

## Ontological Materialism and the Problem of Politics

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Politics is inseparable from ontology. Every ontology is political and every politics is itself an ontology. The reciprocal relation between ontology and politics can be 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 such that his theory of the *univocity* of being itself rests on this principle. This project of the affirmation of pure immanence is rehabilitated within contemporary thought by Deleuze-Guattari in their own philosophy as a form of radical materialism. Appeals to transcendence are nothing but vestiges of theological reasoning. I will refer to this form of philosophy, guided by the principle of 'parallelism', as *ontological materialism*. This thought does not stand outside classical ontology but is an offshoot of the ontological tradition itself. Insofar as it belongs to this tradition, it manifests certain specific traits: every *materialist ontology* denies any pre-constituted structure of being or any teleological order of existence and instead unfolds within a strictly immanent discourse in which only a constitutive conception of practice can serve as foundation.<sup>1</sup> Underlying it

<sup>1</sup> The term 'materialist ontology' has also been defined by Michael Hardt as a lineage within 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, *Gilles Deleuze. An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (London: UCL Press, 1993), p. xiii. The differences between Heidegger's and Deleuze-Guattari's work on ontology is 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 a defence of this task see E. Alliez, *De l'impossibilité de la*

is the philosophical insight that a properly thought-out politics requires an ontology. Without ontology politics is merely ideology.

### I. Deleuze-Guattari's Onto-Politics

Politics always appears as the most obvious of consequences for philosophy: is it not simply a matter of putting a doctrine into practice? The first response to this question is to think about the image of thought itself, which is perhaps the very definition of what it is to do philosophy. In *Différence et Répétition*, Deleuze both characterises and critiques a *dogmatic* image of thought.<sup>2</sup> According to this image of thought the affinity between truth and thought itself is formally presupposed and, as Deleuze tells us, 'it is *in terms of* this image that everybody knows and is presumed to know what it means to think.'<sup>3</sup> 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, remains unquestioned.<sup>4</sup> For Deleuze therefore, to think in a different way is first of all to attack this image of thought. It is not enough to have different thoughts or images of thought. It is a matter of not having any image of thought whatsoever.

This talk of an image-less philosophy does not presuppose a pre-philosophical foundation and is above all a political problem. Deleuze-Guattari's critique of the image of thought in *A Thousand Plateaus*<sup>5</sup> is a critique of political theory, as a form of thought that bases itself upon the rational defense of political sovereignty. The usual translation of thought into practice takes the form of this rationality. Then problem is the following: can one move from thinking to acting outside of the image of

*phénoménologie. Sur la philosophie française contemporaine*, (Paris: Vrin, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> The 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]

<sup>3</sup> DR, p. 172, DRb, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> Deleuze defines the image of thought in the following manner: "The image of thought is only the figure in which *doxa* is universalised by being elevated to the rational level." DR, p. 176 and DRb, p. 134.

<sup>5</sup> G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993). [Hereafter: TP]. And *Mille Plateaux*, (Paris: Minuit, 1980). [Hereafter: MP].

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 type of procedure is the rational defense of the State. This image of thought establishes that the State is merely the external form of rationality. 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 rights. Deleuze-Guattari's argument is that this image of thought (of thought as universal and subjective) cannot constitute 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 in the rational will and the State deduced from it, rather, the rational will, the production of identical subjects, is itself a consequence of State power. Thus, the language of rights is not a philosophical defense of the State, but the State's capture of philosophy. Deleuze-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 can only be possible if there is an exteriority to the State Apparatus as such. If there were no exteriority to the State, then the language of rights would be the only political language.

