are called affections by Spinoza. There are two kinds of affections: passive and active affections. Passive affections have their cause externally. To the extent in which a passive affection leads to a greater state of perfection, then, it belongs to the emotions of pleasure, and to the extent to which it leads to a lesser state of perfection, then, it belongs to the emotions of pain. Perfection means, here, reality. That which has greater degrees of reality has greater degrees of perfection.³² Reality is the power to exist, which he calls the power to act. Painful passive affections thus decrease my power to act whereas cheerful or pleasurable passive affections increase my power to act.³³

Spinoza is very realistic concerning the possibilities of pain or sadness, or joy or pleasure for a human life. This is because the body cannot be seen as being a sovereign element in relation to other bodies. Rather, the affections of a body decrease and increase in relation to other bodies that are the result of fortuitous encounters. This means that we are more subject to passive emotions than active ones: "man is necessarily always subject to passive relations in that he follows the common order of Nature and obeys it and accommodates himself to it as far as the nature of things demands." (*cor.*P4 EIV). From this, it follows that, to preserve our own being we must actively seek passive joyful affections. This leads Spinoza to a redefinition, in

³² "By reality and perfection I mean the same thing.", (Def.6 EII).

book IV of the *Ethics*, of ethical language. What is “good” is that which is useful in increasing my power to act. What is “bad” is that which acts against my power to act. Thus, virtue is a human power based on the knowledge of “good” and “evil”, which is knowledge of the laws of nature. As it pertains to human affections to seek one’s own preservation, that is, to increase one’s power to act: “no virtue can be conceived as prior to this one, namely, the *conatus* to preserve oneself.” (P22 EIV). To understand this as egotism is to completely misunderstand Spinoza’s ontology and the centrality of the body to his ethics. Only if one grasps man as a subject who stands apart from others and from Nature itself, could one understand *conatus* as egoism.³⁴ For Spinoza, on the contrary, the being of an individual must be understood primarily as a body, and the body only exists in relation to other bodies. Thus, I can only seek actively my own increase of power to act in my relation with other bodies. It is here that we can see the transition from Spinoza’s ethics to his politics: “whatever is conducive to man’s social organisation or causes men to live in harmony is advantageous, while those things that introduce discord into the State are bad.” (P40 EIV). We might describe active affections, therefore, as opposed to passive ones, as the striving for an organisation of our emotional life in terms of reason which promotes this harmony and thus our own power to act. This striving for organisation, this activity, is identified with reason. Thus, reason must be understood as the replacement of an external order or as being caused by an internal one. That is, through reason we become the adequate cause of our actions.³⁵ Thus, the only difference between a joyful passive affection and a

³³ For an interesting discussion on the variability of power see B.Massumi’s work on effects in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp.217-239.

³⁴ For an analysis of different theories of egoism such as ‘biological egoism’, rational utilitarianism and intellectualism in contradistinction to Spinoza’s position see: A.Matheron, *Individu et communauté chez Spinoza*, (Paris: Minuit, 1988), pp.241-284.

³⁵ For a discussion of the deployment of a reasonable life at the level of the individual and the inter-individual and the power (*puissance*) of reason in Spinoza see: *Ibid.*, pp.517-542, 543-570.

painful passive affection is that the former, comes into existence from an external cause and the latter, from an internal cause. This difference between externality and internality is the movement from the analysis of bodies to a practice, that is to say, from an analysis of how a body is joyful to a question of how am I to make myself more joyful. Thus, reason becomes constituted and this is what is analysed in book V of the *Ethics*.

The practical project of book V of the *Ethics* could be said to be how does one cure oneself of passive emotions that produce a decrease in one's power to act?³⁶ To do so, Spinoza argues, we must separate ourselves from the external cause of our emotion. This emotion ceases to be passive as soon as we, through the very separation from the cause itself, gain a clear and distinct idea of it: "a passive emotion ceases to be a passive emotion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it" (P3 EV). This is because as soon as we have a clear idea of our emotion we have some control over it and therefore we cease to be passive in relation to it. Now, for Spinoza, this translation of passivity into activity is an ability to organise one's life such that one is not attacked by emotions that are contrary to our nature. It is only by avoiding those affections which are contrary to our nature that we can organise and associate our affections in relation to the order of the intellect rather than the passive affections of the body: "as long as we are not assailed by emotions which are contrary to our nature, we have the power to arrange and associate affections of the body according to the order of the intellect." (P10 EV). The abilities for the mind to organise and control

³⁶ Here, it is interesting to note the evolution of the idea of "cure" in Spinoza's work. In his earlier *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, the "cure" refers to the intellect in such a way as to allow for a form of epistemological reading of being, whereas in his later *Ethics* there is a move away from any possible intellectualist reading of being. Now the "cure" testifies to the perfect parallelism of mind and body. The "cure" is located within emotions, that is the union of mind and body, and our power to act. What is most important is not so much what we can think but what we can do from what we think.

emotions exist for Spinoza in five levels: firstly, in the mind's knowledge of the emotions, secondly, in detaching emotions from their external cause, thirdly, temporally in that affections that we understand are superior to those which we conceive in a confused manner, fourthly, in the knowledge of the causes whereby affections can be related to our understanding of nature, and lastly, in that the mind can organise affections (*sch.P20 EV*). From this it can be seen that one can only achieve control over passive affections through adequate knowledge of one's nature and since one's nature is part of Nature as a whole, then, by adequate knowledge of God. Thus, Spinoza can say that the highest virtue, that is to say the greatest manner in which one can preserve one's being, is knowledge of God: "the highest *conatus* of the mind and its highest virtue is to understand things by the third kind of knowledge." (P29 EV). In the proof of this proposition we can see that this third type of knowledge proceeds from the idea of God to knowledge of the essence of things: "the third kind of knowledge proceeds from the adequate idea of certain of God's attributes to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things, and the more we understand things in this way the more we understand God. Again, we want to underline that this third type of knowledge should not be understood as something spiritual or other worldly, and above all, not as the expression of the mind floating above reality. The mind's capacity to think is directly parallel to the body's capacity to act: "he whose body is capable of the greatest amount of activity has a mind whose greatest part is eternal." (P39 EV). And, once more, proposition 40: "the more perfection a thing has the more active and less passive it is, conversely, the more active it is the more perfect it is".

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IV. The Absolute State: DEMOCRACY

We would like to think of Spinoza's work from the *Ethics* to the *Political Treatise* as a movement from ontology to ethics and then finally to the political. This does not mean that each of these elements should be seen as separate parts such that the ethics, as is the case in Kant for example, were opposed to the theoretical or ontological. Or indeed, such that the political was to be seen as a compromise of the purity of ethical reasoning. It is quite the contrary in Spinoza's case, for both the ethical and the political are not the rejection of ontology but have their bases on it. It is precisely for this reason that Spinoza is of such importance to contemporary thinkers in their attempts to think beyond the impasse of either liberal or Marxist thought.³⁷ The success of political theory today is its ability to ground itself in a secure ontology. It seems to us that the only work that even approaches this success is that of Deleuze and Guattari, and this is perhaps precisely because Deleuze's own philosophical position has its foundation in an intimate knowledge of Spinoza's philosophical *œuvre*.

However, a certain reticence is here required because although the relation between the ethical and the ontological in Spinoza is fully fleshed out in parts III to V of the *Ethics*, it is certainly not the case with the passage from ethics itself to the political. This is no doubt the case because the treatise on politics itself was unfinished at the time of Spinoza's death. Thus, to a certain extent we have to reconstruct Spinoza's politics from his writings. In addition, it is also important to stress how

³⁷ Despite the importance of their connection to Marx, philosophers such as Balibar, Macherey, Matheron, Tosel, Deleuze, Negri and Montag are some of those that have looked in Spinoza for a way out of liberalism and marxist orthodoxy. Most of these thinkers discover already in Spinoza's position the elements of a critique of liberalism. See: W.Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power*, (London and New

Spinoza was writing in a time of great political uncertainty and violence, and thus under censorship. For these reasons, it is necessary to read between the lines of his work to get, perhaps, at their ultimate meaning.³⁸

Thus, for example, it might appear at a first reading that the aim of the *TP* is a defence of the absolute power of monarchies, but we would like to suggest that, like the *TTP*, it is actually a defence of democracy as the most rational form of government. Unfortunately, the chapter on the democratic State is at the very end of the *TP*, which remains unfinished. However, a clue to its importance is given to us by its first sentence: "I pass now to the third State, which is absolute State and which we call democratic." (§1 ch.11). The word to underline here is the word absolute. Of course the only other absolute in Spinoza's system is substance itself. Adhering to Spinoza's rigorous univocal sense of being, this would mean that only the democratic State would be an expression of substance. But we can also see why this is the case if we start with one of the modes of substance which is the individual human being. Each individual, as we have seen from the reading of the *Ethics*, is the expression of the power of Nature, thus, human nature is not different from any other being in its desire to augment its power to exist. Spinoza translates this into the language of natural rights in chapter II of the *TP* by arguing that every individual, no matter what powers it has, has the right to exist, existing meaning here, according to their own affects and affections:

York: Verso, 1999), p.64. For a detailed discussion of the position of all these thinkers in reference to this question see in the same book the whole of the third chapter: *Ibid.*, pp.62-89.

³⁸ The work of Spinoza was badly received by his community and this led to his excommunication. This climate of repression from his Jewish community and the complex political situation of Holland at the time can be regarded as two important factors that Spinoza himself had to take into account in his writings. It must not be forgotten that not only was he excommunicated which meant no one was allowed to speak or even be in his presence, but also there was even an attempt to murder him. For a description of this event see his biography by S.Nadler, *Spinoza a life*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For the more interesting discussion on the measures taken in order to avoid

by natural right, therefore, I understand the very laws or rules of Nature by which everything happens, that is to say the great power of Nature. From that it follows, that the natural rights of Nature as a whole, and consequently of each individual, extends as far as its power and therefore everything a man does following the laws of his own nature he does so by virtue of a right of sovereign nature, and he has upon Nature as much right as he has power. (§4 ch.2)

The question then becomes which form of social organisation has as its ultimate aim the *potentia* or power of each individual? For Spinoza this would be a State guided by reason. The only difference between the state of society and the state of Nature is that, in the latter man is ruled by the affections of hope and fear, whereas in the former, life is ruled in common for the security of all. Only that State which is contrary to reason undermines the freedom of each man, whereas, on the contrary, a State that is ruled by reason is more free:

the more a man lives under the guide of reason, the more he is free, the more often he observes the laws of the City and will conform to the injunctions of the sovereign of which he is the subject. To that I add that the civil State is instituted naturally so as to put to an end common fear and doing away with common miseries, and thus it follows it aims at the goal that all men live under the guide of reason.

(§6 ch.3)

repression in relation to the *marranism* of Spinoza, see: I.S.Révah, *Des Marranes à Spinoza*, (Paris: Vrin, 1995).

Of course, the problem is what is sovereign in a State. Spinoza describes three possible States in the *TP*: monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. Some clue to the answer to this question is given in chapter five. There he argues that the purpose or function of the State is nothing other than the peace and security of life, and that it follows from this, that the best government is that one in which men pass their lives in harmony. In terms of the *Ethics* we wish to interpret this harmony in terms of active affections. From the viewpoint of the *TTP*, active affections, in other words, those affections which increase the power of the individual, are inseparable from freedom and from the democratic State that makes this freedom possible. Why this might be the case, though again we must underline that this cannot be found in Spinoza's writings, is that the political organisation of democracy is the only organisation, in comparison to monarchy or aristocracy, which coincides with the immanence of substance. Thus, if we are correct in saying that there is a parallelism between Spinoza's ontological and political theory, only the democratic State could be the absolute State. This is so because only the democratic State would be purely immanent. In this purely immanent State (democracy), each individual would be an expression of the power common to all in the same way that each individual, from the viewpoint of ethics, is an expression of absolute immanent power. It seems, despite Spinoza's apparent defence of monarchy in the *TP*, that the only plausible outcome of his basing natural rights on *potentia*, is the democratic State. As we shall see in the second part of this chapter this coincides with Toni Negri's reading of Spinoza's philosophy, which introduces an important element into the interpretation of Deleuze's question of what practice the *Ethics* offers us. Moreover, that movement from the ontological to the political will be a decisive tool in the interpretation of the political

consequences of *Anti-Oedipus* and *Mille Plateaux*. Materialist ontology is the same as radical democracy.

Chapter II

Reading Deleuze & Negri through Spinoza's Parallelism

Deleuze's and Guattari's political thought is not just a new kind of Marxism, or better a new kind of marxist Hegelianism, but one that breaks out of the inertia of Marxist theory itself. It does so by turning towards a thinker whose revolutionary thought was perhaps misunderstood by both Hegel and Marx. This thinker is Spinoza. Spinoza is behind both *L'Anti-Oedipe* and *Mille Plateaux*. Thus, the project of this thesis is not simply comparing or contrasting these two works as though they were two distinct objects, but actually following the thread that weaves them together. This thread is a productionist ontology which has its foundation in a materialism whose rigorous formulation was first executed in Spinoza's work. This thesis is in agreement with Negri when he remarks that there is a crisis in Marxist thought today and this crisis does not require a return to Hegel, as many seem to think, but to Spinoza.¹

This question of the relation between Deleuze's and Guattari's political theory and Spinoza will be approached through an examination of Deleuze's writings on Spinoza both, prior to his work with Guattari, and after. In addition, the work of Negri on Spinoza will also be important. Negri's work complements Deleuze's in two

important ways: first of all they are both interested in Spinoza in terms of his materialist ontology, and secondly, there is a different emphasis in their work, a difference that can help us to see the particular singularity of Deleuze's approach to Spinoza. It is as though Negri is a catalyst that can produce in Deleuze's work its full completion and importance. What is at the centre of this relation between Negri and Deleuze, their similarity and difference, is a 'parallelism' between the ontological and the political. This is of fundamental importance to the understanding of political theory. There can be no rigorous political theory that is not founded in an ontological order. This has its basis in Spinoza's depiction of the relation between ontology and politics. Spinoza's politics is inconceivable without his ontology. In the field of politics as much as in the field of ontology it is always a matter of the auto-production of the Real and it is on this basis that one may talk of a radical materialism in Spinoza.

Deleuze and Negri's interpretation of Spinoza, both of whom are involved in the construction of an ever more rigorous materialism, place the emphasis on a 'parallelism' of the ontological and the political. Parallelism is the strategy whereby Spinoza, according to Deleuze and Negri, inextricably links ontology to politics and it is precisely this angle they both take that most distinguishes them from more traditional interpretations of Spinoza. These other readings place his political writings within liberal theory, specially the social contract tradition.²

However, as it has already been indicated, although Deleuze and Negri share this common interpretation of Spinoza, they each approach Spinoza in a different

¹ Antonio Negri, *Spinoza subversif*, (Paris : Kimé, 1994), p. 131.

² As has already been pointed out in the previous chapter, the work of Leo Strauss is one of the most illustrious exponents of Spinoza's supposed liberalism. See: L. Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997). Negri emphasises forcibly that it is a complete misunderstanding of Spinoza to read his politics through the model of the social contract. See : *Op.Cit.* *Spinoza subversif*, pp. 41-44.

manner. And it is here that a return back to Hegel and Marx is necessary. Negri's reading of Spinoza, not unsurprisingly considering his history of political commitments, still has a flavour of Hegel and Marx.³ This is despite the fact that Negri will argue that Spinoza cannot be understood through dialectics. This Hegelianism or Marxism returns in Negri's elaboration of political praxis from out of Spinoza's concept of absolute democracy.⁴ Deleuze's reading of Spinoza has none of these Marxist or Hegelian overtones, and it is for this very reason that one can discern within *L'Anti-Oedipe* a Spinozist imprint which works against a very Hegelian-Marxist horizon.

Another way of thinking about this difference is starting from the parallelism between the ontological and the political as such. One might therefore characterise Negri's approach as a direct and clear translation or conversion of Spinoza's ontological concepts into a current debate about what is meant by the concepts of democracy and liberation. This does not mean, of course, that thereby he ignores the ontological content of Spinoza's work, since this would deny the very parallelism that is as much a part of his approach to Spinoza's as Deleuze's is. Rather, it is better here to speak of a matter of emphasis, or perhaps even of an 'exaggeration', of the political where the unity of the political and the ontological is read from the side of the political as such. The ontological is political because politics is the construction of the

³ Negri wrote his PhD thesis on Hegel. Also he is one of the theoreticians of the Italian "operaismo" in the 60's and later in the 70's of "autonomia operaia". His name has been associated to the kidnapping and murder of the Italian ex-president Aldo Moro through the activity of "the Red Brigades". His militancy, whether it implicates him in real terms to the activities he has been charged with or not, has taken him to prison more than once.

⁴ This can be attested in the following sentence: 'Spinoza refuse en outre la distinction société civile-Etat, cette autre fiction au service de l'idéologie du rapport de production.' A. Negri, *L'anomalie sauvage*, (Paris: puf, 1982), p. 228.

ontological: being is social being. Thus, for Negri, in Spinoza's naturalist philosophy of substance spirit is nothing but the social body in its political auto-organisation.⁵

If Negri's angle can be characterised as an emphasis of the political, then in turn, Deleuze's might be characterised as the emphasis of the ontological. Deleuze's interpretation of Spinoza concentrates on the latter's fundamental overcoming of any theological or idealistic residue within philosophical thought. In other words, the denial of any appeal to transcendence in the explanation of the real. However, just as Negri's counterpart, it would be wrong to suggest that the ontological reading of Spinoza's work ignores its political consequences, for this would be to break with the parallelism of the ontological and the political which is common to both Deleuze and Negri's reading of Spinoza. Their difference lies, then, in their approach to the problem and not in the content that is developed in both cases. However, one needs to be careful not to think that the two approaches merely cancel one another out, so that what is lacking in Negri is completed by Deleuze, or vice versa. This would be much too simple.

Paradoxically, it is perhaps Deleuze's ontological emphasis that can better help us understand the political theory of *L'Anti-Oedipe* and *Mille Plateaux* instead of Negri's political reading of Spinoza. I shall address some comments on this idea at the end of this chapter. For the moment, it might be useful to suggest what could be said to be the weakness of both approaches. It could be argued, for example, that Negri's political reading of Spinoza tends to straight jacket the ontological concepts of Spinoza's thought within traditional concepts of praxis which Spinoza's materialism might make us think of as redundant. Negri, for all his commitment to a materialist

⁵ For an excellent discussion of this see Laurent Bove, *La stratégie du conatus*, (Paris : Vrin, 1996), especially chapters I and IX. His thesis focuses on the question of conatus through a particularly strong reading of the *causa sui* in Spinoza that is very much inspired on Negri's own interpretation.

ontology remains strongly attached to a humanist tradition.⁶ On the other hand, it might perhaps be argued, that Deleuze's emphasis on Spinoza's ontology make it difficult to conceive how one moves from philosophical concepts to political activity. This, of course, is a problem that is just as pressing for a reading of *L'Anti-Oedipe* and *Mille Plateaux*. Does a materialist ontology lead to passive nihilism? There are important temptations to avoid here. Ones that might result in a reading of their work in terms of a mechanicism that would be closer to French materialism than to Spinoza's.⁷ The question is whether Deleuze's idea of active joy can be thought of within political organisations or even as revolutionary praxis. It might appear that Deleuze's work can be interpreted as a self-overcoming which has accidental relations to others only.⁸ All these criticisms, however, need to be thought and tested as to their validity through a sustained reading and interpretation of Deleuze's own philosophical work and in his collaboration with Guattari.

⁶ See for example the importance and place of Humanism in his latest publication with M.Hardt. There is a chapter that draws the distinction between two modernities. This leads them to postulate a positive account of Renaissance as part of their political agenda. In this spirit they declare both Spinoza and Foucault (and one may wonder if Deleuze and Guattari may find their place here as well) as some kind of renaissance figures in the sense of a 'Humanism after the death of Man' as their title of the last section announces. A.Negri and M.Hardt, *Empire*, (London and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 69-92 but especially pp.91-92.

⁷ A mechanicism such as Diderot's, La Mettrie and D'holbac has little to do with Spinoza's system.

⁸ This is the line Rorty takes with regards to Deleuze's work.

I. NEGRI : a politics of the *multitudo*

In *Spinoza subversif*, Negri speaks of two planes in Spinoza's work: the metaphysical and the political.⁹ These two planes, however, should not be seen as opposite to one another, or as different disciplines within a philosophical project, as though, like Aristotle one first began with one's metaphysics having a completely different order from an ethics that then comes to complete the project. On the contrary, in Spinoza's work, as has already been underlined, there is a direct parallel between the metaphysical or ontological order, on the one hand, and the political on the other. The first form of this parallelism, however, is postulated by Spinoza in his famous Proposition 7 of the second book of the *Ethics*: 'the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.'¹⁰ This deceptively simple form in which Spinoza establishes the principle of parallelism opens the way to the larger parallelism of the ontological and the political, as both Deleuze and Negri agree.

One can approach this parallelism in two different ways: either one approaches it through the political order, so that one understands Spinoza's absolute being as political being, or one approaches it from the ontological order, so that one understands the political as immediately ontological. As has been noted, these two angles reflect the two different ways in which Deleuze and Negri approach Spinoza's work. The first political, and the second ontological, but both expressing the

⁹ Op.Cit. *Spinoza subversif*, p. 24.

¹⁰ B.Spinoza. *Ethics*, Part II, Pr 7, (Minneapolis : Hackett, 1992), p. 66.

parallelism between the ontological and the political that marks the originality of Spinoza's thought.

Omnino absolutum democraticum imperium

There is one sentence of Spinoza that is the fulcrum of Negri's interpretation: *omnino absolutum democraticum imperium*.¹¹ This sentence can be split into two halves which correspond to the two planes of Spinoza's work: the metaphysical or ontological, and the political. The first half of the sentence, *omnino absolutum*, corresponds to the ontological or metaphysical order, and the second part of the sentence, *democraticum imperium*, to the political order. First of all, let us say a few words about the metaphysical part of the sentence. There will be, of course, more to be said about this subject when the discussion will centre on the work of Deleuze.

Spinoza's thought, is a theory of being. Being here is understood as univocal. There is no split, unlike in the history of Western thought between a region of immanence and one of transcendence or between the real and the ideal. Being is a continuum, or as Spinoza would say, everything is either a mode or an attribute of God. Despite this identification of being with God, Spinoza's thought is resolutely anti-theological. Words like God, or substance, or the absolute, as Spinoza himself writes, are merely contingent expressions of being. Beyond the words Spinoza uses, what matters above all, is his interpretation of being as univocal and immanent. There

¹¹ The whole of Chapter III centres on the development of this strategy of interpretation of Spinoza's politics but it is more precisely set up on p. 47.

is only one substance and everything is an attribute or a mode of it. In this way, Spinoza's ontology stands in opposition to traditional ontology:

Spinozist ontology is an absolute violation of the ontological tradition [...] Spinoza affirms being as foundation [...] but the foundation is conceived as surface [...] the surface appears as determined being, but the determination is practical, it is the consolidation of the crossings and shifts of the forces that we experience on the physical and historical terrain.¹²

If God is the word Spinoza uses for being, what is Negri's? For Negri being is social being. The absolute is the 'collective singularity.'¹³ As will be seen, this understanding of being, which is perhaps more visible in Negri's book the *Savage Anomaly*, is at the heart of his political reading of Spinoza's ontology. From the beginning Negri understands Spinoza's substance through political praxis and not political praxis through substance. The identity of substance and political praxis is from the side of political praxis itself. For Negri, the only possibility of a politics free from ideology must be its support by a strong ontology. To read Spinoza today is precisely to supply this rigorous ontological base to a politics that is committed to liberation. This means a complete reformulation of the concept of democracy such that it is no longer understood through its usual juridical and legalist definition, and which is returned to an ontological definition that adequately expresses the social being of the collective singularity. This return to an ontological definition of democracy has its condition, for Negri, in history. It is only the process of socialisation produced by capitalism that leads to crisis in democracy, and so to a possible return to real democracy. What is meant by real democracy here is a

¹² My translation of Op.Cit. *Spinoza subversif*, p. 132. Further, Negri argues elsewhere that it is Spinoza's denial of the unity of God that makes his position irrevocably anti-theological: [Thus, is crased up to the last trace of the traditional theological figure of divinity. Corresponding to this disappearance we see emerge a new referent of the divine as the production of infinite power. A total horizon, which does not even admit logical transcendence. The divine is the ensemble of all powers (*puissances*)]. My translation from Op.Cit., *L'Anomalie sauvage*, pp. 209-10.

democracy that reflects the true nature of the human psyche and its collective being, rather than a democracy that is merely the ideological defence of a regime that crushes the individual through modern superstitions. Negri discusses this relation between the individual and the collective in Spinoza's work through the concept of the *multitudo*. This again, is a directly political concept because it is only comprehensible, both subjectively and objectively, in the historical possibilities of democracy. It is through this concept that we can begin to think the second part of the sentence: *democraticum imperium*.

Multitudo

The concept of *multitudo* is to be thought, Negri argues, in three different levels: the physical, the animal and reason.¹⁴ The first two levels, the physical and the animal, correspond to the analysis of the movement and rest of bodies, and then the analysis of affects that Spinoza gives in the *Ethics*. The last level, reason, is linked to the concept of democracy which Negri reconstructs from Spinoza's incomplete political writings. The first level is the critical *puissance* (*potentia*) of the real as a combination and intertwining of physical being, much like the concept of Nature in Lucretius or in Hobbes' physicalism.¹⁵ This gives a rigorous material basis to the second level where animal *puissance*, which includes the human animal, is to be understood through the concepts of *conatus* and *cupiditas*. This second level is to be understood as the continuous entanglement of contradictory passions and situations at the level of the psyche or the affective subject. It is only with the third level, with reason, that we can begin to speak of the formation of a political subject. This subject

¹³ Op.Cit. *Spinoza subversif*, p. 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-60.

itself, as in the other two levels that it does not negate, is to be thought of as a *multitudo*. The political subject is a tendency within the network of passions of the psyche and the material basis of which it is a part. For Spinoza, affects are not to be contrasted to a political will as something external because political will, or reason, is an immanent possibility of ethical life. In other words, sociality is immanent to the realm of affects just as affects are immanent to material being. From this is obtained an imperative of politics: discover and be with those who produce joy and avoid those who produce sadness. This community of joyful beings is the condition of a reasoned constitution of democracy. For this reason, ethics and politics, are not two distinct regions within a philosophical project, as though ethics were to do with individual behaviour or civil society and politics with the organs of government exterior to the individual or civil society, the State. Indeed, Spinoza himself argues that this division between the State and society itself is an illusion that does not correspond to reality.¹⁶ Ethics already includes the social, or the individual is already collective and this collectivity 'is the liberation of all the social forces in a general *conatus* of the organisation of all.'¹⁷ This *conatus* is what Negri understands to be absolute democracy.

The mode of social being is understood by Negri through Spinoza's conception of power. Power is defined in two very different ways in Spinoza which correspond to two different Latin expressions that are not easily translatable into English. Power is either *potentia* or *potestas*. *Potentia* is defined by Spinoza in the *Ethics* as force to produce and *potestas* as capacity to produce in the act. Negri argues that in the *Political Treatise* these definitions are inverted and *potentia* becomes capacity to produce in the act and *potestas* becomes force to produce. These formal

¹⁵ Lucrèce, *De la nature*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

¹⁶ Op. Cit., *Anomalie sauvage*, pp. 188-89.

definitions are given a political expression by Negri through the language of natural rights. Every individual is born with a natural right or *potentia*.¹⁸ This is not to be understood juridically but in terms of the language of affects or desire. The definition of freedom now becomes: every individual desires. Your freedom is proportional to your degree of *potentia*. Nonetheless, all human societies hitherto have been determined by the diametrically opposed notion of power, *potestas*. This latter conception of power can be defined in the modern age as the result of the split between magistrature and the magistrate, that is, as the split between those who execute power and those who are governed by power.¹⁹ In terms of the ideology of democracy, this division of power is ideologically defended through social contract theory according to which members of a society transfer their power to an external authority that then acts independently.

Even though Spinoza might use the language of social contract theory, due to the context in which he was working at the time, Negri argues that his political thought is diametrically opposed to any notion of contractualism.²⁰ It is here that a distinction can be made between liberal democracy on the one hand, and absolute democracy. Only the latter expresses the ontological dimension of Spinoza's thought: the *multitudo*. Liberal democracy, on the contrary, is an ideological misrepresentation of social being for the sake of the unequal division of power, *potestas*: 'The theory of

¹⁷ My translation from: Op.Cit., *Spinoza subversif*, p. 51.

¹⁸ This is based in Spinoza's definition of natural right: 'Par droit de nature, donc, j'entends les lois mêmes ou règles de la Nature suivant lesquelles tout arrive, c'est à dire la puissance même de la nature. Par suite le droit naturel de la Nature entière et conséquement de chaque individu s'étend jusqu'ou va sa puissance, et donc tout ce que fait un homme suivant les lois de sa propre nature, il le fait en vertu d'un droit de nature souverain, et il a sur la nature autant de droit qu'il a de puissance.' B.Spinoza, *Traité Politique*, §4, ch.2, (Paris: Flammarion, 1996), p.16. [By natural right I understand the laws or rules of Nature according to which everything happens, that is to say, the power of nature itself. Thus, it follows that the natural right of Nature in its entirety and consequently of each individual extends as far as its power reaches, and thus everything a man does following the laws of his own nature, he does in virtue of sovereign natural right and he has over nature as much right as he has power.]

¹⁹ Op. Cit. *Spinoza subversif*, p. 50.