In *Anti-Oedipus*<sup>6</sup> the exteriority, or Outside, of the State is presented through the tensions and dynamics of capital. In TP, however, this outside is thought differently. The outside of the State Apparatus is what Deleuze-Guattari call the War Machine. A thought that does not presuppose an image of thought is, therefore, one that is linked to a War Machine. Nonetheless, what presents itself as State-philosophy, that is, as a philosophy that is captured by the State Apparatus, is itself paradoxically connected to the very possibility of an outside to the State's domination. On this basis it can be understood how philosophical writing or thought in general can still present us with a 'new politics', i.e. a new legitimation of sovereign power, whilst 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 thinking whatsoever.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it can never be a matter here of moving from thought

<sup>6</sup> G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *L'Anti-Oedipe*, (Paris: Minuit, 1972/73). Hereafter: AO. And *Anti-Oedipus*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1984). Hereafter: AOb.

<sup>7</sup> It is important to re-contextualize this double aspect of thought in terms of the analysis of power in the work of Spinoza by authors such as Antonio Negri. This

to practice via a process of self-justification and legitimation. Rather, the activity of thought itself is a practice *as long as it is linked to a War Machine*.

The fundamental question then becomes: what is a War Machine? Or: how does one analyse the difference between different machinic assemblages such that one can decide between a War Machine that is outside the State Apparatus and one that has become captured by the State Apparatus? This question, which Deleuze-Guattari ask in TP, has, to some extent, replaced the distinction in AO between subjected groups and subject-groups. For, although the two volumes of *Capitalism & Schizophrenia* both share the same field – the analysis of desire within the axiomatics of capitalism – the relation between the two texts is not without its complications. To begin with, the passage from *Anti-Oedipus* to *A Thousand Plateaus* necessitates a translation of the ontological terms of the first into those of the second, so that the continuities between them may be established. The ontological vocabulary of AO — of desire, production and body without organs — needs to be translated into that TP: abstract machines, machinic assemblages and plane of consistency. This translatability of the ontological terms nevertheless also comes to show the differences between the respective ontologies of the two volumes. Thus, the materialist ontology of AO can be said to be close to the historical analysis of the parallelism of the social and the psychic fundamentally related to a Hegelian or Marxist tradition in the 'philosophy of history'. In TP, by way of contrast, this materialism extends beyond the mere analysis of human societies into all the different strata of being. Other shifts that take place in the passage from the first to the second volume are equally interesting to follow. Within the frame of the strict 'parallelism' of the ontological and the political, even the smallest nuances have meaningful consequences. Thus, it is also possible to analyse the different possibilities envisioned for politics in the two volumes. In the first, and specifically within the analysis of the difference between subject-groups and subjected groups, one can discern a latent concept of 'class consciousness', where the schizophrenic has usurped the

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analysis centres on drawing the important conceptual distinction between the two forms of power for which 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, where the argument follows the same logic as that of Spinoza's analysis of power, is that the power of thought is necessarily linked to its *potentia*. Herein lies its power of resistance and creation.

proletariat as the vehicle for revolution. In TP, 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.

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

There are subtle differences between AO and TP concerning the importance of the State in relation to the codification of desire. In AO the State appears 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 wholly different logics. In TP, by way of contrast, it is the State rather than capital that is the fundamental agent of control. In effect, TP explains why the 'contradictions' of capital have not led to an increase in revolutionary potential within the so-called industrial societies. Within capitalism the State has not become tangential, despite all talk of *flows* of international capital, but ever more powerful. The State intervenes at every level of life.

Thus, the State, for Deleuze-Guattari, is not an evolutionary, historical phenomenon occurring at a certain point in time and then disappearing, but rather is the necessary horizon of every social formation. This they call the *Urstaat*: "We are compelled to say that there has always been a State, quite perfect, quite complete. The more discoveries archaeologists make, the more empires they uncover. The hypothesis of the *Urstaat* seems to be verified: 'The State clearly dates back to the most remote ages of humanity.'"<sup>8</sup> It always and everywhere has the same function: to capture and control the flows of the *ecumenon*, "flows of all kinds, populations, commodities or commerce, money or capital, etc."<sup>9</sup> This

<sup>8</sup> MP, p. 445, TP, p. 360.

<sup>9</sup> AO, p. 264, AOb, p. 223. Thus, we can agree with Ronald Bogue's remark that, though the State in AO has a residual existence within capitalism, it nonetheless cannot be confused with the latter. Capitalism is a totally separate formation: "[Deleuze-Guattari] 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 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, *Deleuze and Guattari* (London: Routledge, 1989), p.96.

means that the State cannot exist without the exterior or outside that it must appropriate. This explains why there can be no self-legitimation and rationalisation of the State, the cornerstone of a juridical conception of power, since the State exists first of all as an apparatus of capture. It can only be the interiorisation of these flows into a striated and organised space because of this exteriority that resists it. This War Machine as Outside is not simply the description of a historical phenomenon, 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. It 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 TP, Deleuze-Guattari first speak of there being two 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 only in order to better appropriate them (e.g., multinational corporations and religious sects). And on a different scale, but perhaps even more disruptive, "the local mechanisms of bands, margins, minorities, which continue to affirm the rights of segmentary societies in opposition to the organs of State power."<sup>10</sup>

## III. The War Machine, or the Outside

However, it is not enough to think of the War Machine as being external to the State Apparatus, rather it must also be thought as the pure form of exteriority. If the War Machine were merely external it would, like the many figures of sovereignty, have to be defined by what it is opposed to. The War Machine would merely be the projection of the State's worst fears and horrors, which the State would continually excise from itself through the sublime operations of its organising and interiorising power of appropriation. If the War Machine in all its different historical guises has appeared as that which is to be feared the most, then this has been a consequence 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 need to remind ourselves of the two sides of the abstract machine. The abstract machine has two sides: one facing towards

<sup>10</sup> MP, p.445, TP, p.360.

the plane of consistency, the other facing towards machinic assemblages; one *metastratic* and the other *intrastratic*. The same logic holds true for the War Machine, for it too is an abstract machine of a special kind. On one side it is appropriated by the State Apparatus for the means of domination and control and on the other side it is always caught in the movement of a deterritorialization that goes beyond any social formation whatsoever.

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-Guattari call the pack or the band. That we can speak, however, of pure forms of exteriority and interiority does not mean that they exist independently. Their pure difference is only at the level of analysis. In concrete situations they are always mixed. In other words, there has never been a pure State without an 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 State Apparatus and War Machine is, therefore, like every distinction in Deleuze-Guattari's work, an immanent distinction, bearing on modalities of operation, and not a transcendent one. Both these formations, State and War-machine, occupy the 'same field', in which interiority describes the formation of States, and exteriority that which 'escapes and stands against States'.<sup>11</sup> This same field is the field of war, so that Deleuze-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'.<sup>12</sup> 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. It is only when the War Machine has been appropriated or captured by the State Apparatus that its direct object becomes war. 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 *n*<sup>th</sup> degree of annihilation, and even self-annihilation – as witnessed by the fascist State – but also in 'post-

<sup>11</sup> MP, p.446, TP, p. 361.

<sup>12</sup> MP, p.525, TP, p. 421.

fascism', in which "total war itself is surpassed towards a norm of peace more terrifying still."<sup>13</sup> At this point, the War Machine is not the State's means of power against the outside; rather it is the War Machine itself that 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 completely 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.

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 their relation in terms of an opposition between 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 is how this machine comes to be appropriated by the State and why this is necessarily linked to the conjunction of the State form in capital. But also 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-Guattari are literally advising us to become nomads once again, or suggesting it would be possible to exist purely outside the State. Rather, what is at stake is far more modest, and therefore more real. How is it possible even within the most powerful coercion of human desires and potential for there to be a form of desire that 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? In endeavoring to answer these difficult questions, we mustn't forget that is never a matter of 'war' in the familiar, extensive sense, but only of war in the machinic or intensive sense, such that Deleuze-Guattari can talk of writing and music as being War Machines.