²⁰ Ibid. pp. 41-44.

social contract has a specific historical and conceptual determination. It is substantially predisposed to the legitimisation of different forms of government in which absolutist forms of the modern State represent themselves.²¹

Absolute democracy, on the contrary, is the unity of the social and the psyche in the auto-constitution of the social. What characterises absolute democracy is the non-separation of *potentia* from *potestas*, or the absolute immanence of power. Social being then becomes the expression of freedom in which freedom is understood as the reciprocal relation between reason and affects. This relation between freedom on the one hand, and absolute social being on the other, is, Negri suggests, the aporia of radical democracy. The absolute nature of democracy is absolute because it expresses the ontological definition of society as *multitudo* in all three levels (of the physical, the animal and reason), whereas freedom is the natural right of the individual *potentia* which reaches its full extent in its relation to others. This tension between freedom and the social, between the individual and the collective, and the social and the psyche, where all two terms of the opposition are already multiple, is the dynamic principle of democracy. In absolute democracy institutions express the social being of subjectivities without these institutions becoming alienated as separate powers as is the case in liberal democracy.

What is decisive, however, in Negri's concept of absolute democracy, is the parallelism of the political and ontological orders. Democracy is the best kind of political constitution because, unlike monarchy or oligarchy, it expresses the true nature of the real as social being. Absolute democracy is absolute because only democracy is the reality of the absolute as social being. Only in absolute democracy is the pleasure of the world possible because democracy is the condition for the ethical,

²¹ My translation from *Ibid.* p. 43.

in the spinozist sense of the word, life of the individual.²² The subjective expression of the absolute, for Negri, is the translation of this objective understanding of social being into praxis. This praxis, in turn, is essentially revolutionary, since only a revolutionary subjectivity could unmask the ideological nature of liberal democracy and the axiomatics of capitalism. It is here that the greatest difficulties arise in the movement from the objective to the subjective and it is here, perhaps, that it is possible to say that Negri is at his least Spinozist and at his most Hegelian-Marxist. This is particularly visible in Negri's other major work on Spinoza, the *Savage Anomaly*. Hegelianism is present in this work both in terms of form and in terms of content. Its form is an examination of the progress of Spinoza's work that could be characterised as a dialectical progression. Such a progression is premised on Negri reading Spinoza backwards much as Hegel himself would argue that one has to read the *Phenomenology of Spirit* twice, once forward and once backwards, and only in the final backward reading will the truth of absolute knowledge be revealed.²³

Negri reads Spinoza's work as a complete system that has two formations: the first formation is in the first written part of the *Ethics* and the description of substance, and the second formation arises out of the interruption of the writing of the *Ethics* by the *Tractatus-Theologicus Politicus*. It is from this interruption that Negri reads Spinoza backwards. Thus, what he calls the phenomenology of production, or the metaphysics of productive forces, becomes the key for understanding Spinoza's notion of substance and ontology. In this way, the constitutive ontology of Spinoza's

²² Op.Cit. *L'Anomalie sauvage*, p. 335. For a different interpretation of Spinoza to that of Negri's but still from the perspective of joy see: R.Misrahi, *Spinoza. Un itineraire de bonheur par la joie*, (Paris: Grancher Editeur, 1992)

²³ Hegel concludes there must be two readings of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Once from the perspective of Spirit as a phenomenology, as a 'gallery of images' and the other from the perspective of Absolute Knowledge as Science having 'digested', 'recollected' or 'reborn' into its new figure. See: G.W.F.Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp.492-93.

system is identified with the auto-constitution of the world by man.²⁴ Despite the great differences between the statist philosophy of Hegel and the democratic politics of Spinoza as it is understood by Negri, this identification of being with social being seems identical to Hegel's conception of the world as a result of human deeds. Thus, it can be argued that Negri's unification of the political and the ontological from the side of the political as the concept of constitutive ontology, exhibits a kind of Hegelianism in reserve. Does not Negri's notion of absolute democracy bear the same kind of teleological and immanent denouement as absolute knowledge in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*?²⁵ In both cases there is a conjunction of the objective and the subjective produced by the system itself but precisely because the system is the subject objectified. The question remains open as to whether Negri leaves too much out when he identifies Spinoza's idea of being with absolute democracy and whether it is possible to read the political writings ontologically rather than the ontological writings politically. It might be the case that this other way of reading, which still remains within an ontological and political parallelism, will produce a new kind of politics, one that is less amenable to be replaced with a politics of the subject.

²⁴ Ibid. pp. 325 and 336-340.

²⁵ This is also argued by Macherey in *avec Spinoza*, (Paris : puf, 1992), pp. 267 and 270.

II. DELEUZE : a politics of events

In turning to *Spinoza, philosophie pratique* by Deleuze, one notices immediately a change in style and tone. In *Spinoza subversif*, Negri reads Spinoza through a political project and thereby interprets the *Ethics* through Spinoza's political writings. Deleuze, on the contrary, focuses his discussion of Spinoza on the metaphysics of the *Ethics*, and his politics will therefore result from that reading. However, this is not just a matter of difference in style but whether a materialist ontology can support a political praxis in the way that Negri describes it in *Spinoza subversif*. As has already been shown, Negri is still willing to admit, in this book, of a political praxis which still appears to require a subjective correlate in some sense similar to 'class consciousness'. Deleuze's materialism, on the other hand, appears to make such a discussion of a project of politics unfeasible if not irrelevant. One way of underlining this difference is that Negri is still at home in the vocabulary of subjectivity or consciousness, even if it is thought within an ontological structure, whereas the very same ontological structure seems to result in a secondary nature of the subject for Deleuze. The subject is always something produced in a relationship between ideas and bodies on a physical plane, and it is not itself productive. Such differences of interpretation will necessarily lead to a different politics even though both belong to the same ontological and political parallelism.

Talk of the subject for Deleuze belongs to theological explanations of nature that are to be opposed to immanent explanations of nature. Theological explanations always refer to some transcendent form or structure which determines nature from the

outside and, thus, always imply a supplement to what requires explanation. Immanent explanations only invoke what Deleuze calls a plane of immanence or composition. On this plane there are no prior forms, structures or subjects, but only relations of speed and movement between bodies of non-formed matter that produce individualities (singular essences) within the flow of an infinite productive power:

On appelle plan théologique toute organisation qui vient d'en haut, et qui se rapporte à une transcendance, même cachés [...] Un tel plan peut être structural ou génétique, ou les deux à la fois ; il concerne toujours des formes et leurs développements, des sujets et leurs formations. Développement des formes et formations de sujets : c'est le caractère essentiel de cette première forme de plan [...] Un plan de transcendance [...] implique toujours une dimension supplémentaire aux dimensions de ce qui est donné [...] Au contraire, un plan d'immanence ne dispose pas d'une dimension supplémentaire : le processus de composition doit être saisi pour lui-même, à travers ce qu'il donne, dans ce qu'il donne. C'est un plan de composition, non pas d'organisation ni de développement [...] Il n'y a plus de forme, mais seulement des rapports de vitesse entre particules infimes d'une matière non formée. Il n'y a plus de sujet, mais seulement des états affectifs individuants de la force anonymes.²⁶

If we go back to Negri's triple delimitation of the concept of *multitudo* (the physical, the animal and reason), then it might be argued that in the difference between the animal and the rational he inserts an unnecessary subjective teleology. This one becomes the condition for political praxis and, in so doing, he risks the danger of separating the first level from the third and second, thus falling into a theological paralogism.

²⁶ G. Deleuze, *Spinoza, philosophie pratique*, (Paris : minuit, 1981), p. 172. [We call a theological plane every organisation that comes from above, and that relates to a transcendance, even a hidden one... Such a plane may be structural or genetic or both at the same time; it always concerns forms and their development. Development of forms and formation of subjects: this is the essential character of this first form of the plane... A plane of transcendance... always implies a supplementary dimension to the dimensions of what is given... On the contrary, a plane of immanence does not dispose of a supplementary dimension: the process of composition must be grasped in itself through what it gives, in what it gives. It is a plane of composition, not of organisation nor of development... There is no

How then are we to think of reason outside of the concept of the subject? For Deleuze, this question is one of the most important in Spinoza's work. He refers to it as the 'devalorisation of consciousness in relation to thought.'²⁷ This operation, Deleuze points out, takes place in Spinoza's consideration of consciousness as the site of a triple illusion: the illusion of final ends (telos), the illusion of free will, and the theological illusion (God). This triple illusion is a disguised anthropology – the supposition that the universe is to be understood from the perspective of the human species. If consciousness is an illusion what is reality? It is the relation between bodies and ideas. If consciousness is the site of a triple illusion then, the condition of this site is the doubling of an idea that takes itself as the origin of ideas. Consciousness, therefore, does not exhaust thought. What, then, is the relation between bodies and ideas? In Spinoza's vocabulary they are to be interpreted in the language of affects. Affects are to be understood in a double manner: first of all, an affect is an image of a thing, but also, an affect measures the augmentation or diminution of the power to act. The first concept of affect explains the relation between bodies and ideas, whereas the second explains the transition from nature to ethics.²⁸

In relation to the interpretation proposed here, it is the second definition of affects that is most significant. There are two ways in which a body can be affected by another body: by composition or decomposition. In composition the power to act (*potentia*) is increased, whereas in decomposition it is diminished. Translated into a

longer any form but only relations of speed between minute particles of a non-formed matter. There is no longer a subject but only individuating affective states of anonymous forces.]

²⁷ Ibid. pp. 28-33.

²⁸ The distinction between two affects that is being drawn here should not be confused with the two affects as described by Spinoza corresponding to the Latin distinction between *affectio* and *affectus* and which Deleuze translates into *affections images* or ideas and *affects-sentiments*. This latter distinction however, cannot be understood as dualist one between ideas on the one hand and bodies on the other. This is well explained by Deleuze as the reason why this thesis chooses to talk of affects in both cases leaving to the force of explanation the working out of this internal distinction. Ibid. p. 69.

language of ethics decomposition is passivity or sadness, and composition is activity or joy. If one can speak of a politics present, therefore, in *Spinoza, philosophie pratique*, then it is in this relation of affects, between composition and decomposition ; and the distinction between active affects (*agir*) and passive affects (*pâtir*), in which the former are to be celebrated and sought, whereas the latter are to be avoided : 'the more perfection a thing has, the more active and the less passive it is. Conversely, the more active it is, the more perfect it is.'²⁹ However, this ethics cannot be understood in terms of a language of subjectivity or consciousness. Affects exist in relations of bodies on the plane of composition. If one can speak of an ethical imperative here, then one could perhaps only say the following: *seek those encounters that produce joy, avoid those that produce sadness*. Such encounters, are always fortuitous and unpredictable and thus cannot be thought of in terms of a language of projects or programs that still imply the operation of a final cause. These encounters, on the contrary, need to be conceived of as experimentations.³⁰

The themes that have been described here can be deepened by turning to Deleuze's systematic treatment of Spinoza's thought in *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*.³¹ The three branches of Spinoza's philosophy are being, knowing and acting or producing.³² Deleuze renames these three branches with the concepts of being, expression and event. Each concept itself can be divided into three different

²⁹ Op.Cit. *Ethics*, Part V, Pr 40, p. 221. Deleuze's commitment to an ethics of joy follows quite closely his analysis of active and reactive forces in his interpretation of Nietzsche, where morality is replaced not by an ethics of values, but of forces existing in relations of composition and decomposition with one another. See, G.Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, (Paris : puf, 1962), *Nietzsche & Philosophy*, (London : Athlone Press, 1983).

³⁰ The field of experimentations is already more complex than what is simply understood by a 'fortuitous encounter' though. M.Hardt argues that in Spinoza's formation of common notions has to do with the practical constitution of reason. Thus, there is a degree in which a direction can be given to events. The transformation of reality is always possible. This is the meaningfulness of ethics. See: M.Hardt, *An Apprenticeship in Philosophy, Gilles Deleuze*, (London: UCL Press, 1993), pp.100-104.

³¹ G.Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, (Paris : minuit, 1968) and *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, (New York: Zone Books, 1992). [Hereafter SE for the French original and ES for the English translation].

³² Ibid. SE, p.299, ES, p.321.

elements: Being into immanence, univocity and parallelism; Expression into explanation/envelopment, substance-attributes-modes, and constitution/production; finally, Event into bodies, relations, encounters. Let us go through these three concepts in turn.

II.1 Being

immanence

The meaning of being in Spinoza's thought is to be understood as the affirmation of immanence.³³ This conception of being as the affirmation of immanence, differentiates Spinoza from the rationalism of his contemporaries. In Descartes, for example, God is cause of himself, in itself and by himself, but he is the cause of other things not in the same way that he is the cause of himself. This means that Descartes' conception of being is still determined by a Thomist legacy. This legacy can be explained through three notions that are intimately tied together: equivocity, eminence and analogy. Equivocity means that God is cause of himself but in another sense that he is the efficient cause of things. Being is, therefore, not univocal. Eminence means that God contains all of reality but in another way than the reality of things themselves. Analogy means that God as self-cause cannot be reached through things themselves.³⁴ In Descartes' conception of being there is an absolute cleavage between transcendence and immanence or, to put it in the language of

³³ Spinoza's philosophy of immanence : 'cherche les conditions d'une affirmation véritable, dénonçant tous les traitements qui retirent à l'être sa pleine positivité, c'est à dire sa communauté formelle.' *Ibid.* SE, p.152, ES, p.167.

³⁴ *Ibid.* SE, p.148, ES, p.162.

causality, the cause is ontologically distant from the effect. For Spinoza, on the contrary, the cause is immanent to the effect. Substance contains no more reality than the attributes, which are expressions of its essence. If Descartes', and other idealists, conception of being is divided, then Spinoza's philosophy of immanence is a theory of being as one, equal, univocal and common.³⁵

univocity

There is a complete identity between the idea of immanence and the concept of expression since substance expresses itself through the attributes in which are expressed essences and the principle of univocity.³⁶ Or, as Deleuze writes: 'l'immanence expressive ne peut se suffire à elle-même tant qu'elle ne s'accompagne pas d'une pleine conception de l'univocité, d'une pleine affirmation de l'Etre univoque.'³⁷ Immanence requires that there is no difference at the level of being between God and creatures³⁸, or to put it in the language of the *Ethics*, there is no difference of being between substance on the one hand, and, attributes and modes on the other. The immanence of these distinctions necessitates a univocal conception of being. Attributes are not exterior to substance but express the formal infinite essences of substance. Likewise, modes are not exterior to attributes but express the identity of attributes. There is an identity of attributes as they constitute the essence of substance and as they are implied in the essence of creatures (modes):

Le concept spinoziste d'immanence n'a pas d'autre sens : il exprime la double univocité de la cause et des attributs, c'est à dire l'unité de la cause efficiente avec la cause formelle, l'identité de l'attribut tel qu'il constitue l'essence de la substance et tel qu'il est impliqué par les essences de créatures.³⁹

³⁵ Ibid. SE, p.152, ES, p.167.

³⁶ Ibid. SE, p.164, ES, p.180.

³⁷ Ibid. SE, p.162, ES, p.178.

³⁸ Ibid. SE, p.157, ES, p.173.

parallelism

This equality of attributes, between attributes as expressions of substance and attributes as implicated modes, leads to what Deleuze calls an ontological parallelism. This parallelism itself refers back to an epistemological parallelism.⁴⁰ Deleuze refers to the *scholium*, II, 7 of the *Ethics*, where Spinoza describes parallelism as the fact that the one and the same substance is made up of diverse attributes, and the one and the same thing is expressed in all the attributes. No thing exists outside of the modes that express it in each attribute, but the modes, which differ from each other through the attributes that express them, belong to the same order since attributes are expressions of the self-expression of substance. Thus, there is a rigorous ontological parallelism between attributes-substance and attributes-modes. This ontological parallelism has its correlate in epistemological parallelism in the identity of the order of ideas and the order of things. This epistemological correlative has also an ethical meaning. The soul and the body are absolutely parallel. What is a passion in the soul is also a passion in the body, and what is an action in the soul is also an action in the body. This parallelism, as Deleuze argues, dismisses any appeal to 'the eminence of the soul, or moral and spiritual finality, and all transcendence of a God who regulates one series by another.'⁴¹ Thus, already in the concept of being, with its three elements of immanence, univocity and parallelism, one can see a direct movement from a materialist ontology to an ethics. This ethics, it might be argued, is Deleuze's word for politics. How this might be so can only be determined by looking at the next two concepts: expression and event.

³⁹ Ibid. SE, p. 150, ES, p. 165.

⁴⁰ Ibid. SE, p. 112, ES, p. 126.

II.2 Expression

explanation / envelopment

Being's immanence, univocity and parallelism already involve expression.⁴² God's relation to creation is not as a distant cause, as though it was somehow exterior to creation, but as an expressive one. God expresses himself in creation. There is no distance between God's self-expression and the being of creatures, or, in the language of the *Ethics*, substance expresses itself in the infinity of its attributes. This immanence of attributes to substance, and also modes to attributes, means that their relation cannot be thought of in terms of an exterior final causality but as the expressivity of immanent causality. Immanent causality has its own form as expression. This expression, Deleuze argues, has two aspects, that of explaining and of enveloping:

Expliquer, c'est développer. Envelopper, c'est impliquer. Les deux termes pourtant ne sont pas contraires : ils indiquent seulement deux aspects de l'expression. D'une part, l'expression est une explication : développement de ce qui s'exprime, manifestation de l'Un dans le multiple [...] Mais d'autre part, l'expression multiple enveloppe l'Un. L'Un reste enveloppé dans ce qui l'exprime, imprimé dans ce qui le développe, immanent à tout ce qui le manifeste : en ce sens l'expression est un enveloppement.⁴³

Attributes explain substance as its expressions but substance envelops attributes in its self-expression. These two aspects should not be seen as opposites but

⁴¹ Ibid. SE, p.235, ES, p.256.

⁴² Ibid. SE, p. 159, ES, p.176.

⁴³ Ibid. SE, p.12, ES, p.16.

as belonging to the one and same expressivity, as the presence of the One in the multiple and the multiple in the One. These two aspects can be understood through the absolute horizontality of the relations between substance and attributes and attributes and modes: 'Or, chez Spinoza la Nature comprend tout, contient tout, en même temps qu'elle est expliquée et impliquée par chaque chose. Les attributs enveloppent et expliquent l'attribut dont ils dépendent, mais l'attribut contient toutes les essences de modes correspondantes.'⁴⁴

This absolute horizontality within being can be differentiated from the two traditions of emanation and imitation, both of which depict God, or substance, as a transcendent cause. In the former, attributes and modes emanate from God, or substance, but only through a hierarchized order of being, such that God or substance is viewed as a distant cause. In the latter, being, as in Plato, is divided into two separate substances in which one is the imitation of the other. In terms of the theory of emanation expression is interpreted through the model of the seed, whereas in the theory of imitation expression is interpreted in the image of the mirror.⁴⁵ Both images still imply some transcendence.⁴⁶ If one were to characterise Spinoza within the two paradigms of the theological position, then one might say that the theory of expression is emanation without distance or transcendence. There is no distance or transcendence between what expresses itself in an expression and what is expressed in that expression.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ibid. SE, p.13, ES, p.17.

⁴⁵ Ibid. SE, p.300, ES, p.322.

⁴⁶ Ibid. SE, p.163, ES, p.180.

⁴⁷ The absence of distance in the concept of expression which already intervened in the theological tradition (of emanation and creationism) brings within it its own self-destruction for, as Deleuze likes saying: 'Il apporte avec lui le "danger" proprement philosophique: le panthéisme ou l'immanence -

substance – attributes – modes

Deleuze reconfigures the relation between self-expression, expression and expressed in the language of substance, attributes and modes of the *Ethics*. Deleuze explains their expressivity as follows: attributes express infinite essence that expresses the essence of substance, which in turn envelops the attribute. Every expression expresses the one and same substance that they explain, but the one and the same substance envelops every expression. This is why there is no contradiction in Spinoza's system between the unity of substance and the diversity of its attributes.⁴⁸ It is necessary, however, Deleuze argues, to look at expressivity in greater detail for there are two levels of expression in the relations between substance-attributes and attributes-modes. The first level of expression is constitutional: substance expresses itself in attributes (expression) and each attribute expresses an essence (the expressed). The second level of expression is production: each attribute expresses itself in a mode (expression) and each mode expresses a modification (expressed).⁴⁹

Just as substance and attributes express themselves so the modes, which are produced by substance, express themselves too. Attributes express themselves through modes, where modes express themselves in relations and powers. What is expressed in relations are parts and the bodies that are composed of them, and what is expressed in power are affections: 'Les attributs s'expliquent dans les modes existants ; les essences de modes, elle-même contenues dans les attributs, s'expliquent

immanence de l'expression dans ce qui s'exprime, et de l'exprimé dans l'expression.' Ibid. SE, p.300, ES, p.322.

⁴⁸ Ibid. SE, p.9, ES, p.13.

dans des rapports ou des pouvoirs ; ces rapports sont effectués par des parties, ces pouvoirs par des affections qui les expliquent à leur tour.⁵⁰ Each mode is measured by the quantity of reality of existence that it expresses and its power to be affected.⁵¹ Just as in the concept of being, there is in the concept of expression an ethical signification. The expressivity of the modes is their power to act. The power to act is the expression both of our existence and our ability to be affected. The aim of ethics is becoming active. It is superstition and ignorance that separate men from their power to act.⁵²

II.3 Event

bodies

However, this ethical significance of both being and expression only becomes concrete in the analysis of the concept of event. An event, meeting or encounter can be understood only through modes. For our understanding there are only two types of mode, a body or an idea, since the only infinite attributes available to us are extension and thought. Modes also follow the law of ontological parallelism. Thus, there is no dualism between the body and the soul. To every body corresponds an idea and to every idea corresponds a body. Every mode, whether a body or an idea, is made out of parts. To exist is to be made up of a great number of parts.⁵³ These parts themselves

⁴⁹ Ibid. SE, p.10, ES, p.14. Deleuze also explains these two levels of expression, constitution and production in SE, pp.21 and 35, ES, pp.27 and 43.

⁵⁰ Ibid. SE, p.213, ES, p.233.

⁵¹ Ibid. SE, p.84, ES, p.95.

⁵² Ibid. SE, p.206, ES, p.226.

⁵³ 'Alors, nous pouvons dire en quoi consiste l'existence du mode : *exister, c'est avoir actuellement un très grand nombre de parties (plurimae).*' Ibid. SE, p.183, ES, p.201.

are to be understood in terms of an infinite quantity. It is this infinite quantity which is divisible into a great number of parts. This infinite quantity is an extensive quantity. Thus, the parts act on one another extrinsically. It is these relations between extensive parts that compose a body. This body itself only comes to pass into existence, and continues to exist, through *puissance*. This *puissance* is to be understood as an intensive quantity. The universe as a whole is therefore to be considered as infinitely in movement where ensembles of parts form bodies.⁵⁴

relations

A body is to be understood through different orders: the order of essence, the order of relations, and the order of parts. The order of essences is determined by degrees of power (*puissance*). In this order there is a total affinity. Each essence is in agreement with all the others. This is to do with the fact that each essence is included in the production of every other essence. This order is eternal. The order of relations is the order of composition that follows laws. These eternal conditions determine the manner in which modes, singular essences, come to be. All relations are infinite but not the meeting of one relation to another.⁵⁵ This is why we need to speak of a third order, of a meeting, event or encounter. Parts are subsumed under relations of composition, and these relations of composition are infinite, but one relation of parts does not necessarily agree with another relation of parts. Thus, we can speak of two different events: one of composition and the other of decomposition.⁵⁶ Decomposition comes about because two existing bodies meet one another in an order where their relations do not compose, even though each specific relation composes the parts into

⁵⁴ 'Toutes ensemble et sous tous leurs rapports, elles forment un univers infiniment changeant, correspondant à la toute-puissance de Dieu.' Ibid. SE, p.187, ES, p.205.

⁵⁵ Ibid. SE, pp.216-17, ES, p.237.

⁵⁶ Ibid. SE, p.215, ES, p.236.

each existing body. Thus, to use Spinoza's example, there is an encounter between poison and blood, which is one of decomposition.⁵⁷

encounters

If the order of essences and the order of relations are infinite and eternal then the order of parts is always local and temporary. Every meeting is always fortuitous, some composing others decomposing. Meetings under the sway of composition are always those that are good and useful to me. Good and useful means here, that they produce in me an emotion or affection that is in affinity with my nature. This emotion or affection Spinoza calls joy.⁵⁸ Meetings of the second kind, in which my body is in a relation that does not compose with mine and therefore has no affinity with my nature, are, on the contrary, bad or useless. They produce in me an emotion or affection that is contrary to my nature. This affection is the emotion of sadness.⁵⁹

II.4 An ethics of events

Spinoza's ethics is the ethics of the event, which is the meeting of bodies in relations of composition or decomposition. The aim of this ethics is to increase those events that compose and decrease those events that decompose. Those events that compose one existing body to others increase joy and thereby augment the power to act. Those events that decompose increase sadness and thereby diminish the power to

⁵⁷ Ibid. SE, p.216, ES, p.237.

⁵⁸ Ibid. SE, p.218, ES, p.239.

act. But, in each case, the event is always something local and fortuitous since every meeting belongs to the order of parts and not to the orders of essences or relations. Translated into a language of ethics this means that there is no Good or Evil as such. This would be the language of morality. Spinoza's critique of morality or theology is expressed in this replacement of a moral language and logic by his ontological understanding of events as being nothing more than compositions and decompositions. This, however, must not be interpreted as a total absence of references or values, as if Spinoza was making us enter into absolute relativism leaving us unable to draw distinctions of any kind between one event and another. The whole point of Spinoza's ethics, with his emphasis on the distinction between composition and decomposition, is to make us able to draw even further distinctions.⁶⁰ Not only for their intellectual interest, even less as a way to punish ourselves in reprobation for our mistakes in the hope to purge ourselves, but in order to augment our power to act. Deleuze relates this aspect of Spinoza's ethics to Nietzsche's own project in his critique of morality:

Comme Nietzsche le dira, « *Par-delà le Bien et le Mal*, cela du moins ne veut pas dire *par-delà le bon et le mauvais*⁶¹ » Il y a des augmentations de la puissance d'agir, des diminutions de la puissance d'agir. La distinction du bon et du mauvais servira de principe pour une véritable différence éthique, qui doit se substituer à la fausse opposition morale.⁶²

From this analysis of Deleuze's *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, how can one differentiate Deleuze's and Negri's Spinoza? They both show an ontological and political parallelism through the univocal definition of being understood in terms of the affirmation of immanence. Where they differ is that Negri inserts the political

⁵⁹ Ibid. SE. p.220, ES, p.241.

⁶⁰ For Deleuze this is so much the case that he even goes to characterise spinozism as 'une extraordinaire théorie des distinctions.' Ibid. SE. p.309, ES, p.332.

⁶¹ Nietzsche. *Généalogie de la morale*, I, 17.

through a political subject in terms of a democratic project, whereas if there is a politics in Deleuze's interpretation of Spinoza, then, it is in a meeting between bodies and not through a political program. Deleuze's politics is an ethics and an ethics of the contingent and the fortuitous, even though this contingency has its place only within an absolute necessity. Negri retains a concept of praxis and thus requires a subjective correlate to substance (the *multitudo*), whereas Deleuze's politics is not the politics of the subject but of the event. Although in his last work Negri makes a shift from his previous positions, as analysed in this chapter, into a politics of the event (a term used solely in reference to Deleuze in the context of this thesis), it is nevertheless still true to say that his politics stresses the importance of the political subject insofar as it invests itself in the construction of a common *telos*.⁶² The question remains as to whether a politics of events makes impossible any idea of engagement whatsoever, or whether we need to rethink the problem of engagement outside any teleology.

⁶² Op.Cit. SE, p.233, ES, p.254.

⁶³ A.Negri. *Kairòs, Alma Venus, Multitudo*, (Roma : manifestolibri, 2000). See last chapter : 'Multitudo, Prolegomini della decisione', but especially p. 171.

Part II

Deleuze & Guattari's
Capitalisme et schizophrénie

Chapter III

the Ontology of “desiring machines” and the Politics of “schizoanalysis”

(L'Anti-Œdipe)

In the previous chapter, Deleuze's *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* was broken down into three main elements: being, expression and ethics. In this chapter, we want to argue explicitly that this threefold distinction can be used to understand and illuminate the complexity of *L'Anti-Oedipe*. In one sense, this is a question of style, *L'Anti-Oedipe* is the rejection of a certain academic style, for the sake of a more joyful and expressive style with numerous digressions, hesitations and connections between different orders of knowledge, science, art and philosophy.¹ Beneath this anarchy, however, there is a rigorous analytical basis and it is this which can be made explicit through reference to Deleuze's work on Spinoza. Again, we need to be

¹ “J’essayais dans mes livres précédents de décrire un certain exercice de la pensée: mais le décrire, ce n’était pas encore exercer la pensée de cette façon-là. (De même, crier “vive le multiple”, ce n’est pas encore le faire, il faut faire le multiple. Et il ne suffit pas non plus de dire : “à bas les genres”, il faut écrire effectivement de telle façon qu’il n’y ait plus de “genres”, etc.). G. Deleuze and C. Parnet, *dialoges*, (Paris: Paris, 1977), p.23. [In my previous books I tried to describe a certain exercise of thought; but describing still was not doing it that way. (The same as shouting “hurray the multiple”, still does not make it, the multiple must be made. And equally it is not enough to say: “down with genders”, one must effectively write such that there are no “genders”, etc.)].

careful of making easy comparisons and oppositions, for indeed, as Deleuze says, Spinoza was already an escape route for institutionalised philosophy:

Et Spinoza, c'est facile de lui donner même la plus grande place dans la suite du cartesianisme ; seulement il déborde cette place de tous les côtés, il n'y a pas de mort vivant qui soulève aussi fort sa tombe, et dise aussi bien : je ne suis pas des vôtres. C'est sur Spinoza que j'ai travaillé le plus sérieusement d'après les normes de l'histoire de la philosophie, mais c'est lui qui m'a fait le plus l'effet d'un courant d'air qui vous pousse dans le dos chaque fois que vous le lisez, d'un balai de sorcière qu'il vous fait enfourcher. Spinoza, on n'a même pas commencé à le comprendre, et moi pas plus que les autres.²

Let us then briefly apply the schema we had obtained from *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* to *L'Anti-Oedipe* so as to give a preliminary overview of the path that we will be taking through this chapter. We have three orders: being, expression and ethics. In *L'Anti-Oedipe*, being concords with the analysis of desire, expression with the analysis of production and ethics with schizoanalysis. From this, we can see that the chapter will be divided into three sections: desire, production and schizoanalysis. As with the previous chapters of this thesis, our aim is to show that the ontological analysis, in this case the analysis of desire, leads immanently and necessarily to a certain politics. Indeed, one might argue that it is possible to read *L'Anti-Oedipe* backwards. Deleuze and Guattari's militancy is expounded in the last chapter of *L'Anti-Oedipe* and is its *ethical* import. It requires, however, an

² Ibid. p. 22. [And Spinoza, it is even easy to give him the biggest place in the follow up from cartesianism; only he overflows this space on all sides, there is no living dead who lifts his tombstone harder than him, and who says louder than him: I am not one of yours. It is on Spinoza that I have worked most seriously according to the norms of the history of philosophy, but it is him who gave the strongest effect of a blow of fresh air that pushes from behind every time you read him, of a broom he makes you mount. We have not even begun understanding Spinoza, and I not more than anybody else.]

ontological foundation that is given in the first chapter of the book, and an epistemological critique of a counter position given in the second chapter, and finally a historical expression deployed in the third chapter.