#### IV. The State Apparatus of Capture

The decisive question is: what does capital add to the State form? This question is certainly different from the question of the relation between

<sup>13</sup> MP, p.525, TP, p.421.

the State and capitalism in AO. The latter text proposed a kind of 'universal history' of social formations that had its basis in a Marxist topology of social organisations. Capitalism *qua* vector of absolute deterritorialization, tendential limit of all social-production, converged with desiring-production *qua* universal process or cosmic schizophrenia, and thus came both before and after the State-form. In TP, on the other hand, social formations which have their origin in machinic assemblages are coextensive with one another. We cannot, for example, speak of a primitive society existing in complete isolation from any State formation, suddenly surprised one day by the appearance on the horizon of the State coming to crush its existence. The primary relation of the primitive society and the State is one of anticipation and prevention. This means that the State formation is always already present in primitive society even whilst that society pretends to ward it off.<sup>14</sup> Before explaining what happens to the State when capital is added to it, the State form itself needs to be defined. In AO the State is defined as overcoding in relation to the flows of desire and in opposition to the coding of primitive societies, which took the form of affiliation and alliances. This overcoding has two aspects: the first 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); the second is a desperate repulsion of the decoded flows that it must keep at the limits of its empire. TP continues with this definition of the State as overcoding, but provides a far more detailed description of its appropriation of resources through the process of the apparatus of capture.<sup>15</sup>

In the description of the relation between the State Apparatus and the War Machine, the apparatus of capture is directed against the pure form of exteriority, which assumes the guise of the nomad. But the apparatus of capture also has a new economic function that Deleuze-Guattari describe, again following Marx, as having the 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

<sup>14</sup> MP, pp. 534-35, TP, pp. 429-30.

<sup>15</sup> TP gives a similar definition of the State as overcoding as follows: "a State apparatus is erected upon the primitive agricultural communities, which already have lineal-territorial codes; but it overcodes them, submitting them to the power of a despotic emperor, the sole and transcendent public-property owner, the master of the surplus or the stock, the organizer of large-scale works (surplus labor), the source of public functions and bureaucracy." MP, p. 533, TP, pp. 427-28.

[*territoires*] are exploited in order to be transformed into land [*terre*] (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 possesses the 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, only thus 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. But besides the double function of comparison and appropriation, the apparatus of capture operates with two other forms: profit and taxation. In profit, free activity is translated into labour, while in taxation exchange is translated into money.<sup>16</sup> Through these different processes, the apparatus of capture recasts the destiny of human beings within a State-megamachine, according to a process Deleuze-Guattari describe in terms of 'machinic enslavement'.<sup>17</sup> Even the monetary economy as such does not announce the arrival of capital. Two abstractions are required for that to take place: abstract money quantities and abstract labour quantities. These two quantities are constituted through the relative deterritorializations of labour and money. They are therefore no longer codifiable by the imperial or despotic State. This is what the State must ward off just as much as the primitive society warded off the State. To account for the fact that capitalism did not happen in China, for example, Deleuze-Guattari explain how the Chinese State warded off its arrival by shutting down the production of mines, as soon as these became redundant within the traditional economy of the State Apparatus.<sup>18</sup> 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 provided 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 every code. It therefore requires a different kind of binding or joint. This

<sup>16</sup> For a description of these three forms of the apparatus of capture see MP, pp. 549-554 and TP, pp. 440-444.

<sup>17</sup> MP, p. 570, TP, p. 457.

<sup>18</sup> MP, p. 562, TP, p. 450.

is provided by the axiom.

## V. Deleuze-Guattari and Tarde

### a) Axiomatics and Politics

Deleuze-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. Just as the notion of appropriation found in AO is given a much more complex analysis in TP through the apparatus of capture, so is the idea of the State as regulator of axioms given a more detailed description in terms of a 'model of realisation'. Through this latter notion, it becomes easier to understand why, far from disappearing with the triumph of capital, the power of the Modern State actually increases in comparison to that 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 also through, for example, families, schools, and universities. The effectuation of axioms takes place through 'normalisation'. Normalisation consists in the creation of a subject that only recognises itself through a dominant reality.<sup>19</sup> It constitutes a far more powerful repressive machine than anything under the control of the despotic State for it no longer requires any external transcendent higher unity. The more you obey the dominant reality, the more you become 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, for it is the combination both of the processes of subjectification and of machinic enslavement. We are lucky to have both, Deleuze-Guattari note ironically.<sup>20</sup>

Contemporary 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-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.

<sup>19</sup> The key text for Deleuze-Guattari here is Althusser's essay 'Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus' in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: NLB, 1971), pp. 127-88.

<sup>20</sup> MP, p.573, TP, p.458.

Why is this so? Because capitalism's fundamental law consists in setting up and continually repelling its own limits, the better 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. The relation between axioms and capital in the present age possesses two poles. Deleuze-Guattari typify these as those of addition and subtraction. The majoritarian political institutions of the State either add axioms to the flow of capital, or they subtract them. The former are typified by the social-democracies of the West, and the latter by the anarcho-capitalist societies that spring up on the peripheries of the centre of capital, in Latin America for instance. However, these extreme poles conceal a whole mixture of gradients delimiting the field of dispute proper to capitalism's world-wide market. In either case, the question concerns whether one should add more axioms or take them away; which axioms to keep and which to discard. Deleuze-Guattari's point is that this operation is far more fundamental than any characterized in terms of the spurious nomenclature of left and right. But none of this gets outside the relation between axioms and capital.

### b) Minoritarian/Majoritarian

A micro-politics, a minoritarian politics, always seeks those places in which something escapes from an axiom. Again, this goes back to the general rule of capital, that it 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, another decoded flow will emerge somewhere else. This is why Deleuze-Guattari can say that 'ours is becoming the age of minorities'.<sup>21</sup> If one must distinguish between the majoritarian and the minoritarian, then one must also discriminate between the minoritarian insofar as it is figured and constructed in opposition to the majoritarian, and the minoritarian as 'medium of becoming'. This latter distinction is probably what is missing in many of the critiques of Deleuze-Guattari's conception of minoritarian politics. For Deleuze-Guattari, minority politics, such as, for example, women's demands for equal rights, or many of the demands for a homeland or Nation-State taking place in the struggles at the edges of the European empire, take their images of themselves directly from what they

<sup>21</sup> MP, p. 586, TP, p. 469.

oppose. If one remains at this level, which is that of the demand for the recognition of one's identity, then, in the end, this demand will simply be re-appropriated by the axioms of capital, which does not have any problems at all with identity politics. What interests Deleuze-Guattari is what takes place beneath or between the politics of identity, something which is less recognizable but far more contagious and unpredictable insofar as its diffusion is infinitesimal.

### c) 'Micro-sociology', or, the Infinitesimal

Deleuze-Guattari's conception of a micro-politics cannot be made sense of without the micro-sociology of Gabriel Tarde. On the whole, the practice of sociology has always consisted in ignoring micro-sociological phenomena for the sake of global representations. This explains to some extent the disappearance of Tarde's work and the predominance of that of Durkheim and his school, concentrating as it does on 'great collective representations'. The work of Tarde interests Deleuze-Guattari because it analyses that which flows beneath binary and segmentary representations. Flowing beneath these representations are the social quantities of belief and desire, which for Tarde are not individual psychological entities, but pre-individual quanta detached from global persons. 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. Thus, as Deleuze-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.