I. ONTOLOGY : *"desiring production"*

What is truly decisive in Spinoza's interpretation of being, and this marks his divergence from Descartes, is his interpretation of it as univocal and immanent. Only from this position can one interpret Spinoza's concept of God and also understand why his philosophy engendered such virulent opposition, why he was always classified as an atheist, even though his first and last word was God, and as an enemy of the State. For, God is usually the name for an equivocal and transcendent interpretation of being, as is the case for example in the work of Aquinas. God is interpreted as the ground of all beings, whilst being utterly separate from those beings, and, in the doctrine of theodicy, all reality is oriented by the final cause (telos) which is God, infinite perfection. For Spinoza, on the contrary, there is no division within being. God does not signify something transcendent which only has a meaning in opposition to something immanent that it determines and rules, rather God is the meaning of all that is, that is to say, the real. And the real is understood as infinite productive being, in which the unitary substance expresses itself in an infinity of attributes, which in turn express themselves in a plurality of modes.

It might appear that this language of God is far away from the revolutionary discourse of *L'Anti-Oedipe*.³ First impressions, are deceptive. Deleuze and Guattari

³ G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *L'Anti-Oedipe*, Vol.1 of *Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, (Paris: Minuit, 1972-73). [Hereafter: *AO*]. The English translation: *Anti-Oedipus*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1984). [Hereafter: *AOb*].

are not embarrassed by this word as we might be however, and give a Spinozist reply to the question whether they believe in God or not as:

A qui demande : croyez vous en dieu ? Nous devons répondre d'une manière strictement kantienne ou schreberienne: bien sûr, mais seulement comme au maître du syllogisme disjonctif , comme au principe *a priori* de ce syllogisme (Dieu défini l'*Ommitudo realitatis* dont toutes les réalités dérivées sortent par division).⁴

The *Ommitudo realitatis* in *Anti-Oedipus* is the real as it is constituted within desiring production. Again, as is the case in Spinoza, we should not see this relation between the real and desiring production as an opposition of two distinct orders, as though the real were the immanent order and desiring production the transcendent order. Rather, the real is desiring production and desiring production is the real. There is no division within reality. To put another way, division is a production of desire itself within a certain conjunction of forces and thus just as real as anything else. Lack does not signify an absence within being, as is the case in Aristotle and the medieval philosophy that followed it and which strangely reappears in the work of semioticians such as Lacan. Rather, lack is a part of being itself where production produces anti-production: "Le manque est aménagé, organisé dans la production sociale. Il est contre-produit par l'instance d'anti-production qui se rabat sur les forces productives et se les approprié."⁵

⁴ Ibid. *AO*, p. 19, *AOB*, p. 13.

⁵ Ibid. *AO*, p. 35, *AOB*, p. 28.

What do Deleuze and Guattari mean by desire as machinic production? First of all, they are quite clear that the term "machine" or "machinic" are not metaphors: "Partout ce sont des machines, pas du tout métaphoriquement."⁶ We might think these words metaphorical, because we think of technical machines first of all, but technical machines are secondary. They are the products of a process that is the conjunction of desire and the socius, which is primarily *machinic*. Societies produce machines from the wheel to the computer, but societies themselves are already the production of a machinic unconscious that is the *Omnitudo realitatis*. It is for this reason that we cannot understand machinic desire through technical machines, for we would be taking what is in fact a secondary and dependent term for what is primary: 'Les machines techniques ne sont pas une catégorie économique, et renvoient toujours à un socius ou machine sociale qui ne se confond pas avec elles, et qui conditionne cette reproduction.'⁷

How then are we to understand machinic desire on its own terms? Deleuze and Guattari explain how the unconscious machine, which is at work everywhere, is made up of two functions. One is the flow or the flux and the other is the cut or break. The flow or flux is the energy of desire or the libido, and the cut or break is the partial object which interrupts this flow. As Deleuze and Guattari write in the first sentences of *AO* there is an organ-machine and a source machine: 'Une machine-organe est branchée sur une machine source: l'une émet un flux, que l'autre coupe.

⁶ Ibid. *AO*, p.7, *AOh*, p.2.

⁷ Ibid. *AO*, p.39, *AOh*, p.32.

Le sein est une machine qui produit du lait, et la bouche, une machine couplée sur celle-là.⁸

The Three Syntheses of the Unconscious

There are, however, three ways in which the relation between the cut and the flow is produced. These three possible relations are: the cut or break as detachment (*coupures-détachments*), the cut or break as a slicing off (*coupures-prélevements*), and finally, a remainder or "residue" (*coupure reste*). These relations refer to the coding of desire. In detachments, connections between different characters which form a momentary combination "la moustache de papa, le bras levé de maman, un ruban, une petite fille, un flic, un soulier"⁹, take place within the flux. These chains do not signify anything, rather they reproduce desire: "Produire du désir, telle est la seule vocation du signe, dans tous les sens où ça se machine".¹⁰ We must distinguish this relation or function rigorously from that of a cut or break, which is a "slicing off". The latter have to do with the relations between fluxes and partial objects which in no way can be separated of, or detached from the flux itself. We should not, however let this distinction at the level of concepts become oppositional at the level of the real. Every relation between a flux and a partial object or objects includes an assemblage of heterogeneous elements, which can detach from the flow and, likewise, every detachment also includes a relation between a flux and its partial object:

⁸ Ibid. *AO*, p.7, *AOB*, p.1.

⁹ Ibid. *AO*, p.47, *AOB*, p.39.

Le prélèvement de flux implique des détachement de chaîne; et les objets partiels de la production supposent les stocks ou les briques d'enregistrement, dans la coexistence et l'interaction de toutes les synthèses.¹¹

The third break, the residual break (*coupure-reste*), is that in which the subject is produced as a remainder alongside machinic production. There is, first of all, the unconscious and the machinic production that is proper to it. It is not the subject whom desires, rather it is the unconscious and the unconscious cannot in any way be understood in terms of a metaphysics of subjectivity. It is not a will who has any origin, source or centre. First of all, there are the immanent processes of the unconscious itself with its breaks and flows, and it is in relation to these that the subject is produced. The subject is not the originator of the process, rather it is the residue of the process. Indeed, such a position is almost identical to Spinoza's interpretation of the body where there are relations between bodies and parts of bodies, to begin with, and it is from these that a subject is produced as a state of intensive quantities or affects. The language of *AO* is unmistakably spinozist on this point:

Aussi consomme t'il les états par lesquels il passe, et naît-il de ces états, toujours conclu de ces états comme une part fait de parties, dont chacune remplit en un moment le corps sans organes.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid. *AO*, p.48, *AOB*, p.40.

¹² Ibid. *AO*, p.49, *AOB*, p.41. We shall return to this question of the subject when we analyse the relation between production and anti-production later in this section.

We would be making a fundamental error if we thought that these functions or relations between flows and breaks were somehow above desiring production itself. We need, on the contrary, to follow the rigorous immanentism of *AO*. The three relations of detachment, slicing off and residue are themselves merely different aspects of the three syntheses of the unconscious, the connective, the disjunctive and the conjunctive which themselves are merely another way of naming the three types of production immanent to the unconscious: production, recording and consumption, that is to say, desire itself.

I.1 The Connective Synthesis

The connective synthesis of the unconscious is the manner in which desiring machines are constituted through a "binary" law. No machine exists by itself. Rather there is always a relation between a machine that produces flows and another machine that interrupts this flow. Production, Deleuze and Guattari argue, is inherently connective: "and", "and then..." ("et", "et puis..."). Desire is always connecting partial objects with flows, which themselves are always breaking and broken up in return. Again, one must be careful of not translating the relation between partial objects and flows as though they were two opposed orders. Partial objects produce flows, which in turn are interrupted by other partial objects and so on. This connective synthesis between partial objects and flows draws us to the second form of the connective synthesis. Within production there is no opposition between the product and the producer, as is the case in the traditional Aristotelian description of

production where the product is merely the end term of production.¹³ Rather, a product itself is producing: "Il n'y a pas lieu de distinguer ici le produire et son produit. Du moins l'objet produit emporte-t-il son *ici* dans un nouveau produire."¹⁴ This means that production is the production of production. But what of its opposite? The question that haunts *AO* is that if the real is desire, why is it that when we look out of our window all we see is desire regulated and crushed? The answer must be that there is anti-production. If we are to remain within the rigorous immanentism of *AO*, its ontological debt to Spinoza, then this anti-production cannot be outside of production. Otherwise there would be something other than the real and we would be back into a dualist metaphysics. Anti-production, therefore must be a product of production which is itself productive and this is the third form of the connective synthesis.

Anti-production (the Body without Organs)

One must postulate in order to explain desire desiring its own repression an immobility within production itself. This immobility Deleuze and Guattari describe as the Body without Organs which they explain using the Freudian concept of primary repression.¹⁵ This primary repression is the source of all secondary repression, which

¹³ In Aristotle's analysis, production is seen as the absolute difference between product and producer but reverses its sense. It is the product that gives to it its necessity. This reversal bears away with the utter separation of them. This has implications at the level of the production of ideas. See P. Aubenque, *Le problème de l'être chez Aristote*, (Paris: puf, 1997), p.76.

¹⁴ Op. Cit. *AO*, p.13, *AOB*, p.7.

¹⁵ Primary repression is described by Freud in his *Metapsychology* as the first time of the operation of repression. It contributes to the formation of a certain number of unconscious representations or 'primary repressions'. The unconscious centres thus constituted, collaborate in the subsequent repression proper through the attraction they exercise over the contents that are to be repressed together

is so manifest within, to use Foucault's phrase from the preface to the English edition of *AO*, our "every day lives":

The book often leads one to believe it is all fun and games, when something essential is taking place, something of extreme seriousness: the tracking down of all varieties of fascism, from the enormous ones that surround and crush us to the petty ones that constitute the tyrannical bitterness of our everyday lives".¹⁶

I.2 The Disjunctive Synthesis

This production of anti-production within the connective synthesis of the unconscious leads us inexorably to the second form of synthesis, the disjunctive synthesis. This second synthesis explains the relation between desiring machines and the Body without Organs. It is first of all described by Deleuze and Guattari from the side of the body without organs in terms of repulsion. In this repulsion the body without organs invests a counter vector within production itself, a paranoiac machine which falls back (*se rabat sur*) upon all the productive forces inscribing them upon its own surface. This inscription is the effect of the disjunctive synthesis:

Mais l'essentiel est l'établissement d'une surface enchantée d'inscription ou d'enregistrement qui s'attribue toutes les forces de production, et qui agit comme quasi-cause en leur communiquant le mouvement apparent (le fétiche).¹⁷

If in the connective synthesis the flows and partial objects are aligned along a series of "and", "and then" then in the disjunctive synthesis they are *distributed* along

with the repulsion coming from the superior instances. Laplanche et Pontalis, *Vocabulaire de la psychanalyse*, (Paris: puf, 1994), pp.396-97.

¹⁶ This Preface exists only in the English translation. Op. Cit. *AOb*, p.xiv.

¹⁷ Op.Cit. *AO*, p.18, *AOb*, 11.

an axis of "either...or" ("soit...soit"). The latter is constituted always in relation to a third term, which acts as the focal point of this axis. This third term is the Body without Organs. One must be careful here, however, of not translating the disjunctive synthesis from the beginning into a triangulation. In the first moment, the Body without Organs is immanent to desire, it is only falsely represented in a second moment as being exterior to desire as though it were a transcendent force. This, if you like, is the false understanding of the divine that becomes objectified outside the very process of which it is a product.

the socius

The Body without Organs is not the origin of production, nor its meaning, rather it is the product. This particular kind of productivity is designated through a disjunctive synthesis. These two kinds of disjunction, the one inclusive and the real expression of desiring production, and the exclusive or false representation of desiring production, will become fundamental for understanding the relation between desire, on the one hand, and the social, on the other. What would be a grave error indeed is to impose an exclusive disjunction itself between desire and the socius. Then, in this opposition the social would be objectified as the origin of desire whereas in reality the social is the anti-production of productive desire. This means, of course, in terms of political praxis, that desire always overflows the social. This has only become more exaggerated in capitalist societies, where the social form itself has become stripped of its exteriority through the process of decoding which is at its very heart. What needs to be emphasised above all is that the true origin of society is the Body without Organs. Societies only code desire because of the primary relation between production and anti-production which is immanent to desire itself. One can add that if

production did not produce anti-production there would be no societies, no "races, cultures and gods".¹⁸

the subject

If the connective synthesis produces the Body without Organs, then the Body without Organs in turn produces the subject. This subject, however, is not a classical subject of philosophy, which mistakenly believes that it is the origin of the real, and so believes itself to be outside the real as its constituting element.¹⁹ Rather, the subject is the product of the collision between production and anti-production, which is immanent to production itself. If in the philosophy of subjectivity the subject is represented as thought, the famous cartesian "I think", then the subject of desire is the affective subject. But the affective subject should not be understood as though it were the thinking subject represented as a different kind; that is to say, as a feeling *thing* or *process* at the centre of the real, organising and distributing it. This would precisely be both to confuse the subject with the body without organs and also to falsely represent the body without organs as a transcendent signifier. Rather, the affective subject is feeling as a state, which is the product of the relation between the disjunctive and the connective syntheses. This is why the conjunctive synthesis, which is the explanation of the subject as a residue rather than as an origin, takes the form of "so its..." ("*c'est donc...*")²⁰ In other words, subjectivity always has the

¹⁸ Ibid. *AO*, p.101, *AOb*, p.85.

¹⁹ As is the case in Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. See: I.Kant, 'the Transcendental Deduction', *The Critique of Pure Reason*, (London: MacMillan Press, 1993), pp.120-169. For a discussion of the subject in Kant and the legislative role of the Understanding see: G.Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

²⁰ Op. Cit, *AO*, p.23, *AOb*, p.16.

grammatical form of the accusative and not the nominative. "It's me", rather than "I am".

I.3 The Conjunctive Synthesis

Deleuze and Guattari explain this conjunctive synthesis through the example of the case of Nietzsche. What the connective synthesis produces, since every product, to follow the law of unconscious production, is productive, is intensive states. It is quite wrong, therefore, to think that one has, first of all, an individual called Nietzsche who then has feelings which are in turn translated into ideas. Rather, first of all there are feelings that are produced in a multitude of disjunctions on the surface of the Body without Organs. It is these disjunctions that, in their fulguration, produce intensive states through which the subject passes. No longer do we have the stable subject of classical subjectivist philosophy, but the nomadic subject of the machinic unconscious, which is nothing more than the degrees of intensity in relation to zero intensity of the Body without Organs. "It's me" is nothing more than the momentary illuminations of the disjunctive points as they slide and skid on the smooth surface of the Body without Organs. Indeed, the classical subject, which believes itself to be the origin of everything and the measure of reality, is itself nothing more than the product of a given *socius*, whose own origin is to be found in the eternal becoming of desiring production. As we have argued earlier in this section, this understanding of the subject is almost identical with Spinoza's notion of affects in the *Ethics*. In both cases it is a matter of interpreting the subject not as the origin of affection or the unconscious but as its product or remainder. Affects or the

unconscious must first of all be understood as subjectless. The subject only comes as a second moment, even though it misrecognises itself as being the first.

II. CRITIQUE : *"social production"*

If the first part of *AO* gives an ontology of desire linking it directly to the social field, then the second and third parts of this book are the application of this concept to a philosophical problematic. The second part takes the form, if one might use such a traditional word in this context, of an epistemological critique. And just as the first part of *AO* exists under the name of Spinoza, as we have argued, then this second part (chapters two and three) is a critique undertaken within the field of an obviously Kantian heritage. The second part of the philosophical problematic is the application of substantive ontology and epistemological critique to the historical formations of the relation between desiring production and social production. What is criticised in the first part of the philosophical problematic is in fact a historical event. The philosophical problem itself is a historical problem. The Oedipal complex, which represents for Deleuze and Guattari the philosophical problem *par excellence*, results from a particular contingent and historical configuration of desiring production and social production.

II.1 Psychoanalysis

We have seen from the previous section that the real is understood by Deleuze and Guattari as unconscious machinic production and that this productivity is organised by three immanent forms of synthesis: connective, disjunctive and conjunctive. The first part of *AO* gives us the proper description of these syntheses, but we already know there must be a misapplication of these syntheses, otherwise it

would be impossible to describe how desire desires its own repression. The second part of *AO* gives us the form of the illegitimate uses of the unconscious syntheses, whereas the third part gives the historical conditions for this misapplication. Freud did not invent the unconscious, the unconscious was already there as desiring production. Likewise, Freud did not invent the illegitimate uses of the syntheses of the unconscious, they already existed at the level of social production in its organisation and coding of desiring production. Freud's texts are merely the most concentrated description of the social repression of the unconscious, even though Freud himself thought he had discovered the truth about the unconscious.

Oedipus complex

For Deleuze and Guattari, Freud destroyed his discovery of the unconscious by constraining and interpreting the libido through the Oedipus complex.²¹ Rather than the unconscious being a place of productivity and desire, it becomes a theatre of myths and symbols:

La production n'est plus que la production de phantasme, production d'expression. L'inconscient cesse d'être ce qu'il est, une usine, un atelier, pour devenir un théâtre, scène et mise en scène. Et pas même un théâtre d'avant-garde, comme il y en avait au temps de Freud (Wedekind), mais le théâtre classique, l'ordre classique de la représentation. Le psychanalyste devient metteur en scène pour un théâtre privé – au lieu d'être l'ingénieur ou le mécanicien qui monte des

²¹ The Oedipus Complex is defined by Freud as the set of organised desires of love and hostility that the child feels for his parents. In its positive form, the complex presents itself as in the myth of Oedipus King. As the desire for the death of his rival of the same sex and sexual desire for the opposite sex. In its negative form, it presents itself as love for the parent of the same sex and hate and jealousy for the parent of the opposite sex. These two forms are found to different degrees in the complete form of the Oedipus complex. Op. Cit. *Vocabulaire de la psychanalyse*, pp.79-84.

unités de production, qui se bat avec des agents collectifs de production et d'anti-production.²²

A transcendental critique, and here Deleuze and Guattari operate through a form in no way different to that of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is a critique of the transcendent misuse of immanent concepts. Thus, to use one example, Kant criticises the misuse of the immanent category of causality, which in the cosmological argument becomes a transcendent category in the notion of absolute totality, thus effectuating a dialectical misuse of the hypothetical syllogism.²³ But in what way can the Oedipus complex be said to operate a transcendent misuse of an immanent principle? Just as in the cosmological misuse of reason an immanent category was taken out of the area of its proper application and predicated to a subject which cannot possibly be an object of experience, so is the Oedipus complex detached from the immanent flow of desiring production, and is thus said to determine it from the outside. Of course, this similarity is only formal. We are not saying that Deleuze and Guattari, and Kant are involved in the same project. Transcendental materialism and transcendental idealism are quite different positions.²⁴ Transcendental idealism itself is based upon a transcendent misuse of the syntheses of the unconscious where the

²² Ibid. *AO*, p.64, *AOb*, p.55.

²³ I. Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason*. (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1929), A406, B 433.

²⁴ The difference between these two 'transcendental' systems has to do with the distance that separates materialism from idealism. Ian MacKenzie has an interesting approach to this question which can be resumed as follows. In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari dispute that philosophy could ever be contemplation, reflection or communication. Each of these terms represents a version of idealism. Thus, we could talk of 'objective idealism' in the case of Plato who defines philosophy in terms of contemplation. Then, we might talk of a 'subjective idealism' for Descartes who basis philosophy in reflection. Finally, we could talk of 'intersubjective idealism' or philosophy as communication, which is phenomenology, especially Husserl's. Instead, they oppose to all idealisms a constructionist definition of philosophy. For Deleuze and Guattari all activities already involve contemplation, reflection and communication. These cannot be the sole privilege of philosophy nor can they serve as definition. All thought is creative. The specificity with regards to other activities of thought has to do

subject produced by the conjunctive synthesis is taken to be the origin of all production and, indeed, is seen to be exterior to all production. Thus, even though transcendental materialism and transcendental idealism are formally the same, transcendental materialism is in fact the *critique* of transcendental idealism; critique once more again.

the Phallus

The transcendent meaning of the Oedipus complex is explained through the development of the phallus in Freud's interpretation of sexuality. In sexuality we have two series, two flows of desire which can intermingle and cross over. But for Freud the very problem is how the sexes become either masculine or feminine. This bipartition can only be explained by a third term, which stands outside the double series and cuts it into two, then opposing one to the other. This third term is the Phallus.²⁵ Freud identifies this third term, the Phallus, as the universal component of the structure of the unconscious, which he then undertakes to expound in his infamous theory of castration. What must be underlined in the theory of castration is the character of exteriority and transcendence the Phallus has. It does not belong to the libido or desiring production, rather it determines and constitutes the libido from the outside. Because the Phallus is outside desire it can only be experienced as a lack in a similar way to the One of negative theology which is by definition unreachabeable but which determines me in every way:

with what it creates: concepts. 'Creativity as Criticism. The philosophical constructivism of Deleuze and Guattari.' I.MacKenzie in *Radical Philosophy* 86 (November/December 1997).

Ce quelque chose de commun, de transcendent et d'absent, on le nommera phallus ou loi, pour désigner "le" signifiant qui distribue dans l'ensemble de la chaîne les effets de signification et introduit les exclusions (d'où les interprétations œdipianisantes du lacanisme). Or c'est lui qui agit comme cause formelle de la triangulation, c'est-à-dire qui rend possible la forme du triangle et sa reproduction : aussi Œdipe a-t-il pour formule $3 + 1$, le Un du phallus transcendant sans lequel les termes considérés ne formeraient pas un triangle.²⁶

II.2 The Three Illegitimate Uses of the Syntheses

This transcendent signification of the Phallus, and thus the operation of the oedipal complex, has its source in the three illegitimate uses of the syntheses of the unconscious. We can understand the misuse of the syntheses as simply being the *opposite* of what we have learnt about them in the first part of *AO*. Thus, if the correct interpretation of the connective synthesis is that of the immanent relation between an organ-machine and an energy source machine, then this one is replaced by a misuse of the connective synthesis. In the misuse of this synthesis desire is interpreted as a fixed subject, and partial objects are interpreted as complete objects defined as global persons, such as the father and the mother. In a second place the disjunctive synthesis, which is the *inclusive* distribution of desiring production on the Body without Organs, is replaced by an *exclusive* disjunction. This exclusive use of the synthesis operates in the twofold opposition of a transcendent term to the two terms it defines, on the one hand, and, between the two terms themselves, on the other - the figure of the triangle. Finally, there is the misuse of the conjunctive synthesis,

²⁵ The Phallus underlines the symbolic function that the penis fulfils in the intra- and intersubjective dialectics. Thus, the penis is the term reserved to designate the organ in its anatomical reality. Op. Cit. *Vocabulaire de la psychanalyse*, pp.311-13.

²⁶ Op. Cit. *AO*, p.86, *AOb*, p. 73.

where the nomadic and polyvocal subject is replaced by the fixed and bi-univocal subject.

Each of these illegitimate uses of the syntheses of the unconscious, again reproducing the language of Kant's critique, has their corresponding parallogism. The parallogism of the misuse of the connective synthesis is the *detachment* of a complete object from the signifying chain so as to extract a transcendent signifier, which then falls back on all the flows of desire, thereby assigning a lack to every desire. The parallogism which corresponds to the misuse of the disjunctive synthesis is that of the *double bind* which makes the Oedipus complex both the cause and the solution of the problem, and thus arrests any motion of desiring production, as it gets caught in an oscillation between these two poles. The Oedipus complex is both the beginning and the end. The parallogism which corresponds to the misuse of the conjunctive synthesis is that of *application* whereby desire is only understood through oppositions : "I am a Jew and you are a Palestinian", and "you are my brother, my sister, or my father, or my mother". In every case, a set of bi-univocal relations to the family and the social field is substituted for the polyvalency of a nomadic subject, which is all these things and more.²⁷

Neither the ontological analytic of the machinic unconscious nor the epistemological critique of the illegitimate use of the syntheses of the unconscious can be abstracted from the social field. Desiring production immediately invests social production as well as social production counter-invests desiring production. Thus, the

²⁷ This discussion of the illegitimate uses of the syntheses of the unconscious are described *in* *ibid.* pp. 131-132. Deleuze and Guattari also make it clear that there may be more parallogisms than the ones described : "Encore n'avons-nous pas épuisé tous les parallogismes qui orientent pratiquement la cure dans le sens d'une œdipianisation forcenée, trahison du désir, mise en pouponnière de l'inconscient, machine narcissique pour des petits moi bavards et arrogant, perpétuelle absorption de plus-value capitaliste, flux de parole contre flux d'argent, l'histoire interminable, la psychanalyse." *Ibid.* p. 132.

Oedipus complex and the operation of the Phallus are not a structural description of language but a mechanism of the social repression of desiring production. The analysis of the Oedipus complex in the works of Freud and Lacan, and their disciples, is merely a repetition of this social repression at the level of theory. This is why Deleuze and Guattari can argue that psychoanalysis is at the service of the State:

Le névrosé reste installé dans les territorialités résiduelles ou factices de notre société, et les rabats toutes sur Œdipe comme ultime territorialité qui se reconstitue dans le cabinet de l'analyste, sur le corps plein du psychoanalyste (oui, le patron, c'est le père, et le chef d'Etat aussi, et vous aussi, docteur...). Le pervers, c'est lui qui prend l'artifice au mot : vous en voulez, vous en aurez, des territorialités infiniment plus artificielles encore que la société nous propose, de nouvelles familles infiniment plus artificielles encore que celles que la société nous propose, de nouvelles familles infiniment artificielles, des sociétés secrètes et lunaires.²⁸

Materialist Psychiatry

The Oedipus complex, therefore, is not simply a theory about the unconscious, rather it is the "delegated representative" of the social repression of the unconscious, whose origin is the given form of social production, in this case is capitalism. This is why a materialist psychiatry itself cannot merely be a theoretical critique, but is already a politics, for psychoanalysis, whether it knows it or not, is invaded by the social field from every side. Thus, every anti-psychiatry must also be a political act, whose theoretical and practical basis is the restoration of the unconscious syntheses to their "immanent use". Just as in Spinoza the ontology of substance and the analysis of attributes and modes leads to an ethics of composition and decomposition of

²⁸ Ibid. *AO*, pp.42 and 43, *AOB*, p.35.

bodies, so schizoanalysis, in its description of the immanent processes of unconscious productive desire leads to a militant politics. This is a necessary consequence of the parallelism between desiring and social production:

La schizo-analyse ne se cache donc pas d'être une psychanalyse politique et sociale, une analyse militante : non pas parce qu'elle généraliserait Œdipe dans la culture, sous les conditions ridicules qui ont eu cours jusqu'à maintenant. Mais, au contraire, parce qu'elle se propose de montrer l'existence d'un investissement libidinal inconscient de la production sociale historique, distinct des investissements conscients qui coexistent avec lui.²⁹

It is this parallelism between desiring production and social production, or between the ontological and the political, that renders necessary for the epistemological critique to become a historical analysis, since the formation of the figures of thought have as their origin a particular shape of social production.

One must be careful, however, of not turning the difference between social production and desiring production into an abstract opposition, as though society determined desire from the outside. On the contrary, desiring production is immediately social and social production has as its *milieu*, the productive unconscious. The condition of possibility for a given *socius* to code, regulate or determine desiring production is immanent to the unconscious itself. This condition is the Body without Organs. Without this primary repression of the Body without Organs over desiring machines, there would be no social repression.

²⁹ Ibid. *AO*, pp.116 and 117, *AOB*, p.98.

II.3 Social Production

The three major forms of social production for Deleuze and Guattari are the primitive, the despotic and the capitalist. Each describes a historically contingent surface from which flows and cuts of desiring production are inscribed. These surfaces are merely different versions of the Body without Organs transposed onto the social field. Although, in this transposition we are no longer faced with an undifferentiated Body without Organs, the limit of every society, but with the full body of the *socius*. In the case of the primitive society this full body, or the *socius*, is the Earth, in despotic society it is the body of the Despot, and in capitalism it is capital. In each case it is a matter of the *socius* falling back onto desire and codifying it according to its own affiliations and alliances. In this falling back upon desire the *socius* is represented as the miraculous origin of society.

Capitalism

The special case here, is that of capitalism. This is because in capitalism the *socius* is the closest to the body without organs. Thus, one of the effects of capitalism is the decoding of all societies that have hitherto existed. This is why Deleuze and Guattari argue that capitalism is at the limit of every society, for capitalism is that *limit*. This limit, however, is only a *relative* limit and not an absolute one. The *absolute* limit is schizophrenia. Thus, as much as capitalism unleashes desire, in the conjunction of the movement of capital and labour (and one only has to see the truth of this when capital invades primitive or feudal society - everything starts falling apart), it immediately seeks to control the desire it has unleashed. The fundamental

contradiction within capitalism is not the falling rate of profit, as Marx believed.³⁰ But, the *socius* at one and the same time decoding desire, and thus allowing desiring production to invest the social field completely, whilst on the other hand overcoding it through a “gigantic machine for social and psychic repression.”³¹

relative / absolute limit

Capitalism is the limit of every society because it decodes the flows that the other social formations coded and overcoded. It substitutes, however, for these decoded flows an even more rigorous axiomatic which ensures that the energy of these flows are always attached to capital: “...parce qu’elle machine et fait couler des flux effectivement décodés, mais en substituant aux codes une axiomatique comptable encore plus oppressive.”³² Unlike the other social formations, however, this disciplinary control of desire is immanent to desire. In the despotic society, for example, the overcoding comes from the side of social production itself and is represented as exterior to desire, ultimately in the figure of God. Capitalism requires that desire disciplines itself. Desire must desire its own repression. This is the

³⁰ ‘La chute tendentielle du taux de profit est combinée –*ist verbundem mit* –avec une hausse tendentielle du taux de la plusvalue, donc du degré d’exploitation du travail.’ K.Marx, *Capital VI*. [The falling rate of profit is combined – *ist verbundem mit* – with the growing rate of profit, thus of the degree of exploitation]. E.Balibar interprets Marx’s critique of the falling rate of profit from the perspective of its opposition to classical economy that basis itself in the notion of contradiction. Instead Marx’s analysis shifts this notion to that of limits which are non-contradictory. Balibar’s argument centres on reading from what Marx indicates with this shift that contradictions in Capitalism need to be explained at another level than the economical and in the complex conjunctions of Capitalism: ‘L’analyse de la transformation des limites requiert donc une théorie des temps différents de la structure économique et de la lutte de classes et de leurs articulation dans la structure sociale.’ E.Balibar, ‘Concepts fondamentaux du matérialisme historique. IV. Elements pour une théorie du passage’, *Lire le Capital*, (Paris: puf, 1996), p.547. [The analysis of the transformation of limits thus requires a theory of times different from the economic structure and class struggle and their articulation in the social structure].

³¹ “une gigantesque machine de repression-refoulement”. Op. Cit. *AO*, p.292, *AOB*, p.245.

³² *Ibid.* *AO*, p.207, *AOB*, p.176.

purpose of the Oedipus complex: to insinuate the axiomatics of capital within desire itself through the three illegitimate uses of the syntheses of the unconscious.

deterritorialisation / reterritorialisation

Everytime there is a deterritorialization, there is immediately a reterritorialization: "il est impossible de distinguer la détterritorialisation de la réterritorialisation, qui sont prises l'une dans l'autre ou sont comme l'envers et l'endroit d'un même processus."³³ And this reterritorialization has as its central mechanism the Oedipus complex: global and specific objects rather than partial and non-specific, exclusive differences rather than inclusive, fixed subjects rather than nomadic. "Le triangle œdipien est la territorialité intime et privée qui correspond à tous les efforts de re-térritorialisation sociale du capitalisme."³⁴ Precisely because capitalism is the *relative* limit of society it also makes possible, for the first time, the *absolute* limit to society. Thus, like Marx, Deleuze and Guattari believe that capitalism is its own impossibility. In other words, capitalism, and thus the Oedipal complex, contains its own auto-critique. The purpose of schizoanalysis, is to lay out this auto-critique.

³³ Ibid. *AO*, p.307, *AOB*, p.258.

³⁴ Ibid. *AO*, p.317, *AOB*, p.266.

III. POLITICS : “schizoanalysis”

We should not fall into the error of translating the parallelism between desiring production and social production into an opposition of two different orders, as though their difference was simply the difference between the individual, on the one hand and society, on the other. On the contrary, *Homo natura* and *homo Historia* are one and the same in desiring production.³⁵ We can see why this unity must be the case since the parallelism between desiring production and social production is founded on the more primary relation between desiring production and the Body without Organs.

III.1 The Body without Organs

The Body without Organs is not different than desiring production but is produced by desiring production itself. This Body without Organs, anti-production at the heart of production, its *immobile motor*, has two poles. One pole is the repulsion of desiring production and the other is attraction. Social production is its attractive pole where desiring machines are recorded upon the surface of the full body of the *socius*. It is at this point, in the relation between the *socius* and desiring production that they are falsely represented as opposed to one another, whereas at the level of the unconscious they must be one and the same. This unity of the Body without Organs

³⁵ Ibid. *AO*, p.328, *AOB*, p.275.

and desiring production is the spinozist centre of *AO*. The partial objects of desire are inscribed on the Body without Organs, but, just as in Spinoza where attributes are not to be opposed to substance but are its expression (expression in the ontological sense and not in the sense of representation), so the Body without Organs and desiring production are mutually and simultaneously implicated :

Le corps sans organes est la substance immanente, au sens le plus spinoziste du mot ; et les objets partiels sont comme ses attributs ultimes, qui appartiennent précisément en tant qu'ils sont réellement distincts et ne peuvent à ce titre s'exclure ou s'opposer. Les objets partiels et le corps sans organes sont les deux éléments matériels des machines désirantes schizo-phréniques : les uns comme pièces travailleuses, l'autre comme moteur immobile ; les uns comme micro-molécules, l'autre comme molécule géante – les deux ensembles dans un rapport de continuité aux deux bouts de la chaîne moléculaire du désir.³⁶

In other words, the parallelism of social production and desiring production has its basis in a rigorous immanent materialist ontology. Social production is the expression, in the spinozist sense, of desiring production. The distance between them is immanent to desiring production itself. Nonetheless, it is this very distance which allows for the coding and decoding of desiring production. The Body without Organs falls back upon desiring machines so as to distribute them upon its surface according to inclusive disjunctions, so many possible connections and flows. The *socius*, on the other hand, falls back upon desiring machines according to exclusive disjunctions. However, the latter is only possible because desire desires its own repression.

³⁶ Ibid. *AO*, p.390, *AOh*, p.327.

III.2 Social Investment

The reproduction of societies, the reproduction of reproduction, requires an investment by desire. There are two types of investment, one from the side of desiring production itself, which deterritorializes the coding of society, and the other from the side of society itself through desiring production, which identifies with this codes and reproduces them.

paranoïac / schizophrénic poles

These two poles of social investment, which oscillate within unconscious production, Deleuze and Guattari name as the paranoïac pole and the schizophrenic pole.³⁷ The paranoïac pole of the unconscious investment of the social field is the identification of the social forms with the given interests of these forms. From this identification are produced global persons and complete objects. This process begins with the family and extends to the most complex institutions of society. It is what Althusser has called "the ideological State apparatus". This does not mean, of course, that the family is the beginning point of the process, for, as we have already seen, the family as such is the delegated representative of social repression. This explains the importance of the critique of the Oedipus complex by schizoanalysis, for it is this very mechanism by which desiring desire becomes paranoid. And this mechanism has to be all the more powerful within capitalism since it itself produces the general decoding of flows within the social field.

³⁷ Ibid. *AO*, p.329, *AOb*, p.277.

molecular / molar

To the two poles of social investment correspond the two kinds of immanent organisation of the unconscious: the molecular and the molar.³⁸ The molar organisation of consciousness refers to the reduction of desiring production to social production through a process of identification (I belong to a species, race or culture). Thus it introduces lack into desire and thereby transposes desire onto the plane of the personal and the collective, rather than the unconscious and singular. The molecular, on the contrary, refers to desiring production investing the social field as such with the flows of its energy machines and breaks of its organ-machines, which populate the social field without any hierarchy or ideal.

Once more, the difference between the molar and the molecular should not be interpreted as a difference between the individual and the collective, as though the molar referred to the undifferentiated "they", and the molecular to the authentic individual. On the contrary, both terms refer to a group determination. Thus, to the two poles, paranoia and schizophrenia, and the two forms molar and molecular of social investment, there correspond two different types of group: the subjected group,

³⁸ See *AO*, p.322, *AOB*.p.270. Although this distinction between the molecular and the molar introduces a new language into *AO* borrowed from the biological sciences, it does not add anything to the content of the distinctions operative in that work. The difference between the molecular and the molar, however, does become the major distinction of Deleuze's and Guattari's work after *AO*, and also changes its meaning. We shall return to this topic in the second half of this second part of the thesis in the analysis of *Mille Plateaux*.

with its heard mentality and slavish disposition, and the subject-group with its revolutionary tendency to liberate desire:

L'un est un investissement de *groupe assujetti*, aussi bien dans la forme de souveraineté que dans les formations coloniales de l'ensemble grégaire, qui réprime et refoule le désir des personnes ; l'autre, un investissement de *groupe-sujet* dans les multiplicités transversales qui portent le désir comme phénomène moléculaire, c'est-à-dire objets partiels et flux, par opposition avec les ensembles et les personnes.³⁹

III.3 The Tasks of schizoanalysis

From this distinction of the two poles of investment of the social field, the two positive tasks of schizoanalysis reveal themselves. It should not surprise us that this is a matter of politics, since in both cases it is a matter of working against the paranoiac investments of the social field. One task is at the level of the individual, which of course is a product of social production itself, and the other, at the level of group. We might characterise the first task as analytical and the second as political, though of course this does not mean there is no relation between the two, as though analysis were not already political.

the first task

The first positive task of schizoanalysis is to discover the desiring machines at work beneath the mask of the subject, so as to reach partial objects and the ultimate unconscious. This would mean, for Deleuze and Guattari, the analyst ridding himself or herself of all the tools of Freudian and Lacanian analysis, since they are the illness

³⁹ Ibid. *AO*, p.333, *AOb*, p.280.

rather than the cure. This positive task leads necessarily to the second positive task of schizoanalysis since the institution of psychiatry and psychoanalysis itself is part of a wider process of social repression.

the second task

The second positive task is the diagnosis of political groups so as to be able to push them from the form of *subjected group* to the form of *subject-group*. This implies, for Deleuze and Guattari, the political-critical task of the auto-critique of left-wing groups, which conceal reactionary moments within their supposed revolutionary intents. And not only the more obvious critique of fascism:

Un groupe révolutionnaire quant au préconscient reste un *groupe assujetti*, même en conquérant le pouvoir, autant que ce pouvoir renvoie lui-même à une forme de puissance qui continue de s'asservir et d'écraser la production désirante; Au moment où il est révolutionnaire préconscient, un tel groupe présente déjà tous les caractères inconscients d'un *groupe assujetti*...⁴⁰

The second positive task of schizoanalysis contains four theses and one general principle: every investment is social, unconscious libidinal group investment is prior to preconscious class investment (class needs are subordinate to desiring production), the relation to the non-familial is primary (sexuality is prior to procreation), social libidinal investment is divided into the two poles of the paranoiac reactionary and the schizoid revolutionary. And finally, the general principle of schizoanalysis is that desire is constitutive of the social field (social production is

⁴⁰ Ibid. *AO*, p.417, *AOB*, p.348.

immanent to desiring production and there is no difference between the two). These four theses and general principle of schizoanalysis although political, since they concern how desire is manipulated and crushed within society, do not, however, announce a political program. A political program would simply institute a new party and thus produce a *subjected group* that would form its own hierarchies in the name of libidinal materialism. The political expression of schizoanalysis is not a program but the direct investment of the social field with desire, and this is made possible by the critique of the Oedipus complex, that is to say by a setting into motion of the revolutionary potential of the analytic machine:

Nous croyons au contraire à la possibilité d'une reversion interne, qui fait de la machine analytique une pièce indispensable de l'appareil révolutionnaire. Bien plus, les conditions objectives en semblent actuellement données.⁴¹

A revolution is not actual, and thus inside our heads, but is a pure potentiality.⁴² This means that the revolutionary break cannot be the formation of a new *socius* but the following of the decoded flows of desire, which break through the oppressive function of the axiomatics of capital. Such *lines of flight* have more to do

⁴¹ Ibid. *AO*, p.97, *AOB*, p.82.

⁴² Potentialities are pure *puissances* or dynamics. These forces that are at play in every situation are liable to certain changes. The different possible changes F.Zourabichvilli calls *possibilité de vie* and thus, although he emphasises the involuntary in his analysis of Deleuze's politics, he stresses the interactivity within this field of forces. Thus, even though politics no longer comes down to a decision that stems from our conscious thinking, it is nevertheless possible to talk of an inherent revolutionary potential in our relations to the field: 'Quand nous saisissons la situation comme pure possible ou dans sa potentialité, nous évaluons ces possibilités de vie (ou ces condensés) qui, par-là mêmes, se redistribuent autrement.' F.Zourabichvilli, 'Deleuze et le possible (de l'involontarisme en politique)'. *Gilles Deleuze une vie philosophique*, (Paris: Synthélabo, 1998), p.343. [When we grasp the situation as a pure possibility or in its potentiality, we evaluate its life expectancy which thus redistribute themselves differently].

with momentary events at the level of the everyday, a kiss brushing the skin of one's lover, than with political meetings and manifestos:

Et puis, surtout, nous ne cherchons aucune dérobade en disant que la schizo-analyse *en tant que telle* n'a strictement aucun programme politique à proposer. Si elle en avait un, ce serait tout à la fois grotesque et inquiétant. Elle ne se prend pas pour un parti, ni même pour un groupe, et ne prétend pas parler au nom des masses. Un programme politique n'est pas censé s'élaborer dans le cadre de la schizo-analyse.⁴³

It would be wrong however, not to point to a certain tension in Deleuze and Guattari's position similar to the one we may find in the work of Marx, and that is whether their very historical description of the parallelism between desiring and social production cancels out politics. If capitalism is the decoding of flows, why not just let capitalism undermine itself as it pushes itself to the limit?: "Non pas se retirer du procès mais aller plus loin, 'accélérer le procès', comme disait Nietzsche..."⁴⁴ We know others who have been tempted by this interpretation – schizoanalysis as passive nihilism. But such an interpretation would misunderstand the relation between capitalism, a particular social formation, with desiring production, on the one hand, and the relation of the Body without Organs, on the other. Capitalism is only the *relative* limit to the *socius*. Thus, to push capitalism would only be to push the *relative* limit further from the centre to the periphery, from the first world to the third. Only the Body without Organs is the *absolute* limit to the *socius*. It is true, for Deleuze and Guattari, that capitalism is the closest to desiring production since in capitalism coding and overcoding are replaced by the decoding of the flows of desire.

⁴³ Op. Cit. *AO*, p.456, *AOb*, p.380.

⁴⁴ Ibid. *AO*, p.285, *AOb*, p.240.

Nonetheless, the other side of this decoding is the axiomatics of capitalism which is an even more rigorous, and the Oedipus complex comes to show this, control and determination of desiring production, since in this instance desire desires its own repression to the highest degree.

active utopia

It is this difference between the *relative* and *absolute* limit that enables Deleuze and Guattari to have a utopian politics. They call it an *active utopia*. Deterritorialization beyond the reterritorialization of capitalism, which attempts to re-inject into the social field failed and ruined representations, above all the holy family, so as to block the very flows that capital sets into motion.⁴⁵ Indeed, in the appendix to the second edition of *AO*, Deleuze and Guattari give a pragmatic example of what an *active utopia* might be. It would be the appropriation of the means of production by everyone, whereby there would be the greatest number of people utilising the greatest number of machines, the greatest number of small machines, connecting and cross-connecting, and the destruction of the domination of professionals and experts. This, they argue, is not a "return to nature" but the promotion of the greatest invention possible in scientific and artistic machines. These are blocked and prevented by capitalism for its own political and economic ends, that is, the formation of great monopolies that prevent the general democratisation of the means of production.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See *Ibid. AO*, p.360, *AOB*, p.302.

⁴⁶ See only in the French original: *Ibid. AO*, p.479.

Chapter IV

from “schizo-analysis” to “micro-politics”

(Mille Plateaux)

In this chapter, the analysis of the parallelism between the ontological and the political order in Deleuze and Guattari's work will cover from *L'Anti-Oedipe* to *Mille Plateaux*.¹ Before the topic of this chapter is approached directly, we shall first need to think about the difference between these two works. It would be wrong to claim that there is an absolute break between them, still less that there has been a 'turn' in their work, as some speak of a similar 'turn' in the work of other philosophers, rather the same style is present in *MP* as in *AO*: a rigorous materialism, no appeal to any transcendence, and a new politics of desire or affects. This thesis has argued that all these elements belong to the essence of their spinozism. Despite the continuity of this project, there are nonetheless subtle differences between these two works that need to be alluded to at the beginning of this chapter.

The most important of these differences, and one that is essential to our theme, is *MP*'s resistance to the notion of a universal history. This will have important

¹ G.Deleuze et F.Guattari, *L'Anti-Oedipe*, (Paris : Minuit, 1972/73). [Hereafter *AO*]. The English translation: *Anti Oedipus*, (London: the Athlone Press, 1984). [Hereafter *AOB*]. And G.Deleuze et

consequences on how both works configure and reflect upon the political. Unlike *MP*, the argument of *AO* seems to require the concept of a universal history that has become unnecessary in the former. Indeed, the concept of a universal history is seen in *MP* to have its origin in macro-political forces that run counter to the micro-political forces of becoming. Universal history is, as Walter Benjamin once famously remarked, always the language of the victors, or as Deleuze and Guattari will write, the language of universal history is always the language of the State: 'On écrit l'histoire, mais on l'a toujours écrite du point de vue des sédentaires, et au nom d'un appareil unitaire d'Etat, au moins possible même quand on parlait de nomades. Ce qui manque, c'est une Nomadologie, le contraire d'une histoire.'²

This is quite different from *AO* where Deleuze and Guattari appear to have found as they say enough 'innocence' to be able to write a universal history.³ Why is this so? This is because in *AO* Deleuze and Guattari accept Marxists division of history into primitive, despotic and capitalist blocks, of which the last shape is the universal form of history itself. In other words capitalism is the real that haunts every social formation. It is the real because it is the decoding of flows of desire that the other social formations repress and codify. It is also for this reason that the writing of *AO* is only possible with the arrival of capitalism. For one can only think desiring production through the fact of capitalism. This does not mean that Deleuze and Guattari are simply celebrating capitalism in *AO*, for they are well aware that the opposite side of this process of decoding is the repressive axiomatics of capital:

Pourquoi forme-t-elle à son tour une gigantesque machine de répression-refoulement à l'égard de ce qui constitue pourtant sa propre réalité, les flux décodés ? C'est que, nous l'avons

F. Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, (Paris : Minuit, 1980). [Hereafter, *MP*]. The English translation: *A Thousand Plateaus*. (Minneapolis, London: 1987). [Hereafter *TP*]

² Op. Cit. *MP* p.34, *TP*, p.23. See also *MP*, p.269-70, *TP*, p.221.

³ Op. Cit. *AO*, p.163, *AOB*, p.139.

vu, le capitalisme est bien la limite de toute société, en tant qu'il opère le décodage des flux que les autres formations sociales codaient et surcodeaient. Toute fois il en est la limite ou coupures *relatives*, parce qu'il substitue aux codes une axiomatique extrêmement rigoureuse qui maintient l'énergie des flux dans un état lié sur le corps du capital comme socius déterritorialisé, mais aussi et même plus impitoyable que tout autre socius.⁴

And yet it is also within the era of capitalism that these contradictions and even the possibility of its abolition is both thinkable and achievable. This is why even for Deleuze and Guattari at the time of writing *AO*, capitalism is the end of history.⁵ They have quite a different position on history, as has already been remarked, however, in *MP*. This is not because capitalism has ceased to be of major importance to them but that the linear narrative of history, which they borrow from Marx, has been jettisoned for a micro-analysis of social formations. Rather than these social formations being strung, like beads on a chain one after the other through universal history, they are placed co-extensively side by side. Thus, history, rather than being the story of an evolution that results in a necessary end called capitalism, is the connection between heterogeneous and divergent elements across an immanent field :

Un évolutionisme économique est impossible : on ne peut guère croire à une évolution même ramifiée « cueilleurs – chasseurs – éleveurs – agriculteurs – industriels ». Ne vaut pas mieux un évolutionisme éthologique « nomades – semi-nomades – sédentaires ». Pas d'avantage un évolutionisme écologique « autarcie dispersée de groupes locaux – villages et bourgades – villes – Etats ». Il suffit de faire interférer ces évolutions abstraites pour que tout évolutionisme s'écroule : par exemple c'est la ville qui crée l'agriculture, sans passer par des bourgades.⁶

Take one example from *MP*: the relation between the nomadic war machine and the State Apparatus. Deleuze and Guattari are not talking about the super

⁴ Ibid. *AO*, p. 292, *AOb*, p. 245-46.

⁵ Ibid. *AO*, p. 163, *AOb*, p. 139.

⁶ Op. Cit. *MP*, p. 536, *TP*, p. 430.

imposition of one form upon the other, as though there were first, in a point of history, a nomadic war machine that evolves into the State, but that there is a constant war between them. Nomadic war machines do not have a 'once' in history but are being continually recreated and dismantled. The State, also, does not happen 'once' in history but is continually being recreated in new forms and shapes answering to different threats and demands from the outside. The point, then, is not to have the 'innocence' to write a universal history, but to analyse and describe the infinitesimal movements and rests across history, in which certain moments of convergence can be dated (as the dates that mark the plateaus of *MP*), but will never stabilise into the illusion of an evolutionary history.

Rather than this micro-analysis or micro-politics moving *MP* away from Spinoza it draws it even closer. What is the legacy of Spinoza's political theory to *MP*? First of all, it is a question of style, and more importantly, the effect of style. Of course we know that parts of *MP* even seem to imitate the geometric model of Spinoza's method. Thus, the plateau called 'Treatise on Nomadology' (even echoing one of the titles of Spinoza's work such as his *Political Treatise*) is made up of propositions, axioms and problems. This, however is not really what is at issue in the matter of the style of *MP*, rather, it is a question of writing as a war machine and the effects it has on bodies. Thus, as Warren Montag writes in *Bodies, Masses, Power*, one of the fundamental theses of Spinoza's materialism is the material effects of writing:

The written form of these propositions itself possesses a corporeal existence, not as the realisation or materialisation of a pre-existing mental, spiritual invention, but as a body among other bodies. Spinoza's philosophy compels us to replace questions like 'Who has read it?' and 'Of those how many have understood it?' with 'What material effects has it

produced, not only on or in minds, but on bodies as well ?'
'To what extent has it moved bodies and what has it moved
them to do?'⁷

In the same way, at the beginning of *MP* where Deleuze and Guattari speak about the writing of this very book, they say its importance lies not in what it might mean (though this does not discount the pleasure many may find in finding out what it might mean) but in what effect this book has upon others; that is to say, what connections, breaks and flows it produces:

On ne demandera jamais ce que veut dire un livre, signifié ou signifiant, on ne cherchera rien à comprendre dans un livre, on se demandera avec quoi il fonctionne, en connexion de quoi il fait ou non passer des intensités, dans quelles multiplicités il introduit et métamorphose la sienne, avec quel corps sans organe il fait lui-même converger le sien.⁸

Any writing, whether in this case we are talking about philosophy or literature, is not political in the first case because it has something to say about politics, even Deleuze and Guattari, but is political as writing. Naturally, both philosophy and literature can and do suggest to us certain political virtues and actions, but what is fundamental and decisive is that writing itself, before the representation of the political already has an effect. This is what Deleuze and Guattari mean by rhizomatic writing or pragmatics. This question of the relation between writing and material effects brings us back to the decisive rupture of Spinoza's thought within political theory. This rupture is still important and significant for us because it marks a disjunction with liberal theory that continues to be the ideological justification of the State in our own era. Although on the surface it appears that Spinoza adopts the language of liberal theory by appearing to endorse the language of rights, his own defence of natural rights, as many commentators have emphasised (such as Tosel,

⁷ Warren Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power: Spinoza and his Contemporaries*, (London, New York: Verso, 1999), p.xxi.

Macherey, Balibar, Negri) is based upon the operation of power rather than an appeal to juridical laws:

Par droit de nature, donc, j'entends les lois mêmes ou règles de la Nature suivant lesquelles tout arrive, c'est à dire la puissance même de la Nature entière et conséquemment de chaque individu s'étend jusqu'où va sa puissance, et donc tout ce que fait un homme suivant les lois de la propre nature, il le fait en vertu d'un droit qu'il a de puissance.⁹

This definition of rights in terms of power rather than juridical concepts marks an important displacement in political theory even though to a certain extent it has taken us this long to see what Spinoza was getting at. To some extent Spinoza's displacement of natural rights and contract theory to the language of power and affects, and thereby the domination and servitude of the body and its correlate effects upon the mind (its beliefs and self-defences), is a foretaste of Foucault's almost self-revelation in the first volume of the history of sexuality: juridical power is a fiction.¹⁰ The effects of power upon bodies is always diffuse and eccentric: 'Chaque centre de pouvoir est aussi moléculaire, s'exerce sur un tissu micrologique où il n'existe plus que comme difus, dispersé, démultiplié, miniaturisé, sans cesse déplacé, agissant par segmentation fines, opérant dans le détail et le détail de détails.'¹¹ It is this change or transformation in the conception of power that perhaps marks the biggest shift between *MP* and *AO*. In the latter work there is almost no discussion of the spinozist vocabulary of bodies and effects and the operation of power upon them. Moreover, the conception of power in *AO* is monolithic: the different forms of the socius, such as the Earth, the body of the Despot and Capital fall back onto desiring production in the same way. Even though the historical specific nature of this repression is distinct to

⁸ Op. Cit. *MP*, p. 10, *TP*, p. 4.

⁹ Baruch Spinoza, *Traité Politique*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1966), p. 16.

¹⁰ See Foucault's, *Histoire de la sexualité*, vol. I, (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 107-120, *The History of Sexuality*, (London: Penguin, 1978), p. 81-91.

each social formation, such that Deleuze and Guattari speak of the coding of flows that belongs to the body of the despot as opposed to the decoding that belongs to Capital, the actual operation of these repressions is always the same: that is to say a homogeneous operation of power. The micro-analysis of power belongs to a different conception of the relation between the poles of repression and repressed which makes it far more difficult to diagnose the difference between subjected groups and subject-groups. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari will say in *MP* that we need to be more aware of the 'microtextures' of oppression, such that we can see how even the revolutionary groups of Europe are involved in the oppression of the Third World.¹² This is not to deny the hesitations and uncertainties of *AO* in its description of possibilities of revolutionary praxis and the fact that any revolutionary group can be parasitic upon regimes of oppression. But even in this case this is thought of in terms of the contradictions of capital, rather than a micro-politics.

When we speak about the diffused concept of power then we have to begin with Spinoza's description of the relation between bodies and their affects. Subjection is a matter of corporeal relations and not a matter of the free will; 'a matter of what bodies do and do not do,' as Warren Montag writes, 'and how they affect each other.'¹³ In the opposite movement the possibility of liberation also exists at the level of bodies and affects. This means that politics no longer becomes a question of an appeal to sovereign power, even if this power might be said to represent the power of the people, but a different relation between bodies than the model of domination. Maurizio Lazzarato gives us some indication, in his analysis of Foucault's

¹¹ Op. Cit. *MP*, p. 274, *TP*, p.224.

¹² Ibid. *MP*, p. 275. *TP*, p. 225.

¹³ Op.Cit. p. 42.

biopolitics, about what this other politics might be: a minimisation of domination in the relation between bodies and the reversal and re-mobilisation of power relations:

A la frontière entre 'relations stratégiques' et 'états de domination', sur le terrain des 'techniques de gouvernement', la lutte éthico-politique prend tout son sens. L'action éthique est donc concentrée sur le rapport entre relations stratégiques et technologies de gouvernement et a deux finalités majeures : 1) permettre de jouer les relations stratégiques avec le minimum possible de domination en se donnant des règles de droit, des techniques de gestion des rapports aux autres et aussi de rapport à soi. 2) augmenter la liberté, la liberté, la mobilité et la réversibilité de jeux de pouvoir car elle sont les conditions de la résistance et de la création.¹⁴

This emphasis on micro-politics does not change the parallel between ontology and politics, which is one of the major themes in Deleuze and Guattari, but modifies it in subtle ways and these modifications will be the major topic of this chapter. Briefly, we might describe these modifications as follows: the ontological investigations of *MP*, in comparison to *AO*, become all encompassing. In other words, the real no longer simply refers to the anthropocentric sphere as it does in *AO* but also to the inorganic and organic spheres exterior to the human species. The description of the relations between machinic assemblages, abstract machines and the plane of consistency within *MP*, include just as much the relation between, for example, DNA and genetic replication as they do the description of social formations. This means that there is no disjunction between the human sphere and Nature in *MP* as there might be in *AO*. This broadening out of the ontological analysis in *MP*, however, does not discredit the parallelism between ontology and the political. For Deleuze and

¹⁴ Maurizio Lazzarato, 'Du biopouvoir à la biopolitique', dans *Multitudes*, n° 1, mars 2000, pp. 55-56. [In the frontier between 'strategic relations' and 'states of domination', on the terrain of the 'technics of government', the ethico-political struggle takes its full meaning. Ethical action is concentrated upon the rapport between strategic and technological relations of government and has two major finalities : 1) to allow the play of strategic relations with the minimum possible domination giving itself rules of right, technics of management of the relations to others and also to oneself. 2) to augment the freedom, mobility and reversibility of the games of power, since they are the conditions of resistance and creation.]

Guattari, it is always a question of an emergent politics rather than a transcendental one. It is through the analysis and description of social formations in the relation between abstract machines and machinic assemblages that the possibility of politics emerges. We do not have to translate an ontology into a politics, rather a materialist ontology is already political. This, again, is the important lesson of Spinoza. His political writings are not an addition or an addendum to his metaphysical writings, they belong to the same continuity of thought.

This chapter will be organised in the following manner. First of all, it will examine the ontology of *MP* in as far as it is relevant to the question of the political. In attempting to bring out the specific nature of this politics, it will turn to the work of the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde, who has had a decisive influence upon Deleuze's work and his collaboration with Guattari. Finally, it will examine the scope and depth of the notion of micro-politics as it emerges from this problematic.

I. MILLE PLATEAUX : 'translational' Ontology

No one can hope to give a complete summary of all the twists and turns of *MP*. Indeed, even to think of performing such a task is to profoundly misunderstand both the form of this book and the effect of Deleuze and Guattari's writing. You have to make your own path through the book, and the desire for systematisation and closure is merely a counter movement to the philosophical creativity that this book, which fundamentally bears no name, desires to inspire. The path that this thesis takes is one that follows the connections between a materialist ontology and a new politics. For this reason it is concerned essentially with the social formations that are analysed in *MP* rather than its analysis of inorganic and organic matter. These different levels or 'strata', as Deleuze and Guattari will call them, however, are not externally related to one another. There is not an inorganic stratum opposed to an organic one and then, finally, a human stratum opposed to an organic one, as though one stratum evolved from another, rather all strata belong to the same immanent material continuum that Deleuze and Guattari call the Mechanosphere. This does not mean however, that there are no differences between them. These differences are explained by the three fundamental ontological terms of *MP* that will form the basis of our investigation of this book: Machinic Assemblage, Abstract Machine and the Plane of Consistency.

I.1 Machinic Assemblage

Let us first look at the notion of Machinic Assemblage which I have further subdivided into three distinct levels: machinic assemblage itself, their effectuation of abstract machines and finally their relation to the plane of consistency.

Machinic assemblage is the term that is perhaps the closest to the vocabulary of *AO*. As we remember, this book opens with the description of desire as machinic. Desire is to be understood as a flow that is divided and cut up by connections. These flows and cuts are to be understood as a machinic process. And, as Deleuze and Guattari insist, this machinic process is not to be understood as a metaphor:

Partout ce sont des machines, pas du tout métaphoriquement : des machines de machines, avec leur couplages, leurs connections. Une machine-organe est branchée sur une machine-source : l'une émet un flux, que l'autre coupe. Le sein est une machine qui produit du lait, et la bouche, une machine couplée sur celle-là.¹⁵

Multiplicity

The breaks and flows do not exist counter imposed to one another, as though there were only flows upon which there descended breaks and cuts, rather the breaks and cuts belong to the flows. In *MP*, Deleuze and Guattari speak about a substantive multiplicity. This is the ontological fundament of their thought. There is multiplicity, or better, multiplicity is. What was called breaks or cuts in *AO*, is now called assemblage. These assemblages are connections between multiple points within the plane of immanence, which have, whether large or small, some consistency. These connections do not come from outside of the multiplicity, rather they are merely the

¹⁵ Op.Cit. *AO*, p. 7, *AOB*, p. 1.

expression of its increase in dimension and complexity: 'Un agencement est précisément cette croissance des dimensions dans une multiplicité qui change nécessairement de nature à mesure qu'elle augmente ses connexions.'¹⁶

Any consistency or order to multiplicity is therefore an emergent phenomena and not an external one. Assemblages 'select, organise and stratify' elements from within the flow and in this process produce, whether artificially or naturally, a consistency.¹⁷ This process of organisation has a double side for Deleuze and Guattari, and this double articulation, as they would say, runs throughout *MP*. The double side of machinic assemblages is content and expression. They borrowed this distinction from the linguist Louis Hjelmslev, but they apply it across all the different strata and not just to linguistic expressions and contents. To make this distinction understandable, however, let us first understand it through its linguistic formulation.

Language, for Hjelmslev, can be divided into a plane of expression and a plane of content.¹⁸ This is not the same as the distinction between the signified and the signifier since this distinction exists through the access of a form-content distinction, which Hjelmslev wishes to displace. For Hjelmslev there is not the signified on the one hand, as the content of language, and the signifier on the other as the form of language. Rather, the content of language has its proper form and content and the form of language, which he calls expression, also has its own proper form and content that cannot be confused with the form and content, or substance as he calls it, of the content of language. Thus, expression, for Hjelmslev, is divided into: unformed matter which is the 'raw sonic matter' of language, expression-form which is imposed upon

¹⁶ Op.Cit. *MP*, p. 15, *TP*, p. 8.

¹⁷ Ibid. *MP*, p. 506, *TP*, p. 406.

¹⁸ L.Hjelmslev, *Prologemena to a Theory of Language*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

this matter, and expression-substance that is a result of this imposition of form onto matter. Likewise, the content of language can be divided into thought-matter, the form, which is imposed upon this thought-matter, and the substance that is the result of the imposition of form upon this matter. What is absolutely important for Hjemslev is that the form and matter of content and the form and matter of expression are distinct.¹⁹

Expression-content

Deleuze and Guattari far exceed Hjemslev's application of this distinction between expression and content by applying it, as was remarked earlier, to every strata since this distinction belongs to the very operation of machinic assemblage. In other words, stratification, the immanent organisation of multiplicity always takes the form of the separation of flows into two distinct lines of expression and content. For example, at the level of the organisation of organic life we can speak of the content of the protein molecule as given by the immanent organisation of aminoacids, whereas the expression is given by the global molecule which gives the specific selection of aminoacids and their particular arrangement within a chain.²⁰ What is important to stress here is that the expression is not dependent on the content for the sequence of aminoacids is arbitrary, determined as it is by an external enzyme. Thus, the content of aminoacids is conjugated with a flow of the product of an enzyme. Although this example is taken from the organic strata the logic operates at all the other levels. Machinic assemblage is always the connection or conjunction of expression and

¹⁹ Ronald Bogue gives a good description of this content and expression distinction in his book *Deleuze and Guattari*, (London and New York: 1989), p. 126.

²⁰ This example is given by Philip Goodchild in his book *Deleuze and Guattari: an introduction to the politics of desire*, (London: Sage, 1996), p. 157.

content. This will become extremely important for our understanding of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of micro-politics in *MP*. At the level of human populations, the content side of machinic assemblage is composed in the arrangement of bodies whereas the expression side of the machinic assemblage is composed through what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'collective assemblage of enunciation'. Again, both sides have their own form-matter or form-content distinction that needs to be analysed.

Vertical and Horizontal axes

Machinic assemblages not only have double sides or a double articulation in expression and content but also a double axis. There is a vertical axis that includes this expression-content distinction in which elements within the multiplicity are stratified. And there is a horizontal axis wherein the assemblage has both a territorial side, that produce consistency or stability, and an 'edge of deterritorialization', that cuts across and scrambles these stabilities.²¹ It is along the horizontal axis that machinic assemblages effectuate abstract machines and touch upon what Deleuze and Guattari call the plane of consistency. Let us first discuss this notion of abstract machines, which as we shall see will become decisive in understanding Deleuze and Guattari's conception of social formation.

1.2 Abstract Machine

What do Deleuze and Guattari mean when they say that machinic assemblages effectuate abstract machines? There are two flows across every stratum: expression

²¹ Op.Cit., *MP*, p. 112, *TP*, p. 88.

and content. But what is it, or better, what function, causes these two flows to come into relation? We have in fact here three terms not just two: expression, content and the *relation* between them. The abstract machine is what combines or conjugates these two sides of the machinic assemblage. As such, it has neither expression nor content. As shall be seen, it necessarily touches upon the plane of consistency. As Deleuze and Guattari write, therefore, one function of the abstract machine is to organise or territorialize strata, but at the same time it is always deterritorialized:

Une véritable machine abstraite n'a aucun moyen de distinguer pour elle-même un plan d'expression et un plan de contenu...déstratifiée, déterritorialisée pour elle-même, la machine abstraite n'a pas de forme en elle-même (pas plus que de substance), et ne distingue pas en soi de contenu et d'expression, bien qu'elle préside hors d'elle à cette distinction, et la distribue dans les strates, dans les domaines et territoires.²²

Let us think of an example to make these distinctions more tangible. Again, we shall go to the anthropocentric stratum because it is this stratum that is significant for us in relation to the parallelism between Deleuze and Guattari's ontological materialism and a new politics. At the level of the anthropocentric stratum content and expression are defined as follows: content is equivalent to the regime of bodies and expression is equivalent to a regime of signs. What brings these two series together is the abstract machine. If we imagine the plane of consistency as a smooth space, then it is the abstract machine that draws lines upon that space and connects these two series together across the different strata. One might say that one side of this function is *interstratic*: it organises and distributes the two series of expression and content within a given stratum. A good example of such a process, and it is one that Deleuze

²² Ibid. *MP*, p. 176, *TP*, p. 141.

alludes to in his book on Foucault, is the example of the Panopticon.²³ Bentham's panopticon is a diagram for the ideal prison in which there is a central tower from which all the cells containing prisoners can be surveyed. Foucault's point is not that such a building was constructed at a given time in history but that it is a generalisable function, certainly substantiated in the panopticon, which expresses, in a certain society, the conjunction between bodies, (that is to say content), and signification, (that is to say expression). The abstract machine is therefore not the panopticon but the *diagram*. Deleuze and Guattari take this notion of diagram and generalise it across all the strata. Thus, following from the previous quotation, they write: 'Une machine abstraite en soi n'est pas plus physique ou corporelle que sémiotique, elle est *diagrammatique* (elle ignore d'autant plus la distinction de l'artificiel et du naturel). Elle opère par *matière*, et non par substance; par fonction, et non par forme.'²⁴

Yet what needs to be emphasised is that this is only one side of the function of the abstract machine. If one only understands it through the example of Foucault's panopticon, which is generally the way it appears in secondary literature, then we would only have an understanding of its repressive function. This is only how the abstract machine operates when it is effectuated by machinic assemblages within a stratum, for example as the two series of expression and content are effectuated in the panopticon. But, precisely because the abstract machine is the relation between expression and content, it itself has neither expression nor content. Thus, as Deleuze and Guattari explain, an abstract machine is always the operation of unformed matter and informal function. This means that one side of the abstract machine is always *metastratic*. It cuts across strata and their organisations. The abstract machine is as

²³ Deleuze, *Foucault*, (Paris : Minuit, 1986), pp. 39-43, *Foucault*, (Minneapolis, London : 188), pp. 39-44.

²⁴ Op.Cit.. *MP*, p. 176, *TP*, p. 141.

much a force of deterritorialisation across strata as it is a force of reterritorialization within strata:

Tantôt elles restaient prisonnières des stratifications, elles étaient enveloppées dans telle ou telle strate déterminée, dont elles définissaient le programme ou l'unité de composition...tantôt la machine abstraite au contraire traversait toutes les stratifications, se développait unique et pour elle-même sur le plan de consistance dont elle constituait le diagramme, la même machine travaillait aussi bien l'astrophysique et le micro-physique, le naturel et l'artificiel, et pilotait des flux de déterritorialisation absolue.²⁵

1.3 Plane of Consistency

What is the meaning of the plane of consistency? This is perhaps the most difficult question facing anybody that wishes to understand Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. One path into this problem might be to remind ourselves of Spinoza's rigorous immanentism. Although Being for Spinoza is divided into three terms, substance, attributes and modes, there is no external disjunction between them. To put it into the language that Deleuze uses, attributes express substance as modes express attributes, each term envelops the other. By analogy, we might suggest that machinic assemblages are modes, abstract machines are attributes and the plane of consistency is substance. The force of the analogy here is to prevent us from thinking that the plane of consistency somehow stands outside the abstract machine and machinic assemblages. Rather, one must think of there being two forces or movements across the plane of consistency, territorialization and deterritorialization. The strata are not external or opposed to the plane of consistency, but are merely movements and rests within it. The abstract machine is that function which determines these movements or

²⁵ Ibid. *MP*, p. 73, *TP*, p. 56.

rests, or, to use Deleuze and Guattari's language, draws lines across the plane of consistency, but these lines can either be the line of stratification or the line of destratification.

What, however, does *MP* say about the plane of consistency in itself? We shall divide the response to this question into three parts: subtraction, expression and translation. Subtraction is a matter of analysis (or schizoanalysis, or micro-politics as Deleuze and Guattari will call it), expression concerns the spinozist definition of the univocity of Being, and finally translation pertains to the reconnection of this idea of univocity to a pragmatic politics.

subtraction

The plane of consistency is everywhere and always present, but we rarely see it. This is because we confuse the order of the real, or its origin with transcendent structures. That is to say, in the language of *MP* we make ontologically distinct the strata and the surface upon which they are composed. It is as though the order of the stratum came from the outside and fell back upon the plane of consistency. But for Deleuze and Guattari there is only the plane of consistency, and even the principles of organisation must emerge from it. Thus, at the level of analysis, we must *subtract* the principles of organisation in order to reach the plane of consistency, always aware that these principles of organisation do not have a different status of being than the plane of consistency. The principle of organisation lies at the level of exclusive disjunctions or differentiations, such as artificial-natural, content-expression, forms and formed

substances.²⁶ In other words it is the operation of the abstract machine in relation to machinic assemblages as they are enveloped within strata.

But, after this subtraction are we not left with the black night of the undifferentiated, absolute death and zero intensity? The analysis of subtraction enables us to see that precisely the opposite is the case, that the plane of consistency has its own ordering (that is to say its own relation to the abstract machine). And that this ordering is not at all identical to the principle of organisation, but of which the latter itself is its product. That is why we should not see the difference between the plane of transcendence, organisation and stratification as opposed to the plane of immanence, composition and destratification. Rather, there are only two vectors or directions of deterritorialization and reterritorialization that belong to the same continuum. In other words, compositions can be transmuted into conjugations and equally conjugations can be transmuted into compositions. This is why we shall see that politics for Deleuze and Guattari becomes a question of analysis: what are the conjunctions and compositions present in this relation between an abstract machine and the plane of consistency?

expression

Thus, after the analysis we are not left with an undifferentiated chaos of elements, but a different kind of relation between elements. Where, rather than elements being related to one another by transcendent or stratified schemas these elements cut across these strata and schemas. It is where everything is flattened out, and thereby where everything can relate to everything else, and in which elements are

²⁶ Ibid. *MP*, p. 90, *TP*, p. 70.

only distinguished by movement and rest, slowness and speed. In this plane there are only assemblages of multiplicity and individuation rather than assemblages of stratification and organisation. At this moment, Being, the expression of Being is the multiple – the infinite productivity, as Spinoza will name it, of the One. The One is not opposed to the multiple as though the plane of consistency were a unity outside of the multiplicities, rather the infinite assemblages of multiplicities are the expression of one and the same Being. The plane of consistency,

est un plan d'étalement, qui est plutôt comme la section de toutes les fonctions, et dont les dimensions croissent pourtant avec celles des multiplicités ou individualités qu'il recoupe. Plan fixe où les choses ne se distinguent que par la vitesse et la lenteur. Plan d'immanence ou d'univocité, qui s'oppose à l'analogie. L'Un se dit en un seul et même sens de tout ce qui diffère. Nous ne parlons pas ici de l'unité de la substance, mais de l'infinité des modifications qui sont parties les unes des autres sur ce seul et même plan de vie.²⁷

translation

What is decisive, as has been continually repeated and emphasised in this thesis, is that this expression of the univocity of Being has its direct translation into a pragmatic of politics. This does not mean that we first of all plan out our ontology and then somehow deduce from this a political program, rather a materialist ontology is straight away political because it makes no distinctions between the different strata since they all belong to one and the same substantive multiplicity. Or if one likes, the other way around, a counter politics such as liberalism or its modern formulations, has its own ontological basis or ground, which it nonetheless obscures or keeps concealed by appealing to epistemological or ethical categories. Deleuze and Guattari's

²⁷ Ibid. *MP*, p. 311, *TP*, p. 254.

ontological materialism implies that any principle of organisation is immanent to a process of deterritorialisation in two senses : the relation between any organised assemblage, whether large or small, is always a question of a relative deterritorialisation, and at the same time every relative deterritorialisation is also linked to an absolute deterritorialisation. The principle of organisation has its primary function in preventing these absolute deterritorialisations, to prevent the movement across different strata. Politics, which is now localised within the relation between the machinic assemblage of the social formations at the level of expression and at the level of the body, is now translated into finding and constructing those abstract machines that cut across the organisations of these signs and bodies. That is to say, of constructing differing relations between bodies and signs that break through the monolithic stratum of political identities :

Le plan de consistance, ce serait l'ensemble de tous les CsO, pure multiplicité d'immanence, dont un morceau peut être chinois , un autre américain , un autre médiéval , un autre petit-pervers , mais dans un mouvement de déterritorialisation généralisée où chacun prend et fait ce qu'il peut d'après ses goûts qu'il aurait réussi à abstraire de telle ou telle formation , d'après tel procédé qui serait abstrait de son origine.²⁸

Such a political project, which is not to be confused with any program or plan, demands a rejection of macro-politics (such as parties, international organisations, demands for human rights and so on), for a micro-politics that functions and effectuates change at the level beneath global representations. Before going on to attempt and explain the meaning of micro-politics in *MP*, and how it is both similar and different from the political position in *AO*, I shall turn to the work of the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde whose analysis of micro-sociology can help explain how

²⁸ Ibid. *MP*, p. 195, *TP*, p. 157.

society can be understood both at the levels of, in the words of Maurizio Lazzarato, the 'sub-personal' and the 'supra-personal'.²⁹

²⁹ Maurizio Lazzarato, 'Gabriel Tarde et l'économie des affects'. dans *Chimères*, n° 39, Été 2000, p. 64.

II. Gabriel Tarde : "micro-sociology" or the Infinitesimal in *Mille Plateaux*

Gabriel Tarde is one of the most significant and perhaps subterranean influences in the development of Deleuze's thought. In fact, before Deleuze is interested in him he had almost completely disappeared from the intellectual scene and his major works have only been recently republished.³⁰ His name first appears in *Différence et Répétition* in which he is one of many names of a counter tradition put into battle by Deleuze against the great systems of the idealism of Western thought.³¹ The Tarde that is important for this thesis, however, is the Tarde of micro-sociology ; Deleuze and Guattari's conception of a micro-politics cannot be made sense of without it. The social stratum is made up of segmented lines and constant flows. Segmented lines belong to the global representation of society whereas the quantum flows belong to the infinitesimal relations between bodies and signs. The practice of sociology on the whole has always been to ignore these micro sociological phenomena for the sake of global representations. This explains to some extent the disappearance of Tarde's work. For as Deleuze and Guattari remind us in *MP*, the work of Gabriel Tarde was crushed by 'Durkheim and his school' because the latter investigated 'great collective representations.'³² If Durkheim and his school study these collective representations which are binary and segmentary, then the work of

³⁰ The exception to this is Jean Milet's Doctorat d'Etat, *Gabriel Tarde et la philosophie de l'histoire*, (Paris : Vrin, 1970).

³¹ The importance of Tarde at this stage for Deleuze is that in his thought there is a sustained critique of representation and dialectics through the concepts of difference and repetition. See *DR(a)*, (Paris : puf, 1968) p. 39, fn. 1, p. 104-05, fn 1, *DR(b)*, (London : Athlone Press, 1994), pp. 25-26, 76, 307, 313-14.

Tarde interests Deleuze and Guattari because it analyses that which flows beneath these binary and segmentary representations. What flows beneath are the social quantities of belief and desire, which for Tarde are not individual psychological entities, but pre-individual quanta detached from global persons. Thus, as Deleuze and Guattari underline, the fundamental difference is not between the individual and the social, but between molar representations (of which the idea of the individual and the social are products), and the molecular realm of social quanta that detach themselves from codification and stratification:

Car, finalement, la différence n'est nullement entre le social et l'individuel (ou l'interindividuel), mais entre le domaine des représentations, qu'elles soit collectives ou individuelles, et le domaine moléculaire des croyances et des désirs, où la distinction du social et de l'individu perd tout son sens, puisque les flux ne sont pas plus attribuables à des individus que surcodables par des signifiants collectifs.³³

Social Quanta

Tarde's theory rests on one fundamental principle: all relations that link individuals together, and these relations are not the same as the individuals themselves but are social quanta, can be brought back to one original and unique relation : *imitation*. For Tarde this force can be explained by the natural tendency that all individuals have within them that makes them prone to imitate one another in such a way that a series of similarities are developed: 'Je prétends que le rapport de ces deux personnes est l'élément unique et nécessaire de la vie sociale, et qu'il constitue toujours,

³² Op.Cit. *MP*, p. 267, *TP*, p. 218.

³³ Ibid. *MP*, pp. 267-68, *TP*, p. 219.

originaires en une imitation de l'une par l'autre.³⁴ Again, it needs to be emphasised that what interests Tarde is not the individuals of this relation, but *the relation* itself. This relation is pre-individual made up of social quantities that like a wave rises and falls as a passage through the bodies of individuals constituting them prior to any conscious acts. The principle of imitation therefore is the explanation of group cohesion and expansion, producing an ever greater amount of similarities as the only guarantee of its own perpetuation: 'De là que cette définition du groupe social: une collection d'être en tant qu'ils sont en train de s'imiter entre eux ou en tant que , sans s'imiter actuellement, ils se ressemblent et que leurs traits communs sont des copies anciennes d'un même modèle.'³⁵

What makes a people or a community can be analysed in several different ways: economical, juridical, political, religious and so on. But what needs to be explained at a most profound level is how these common or shared beliefs pass from one individual to another thus constituting a given social formation. What is shared by all the individuals of a given social formation, is a certain similitude, a similitude of values arising from the past, marking the present and to a certain extent shaping the future. All the quantity of values that are shared by the individuals of the same social formation constitute similarities amongst them. The members of a given social formation are quantifiably similar to one another through the values that they share.

³⁴ Gabriel Tarde, *Les lois sociales*, (Paris : Institut Synthelabo, 1999), p.59. [I assert that the relation between these two people is the unique and necessary element of social life, and that it always consists in the imitation of the one by the other.]

³⁵ Gabriel Tarde, *Les lois de l'imitation*, (Paris : Kimé, 1993), p. 73. [From this the definition of a social group: a collection of beings as they are in the process of imitating each other or as they resemble one another, without actually imitating one another and that their common traits are ancient copies of a same model.]

But this identity is not given, it is produced, and it is produced, Tarde writes, 'peu à peu, de proche en proche, par voie d'imitation.'³⁶

the Pre-individual

Imitation is not an individual decision or act. The fundamental forces that constitute the social organisations through similitude exist at a deeper level than the social representations that would appear on the surface to represent them. These social representations are in fact a secondary product of a conglomeration that has already happened at the level of the pre-individual. For Tarde imitation can be conscious or unconscious, deliberate or automatic, positive or negative, attractive or repulsive, but the difference that lies between these oppositions is one of degree not one of nature. Thus, unconscious processes can be congealed into conscious ones and conscious ones can flow into unconscious ones, but there is no absolute distinction between them. It is closer to the truth to say that we pass from the unconscious to the conscious (and vice versa) by degrees rather than by abstract jumps. This passage from the unconscious to the conscious therefore, cannot be understood at the level of the individual. Thus, the relations between individuals, their imitation of one another, and the infinite amount of similarities that binds and forms social formations, is not itself something that can be thought at the level of the individual person – in fact, individual persons are the product of this relation. This is why Tarde believes that imitation can only be made sense of at the level of the infinitesimal. It has to be subdivided into a range of small repetitions, and it is these repetitions that produce desires and beliefs at the level of the individual. It is for this reason that Tarde is weary of generalisations à

³⁶ Ibid. p. 65. [little by little, next by next, by way of imitation.].

la Durkheim and other sociologists, that leads to totalisations and general representations which conceive of the social as merely the antinomy between the individual and the community. If the principle relation of the social is imitation, then it becomes clear, that imitation does not occur at the level of a total or global person. Imitation takes place, for Tarde, at the level of two social quantities of belief and desire which flow through individuals, rather than being constituted by these individuals:

L'énergie de tendance psychique, d'avidité mentale, que j'appelle le désir, est, comme l'énergie de saisissement intellectuel, d'adhésion et de constriction mentale, que j'appelle croyance, un courant homogène et continu qui, sous la variable coloration des teintes de l'affectivité propre à chaque esprit, circule identique, tantôt divisé, éparpillé, tantôt concentré, et qui d'une personne à une autre, aussi bien que d'une perception à une autre dans chacune d'elles, se communique sans altération.³⁷

In other words, these social quanta, and they are quantities because they increase and diminish within the social field, can be analysed separately from the global representations, which constitute the order of social formations. In the language of *MP*, these social quantities are lines of deterritorialisation that flow through individuals as they are constituted by global representation, whereas the latter are segments that belong to stratification and are thereby always reterritorializations of the deterritorialized flows of social quantities.

³⁷ Ibid. pp. 56-7. [The energy of psychic tendency, of mental avidity, that I name desire is, like the energy of intellectual grasping, of mental adhesion and constriction, which I call belief, a homogenous and continuous current which beneath the varied colourings of the shades of the affectivity proper to each spirit, circulates identical, now divided, spread, then concentrated, and that from one person to the next, just as much as from one perception to another in each of them, communicates without alteration.] For a further description of the meaning of social quanta see Op.Cit. *Les lois de l'imitation*, pp. 15-6, and Op.Cit. *Les lois sociales*, p. 57.

A Critique of Political Economy

The analysis of social quanta also leads Tarde to a fundamental critique of the foundations of political economy. This perhaps is one of the causes for the shift in register from *AO* to *MP*. In the former work, Deleuze and Guattari are quite content to still operate in the language of political economy. This is no doubt due to their adoption of the Marxist distinction between production, distribution and consumption. Despite the fact that Marx's work can be seen as a critique of political economy such as Ricardo and Smith's, this critique is an *immanentist* critique in the style of Hegel. In other words, it adopts the very terminology of that system that it criticises in order to demonstrate that system's internal contradictions. Even though Marx's works remain the most important critique of capital we have (and many assert that the last work Deleuze was writing was to be on Marx), it nonetheless retains the fundamental premise of all political economy that production can only be understood through the nexus of capital and labour. Tarde rejects this fundamental premise. It can perhaps be postulated that this rejection explains, as we shall see in the following section, that the immanent dissolution of capital at the level of the nexus of labour and capital is no longer the fundamental site for resistance for Deleuze and Guattari.³⁸

In political economy all values are economic; that is to say that economy is the source of all values and production is essentially understood as economic. For Tarde all values are social, and economic values are simply one example of social values. Take for example the category of production. For political economy, production is

³⁸ Gabriel Tarde is quite direct in his rejection of the fundamental premise of political economy when he writes : 'Ne disons plus que le travail est la seule source de valeur. La source première, c'est l'invention, qui n'est pas un travail'. *Ps. Ec.*, I, (Paris : Alcan, 1902), p. 168. [We no longer say that labor is the only source of value. The first source is invention which is not labor.] And : 'Le capital [...] n'est nullement du travail accumulé, ou du moins ce n'est pas cela essentiellement, mais bien, avant tout, l'invention accumulée', *La logique sociale*, (Paris : Alcan, 1893), p. 352. [Capital...is not at

merely an economic category in the conjunction of capital and labor (or for the neo-classicists: use-value). Rather than understanding value through production in this sense, Tarde wishes to reach the fundamental layer of the production of values as such. He is interested in the productivity of production, rather than production as a result of an anterior process (in this case the social formation of capital) that captures the productivity of production in a global representation. Tarde calls the productivity of production *invention*. We can understand this concept in the following way: invention is that which translates social quanta into value through the reciprocal combination of beliefs and desires. It is through this combinatory that the real forces that constitute history and politics are produced: 'Ne voit-on pas qu'avec leurs combinaisons réciproques, les passions et les desseins, ils sont les vents perpétuels des tempêtes de l'histoire, les chutes d'eau qui font tourner les moulins des politiques ?'³⁹

This conjunction between desires and beliefs takes place beneath the economic categories of political economy. Invention cannot be reduced to work nor can it be reduced to the ideological fantasies of artists, philosophers and so on. Invention, for Tarde, happens at the level of the pre-individual. It is the eruption of the new within the continuum of habit across all spheres of productivity whether we are speaking of the religious, juridical, economic and even beyond these discourses themselves, at the level of the infinitesimal unheard of becomings. This is why Tarde will say, almost quite humorously, that the force of invention that translates quanta into value has its site in 'little men'.⁴⁰ Moreover, what prevents us from reducing invention to the level

all accumulated labour, or at least it is not that essentially, but before anything else, accumulated invention.]

³⁹ Gabriel Tarde, *Monadologie et sociologie*, (Paris : Institut Synthélabo, 1999), p. 50.

⁴⁰ 'Ce qu'il faut accorder aux adversaires de la théorie des causes individuelles en histoire, c'est qu'on la faussé en parlant de grands hommes là où il fallait parler de grandes idées, souvent apparues en de très petits hommes, et même des petites idées, d'infinitésimal innovations apportées par chacun de nous à l'œuvre commune.' Op.Cit, *Les lois sociales*, p. 126. [What we can grant to our adversaries of the theory of individual causes in history is that it is false to speak of great men where it should have spoke

of the individual is that it is always in an *intrinsic* relation to imitation. Tarde explains the synthesis between invention and imitation through the concept of adaptation. An invention expands through the social field by means of imitation, which as we have described above occurs at the level of infinitesimal transformations, at the level of the pre-individual.

If we understand innovation as difference then no difference stands without its necessary repetition. Invention only arises through repetition, but also repetition only has its source in innovation. This inclusive relation between invention and imitation is not external to the social quanta of belief and desire, rather it explains their transubstantiation into molar organisations. But equally, these two forces also explain the dissolution of molar organisations through the intensities that are translated by these forces. Thus, the question is not what is the relation between the individual and society but which forces produce territorialized flows and which deterritorialized flows. Durkheim and his followers begin from the level of the individual and deduce transcendent forms of collective schemas of objectivity which miraculously stand apart from the individuals they constitute. Tarde's genius is to show that beneath all our collective beliefs and desires there is a whole micro-sociology of 'little' beliefs and desires which are continually bubbling underneath our most cherished and fictional values and habits.

of great ideas, often coming from little men, and even of little ideas, infinitesimal innovations brought about by each of us in common effort.]

when for example Deleuze and Guattari speak of the unconscious as being neither expressive nor representative, on the one side, whereas on the other the social machine is symbolic.⁴² Formal oppositions like these are present throughout the argument of *AO*. This is unlike *MP*, where the distinction between unconscious machines and social machines is no longer present. There are only social machines or, more fundamentally, there are only, at the level of the anthropomorphic, social quanta that constitute a combinatory of connections and conjunctions.

the Outside

Although, both *MP* and *AO* talk about absolute and relative deterritorialization, this change in emphasis leads them to be interpreted in a different way. In *AO* absolute deterritorialization is almost imagined as an outside to society as such. There are two reasons for this: one reason is to do with the manner that *AO* understands capitalism in a Marxist sense as the contradiction between an absolute and a relative limit, and the other, is to do with the manner in which the machinic unconscious, although it is understood as being social, it is only social as that which is exterior to every society. This might explain the residual romanticism, if one may use such a word, of *AO* which resides in the figure of the schizoid who exists outside the limits of every society as can be found in the example that opens *AO* of the famous stroll of Bückner's Lenz :

La promenade du schizophrène : c'est un meilleur modèle
que le névrosé couché sur le divan. Un peu de grand air, une

⁴¹ Op.Cit. *Monadologie et sociologie*, p. 58.

⁴² 'L'inconscient ne dit rien, il machine. Il n'est pas expressif ou représentatif, mais productif. Un symbole est uniquement une machine social qui fonctionne comme machine désirante, une machine désirante qui fonctionne dans la machine sociale, un investissement de la machine sociale par la machine.' Op.Cit. *AO*, p. 213, *AOb*, p. 180.

relation avec le dehors. Par exemple la promenade de Lenz reconstituée par Bückner. C'est différent des moments où Lenz se retrouve chez son bon pasteur, qui le force à se repérer socialement, par rapport au Dieu de la religion, par rapport au père, à la mère. Là au contraire il est dans les montagnes, sous la neige, avec d'autres dieux ou sans dieu du tout, sans famille, sans père ni mère, avec la nature. « Que veut mon père ? Peut-il me donner mieux ? Impossible. Laissez-moi en paix. » Tout fait machine.⁴³

This is why one cannot underestimate the importance of Tarde to *MP*. There is no necessity to appeal to a psyche which, no matter the parallel that is drawn with the social, somehow, still stands apart from it even though all the elements it contains are social. There is no psyche as such, there are only flows of social quanta and rather than speaking of a schizoid at the limit of the socius, we can only speak of there being two forces which direct the two social flows of beliefs and desires. Or, in Deleuze and Guattari's language, the flows of affects go one in the direction of stratification and the other in the direction of absolute destratification. Of course, this is not a vision directed against *AO*, rather it merely pushes the immanence of the latter to its own implicit conclusion. If everything is immanent to the social field, then the phenomenological distinction between the psyche and the social is no longer required. The abolition of this distinction, however, will also change the way in which *MP* constructs the political and this is what will be analysed in what follows. Micro-politics, as they call it in *MP*, is different from schizo-politics as they name it in *AO*. This difference too has to do with the change in the problematic of the parallelism between the psyche and the social and the status of capitalism as the end of history.

⁴³Ibid. *AO*, pp. 7-8. *AOB*, p. 2.

the Molecular and the Molar

This difference becomes more visible if we look at the analysis of the distinction between the molecular and the molar (already in use in *AO*), in the chapter entitled 'micro-politics and segmentarity' in *MP*. In this work, this distinction is first of all used to describe the difference between what they call 'soft' and 'hard' segmentarity. One example they give of this difference is through the relation between the sexes. One can think of the relation between the sexes across hard segmentarity, as Freud does, in the difference between the masculine and the feminine. One can also think of the relation between the sexes not in terms of an exclusive relation but as an inclusive one, in which one cannot speak of a femininity opposed to a masculinity (embodied in the two distinct sexes), but as a masculinity or femininity that passes *between* sexes. Also, one may think of a relation of these two sexes to other becomings beyond the woman-man distinction: 'Car les deux sexes renvoient à de multiples combinaisons moléculaires, qui mettent en jeu non seulement l'homme dans la femme et la femme dans l'homme, mais le rapport de chacun dans l'autre avec l'animal, la plante, etc., mille petits-sexes.'⁴⁴ These molecular couplings are first of all defined by Deleuze and Guattari in terms of a 'soft segmentarity'.

Having made this distinction between a 'hard' and a 'soft' segmentarity, later in the chapter Deleuze and Guattari actually correct themselves. Rather than the distinction existing at the level of segments, whether they are rigid or not (whether they are, ethnographically speaking, modern or primitive), the real distinction is now placed between segments on the one hand, of which there are two kinds, and flows of

⁴⁴ Op. Cit. *MP*, p. 260, *TP*, p. 213.

quanta on the other. The molar is on the side of segmentarity and the molecular on the side of flows:

Peut-être alors faut-il réserver les mots « ligne » et « segments » pour l'organisation molaire, et chercher d'autres mots qui conviendraient davantage à la composition moléculaire. En effet, chaque fois que l'on peut assigner une *ligne à segments* bien déterminé, on s'aperçoit qu'elle se prolonge sous une autre forme, en un *flux à quanta*.⁴⁵

Not that we should see these two forces as being opposed to one another, rather they are reciprocally combined. Thus, it is never possible to say that a given society or organisation is molar or molecular, in fact, across molar organisations there is always a flow of deterritorialisations and equally these flows are always being reterritorialized in turn. Deleuze and Guattari use the example of money. Money has two aspects: money as molar and as molecular. On the one hand, it is molar, they call it 'payment money', it is a money-segment that is linked to another aspect of money, that is, a money-flow that they call the 'flow of financing-money'.⁴⁶ Every element within the social field can be described in the same way: at one moment caught within molar organisations, and at another, mutant flows, which are always carrying it somewhere else. These deterritorialisations, as Deleuze and Guattari remark, are also the site of a new territorialization, as for example the bourgeoisie were with the dissolution of feudal structures.⁴⁷

Now this description of the difference between the molar and the molecular is subtly different from their description in *AO*. It is true to say that in *AO* the molecular is thought on the side of deterritorialisation and the molar on the side of reterritorialization. And yet, the difference lies in the fact that the molecular in *AO* is

⁴⁵ Ibid, *MP*, p. 264, *TP*, p. 217.

⁴⁶ Ibid, *MP*, pp. 264-65, *TP*, p. 217.

⁴⁷ Ibid, *MP*, p. 269, *TP*, p. 221.

on the side of desiring production itself whereas the molar is thought only on the side of social production. In *MP*, on the other hand, as has already been remarked, both the molar and the molecular are descriptions of social forces that act upon social quantities to produce either lines of flight or lines of segmentarity. The question we have to ask ourselves now, is whether these subtle differences change the way we need to think about politics as such. The question is: are schizoanalysis and micro-politics the same thing?

Schizoanalysis and Micro-politics

It should not surprise us that this difference will be subtle. It is a question of where you are looking. The similarity between schizo-politics or schizoanalysis and micro-politics is that both are not to be thought of within any kind of traditional political schema. In other words, they do not embody theoretical principles that can then readily be translated into practice. Thus, in *AO* Deleuze and Guattari write that 'la schizo-analyse *en tant que telle* n'a strictement aucun programme politique à proposer. Si elle en avait un, ce serait tout à la fois grotesque et inquiétant.'⁴⁸ And equally in *MP*, they will sharply distinguish between micro-politics and macro-politics, the latter describing all kinds of organised, whether big or small, political groups:

La politique opère par macro-décisions et choix binaires, intérêts binarisés ; mais le domaine du décidable reste mince. Et la décision politique plonge nécessairement dans un monde de micro-détermination, d'attirances et de désirs, qu'elle doit pressentir ou évaluer d'une autre façon [...] Bonne ou mauvaise, la politique et ses jugements sont toujours molaires,

⁴⁸ Op. Cit, *AO*, p. 456, *AOB*, p. 380.

mais c'est le moléculaire, avec ses appréciations, qui la
« fait ».⁴⁹

Both are also similar in that they offer an analysis of capitalism that cuts across the theoretical-practice divide – to do schizoanalysis or micro-politics is to analyse. It means to draw a map of the lines of deterritorialisation that cut across the segmentary divides: 'Tout autre est le rhizome, *carte et non pas calque* . Faire la carte, et pas le calque [...] La carte est ouverte, elle est connectable dans toutes ses dimensions, démontable, renversable, susceptible de recevoir constamment des modifications.'⁵⁰ And yet, it is at the level of the content of this analysis that there is a subtle difference between schizoanalysis and micro-politics. Both are a critique of capitalism, but in the former capitalism is seen as a social formation that exists at the end of a linear line of history, whereas in the latter capitalism is co-extensive to other social formations. This means that in schizoanalysis it is only with the end of history that a politics of desire is possible, and this possibility is due, here reformulated within the language of desire, to the internal contradictions of capitalism itself. Micro-politics on the other hand is turned towards those infinitesimal encounters that Tarde was one of the first to describe: 'L'infinésimal, donc, diffère qualitativement du fini ; le mouvement a une cause autre que lui-même ; le phénomène n'est pas tout l'être. Tout part de l'infinésimal et tout y retourne.'⁵¹

Here the subtle difference is a matter of scale but also of pathos. In *AO* becoming revolutionary is understood through the difference between subjected and subject-groups whereas in *MP* becomings (including becoming revolutionary) are happening everywhere beneath the homogenous space hollowed out by the State

⁴⁹ Op.Cit, *MP*, p. 270, *TP*, p. 221. And also : 'Bref, tout est politique, mais toute politique est à la fois *macro-politique et micro-politique*.' Op.Cit, *MP*, p. 260, *TP*, p. 213.

⁵⁰ Ibid, *MP*, p. 20, *TP*, p. 13.

apparatus. This is because the possibility of deterritorialisations does not come from a subject position even if this subject is now understood as the unconscious, but from that side of the abstract machine that is turned towards the plane of consistency: a whole nexus of criss-crossing lines that are surging through the stratified layers of society. But this is also a change in pathos, in mood and optimism. In *AO* there is still a faint shadow of a Marxist melancholia that the internal contradictions on which the revolution resides are simply infinitely iterative. As soon as one situates becoming revolutionary between the interstices of power within infinitesimal changes that happen between and beyond binary oppositions of whatever kind, and not just the disjunction between capital and labour, then it is understandable we find a certain optimism of Deleuze as for example in *Dialogues*:

D'une certain manière, c'est tout simple, ça se fait tout seul, et tout les jours. L'erreur serait de dire : il y a un Etat globalisant, maitre de ses plans et tendant ses pièges ; et puis, une force de résistance qui va épouser la forme de l'Etat, quitte à nous trahir, ou bien qui va tomber dans les luttes locales partielles ou spontanées, quitte à être chaque fois étouffées et battues. L'Etat le plus centralisé n'est pas du tout maître de ses plans, lui aussi est expérimentateur, il fait des injections, il n'arrive pas à prévoir quoi que ce soit : les économistes d'Etat se déclarent incapables de prévoir l'augmentation d'une masse monétaire [...] C'est sur les lignes différentes d'agencements complexes que les pouvoirs mènent leurs expérimentations, mais qui se lèvent aussi des expérimentations d'une autre sorte, déjouant les prévisions, traçant des lignes de fuite actives, cherchant la conjugaison de ces lignes, précipitant leurs vitesse ou la ralentissant, créant morceau par morceau le plan de consistance, avec un machine de guerre qui mesurerait à chaque pas les dangers qu'elle rencontre.⁵²

⁵¹ Op.Cit, *Monadologie et sociologie*, p. 39. [The infinitesimal, thus, qualitatively differs from the finite; movement has another cause than itself ; the phenomenon is not the whole of being. Everything leaves the infinitesimal and returns to it.]

⁵² Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, (Paris : Flammarion, 1996), p. 174. *On the line*, (New York : Semiotexte, 1983), pp. 110-11.

Chapter V

the practice of micro-politics or philosophy as 'ethics'

To some extent the operation of this thesis so far has only been to describe the status of the political in Deleuze and Guattari's work. But there is a question, a very important one, which still needs to be analyzed: the *practice* of politics as such. This is a very difficult question that many seem to ask of philosophers nowadays; what is Derrida's politics? Levinas' politics, and so on... Yet, the real problem that is being posed here lies not in the difficulty to find an answer in terms of some content to these questions. But, in that the image this thought presents us with renders diagnose difficult in it self. It is difficult to find an answer because the image of this thought presents itself to us as being utterly obvious and therefore we have no need to think about it. Politics therefore appears as the more obvious of consequences for philosophy: is it not simply a matter of putting into practice what a philosopher has said? But, what precisely does it mean to put something into practice? How do we translate from the level of thought to that of action?

The first response to this question is to think about the image of thought itself, and this is perhaps the very definition of what it is to do philosophy. In *Différence et*

Répétition, Deleuze describes the image of thought in terms of dogmatism.¹ As one part of his analysis he talks of the dogma of common sense or the 'postulate of the ideal', wherein is explained how the notions of common sense and good sense combine and complete each other.² In accordance to this image of thought the affinity between truth and thought itself is formally established and, as Deleuze tells us, 'c'est sur cette image que chacun sait, est censé savoir ce que signifie penser.'³ This is not itself a philosophical thought, but an image of thought that a certain kind of philosophy presupposes as its necessary condition. Within its own boundaries this image of thought, although it can be refined upon, itself remains unquestioned.⁴ For Deleuze therefore, to think in a different way is first of all to attack this image of thought, and one of the most important recourses for him in this task is the thought of Nietzsche. It is not about having different thoughts, which is simply not enough, but about having a different image of thought altogether, or even as we shall see, having no image of thought: 'La pensée qui naît dans la pensée, l'acte de penser engendré dans sa genitalicité, ni donné dans l'innéité ni supposé dans la réminiscence, est la pensée sans image. Mais qu'est-ce qu'une telle pensée, et son processus dans la monde?'⁵

This talk of a philosophy that has no image of thought does not presuppose a pre-philosophical foundation and is above all a political problem (as the question

¹ The very interesting concept of the image of thought is treated at length by Deleuze and makes the matter of a full chapter. See 'l'Image de la pensée', *Différence et Répétition*, (Paris : puf, 1968), pp.169-217. [Hereafter DR]. And 'the Image of Thought', *Différence and Repetition*, (London : the Athlone Press, 1994), pp.129-167. [Hereafter DRb]

² 'Car si le sens commun est la norme d'identité, du point de vue du Moi pur et de la forme d'objet quelconque qui lui correspond, le bon sens est la norme de partage, du point de vue des moi empiriques et des objets qualifiés comme tel ou tel (ce pourquoi il s'estime universellement partagé)[...]le bon sens et le sens commun se complètent ainsi dans l'image de la pensée, d'une manière tout à fait nécessaire : à eux deux, ils constituent les deux moitiés de la *doxa*.' Ibid., DR, p.175 and DRb, pp.133-4.

³ Ibid. DR, p.172, DRb, p.132.

⁴ Deleuze defines the image of thought in the following manner: 'L'image de la pensée n'est que la figure sous laquelle on universalise la *doxa* en l'élevant au niveau rationnel.' Ibid. DR, p.176 and DRb, p.134.

ending the above quotation suggests). In *Différence et Répétition* this political form of the image of thought is presented through the notion of morality. As Deleuze remarks, Nietzsche's critique of philosophy is the demonstration that philosophy's fundamental presuppositions are in fact moral ones, and thus its pre-philosophical foundation is in fact non-philosophical; that is to say, put outside any critique.⁶ In *MP*, however, this political form of the image of thought is made more expressly obvious. Deleuze and Guattari do not talk of it in terms of common sense, but in terms of the State apparatus.⁷

It is here that we get to the crux of the problem: our contemporary desire for a politics arises from an image of thought that is counter to the very politics that we desire. Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the image of thought in *MP* is a critique of political theory for it is this form of philosophy that bases itself upon the rational defense of political sovereignty. Now, the usual translation of thought into practice takes the form of this rationality. Then, the problem is: can one move from thinking to acting outside of the image of thought since it is the image of thought itself which seems to supply the necessary coordinates to move from thought to the constitution of rational and objective political institutions?

The classical formulation of this form of procedure is the rational defense of the State. This image of thought establishes that the State is merely the external form of rationality. 'L'image classique de la pensée, et le striage de l'espace mental qu'elle opère, prétend à l'universalité. En effet, elle opère avec deux "universaux", le Tout

⁵ There are no italics in the original text: Ibid. **DR**, p.217, **DRb**, p.167.

⁶ Ibid. **DR**, p.172-3, **DRb**, p.132.

⁷ In fact, in *MP* they give another name to the State-form as it is developed in thought, they call it "noology".

comme dernier fondement de l'être ou horizon qui englobe, le Sujet comme principe qui convertit l'être en être pour-nous. *Impérium et république.*'⁸

Thus, if you obey the State you are not obeying an external heterogeneous power but the inner form of your rational will. The question of politics then becomes merely the creation of rational institutions throughout the world as it is defended through the universal language of human rights. Deleuze and Guattari's argument is that this image of thought (thought as universal and subjective) cannot itself be a defense of the State for it is itself a production of the State. It is not as though the image of thought is simply given, the rational will, and from that we can deduce the State, rather the rational will, the production of identical subjects, is itself a consequence of State power. Thus, the language of human rights is not a philosophical defense of the State, but the State's capture of philosophy: 'Il n'y a pas à s'étonner que le philosophe soit devenu professeur public ou fonctionnaire d'Etat.'⁹

Deleuze and Guattari's response to this impasse is not to offer another image of thought, another model of the True, the Just, the Good, but to think outside of the image or the model. Such a counter-thought could only be possible if there were an exteriority to the State apparatus as such. If there were no exteriority of the State, then the language of human rights would be the only political language. In *AO* the exteriority or the Outside of the State, as has been remarked in the previous chapter, is presented through the contradictions of capital. In *MP*, however, this outside is thought differently. The outside of the State apparatus is what Deleuze and Guattari call the War Machine. A thought that does not presuppose an image of thought is, therefore, one that is linked on to a war machine. Once more, the important precursor for Deleuze and Guattari is Nietzsche: 'Mettre la pensée en rapport immédiat avec le

⁸Ibid. *MP*, p.469, *TP*p.379.

⁹Ibid. *MP*, p.466, *TP*p.376.

dehors, avec les forces du dehors, bref faire de la pensée une machine de guerre, c'est une entreprise étrange dont on peut étudier les procédés précis chez Nietzsche.¹⁰

It is well known that Nietzsche was not a very systematic thinker, but this absence of system is not a failure on his part but marks the absence of an image of thought. In other words, this failure on Nietzsche's part to be 'rational' is the mark of the success of his 'counter-thought'. Of course, from the perspective of the philosophy of the State, this counter-thought can only present itself as being vaguely ridiculous or even poetic. Nonetheless, what presents itself in terms of the philosophy of the State, that is to say, as a philosophy that is captured by the State apparatus, is paradoxically also connected on its side to the very possibility of an outside to the State's domination. On this basis it can be understood how this writing or thought can still present us with a 'new politics', a new legitimization of sovereign power, yet writing and thought *themselves* run in a *counter* direction to any form of sovereign power. There is always the potentiality of counter-thought at the heart of any thought.¹¹ The object, therefore, is not just to write well but to think, and to think, for Deleuze, is to stammer: 'Le bégaiment créateur est ce qui fait pousser la langue par le milieu, comme de l'herbe, ce qui fait de la langue un rhizome au lieu d'un arbre, ce qui met la langue en perpétuel déséquilibre.'¹²

¹⁰ Ibid. p. *MP*, p.467, *TP*, pp. 376-77.

¹¹ It is important to recontextualize this double aspect of thought in terms of the analysis of power as discussed in the second chapter of this thesis. This analysis centred on drawing the important conceptual distinction between the two forms of power for which the English terms are not readily available: *potentia* and *potestas*. There is, as it were, a *potentia* or *puissance* of thought, as inexhaustible creativity and power of resistance, and there is a *potestas* or *pouvoir* of thought which is the form the State takes in thought, its power of self-legitimation. But the important point to remark, and this is where the argument follows the same logic than that of Spinoza's analysis of power, is that the power of thought is necessarily linked to its *puissance*. Herein, lies its resisting and creative power. This double aspect of thought will be further examined throughout this chapter.

¹² G. Deleuze, *Critique et clinique*, (Paris : Minuit, 1993), p. 140. [Creative stammering is that which makes language grow through the milieu, like grass, making language a rhizome instead of a tree, putting it in a perpetual state of disequilibrium.]

Thus, it can never be a matter here of moving from thought to practice via a process of self-justification and legitimisation. Rather, the activity of thought itself is a practice *as long as it is linked on to a war machine*. The fundamental question therefore becomes what is a war machine? Or how does one analyse the difference between different machinic assemblages such that one could decide between a war machine that is outside the State apparatus and one that has become captured by the State apparatus. It is this question, to some extent, that has replaced the distinction in *AO* between subjected groups and subject-groups.

This chapter will be organised in the following manner. First of all there will be an analysis of the relation between the War Machine and the State apparatus in so far as it is constitutive of thought and counter-thought. Then it will explore the notion of 'becoming' as Deleuze and Guattari's alternative answer to the more classical image of a thought in which the *passage* from theory to practice is what remains most unthought. Finally, having realised the full transformational and metamorphical character of the latter notion the discussion will return to the question of the subject and its possible redefinition as a site both of revolutionary resistance and creative potential.

I. Of the relation between the War Machine and the State Apparatus of Capture

Let us first of all, therefore, turn to the description of the relation between the war machine and the State apparatus as it is described in *MP*. Again, we need to remind ourselves of the subtle difference between *MP* and *AO* concerning the importance and opposition of the State in relation to the codification of desire. In *AO* the State exists as one form of the socius existing between primitive social formations and capitalism. The State does not disappear after the emergence of capital. Nonetheless, in *AO*, the State and capital operate by a wholly different logic: 'La machine despotique est synchronique tandis que le temps de la machine capitaliste est diachronique, les capitalistes surgissent tour à tour dans une série que fonde une sorte de créativité de l'histoire, étrange ménagerie: temps schizoïde de la nouvelle coupure créative.'¹³ In *MP*, on the other hand, it is the State rather than capital that is the fundamental agent of repression and in fact it explains why the contradictions of the latter have not at all lead to an increase in revolutionary potential within the so called industrial societies. Within capitalism the State has not become tangential, despite the talk of flows of international capital, but ever more powerful. The State intervenes at every level of life.

The State, for Deleuze and Guattari, is not an evolutionary historical phenomena that occurs at a certain point in time and then disappears, but is the

¹³ G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *L'Anti-Œdipe*, (Paris : Minuit, 1972), p.264 and *Anti Œdipus*, (London : the Athlone Press, 1984), p.223. Thus, we can agree with Bogue's remark that though the State in *AO* has a residual existence within capitalism it nonetheless can be confused with the latter. Capitalism is a totally separate formation : '[t]hey identify primitive societies as those which oppose the centralization of power, and hence all forms of state organisation, and they regard the capitalist state as a residual despotic archaism, which functions as a unit of anti-production within the capitalist machine, but which

necessary horizon of every social formation: what they call the *Urstaat*: 'Il faut dire que l'Etat, il y en a toujours eu, et très parfait, très formé. Plus les archéologues font de découvertes, plus ils découvrent des empires. L'hypothèse de l'*Urstaat* semble vérifiée, « l'Etat bien compris remonte déjà aux temps les plus reculés de l'humanité ».¹⁴ It always and everywhere has the same function and that is to capture and control the flows of the *ecumenon*, flows of 'populations, de marchandises ou de commerce, d'argent ou de capitaux, etc.'¹⁵ But this means, and this is the decisive point for Deleuze and Guattari, that the State cannot exist without the exterior or outside that it must appropriate. Thus, this explains why there can be no self-legitimation and rationalisation of the State, which is the cornerstone of a juridical conception of power, because the State first of all exists as an apparatus of capture. It can only be the interiorization of these flows into a striated and organised space because of this exteriority that resists it.

This exteriority or Outside, Deleuze and Guattari call the War Machine. Again, we need to remind ourselves that this is not simply the description of a historical phenomena, so that we might imagine a happy band of nomads who were suddenly one day enslaved by a despotic State; rather, the process of the interiorization of an exteriority and the exteriorisation of an interiority are coextensive within the historical field. This means that the nomadic war machine can take many different forms and guises. This also means, however, that the State apparatus, which is constantly on the search for new forms of war machines, can equally take on different forms and guises. In *MP* Deleuze and Guattari first speak of there being two

has no intrinsic connection with capitalism itself. The three machines, therefore, may be roughly described as pre-state, state and post-state machines.' R. Bogue, (London : Routledge, 1989), p.96.

¹⁴Op.Cit, *MP*, p.445, *TP*, p.360.

¹⁵Ibid. *MP*, p.479, *TP*, p.386.

forms in the present age of the war machine. These two forms take the shape of world wide machines that are continuously escaping the power of States to appropriate them (for example, multi-international corporate organisations and religious sects). And on a different scale, but perhaps even more disruptive, 'mécanismes locaux de bandes, marges, minorités, qui continuent d'affirmer les droits de sociétés segmentaires contre les organes du pouvoir d'Etat.'¹⁶ We shall need to talk about the apparatus of capture in more detail later on in this chapter. First of all, however, let us focus on the exteriority of the war machine in relation to the State and how this becomes a locus for Deleuze and Guattari's conception or perhaps 'condition of possibility' of any kind of revolutionary affect.

I.1 The War Machine or the Outside

It is not enough to think of the War Machine as being external to the State apparatus, rather it is the pure form of exteriority. If the war machine were merely external, then like any proposition that opposes it would have to be defined by what it is opposed to. The war machine would merely be the projection of the worst fears and horrors of the State that it could continually excise from itself through the sublime operations of its organising interiorising power of appropriation. If the war machine in all its different historical guises has appeared as that which is most to be feared then this has arrived from out of its own exteriority to the State apparatus. The Outside is not a function of the inside; it is what happens to the inside. To understand this we

¹⁶ Ibid. *MP*, p.445, *TP*, p.360.

need to remind ourselves of the two sides of the abstract machine that we discussed in the previous chapter.

If we remember, the abstract machine has two sides: one that faces towards the plane of consistency and the other which faces towards machinic assemblages; one that is *metastratic* and the other which is *intrastratic*. The same logic holds true for the war machine, for it too is an abstract machine of a special kind. On the one side it is appropriated by the State apparatus for the means of domination and control, and on the other side, it is always in movement along a deterritorialization that moves beyond every social formation. The war machine is not another kind of State, but the non-state itself. Not the private individual but another type of organisation that Deleuze and Guattari call the pack or the band:

Les meutes, les bandes sont des groupes du type rhizome, par opposition au type arborescent qui se concentre sur des organes de pouvoir. C'est pourquoi les bandes en général, même de brigandages, ou de mondanité, sont des métamorphoses d'une machine de guerre, laquelle diffère formellement de tout appareil d'Etat, ou équivalent qui structure au contraire les sociétés centralisées.¹⁷

That we can speak, however, of a pure form of exteriority and interiority does not mean that they exist independently. Their pure difference is only at the level of analysis. In concrete terms they are always mixed. In other words, there has never been a pure State without any outside, and likewise there has never been an outside that has not been continually appropriated by some form of State apparatus. The distinction or difference between the State apparatus and the war machine is, therefore, like every distinction in Deleuze and Guattari's work, an immanent and not a transcendent one. They occupy, to use Deleuze and Guattari's expression, the 'same

¹⁷ Ibid., *MP*, p.443, *TP*, p.358.

field' in which interiority describes the formation of States and exteriority what 'escapes and stands against States'.¹⁸

This same field is the field of war such that Deleuze and Guattari can reverse Clausewitz' famous formula 'war is the continuation of politics by other means' into 'politics is the continuation of war by other means'.¹⁹ The immanent relation between the war machine and the State apparatus is thereby one of war. However, the war machine itself does not have a direct relation to war. It only relates to war supplementarily; that is to say, the war machine only becomes or has war as its object when it confronts the State form as such. In itself, the war machine is the invention of a nomad:

la machine de guerre était dans son essence l'élément constituant de l'espace lisse, de l'occupation de cet espace, du déplacement dans cet espace, et de la composition correspondante des hommes : c'est là son seul et véritable objet positif (*nomos*). Faire croître le désert, la steppe, non pas les dépeupler, bien au contraire. Si la guerre en découle nécessairement, c'est parceque la machine de guerre se heurte aux Etats et aux villes, comme au forces (de striage) qui s'opposent à l'objet positif : dès lors, la machine de guerre a pour ennemi l'Etat, la ville, le phénomène étatique et urbain, et prend pour objectif de les anéantir.²⁰

It is only when the war machine has been appropriated or captured by the State apparatus that its direct object becomes war. This is why the analysis of the war machine is so difficult because we tend to take its appropriated form as the manifestation of this pure Idea. This uncertainty is only further increased with the modern development of the State, which is the conjunction of the State apparatus with capital. Here war becomes total war, war pushed to the nth degree of annihilation even self-annihilation, as is witnessed in the fascist State. But also on the other side,

¹⁸ Ibid. *MP*, p.446, *TP*, p. 361.

¹⁹ Ibid. *MP*, p.525, *TP*, p. 421.

²⁰ Ibid. *MP*, p.519, *TP*, p.417.

'post-fascism' in which 'total war itself is surpassed towards a norm of peace more terrifying still.'²¹ At this point, the war machine is not a means of power of the State against the outside, rather it is the war machine itself which surrounds the whole Earth and States have merely become parts of its mechanism. Yet even in this case, where it appears that the war machine has become through a conjunction with capital a total interiorized form of stratification, there is nonetheless still the possibility, indeed a possibility exacerbated by the existence of this 'World war machine', of the emergence of countless and unforeseen revolutionary machines. This also explains why the modern State in its conjunction with capital must continually improve its mechanisms of surveillance and discipline in order to prevent these 'mutant' machines from proliferating: 'Cependant, les conditions mêmes de la machine de guerre d'Etat ou du Monde, c'est à dire le capital constant (ressources et matériel) et le capitale variable humain, ne cessent de recréer des possibilités de ripostes inattendues, d'initiatives imprévues qui déterminent des machines mutantes, minoritaires, populaires, révolutionnaires.'²²

It is not a question, therefore, of a simple opposition between a nomadic war machine on the one hand and a State apparatus on the other. Or even of thinking of it in terms of an opposition of a pure form of exteriority and a pure form of interiority, because for us the war machine has always already been appropriated. The question that needs to be asked therefore, is how this machine is appropriated by the State and why this is necessarily linked to the conjunction of the State form in capital. And how, at the very same time, a new kind of war machine is created at the margins of this appropriation or capture. Thus, it would be absurd to think, that Deleuze and Guattari are saying that we should literally become nomads again, or that it is even

²¹ Ibid. *MP*, p.525, *TP*, p.421.

²² Ibid? *MP*, p.526, *TP*, p.422.

possible to exist purely outside the State; rather what is at stake is far more modest, and thereby more real. How is it possible even within the most powerful repression of human desires and potential for there to be a form of desire which is not collapsed and flattened by the State machine? How are we to find the war machine that is on the other side of the appropriated war machine? It is never simply a matter of war in any simple sense, but only metaphorically and 'metaphorically', such that Deleuze and Guattari can talk of writing and music as being war machines. Any thing that is a weapon, a projectile, even metaphorically, is a weapon against the State: 'L'écriture, la musique peuvent être des machines de guerre. Un agencement est d'autant plus proche de la machine abstraite vivante qu'il ouvre et multiplie les connexions, et trace un plan de consistance avec ses quantificateurs d'intensités et de consolidation.'²³

1.2 The State Apparatus of Capture

From the previous analysis of the War Machine and its double operation it has become important to investigate in more detail, therefore, the State apparatus of capture of the war machines and its necessary relation to capital. The decisive question is what does capital add to the State form? Let us remind ourselves that it is a certainly different question than the question of the relation between the State and capitalism in *AO*. The latter text, as we know, works through a kind of evolutionism that has its basis in a Marxist topology of social organisations. Capitalism comes after the State. In *MP*, on the other hand, as it is also known, social formations which have their origin in machinic assemblages are coextensive to one another. We cannot

²³ *Ibid.* *MP*, p.639, *TP*, p.513.

speak, for example, of a primitive society that exists in complete isolation from any State formation, and then to whom suddenly one day a State appears over the horizon that comes to crush its existence. As Deleuze and Guattari argue in *MP*, the primary relation of the primitive society and the State is one of anticipation and prevention (they obtain this thesis from the work of Pierre Clastres). This means that the State formation is always already present in primitive society even whilst that society pretends to ward it off.²⁴

But before we can answer the question of what happens to the State when capital is added to it, we first of all have to define the State form itself. First of all, let us go back to the definition of the State form in *AO*. Here, the State is defined, in relation to the flows of desire and in opposition to the coding of primitive societies, in the form of affiliation and alliances, as overcoding. This overcoding has two sides : the first side is the appropriation of the surplus value of agricultural communities by referring back to the higher transcendent unity of a transcendent power (a despot or a tyrant), and on the other side a desperate repulsion of decoded flows that it must keep at the limits of its empire :

Le surcodage, telle est l'opération qui constitue l'essence de l'Etat, et qui mesure à la fois sa continuité et sa rupture avec les anciennes formations : l'horreur de flux du désir qui ne seraient pas codés, mais aussi l'instauration d'une nouvelle inscription qui surcode, et qui fait du désir la chose du souverain, fût-il instinct de mort.²⁵

MP continues with this definition of the State as overcoding, but gives a far more detailed description of its appropriation of resources through the process of what they call the apparatus of capture.²⁶ We have already come across the latter in our

²⁴ Ibid. *MP*, pp. 534-35, *TP*, pp. 429-30.

²⁵ Op. Cit. *AO*, p. 236, *AOB*, p. 199.

²⁶ *MP* gives a similar definition of the State as overcoding as follows : 'Un appareil d'Etat s'érige sur les communautés primitives agricoles, qui ont déjà des codes lignagers-territoriaux; mais ils les

description of the relation between the State apparatus and the war machine. In this case the apparatus of capture is directed against the pure form of exteriority in the guise of the nomad. But the apparatus of capture also has a new economic function that Deleuze and Guattari describe, again following Marx, as having a threefold form of rent, profit and taxation. In each case it is a matter of appropriating and thereby deterritorialising an earlier form so as to link it back to the higher transcendent unity for the State.

Take for example rent: territories are exploited in order to be translated into Land (extensive cultivation). This land, in the relation between the least and most productive produces rent. This operation, however, is impossible without the action of the State, the apparatus of capture, which has a twofold function of comparison and appropriation. For a territory to be transformed into Land there first of all needs to be the operation of comparison: the territory needs to be reduced to quantitative criteria. Only after having been reduced to such a quantitative measure can this land be distributed to landowners; that is to say can exterior uncultivated land be appropriated. It is the monopoly of the State that fixes this ownership. In other words, all ownership of land that produces rent refers back to the State as a transcendent principle of ownership and property.

The same double function of the apparatus of capture as comparison and appropriation operates with the other two forms: profit and taxation. In profit free activity is translated into labour and in taxation exchange is translated into money.²⁷ Through these different processes of the apparatus of capture all human beings become pieces within a megamachine of the State, what Deleuze and Guattari call

surcode, les soumet au pouvoir d'un empereur despote, propriétaire publique unique et transcendent, maître du surplus ou du stock, organisateurs des grands travaux (surtravail), source des fonctions publiques et de bureaucratie.' Op.Cit, MP, p.533, TP, pp.427-28.

machinic enslavement: 'Il y a asservissement lorsque les hommes sont eux-mêmes pièces constituantes d'une machine, qu'ils composent entre eux et avec d'autres choses (bêtes, outils), sous le contrôle et la direction d'une unité supérieure.'²⁸ Even the monetary economy is not the arrival of capital. For that to take place there are required two abstractions: abstract money quantities and abstract labour quantities. These two quantities are relative deterritorialisations of both labour and money. They are therefore no longer codifiable by the imperial or despotic State. It is what this State must ward off just as much as the primitive society warded off the State.

To answer why capitalism did not happen in China, for example, Deleuze and Guattari explain that the Chinese State warded off the arrival of capital by shutting down the production of mines as soon as they became no longer useful in terms of the traditional economy of the State apparatus.²⁹ But if the decoding of the abstract quantities of capital opposes the overcoding of the State, why doesn't the State disappear with the triumph of capital? The answer to this question is given by the axiomatics of capital. Of course, to produce capital, the two abstract quantities of labour and power need to be conjugated. This cannot be brought about by a code since the abstract quantities themselves disrupt any code. It therefore requires a different kind of binding or joint. This is given by the axiom.

²⁷ For a description of these three forms of the apparatus of capture see *MP*, pp.549-554 and *TP*, pp.440-444.

²⁸ *Ibid.* *MP*, p.570, *TP*, p.457.

²⁹ *Ibid.* *MP*, p.562, *TP*, p.450.

I.3 Axiomatics and Politics

Deleuze and Guattari first talk about axioms in *AO*, and they remark there that it is at this point that we can understand the function of the State within capitalism: its purpose is to *regulate* the axioms of capital:

L'Etat capitaliste est le régulateur des flux décodés comme tels, en tant qu'ils sont pris dans l'axiomatique du capital. En ce sens il achève bien le devenir-concret qui nous a semblé présider à l'évolution de l'Urstaat despotique abstrait : d'unité transcendante, il devient immanent au champ de forces sociales, passe à leur service et sert de régulateur aux flux décodés et axiomatisés.³⁰

Just as in the case of how the notion of appropriation that comes from *AO* is given a much more complex analysis in *MP* through the apparatus of capture, so too this idea of the State as a regulator of axioms is given a more detailed description in *MP*. The notion of the State is now understood in terms of a 'model of realisation'. Through this notion it is easier to understand why the State form does not disappear with the triumph of capital, but in fact increases in power in comparison to the power of the despotic State. The Modern State 'realises' the axioms of capital by giving them a concrete instantiation. This does not just mean in terms of its laws but through, for example, its families, schools and universities. The effectuation of axioms takes place through 'normalisation'.

Normalisation is the creation of the subject who only recognises itself through a dominant reality.³¹ It is a far more powerful repressive machine than any thing under the control of the despotic State for it no longer requires any external transcendent higher unity. For in obeying the dominant reality the more you become

³⁰ Op. Cit., *AO*, pp. 299-300, *AOB*, p.252.

³¹ The key text for Deleuze and Guattari's here is Althusser's essay 'The Ideological State Apparatus' in .

yourself. Normalisation is the invention of a new form of slavery: 'being a slave to oneself'. No one has to tell you to be at work on time, you tell yourself to be. This does not mean that the Modern State does away with machinic enslavement, but it is the combination of both the processes of subjectification and machinic enslavement. We are lucky to have both, Deleuze and Guattari ironically retort.³² Take for example, they say, the wonderful effects of T.V. We are both subjected to T.V., we use and consume it, and also are produced as subjects by T.V. The T.V. addresses us as subjects of consumption, 'dear viewer... and so on'. Such as one of the processes that take place in our everyday reality. But also we are enslaved by T.V., we are not just consumers and subjects produced by it, but one of the pieces of the process of making T.V., an 'input and an output... and so on'.³³

Present day politics, therefore, must take place within the axioms of capital and their effectuation or realisation in the State through the process of normalisation. For such a politics if it can be called a politics at all, and Deleuze and Guattari are only willing to call it so by naming it a micro-politics, must recognise that all standard majoritarian politics, whether of the 'left' or the 'right', belong to the axiomatics of capital. Why is this so? The reason is that it is the fundamental law of capital that it sets up and continually repels its own limits in order to increase the rate of profit. The function, therefore, of majoritarian politics is to invent and create axioms that compensate for the continual change at the boundaries of capital. One of the most famous of these changes, of course, is the response of the majoritarian political institutions to the great 'crash' of the 1920's, which led to a whole proliferation of new axioms in terms of a change of labour law and the regulation of capital, but did not at all change the general rule of capital. What is important here is not the

³² *Op. Cit.*, *MP*, p.573, *TP*, p.458.

³³ *Ibid.*

designations 'left' or 'right', which have become utterly meaningless labels in the present age, but the relation of axioms to capital.

There are two poles of the relation between axioms and capital in the present age, which Deleuze and Guattari typify as addition and subtraction. The majoritarian political institutions of the State either add axioms to the flow of capital or they subtract them. The former, typify the social-democracies of the West and the latter the anarcho-capitalist societies which spring up on the periphery of the centre of capital, such as in Latin America. These extreme poles however, conceal a whole mixture of gradients that mark out the field of dispute of the world wide market of capital. If one opens a paper today, watches a T.V. program or looks at the internet, then the whole discussion is whether one should add more axioms or take them away, or which axioms we should have and which not.

Deleuze and Guattari's point is that this operation is far more fundamental than the spurious nomenclature of left and right (and in fact explains much of the dissatisfaction of voters with so called 'leftwing parties', whose only claim to power is that they can regulate capital better than their reactionary opponents). But none of this gets outside of the relation between axioms and capital. A minoritarian politics a micro-politics, always seeks those places in which something escapes from an axiom. Again, this goes back to the general rule of capital that is always producing a decoded flow that must be axiomatised. It does not just come across this outside, it produces it, and it is continually producing it in more and more complex and varied ways that must necessarily escape the model of realisation of the State. Even if a decoded flow is axiomatised, then somewhere else another decoded flow will emerge. This is why, Deleuze and Guattari can say 'ours is becoming the age of minorities'.³⁴

II. Minoritarian "becomings"

Minorities, whether large or small, name anything that escapes the axiomatics of capital. Deleuze and Guattari take the example of the ever-present fear today of being swamped by minorities. Even on the 'left', they argue, there is this bizarre fear that the majority is being engulfed on all sides: the great capitalist war cry that whites will only form 12% of the world population. Of course this is quite absurd, but what interests Deleuze and Guattari is that only the majoritarian sphere, which even though it is smaller acts as a standard (the white, educated male), is denumerable, whereas minorities (black, yellow, female, whatever, it is always multiplying...) are nondenumerable. It is, to use the language of set theory, a fuzzy set. And because it is nondenumerable, it resists axiomatics. Not because it is political, for as soon as a minority demands rights, then it is axiomatised. Nondenumerable sets only resist capital through a becoming minoritarian they communicate to the majority. This is what Deleuze and Guattari call 'la formule des multiplicités. Minorité comme figure universelle, ou devenir tout le monde. Femmes nous avons tous à le devenir, que nous soyons masculins ou féminins. Non-blancs, nous avons tous à le devenir que nous soyons blancs, jaunes ou noirs.'³⁵ Such a disruption of axiomatics by nondenumerable sets of minoritarian becomings demolishes the reality of the modern State. For as Deleuze and Guattari remark, has any one ever heard of a 'woman's State' or a 'State of erratic workers'?'³⁶

Micro-politics is, therefore, a politics of becoming: 'Devenir-minoritaire est une affaire politique, et fait appel à tout un travail de puissance, à une micro-politique

³⁴ Ibid., *MP*, p.586, *TP*, p.469.

³⁵ Ibid., *MP*, p.588, *TP*, p.470.

³⁶ Ibid., *MP*, p.590, *TP*, p.472.

active.³⁷ What does it mean, however, to say that one should become, for instance, a woman or a black? Is it not as some commentators have complained a most hypocritical discourse that claims it can appropriate the histories of the struggles of women or blacks for the sake of a struggle against the axiomatics of capital? Some care is needed here in order not to accuse Deleuze and Guattari of a mistake they do not commit. Too many are hasty to jump to conclusions, especially in regards to their comments about becoming woman, without being aware of the wider implications of Deleuze and Guattari's materialist politics.³⁸ First of all, it is important that the necessity of the statement of becoming-woman or becoming-black should not be thought of in terms of an identity politics. The politics of a becoming-minoritarian is not to be understood as becoming *a* woman, or *a* black.

II.1 '*blocks of becoming*'

The process of becoming takes place not in the terms of the relation; that is to say, as a subject imitating, resembling or translating itself into the opposite term, such as the woman defined as an opposite, or the black defined as an opposite of the white man. Becoming occurs *between* the terms. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari tell us that becoming must always be thought in terms of 'a block of becoming'.³⁹ But first of all,

³⁷ Ibid., *MP*, p.357, *TP*, p.292.

³⁸ If Deleuze and Guattari are anti-feminist then it is, as D.Beddoes points out, only a feminism of a certain kind (an even here there is a hesitation – Deleuze and Guattari mention in a few places in *MP* that they do not disagree with majoritarian politics of women's struggles, as long as it does not just stay there, for example see *MP*, p.338, *TP*, p.275) that reduces the question of femininity to an essentialism of 'Woman': 'When mediated by theories whose structural grasp crushes beauty with taste, fabrication with logic, and women with law, feminization is corrupted as much by feminism as by any other methodological systematization of patterns in flux. The 'status' of an image, of its reality, truth, beauty, etc., it is a question of emerging only on this secondary level; the 'value' of women is condensed into a question of 'Woman'.' D.Beddoes, 'Mapping V', in *Mapping Woman*, (University of Warwick : Centre of Research in Philosophy and Literature, 1994), p. 89. Dorothea Olkowsky gives a good resume of all the debates on feminism in relation to the work of Deleuze and Guattari in her book *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, (London : University of California Press 1999), pp.32-58.

³⁹ Op. Cit., *MP*, p.291, *TP*, p.238.

to understand that becoming takes place in-between the terms, rather than in the terms themselves, we must understand that these terms are not equivalent.

majoritarian

The white male is not the same as the black or the woman, for example. The white male, Deleuze and Guattari describe as the majority whereas the black or the woman is described as a minority. Again, we must remind ourselves that this distinction is not numerical. The white male might be less numerous than the other minority terms, but in any case operates as the 'standard' through which all the rest of minoritarian terms are measured as being deficient: 'Par majorité, nous n'entendons pas une quantité relative plus grande, mais la détermination d'un état ou d'un étalon par rapport auquel les quantités plus grandes aussi bien que les plus petites seront dites minoritaires: homme-blanc adulte-mâle, etc.'⁴⁰

minoritarian

Equally, if one must distinguish between the majoritarian term and the minoritarian, one must also discriminate between the minoritarian term as it is figured and constructed in opposition to the majoritarian term, and the minoritarian term as a 'medium of becoming'. This latter distinction is probably what is missing in many of the critiques of Deleuze and Guattari's position of minority politics. Their argument is that minority politics, such as the demand for equal rights for women, and many of the demands of a homeland or Nation-State that take place in the struggles, for example at the edges of the European empire, take their images of themselves directly from what they oppose. Of course, one needs a little discrimination here – it is not, as has already been remarked, that Deleuze and Guattari deny the force of these

struggles. If one remains at this level, of the demand for the recognition of one's identity (an identity which is the construction of the standard – white adult male and so on...and only reverts a negative marking with a positive one – it is good to be a woman and so on...), then, in the end one will simply be re-appropriated by the axioms of capital, which does not have any problems at all with identity politics. What interests Deleuze and Guattari is what takes place beneath or between these identity politics, which in one sense is less grand, but far more contagious and unpredictable for its diffusion is *infinitesimal*, as Tarde would say.

two examples: becoming-Jewish and becoming-woman

Take for example their description of becoming Jewish. It would be quite ridiculous to think that Deleuze and Guattari would find it at all revolutionary that we should all begin to take on a Jewish identity, that we should all start to imitate, resemble or transform ourselves into Jews, because the very notion of a Jewish identity opposed to the majority is itself a construction of that majority. Becoming-Jewish is not a movement from one term to the other but happens 'between' the terms. It takes place, Deleuze and Guattari argue, from the side of the non-Jew in relation to the Jew but only in the sense that both the non-Jew and the Jew are torn out of their identities. The subject is withdrawn from the majority, and the agent of the process of becoming rises up from the minority. There is no subject of becoming, as Deleuze and Guattari write, except a deterritorialized one, there is no medium of becoming, except a deterritorialized minority.⁴¹ Thus, becoming Jewish affects the Jew, understood as a state of being, as much as it affects the non-Jew. Becoming, as Deleuze and Guattari

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* *MP*, p.356, *TP*, p.291.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* *MP*, p.357, *TP*, pp.291-2.

describe it, is a line between the points that carries these points out of their standard representation.

Let us return to the question of becoming-woman. It must be obvious to us now that it is not at all a matter of a man or a woman deciding to be a woman (though again, we need to be careful here that this does not make it insignificant that certain men should desire to imitate women – for instance, to use Deleuze and Guattari's examples, homosexuals and transvestites – but it would be only another kind of reterritorialization of women if these imitations simply stopped there). It is a matter of 'a block of becoming' that happens between the man and the woman, and even though it starts from the side of the woman, takes both woman and man elsewhere.⁴² There are several moments that need to be distinguished here. Becoming-woman does not belong to woman, in the sense of belonging to her definition or essence, since her definition or essence is something that is given to her by the masculine standard. This is what is meant, from the side of being a woman that becoming-woman takes place in-between man and woman. But equally becoming-woman does not belong to man; it is something that happens to man in relation to woman. Indeed, for Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-woman is the first dimension that overthrows the white adult male. There is a kind of emission of particles or molecules, a micro-femininity, that exists between the terms, and which is possessed by neither of them though it only comes into existence in their relation.

What is this zone of indeterminacy that exists in-between these two terms that are ordinarily defined in opposition? Deleuze and Guattari's answer to this question is that it is the body. Not the body as something that is possessed by a subject, whether we define the subject as masculine or feminine, but the body that cuts across or

⁴² See *Ibid.* *MP*, p.337, *TP*, p.275, for Deleuze and Guattari's comments on homosexuality and transsexuality in relation to becoming-woman.

through all subjectivities. In relation to becoming-woman, this body is the girl. The girl is the body of both the woman and the man when the body is no longer understood as an organism, but as a becoming:

La question est d'abord celle du corps – le corps qu'on nous vole pour fabriquer des organismes opposables. Or, c'est à la fille qu'on vole d'abord ce corps : cesse de te tenir comme ça, tu n'est plus une petite fille, tu n'est La question est d'abord celle du corps – le corps qu'on nous vole pas un garçon manqué, etc. C'est à la fille qu'on vole d'abord son devenir pour lui imposer une histoire, ou une pré-histoire. Le tour du garçon vient ensuite, mais c'est en lui montrant l'exemple de la fille, en lui indiquant la fille comme objet de son désir, qu'on lui fabrique à son tour un organisme opposé, une histoire dominante. La fille est la première victime, mais elle doit aussi servir d'exemple et de piège.⁴³

II.2 *the Body*

It all comes down, then to the question of the body and here we must return again to Spinoza. The body is not to be thought through the difference between form and matter, in which form corresponds to the subject as the form of thought, and the body to the matter of thought. Rather, the body is to be thought in terms of its own being, or to use the language of Spinoza, as a mode of being.⁴⁴ How is the body to be understood in terms of its own reality, rather than merely as a stratum animated by the form of thought? As Deleuze reminds us, Spinoza is perhaps the most important philosopher to give an intrinsic definition of the body. This definition of the body has two elements: the body is an infinite number of parts or particles related to one

⁴³ Ibid. *MP*, p.339, *TP*, p.276.

⁴⁴ See chapter II, p. for a description of the body in Spinoza.

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⁴³ Ibid. *MP*, p.339, *TP*, p.276.

⁴⁴ See chapter II, p. for a description of the body in Spinoza.

another in terms of rest, movement, slowness and speed, and also the body is the power to affect and being affected.⁴⁵

affects

Thus, one does not define a man or an animal in terms of its organs, functions, or as being a subject, that is to say, as a formed matter, but as a 'complex relation of differential speeds' and the limitation or extension of its affective power.⁴⁶ Deleuze uses the example of the tick to explain how one would define a body in a spinozist sense. A tick is defined by three affects: 'le premier, de lumière (grimper en haut d'une branche) ; le deuxième, olfactif (se laisser tomber sur le mammifère qui passe sous la branche) ; le troisième calorifique (chercher la région sans poil et plus chaude).'⁴⁷ A body, therefore, in a Spinozist sense, is defined in terms of not what it is (form-matter distinction), but what it can do. The more complex an organism, that is to say, the more complex the differential relations of movement, rest, speed and slowness that inhere within it, and the more complex the ways in which it can affect and be affected, the more complex its definition will be, to such an extent that when we talk about the human species its power complexity exceeds definition. No one really knows what the body can do.

⁴⁵ As Deleuze explains in *Spinoza, philosophie pratique*: 'Un corps quelconque. Spinoza le définit de deux façons simultanées. D'un part, un corps, si petit qu'il soit, comporte toujours une infinité de particules : ce sont les rapports de repos et de mouvement, de vitesses et de lenteurs entre particules qui définissent un corps, l'individualité d'un corps. D'autre part, un corps affecte d'autres corps, ou est affecté par d'autres corps ; c'est ce pouvoir d'affecter et d'être affecté qui définit aussi un corps dans son individualité.' (Paris : Minuit, 1981), p.165. [Spinoza defines any body whatever in two simultaneous ways. On the one hand, the body, no matter how small, is always composed of an infinity of particles : these are relations of movement and rest, of speed and rest between particles that define a body, the individuality of a body. On the other hand, a body affects other bodies or is affected by other bodies; it is this power to affect and be affected that also defines a body in its individuality.]

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

'hæcceities'

In *MP* this spinozist definition of the body is described in terms of a cartography of becoming. There is a longitude of becoming that relates to the movement, rest, speed or slowness of a body, and there is a latitude of becoming that corresponds to a body's power to affect and be affected. The singularity of a body's existence exists in the intersection of these two vectors. Here, we need also, however, to distinguish the mode of individuation of bodies from that of subjects, things or substances. Deleuze and Guattari borrow the concept of *haecceity* from Dun Scotus to describe this different mode of individuation: 'Il y a un mode d'individuation très différent de celui d'une personne, d'un sujet, d'une chose ou d'une substance. Nous lui réservons le nom d'*hecceté*.'⁴⁸ But, as François Zourabichvilli reminds us, even though they borrow this concept from Duns Scotus it does not have the exact same meaning. For Duns Scotus *haecceity* defines an individual singularity in terms of the individuation of a form (Socrates as opposed to man in general) and not as Deleuze and Guattari define it, as the individual singularity, as the individuation of the body.⁴⁹

The individuation of bodies, as opposed to the individuation of things and subjects, must be thought of in terms of an event: 'a season, a winter, a summer, an

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 167.

⁴⁸ Op. Cit., *MP*, p. 318, *TP*, p. 261. Deleuze refers to the work of Duns Scotus in his reading of Spinoza but there centres his attention on the notion of the formal distinction. This leads him to conclude the possibility of a non-numerical yet real distinction that will provide more strength to his argument on the absolute immanence of substance and thus of its utter indivisibility. See Op. Cit. *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, pp. 54-55, 57. Although the argument does not follow the same course here, we can nevertheless see how this same trait of the indivisibility of substance is based on the ontological notion of 'haecceity'. For the notion of formal distinction see: Duns Scotus, *Metaphysica*, x, cap. iii. For the notion of 'hæccetas' see: Duns Scotus, *Opus Oxoniense*, II, d. III, q. vi, n. 12; I, d. III, q. iii, n. 15; II, d. xxv, q. I, n. 16. See also Duns Scotus, *Philosophical Writings*, (Indianapolis/Cabridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), pp. 4, 166-67, 194-95.

⁴⁹ François Zourabichvilli writes concerning this relation between Deleuze and Guattari and Duns Scotus as follows: 'Duns Scot créait alors le mot "hæccetas" pour désigner positivement la singularité individuelle. Mais la connivance s'arrête là, puisqu'il concevait l'hecceté comme une individuation de la forme, tandis que Deleuze pense à travers elle une individuation intensive, événementielle, dès lors mobile et communicante.' *Deleuze, Une philosophie de l'événement*, (Paris: puf, 1994), p. 117. [Duns Scotus then created the word 'hæccetas' in order to positively designate individual singularity. But that is as far as the connivance goes, for he conceived of haecceity as an individuation of the form,

hour, a date...'⁵⁰ The individuality of an event is nothing like the individuality of a substance or a form that gives permanence to a subject or thing, rather it is the evanescent conjunction of the two parts of the body, its material elements and particles and its power of being affected or affecting other bodies. To use Deleuze and Guattari's example : that intensity of the light in relation to that degree of heat which is that summer evening.⁵¹ The individuation of a body also, unlike the individuation of a thing or subject, is therefore always in relation to other bodies, to *n* dimensions, because the connection between bodies belongs to the very reality of the body – these connections simply describe this complexity.

Deleuze and Guattari talk of there being two kinds of assemblages, which are always co-existent : assemblage haecceities, which is a body defined in terms of its longitudes and latitudes, and interassemblage haecceities which marks the milieu of the intersection of these longitudes and latitudes. They are co-extensive precisely because there is no relation of longitude and latitude without a milieu of becoming. Every haecceity contains any number of heterogenous elements to *n* dimensions that either augments or diminishes its multiplicity :

Vous êtes longitude et latitude, un ensemble de vitesses et de lenteurs entre particules non formées, un ensemble d'affects non subjectivés. Vous avez l'individuation d'un jour, d'une saison, d'une année, d'une *vie* (indépendamment de la durée), - d'un climat, d'un vent, d'un brouillard, d'un essaim, d'une meute (indépendamment de la régularité). Ou du moins vous pouvez l'avoir, vous pouvez y arriver. Une nuée de sauterelles apportée par le vent à cinq heures du soir ; un vampire qui sort la nuit, un loup-garou à la pleine lune.⁵²

whereas Deleuze thinks of an intensive, factual individuation consequently mobile and communicating.]

⁵⁰ Op. Cit., *MP*, p.318, *TP*, p.261.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., *MP*, p.320, *TP*, p.262.

resistance

The body, therefore, is the point of resistance to the State apparatus. For it is the State apparatus in its modern form through the axiomatics of capital that defines us in terms of our subjectivity through the process of subjectification: you are a worker, a student, a teacher, a philosopher, and so on.... Beneath these subjectivities – or in reality what you are, say Deleuze and Guattari – is a swarm of particles that cannot be limited to these interpellations – look at me I really am a worker, student, teacher, philosopher, and so on.... The object of a human life, therefore, and it is here that Deleuze and Guattari's politics seems most to resemble an ethics, or at least a spinozist ethics, is to slip into other *haecceities* by increasing the dimensions of multiplicity.

The limit of this process is a becoming impersonal, which Deleuze and Guattari call 'the immanent end of becoming'.⁵³ As a practice of life, one reaches the limit by becoming everyone and everything. Not that you become everyone and everything, as though there was a fusion between your subjectivity and the cosmic whole, but that there is an event of becoming everyone and everything – push your life to n dimensions, increase the lines between the points until the subjectivity that has been given you disappears. Thus, a new ethics with its three cardinal virtues: imperceptibility, indiscernibility and impersonality.⁵⁴

⁵³ Ibid. *MP*, p.342, *TP*, p.279.

⁵⁴ Ibid., *MP*, p.343, *TP*, p.280.

III. The Impersonal (Return of the Subject)

All this should not make us think that the subject disappears altogether in Deleuze and Guattari's work, though. It is clear in Deleuze's last works, such as *Foucault* and *le Pli, Leibniz et le Baroque*, and his last joint work with Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* that the subject returns. This might appear quite strange to those who have read their other works previous to these, which on the whole seem to call into question the priority of the subject and especially in its link to politics. Have we not ourselves already seen in this chapter that the State apparatus is the 'model of realisation' of the axioms of capital through the process of subjectification? The only answer to this question is the possibility of conceiving the subject in another way. And it is the impact of Foucault's later work (his series on the history of sexuality) that allows this possibility, even though the process of subjectification in MP probably has the same origin.

Foucault

In Deleuze's book on Foucault we get quite a different definition of subjectivity than we find in *MP*, rather than subjectivity being the point of application of power it is the '*foyer de resistance*' (focal point of resistance), and rather than being a pure form of interiority, it is 'derivative of the outside'.⁵⁵ To discover this new kind of subjectivity we need to return to the Greeks. There are two reasons for this :

⁵⁵ G. Deleuze, *Foucault*, (Paris: Minuit, 1986), p.113. [Hereafter *F*]. An the English translation: *Foucault*, (Minneapolis, London : University of Minnesota, 1986), p.106. [Hereafter *Fb*]

first of all, Deleuze remarks that at least at the level of morality we seem to be still weigh down with the old problems : 'Tout se passe comme si les modes de subjectivation avaient la vie longue, et nous continuons à jouer aux Grecs, ou aux chrétiens, d'où notre gout pour les retours à...'⁵⁶ At least at the level of our beliefs about ourselves, our relation to our sexualities and bodies, we are still Greek and Christian; a long history weighs down upon our souls. But there is also a much more important reason to return to the Greeks for Deleuze in his reading of Foucault and that is what he calls an 'Absolute Memory' of an outside. It is this memory of an outside that the Greeks have handed down to us, and which Deleuze believes is in fact far more important than the Heideggerian reading of tradition in which Greek culture is celebrated as the opening of the question of Being.⁵⁷

doubling

This absolute memory of an outside is to be understood through a doubling of the subject. Greek power is to be essentially understood as external governance, yet through a process of doubling this government becomes self-government, for how could one govern others unless one can govern oneself? This doubling is not interesting in it self except that through this process self-mastery (*enkrateia*) becomes detached from the external power relations and knowledge relations. The doubling of the external forces into internal ones actually changes the status of the forces themselves. What belongs to the external relations of force, affecting others or being affected by others, is repeated or doubled as a power to affect oneself. This 'auto-

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, *F*, p.107, *Fb*, p.114.

affection' is the invention of a new subjectivity independent of power and knowledge even though it is 'derived' from them: 'L'idée fondamentale de Foucault, c'est celle d'une dimension de la subjectivité qui dérive du pouvoir et du savoir, mais qui n'en dépend pas.'⁵⁸

What is interesting about this discovery, as has already been remarked, is how different it is from the description of subjectivity in *MP*. In fact, the French word which describes this new subject, *subjectivation*, is the very same word that is used in *MP* to describe the way in which molecular assemblages are caught up within molar representations. In *Foucault* it is this term *subjectivation* which becomes the positive term and which is then contrasted to another process of subjectivity designated by the French word *asujettissement* and which is translated as 'subjugated'. In other words, *subjectivation* describes the subject as a derivative of the outside (and as we shall see later there are in fact two 'outsides' for Deleuze, the outside of external relations of power and knowledge relations, and the outside as something ultimate). And the *subjected subject* describes the subject as subjected by someone else (what in *MP* was designated by the process of *subjectification*). Thus, the subject describes a double operation: it is reduced to a process of individuation and tied to an identity.

Of course, this is not at all a matter of simply returning to the Greeks, but of a memory of resistance to subjection. It is, as Deleuze writes in a footnote, that 'nous cherchons évidemment un autre type de rapports propre à notre champs social.'⁵⁹ It is a matter therefore in our own time of finding our own resistance to subjection. This is as Deleuze describes it, a resistance against individuation and the manner in which every individual is attached to a known and recognised identity. This struggle is a

⁵⁷ 'Ce que les Grecs ont fait, ce n'est pas révéler l'Être ou déplier l'Ouvert, dans un geste historico-mondiale. C'est beaucoup moins, ou beaucoup plus, dirait Foucault.' Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., *F*, p.109, *Fb*, p.101.

⁵⁹ Ibid. *F*, p.113, fn.28. *Fb*, p.105, fn.28.

struggle for 'difference, variation and metamorphosis' and is, therefore, similar to the micro-politics of *MP* except that with *Foucault* Deleuze is no longer afraid of speaking of this struggle in terms of the self.⁶⁰ It is perhaps at this point that we might speak of a movement of their politics towards an ethics. And ethics in the sense of Foucault's, that is to say as an answer to the question 'how does one relate to oneself. As we shall see, ethics in this sense has no longer only to do with an art of living but also with philosophy as a way of life – the stoic, spinozist ethics of a materialist ontology.

folding

How can the subject be a derivative of the outside? That is to say, how by a process of doubling escape subjection? The answer to this question is perhaps the most important theme of Deleuze's later works: the fold. It is, Deleuze says at the beginning of his book *the Fold*, the 'operative function' of the Baroque, but it is equally operative, to use Deleuze's expression, in the doubling of the self that produces a subjectivity independent of the codes of power and knowledge.⁶¹ The doubling of the self is a folding of the outside or from the other perspective the inside of the self, that part which escapes subjection, is a fold of the outside – an interior exteriority. Compare this with the relation with the pure form of interiority and exteriority in *MP*. Here, although both forms are co-extensive and are continually related to one another, the State apparatus is continually appropriating the outside and

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, *F*, p.113, *Fb*, p.106.

⁶¹ G.Deleuze, *le Pli, Leibniz et le baroque*, (Paris : Minuit, 1988), p.5, *the Fold, Leibniz and the Baroque*, (London : the Athlone Press, 1993), p.3. Strangely enough Deleuze does talk about a Greek

the outside is continually encroaching upon the State apparatus finally in the form of an imperceptible becoming, nonetheless these two forms retain their purity of form.

In the fold, interiority is infracted from within by the outside, because it is nothing less than the fold of this outside – an invaginated, convoluted, involuted self, the I is an Other: ‘C’est le cerveau qui dit Je, mais je est un autre.’⁶² The self of subjectification is not exposed to an exteriority, still less does it identify with exteriority, rather it is an interiorization of exteriority. It is this self as a fold that continually escapes the codes of power and knowledge. Self-mastery then becomes: place oneself within the fold of the outside:

Le plus lointain devient intérieur, par une conversion au plus proche: *la vie dans les plis*. C’est la chambre centrale, d’ont on ne croit plus qu’elle soit vide, puisqu’on y met le soi. Ici, on devient maître de sa vitesse, relativement maître de ses molécules et de ses singularités, dans cette zone de subjectivation : l’embarcation comme intérieur de l’extérieur.⁶³

There are, Deleuze argues, four folds of the outside: the fold of the body, the fold of external force (power), the fold of knowledge, and finally the ultimate fold, the fold of the outside itself.⁶⁴ It is the last fold that is probably the absolute memory of the outside that escapes beyond any strata or diagram and it is that fold that goes beyond any body, power or knowledge. It is perhaps the equivalent to the becoming imperceptible of *MP*, but now recast within the stoic language of self-mastery. It is the last line of becoming oneself in which self is no longer distinguishable from any of the elements of the cosmos: ‘Le quatrième est le pli du dehors lui-même, l’ultime : c’est lui qui constitue ce que Blanchot appelait une “intérieurité d’attente”, c’est de lui

fold in this book but refers it to Plato and deems it ‘not satisfactory’. He seems to have forgotten his discussion of the more Stoic Greek fold in *Foucault*. *Ibid.*, p.L(a), p.53, L(b), p.38.

⁶² G.Deleuze and F.Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie*, (Paris: Minuit, 1991), p.199, *What is Philosophy?*, (London, New York : Verso, 1994), p.211.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, *F*, p.130, *Fb*, p.120.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, *F*, pp.111-12, *Fb*, p.104.

que le sujet attend, sur des modes divers, l'immortalité, ou bien l'éternité, ou le salut, ou la liberté, ou la mort, le détachement...⁶⁵

Is not this ultimate fold of the outside the impersonal as the expression of life, similar to Spinoza's beatitude, that Deleuze describes in his last published work *Immanence, une vie...* the final aim of philosophy? Not a philosophy of ethics, but philosophy as ethics.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Ibid., *F*, p.112, *Fb*, p.104.

⁶⁶ For the remarkable description of the impersonal at the heart of life see Deleuze 'Immanence. une vie...', *Philosophie*, n°47, September 1995, pp.3-7.

CONCLUSION

Ontological Materialism: Philosophy as Ethics *Amor fati*

Let us return to the central tenet of this thesis: 'ontological materialism' is the parallelism of the ontological and the political. This parallelism was first described in Deleuze's and Negri's reading of Spinoza, where it was shown that the ethical and the political have their bases in ontology. What, however is the materialist basis of this ontology? It is a materialism in four senses: first of all, inasmuch as it affirms the auto-production of the Real; that is to say, it is a productionist ontology. Secondly, in that all the principles of organisation and composition are strictly immanent. Thirdly, because it takes the body as its model of ethics. Finally, since it understands writing in terms of its material effects. These four aspects, already present in Spinoza's thought, are reawakened in Deleuze and Guattari's own philosophy. Their ontological approach to this parallelism means that philosophy itself comes to be defined as ethics in a spinozist sense. The questions that need to be asked are: how to increase our *puissance*, how to become active, how to become joyful. Here ethics goes beyond any notion of good and evil, and beyond the sad passions on which morality necessarily feeds and is engendered. Freedom is not an innate state nor can it be attained through the abstract form of a juridical category that is listed in declarations of human rights.

We are not born free since, as Spinoza rightly says: 'If men were born free, they would form no conception of good and evil so long as they were free.'¹

In this context of a redefined ethics, freedom is understood as a process, a process of liberation, a process of becoming. One that is significant in regard to Deleuze and Guattari's practice is the becoming of writing: 'l'écriture est inséparable du devenir.'² Through writing their revolutionary *puissance* is mobilised and as a becoming the divide between theory and practice no longer makes any sense. Revolution is occurring everywhere and all the time in the interstices of power. These are only micro-revolutions though, happening in the various fields of the arts, sciences and philosophy that constantly cross over one another. They take place in invention but also in its propagation. Revolution is no longer a single and unitary powerful overthrowing of the State, nor is it a massive transformation of the State.³ It is not a question of the State at all. It rather works against the State and its form in thought, but can never replace it, can never act as a State against the State. The micro-revolutionary forces are affects performed not by individuals and not acted on individuals. They are rather impersonal forces of creation, transformation and becoming.

But, let us come back to the notion of 'parallelism' itself. What can we now say about this notion of 'parallelism'? Is such a term still adequate in order to describe the relation between ontology and politics? Is it still helpful in order to explain ontological materialism? This is the first task that needs to be addressed at the end of this thesis. Secondly, there is another notion that needs to be developed in a second

¹ B. Spinoza, *Ethics*, IV,P68, (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), p.192.

² [Writing is inseparable from a becoming] G.Deleuze, *Critique et Clinique*, (Paris: Minuit, 1993), p.11.

³ Deleuze and Guattari describe these two forms of revolution as belonging one to the history of the East and the other to that of the West : 'Il est vraie que l'idée de révolution est elle-même ambiguë: elle

time. Although this notion was never approached directly and did not in any way form part of the original thesis it has nevertheless worked implicitly from within the very title of the thesis itself. That is the notion of 'problem'. Lastly, it is of the utmost importance to pick up the concept of 'life', which was alluded to at the very end of the last chapter. What is the link between this 'life' and philosophy? Does it lead us back to a sort of teleology? If not, how can we still speak of a *final aim* of philosophy.

Parallelism

Let us first of all briefly follow the development of this notion throughout this thesis. This thesis started with Spinoza and the parallelism of the ontological and the political. As the thesis moved on to the analysis of *AO* the language was transformed and the parallelism was re-framed in terms of desiring production and social production. Then, in the fourth chapter we saw how this 'parallelism' was broadened out as we passed from *AO* to *MP*. This 'broadening out' did not discredit this parallelism though and it was still important to assert that materialist ontology is already political. The ultimate consequence of this lesson was to understand that writing is political before any representation of the political: writing is political as writing and not because it is about the political. In the third chapter, the vocabulary changed once more and the discussion took place in terms of the relation between the abstract machine, machinic assemblages and the plane of consistency. It seemed now that 'parallelism' was no longer the appropriate word. This is due to the subtle shift from *AO* to *MP* in the change of status of the unconscious and capitalism. Thus, the

est occidentale pour autant qu'elle renvoie à une transformation de l'Etat; mais elle est orientale pour autant qu'elle projette une destruction, une abolition de l'Etat.' Op. Cit. *MP*, p.478, *TP*, p.385.

term of 'parallelism' was replaced by such terms as 'combinatory' or 'combinations' that occurred within an interactive field. The question turned to bodies and becomings; that is to say, to mixed states, or zones of indeterminacy. Therefore, linking two distinct terms through one sole notion, as it was done at the beginning of this thesis by using the strategy of 'parallelism', was now no longer helpful. The notions of 'body', becoming and 'milieu' now made more sense. Also, the notions of doubling and the fold became more significant such that the notion of parallelism was altogether abandoned in the last chapter. Instead there was a talk of differences, variations and metamorphosis, of becoming-imperceptible and the impersonal and beatitude and the final aim of philosophy.

Having drawn the trajectory of this notion let us now return to it in Deleuze's *Spinoza, et le problème de l'expression*. By the end of this book Deleuze develops an argument that many agree marks the originality of his reading of Spinoza. There are two *Ethics*, affirms Deleuze, one that has to do with definitions, axioms and propositions, but there is also the more subterranean one of the *scholiums*. It is the *scholiums*, Deleuze argues, that are the pivots or 'turning' points of the *Ethics* itself :

En vertu de leur indépendance à l'égard des proposition qu'ils doublent, on dirait que l'*Ethique* a été simultanément écrite deux fois, sur deux tons, sur un double registre. En effet il y a une double manière, discontinue, dont les scolies sautent des uns aux autres, se font échos, se retrouvent dans la préface de tel livre de l'*Ethique* ou dans la conclusion de tel autre, formant une ligne brisée qui traverse toute l'œuvre en profondeur, mais qui n'affleure qu'en tel ou tel point (les points de brisure).⁴

If we borrow the language of *MP* then, these points can be called remarkable or singular for they effectuate breaks and represent the lines of flight of the text. They are little 'war machines' inside the text, its most revolutionary and creative aspect.

They mark the passages, transformations and metamorphosis of the *Ethics*. Of course, it is not that simple. It is not as though Spinoza had found the formula for inserting revolutionary potential in any and every text. Even here the *scholiums* can only function within a certain context. They are part of a composite mix with various vectors of speed that take it in so many directions.⁵ Yet, it is their force that, as great gusts of wind, produces change and accelerations in the movement. For Deleuze the most important example of this operation is the *scholium* of 'parallelism' in proposition seven of the second book. Its function is to reverse the direction of the demonstrations in order to establish the equality of *puissances* and the identity of order.⁶ The effects of this operation ultimately separate Spinoza from any form of transcendent thought starting with his contemporary Leibniz. Curiously enough, although it is Leibniz who coins the term 'parallelism' and in spite of all they share, this term is only properly at work in Spinoza for, as Deleuze argues in the conclusion: 'C'est que, chez Spinoza, le rapport d'expression ne s'établi qu'entre égaux. C'est là le vraie sens du parallelism: il n'y a jamais éminence d'une série.'⁷

The main idea to retain here is *equality*. The other word for it is *univocity*. As we already know this has immediate practical consequences: an action in the mind is an action in the body and vice versa. Ontological parallelism is doubled by an epistemological parallelism that becomes the basis for Spinoza's 'common notions'. And as Michael Hardt rightly points out: 'the common notions constitute for Deleuze the 'ontological rupture' of Spinoza's thought that marks the completion of the

¹ Op. Cit. G.Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, p.317.

⁵ For more on the three different aspects of the *scholiums*, the axiomatic, paradigmatic and casuistic, see: *Ibid.* pp.319-21.

⁶ 'alors que la demonstration va de l'effet à la cause pour conclure que l'ordre de la connaissance est le même que celui des choses, alors que l'ensemble de la démonstration et du corollaire s'élève de cette identité d'ordre dans les lodes à une égalité de puissances en Dieu, le scolie au contraire part de l'unité ontologique de la substance pour conclure à l'égalité des puissance et à l'identité d'ordre.' *Ibid.* p.318.

⁷ *Ibid.* p.308.

transformation from speculation to practice.⁸ This transformation occurs on the basis of a rigorous 'parallelism'. Once more, what is truly important here is not that the body and the mind are strictly equal. In itself this idea would prove quite bland and would be readily assimilated into Hegel's 'black night of the undifferentiated'. Rather, it is about discovering in parallel to the *puissances* of the body the *puissances* of thought that escape consciousness: 'il s'agit d'acquérir une connaissance des puissance du corps pour découvrir parallèlement des puissances de l'esprit qui échappent à la conscience.' Consequently, this parallelism that doubles itself posits a form of an idea that is referred as such to the power of thinking.⁹ This, as has already been explained, leads Spinoza to formulate a third kind of knowledge or beatitude. On the other hand, following the line of the ontological and political parallelism, this thesis arrived at the singular point where philosophy and ethics meet, an encounter that was seen to be of the same nature as Spinoza's beatitude. Do we, from this new perspective of the absolute coincidence of philosophy and ethics, still have any use for the notion of parallelism? Are we still correct at this point to talk of a 'parallelism'? One way of answering this question is to turn to another term.

Problems

In the title of this thesis we can read the term 'problem' twice: once in the sense of the 'problematic' relation between ontological materialism and the political, and the other, in that the political itself is posed as a problem. But, what precisely do we understand by problem? What is the nature of the relations in the problematic? Is

⁸ Op. Cit. M.Hardt, *An Apprenticeship in philosophy, Gilles Deleuze*, p.99.

⁹ Op. Cit. *MP* p.111, *TP* p.126.

there just a difference of degrees between problems and the problematic? First of all, problems are linked to questions and to solutions. In *Différence et Répétition*, Deleuze describes problems in terms of a relation to their solutions as having three aspects: they are *different* from their solutions, thus they *transcend* them, yet they are *immanent* to the solutions themselves. Then, the movement of thought itself is described as going from the problematical to the question. And questions are understood in terms of imperatives, not the moral Kantian imperative for this is exactly what is under attack here. Imperatives are events that present themselves as questions. They are inseparable from an evaluation: 'Le problème de la pensée n'est pas lié à l'essence, mais à l'évaluation de ce qui a de l'importance et de ce qui n'en a pas, à la répartition du singulier et du régulier, du remarquable et de l'ordinaire[.]'¹⁰ Thus, Deleuze considers the determination of problems to be the highest task for they carry our most decisive and creative power. However, this must not be interpreted as an act of consciousness. Problems are unconscious, that is to say they are extra-propositional and sub-representative. In fact, it belongs to consciousness to be false consciousness. This affects the life of problems such that each is always doubled by a *false problem*. The questions that are brought about by the problem are confounded with the problem itself such that their solutions are confused with them and are thought in propositional terms. This explains why the problems of society are too often so badly posed and are almost always immediately rejected as having no solutions. Yet, problems solve themselves despite the doubling of the falsification. No law can stop the flows of population from moving across the globe.¹¹ This is the real sense and force of imperatives: 'Les impératifs sont de l'être, toute question est

¹⁰ G. Deleuze. *Différence et Répétition*. (Paris: puf, 1968), p.245, *Difference and Repetition*. (London: Athlone Press, 1994), p.189.

ontologique, et distribue "ce qui est" dans les problèmes. L'ontologie, c'est le coup de dés – chaosmos d'où le cosmos sort.'¹²

Thus, we can return to the questions asked at the beginning. What links the relation between materialist ontology and the political as problematic and the political itself as a problem to the idea of parallelism? Is there a 'problem' of this thesis? Problems are never singular rather they are multiplicities. They cannot be located in the political or in the idea of parallelism for example. They always come in constellations and it is ideas (such as the political or 'parallelism') as singularities that people them. Problems work at a micro-logical level. Can we at least say that the political is a problem in itself? From the perspective of ontological materialism even to ask this question is to fall into a false problem. There is no such thing as the political standing apart from politics. Then, what is the imperative that forces us to repeatedly ask this question in so many different guises? Deleuze in a short but powerful text tells us that: 'Il n'y a pas de psychologie, mais une politique du moi. Il n'y a pas de métaphysique, mais une politique de l'être. Pas de science, mais une politique de la matière, puisque l'homme est chargé de la matière même.'¹³

A work is itself a problem that is born out of an imperative. Problems are of the order of events that present themselves as questions. For this reason 'les problèmes ne sont pas séparables d'un pouvoir décisive, d'un *fiat*, qui fait de nous, quand il nous traversent, des êtres semi-divins.'¹⁴ This decision, once again, must not be interpreted as a reflexive act that a consciousness reaches after some deliberation. On the contrary, it needs to be understood in terms of a dice throw: 'Il s'agit plutôt

¹¹ For an excellent account of the unstoppable nature of massive migrations world wide see: T.Negri and M.Hardt, *Empire*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp396-400.

¹² Op. Cit. DR, p.257, DRb, p.199.

¹³ G.Deleuze, *Périclès et Verdi, la philosophie de François Châtelet*, (Paris: Minuit, 1988), p.10.

¹⁴ Op. Cit. DR(a), p.255, DR(b), p.197.

d'un coup de dés, et de tout le ciel comme espace ouvert, et du lancer comme espace unique. Les points singulier sont sur le dé; les questions sont les dés eux-mêmes; l'impératif est le lancer.'¹⁵ This throw of the dice does away with the arbitrary nature of chance and instead affirms the whole of it all at once. The nature of this absolute affirmation has the same flavour as Spinozist beatitude.

A life

The idea of life in Deleuze's last written work is the question of immanence. Thus, it is intimately linked to Spinozist substance. *A life* is everywhere, in all the moments that traverse individuals and that measure objects. It is when the life of the individual makes room for the impersonal. It is pure immanence: 'On dira de la pure immanence qu'elle est une vie et rien d'autre. Elle n'est pas immanence à la vie, mais l'immanence qui n'est en rien est elle-même une vie. Une vie est l'immanence de l'immanence, l'immanence absolue: elle est puissance, béatitude complètes.'¹⁶

Thus, immanence is described in terms of life. As Agamben rightly points out this text in a way represents Deleuze's peak moment in his project of going beyond the cogito. It marks the point where consciousness is finally liberated from all subject and object determinations and returned to life. But, life here is not to be understood in terms of nature. In this article Agamben's own definition of life follows that of Bichat as the set of functions that resist death. Furthermore, he affirms that the philosophy to come will have to start with the notion of life as this theme has already let itself be

¹⁵ Ibid., DRb, p.198.

¹⁶ G.Deleuze, 'Immanence: une vie...' in *Philosophie*, (Paris: Minuit, September, 1995), n° 47, p.4.

announced in the late philosophy of both Deleuze and Foucault.¹⁷ Thus, Agamben retakes this theme for himself but this time in terms of what he calls 'naked life'. Not surprisingly Agamben also returns to the Greeks in order to unfold this notion.

Homo sacer vs homo tantum

In his book *Homo sacer*, Agamben begins by remind us that the Greeks used two terms to designate life: *zoe* and *bios*.¹⁸ Politics could only be attached to the latter of these terms for it related to *qualified* life. Like Aristotle in his *Nichomachean Ethics*, one can speak of a *bios politikos* but not of a *zoe politikos*. To this extent, politics has always been biopolitics. Thus, it is not enough to talk of the introduction of life as *bios* into politics in order to define its modern form, he argues.¹⁹ Instead, it is the introduction of life as *zoe*, that is to say as 'naked life' that describes modernity. The politisation of 'naked life' is the decisive event of modernity that radically transforms all the political and philosophical categories of the classics. Thus, sovereignty is the main site of this transformation. The sovereign is, in Schmitt's words, he who decides of the state of exception. Therefore, the power of the sovereign is paradoxical in nature for he is both interior and exterior to juridical order.²⁰ The sovereign holds the ultimate decision over life but this one is itself ambivalent. In the simplest of terms 'naked life' is that life that can be killed but not sacrificed.²¹ The ambivalence resides in the root of the term sacrifice: *sacer*. This one is explained

¹⁷ G. Agamben, 'L'immanence absolue', *Gilles Deleuze une vie philosophique*, edited by Eric Alliez, (Paris: Institut Synthelabo, 1998), pp.165-188.

¹⁸ G. Agamben, *Homo sacer, le pouvoir souverain et la vie nue*, (Paris: Seuil, 1997).

¹⁹ He thus can see the necessity for the completion of Foucault's project whose work on the notion of biopolitics appears now to be somehow incomplete.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.23.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.16.

through the double capture of the apparatus of the state of exception as the conjunction of the impunity of homicide and the exclusion of sacrifice.²² Thus, a correction or completion of Foucault's work must here be accomplished according to Agamben.

Sacred life is neither political *bios* nor natural *zoe* but the zone of their indifference. This zone of irreducible indifferenciation becomes the paradigm of Western political space where 'naked life' describes that life that is only included in the shape of its exclusion. Thus, Agamben concludes that the biopolitical paradigm of the West is the camp and not the City in comparison to Athenian democracy. The camp as the paradigm of modern political space holds true beyond totalitarian regimes and applies to all forms of democracy that conform our modern states. Exception tends to become the rule. A camp is any such zone of indifferenciation whether we are thinking of waiting zones (to be deported) in international airports or of Pinochet's stadiums in all of which the structure of a state of exception is at work. Thus, Agamben can reverse the nazi formula of "everywhere there is naked life there will be a people" into "everywhere there is a people there will be naked life".²³ The capitalist democratic project only transforms class struggle into the 'naked life' of the populations of the third world. Therefore, Agamben draws a further distinction between pure life that is referred back to the enigma ontology must work through and 'naked life' as our subjection to political power. Thus, pure life is understood as the limit where metaphysics becomes politics and 'naked life' as the threshold where politics transmutes into theory.²⁴

²² Ibid., p.91.

²³ Ibid., p.193.

²⁴ Ibid., p.196.

Despite Agamben's pursuit of the point of reversibility between politics and ontology, 'naked life' still works too much as a negative limit.²⁵ *Homo sacer* as a nonhumanised ethics, as the identity "l'homme est le non-homme" still bears the complexion of the sad face of human passivity. We seem to be quite far away here from Deleuze's *homo tantum* as he describes it in his last work which Agamben so well analysed. In the nonhumanised ethics of Deleuze there is a Nietzschean inspiration that relates man to the *überman* and here even death is only thought as an opening to the flows of life. It is the event of the impersonal. It is "a life" as expression: *homo tantum*.²⁶

Amor fati

There is a time, say Deleuze and Guattari in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* that is the time of philosophy proper. They name it *amor fati* and describe it in terms of the dignity of events as being inseparable from philosophy: s'égaliser à l'événement, ou devenir le fils de ses propres événements. [] Il n'y a pas d'autre éthique que l'amor fati de la philosophie. La philosophie est toujours entre-temps.²⁷ This time of philosophy is not the time of history but the time of becoming. It is the relation of philosophy to non-philosophy, their double becoming. The aim of philosophy is not to tell us about the end of history. Just as Spinoza's beatitude, it does not announce the arrival of absolute enlightenment. The relation of the philosopher or the intellectual to others is

²⁵ There is a short but interesting discussion on the negativity of the notion of 'naked life' in T.Negri and M.Hardt. *Empire*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press. 2000), pp. 366-67.

²⁶ For more on the notion of *homo tantum* see: René Schérrer. *Regards sur Deleuze*, (Paris: Kimé. 1998), pp.30-44. Also. Op. Cit., 'Homo tantum, l'Impersonel: une politique' in *Gilles Deleuze une vie philosophique*, pp.25-42.

not that of the sage to the people. Rather, in the impersonal *puissance* of thought their relation follows the logic of the fold.²⁸ In this way philosophy resists death, servitude, and the intolerable.... This it does with its own war machine. The war machine of writing that does not have the battle as its object for, on the contrary, 'on écrit toujours pour donner la vie, pour libérer la vie là où elle est emprisonnée, pour tracer des lignes de fuite.'²⁹

²⁷ G.Deleuze and F.Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, (Paris: Minuit, 1991), p.151, *What is Philosophy?*, (London, New York.: Verso, 1994), p.159.

²⁸ 'Le peuple est intérieur au penseur parce que c'est un "devenir peuple", pour autant que le penseur est intérieur au peuple, comme devenir non moins illimité.' *Ibid.*, QP, p. 105, WP, p. 109.

²⁹ G.Deleuze, *Pourparlers*. (Paris: Minuit, 1990), p.192.

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²⁷ G.Deleuze and F.Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, (Paris: Minuit, 1991), p.151, *What is Philosophy?*, (London, New York.: Verso, 1994), p.159.

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²⁹ G.Deleuze, *Pourparlers*. (Paris: Minuit, 1990), p.192.

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