### d) Social Quanta

Tarde's theory rests on one fundamental principle: all the relations that link individuals together — and these relations are not the same as the individuals themselves but are social quanta — can be reduced to one original and unique relation: that of imitation. For Tarde, this force finds expression in the natural tendency that all individuals have within them to imitate one another in such a way that a series of similarities are developed.<sup>22</sup> What interests Tarde are not the individuals who imitate, but

<sup>22</sup> "I assert that the relation between these two people is the unique and necessary

rather the relation of imitation itself. This relation is pre-individual, made up of social quantities that rise and fall like waves, as they pass through the bodies of individuals, thereby constituting them prior to any acts of consciousness. The principle of imitation explains group cohesion and expansion, producing ever greater amounts of similarity as the only guarantee of its own perpetuation: "Thus, there follows this definition of the 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 whose common traits are ancient copies of a same model."<sup>23</sup>

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 more profound level is how these 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. The members of a given social formation are quantifiably similar to one another through the values that they share. But this identity is not given, it is produced, and it is produced, Tarde writes, "little by little, next by next, by way of imitation."<sup>24</sup>

### e) 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 congeal into conscious

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element of social life, and that it always consists in the imitation of the one by the other." Gabriel Tarde, *Les lois sociales*, (Paris : Institut Synthélabo, 1999), p.59.

<sup>23</sup> Gabriel Tarde, *Les lois de l'imitation*, (Paris : Kimé, 1993), p. 73. ["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." ] (All translations from Tarde are the author's).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 65. ["peu à peu, de proche en proche, par voie d'imitation." ]

ones and conscious ones 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 bind and shape social formations, are not themselves something that can be thought at the level of the individual person – in fact, persons, as social individuals, 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 of the kind proposed by Durkheim and other sociologists, leading as they do to totalisations and general representations that portray the social merely in terms of the antinomy between the individual and the community. Imitation does not occur at the level of a total or global person, but rather takes place at the level of two social quantities — belief and desire — that flow through individuals, rather than being constituted by them.<sup>25</sup> In other words, these social quantities that increase and diminish within the social field can be analysed independently of the global representations that constitute the order of social formations. In the vocabulary of TP, these quanta are *lines of deterritorialization* flowing through individuals as they come to be constituted by global representation, whereas the latter are *stratified segments*, and are thereby always reterritorializations of the deterritorialized flows of social quantities.

#### f) Critique of Political Economy

The analysis of social quanta also leads Tarde to a radical critique of the foundations of political economy. Attention to this aspect of Tarde's work is perhaps amongst the causes for the shift in register from AO to

<sup>25</sup> "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." Ibid., pp. 56-7. For a further description of the meaning of social quanta see *Les lois de l'imitation*, pp. 15-6, and *Les lois sociales*, p. 57.

TP. In the former work, Deleuze-Guattari are quite content to operate within the vocabulary 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 is a critique of political economy, in the wake of Ricardo and Smith, it is an *immanent* critique, in a Hegelian register. In other words, it adopts the very terminology of the system which is the object of its critique in order to expose the latter's internal contradictions. Thus, although Marx's work remains the most important critique of capital we have, 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. One might argue that this rejection explains why capital's immanent dissolution at the nexus of labour and capital is no longer considered by Deleuze-Guattari to be the privileged site of resistance.<sup>26</sup>

In political economy all values are economic: economy is the source of valorization and all production is understood as economic. For Tarde, by way of contrast, all values are social and economic values are simply instances of social values. Take for example the category of production. For political economy, production is merely an economic category functioning at the conjunction of capital and labour (or, for the neo-classicists, use-value). Rather than understanding value through production in this sense, Tarde wishes to attain the level of the production of values as such. He is interested in the *productivity* of production, rather than in production as a result of an anterior process (e.g. the social formation of capital) that captures the productivity of production by means of a global representation. Tarde calls this productivity *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 'impersonal' *ars combinatoria* that the real forces constituting history and politics are produced. This conjunction between desires and beliefs takes place

<sup>26</sup> Gabriel Tarde is quite direct in his rejection of the fundamental premise of political economy when he writes: "Let us no longer say that labor is the only source of value. The first source is invention, which is not a labour." *Ps. Ec.*, I, (Paris: Alcan, 1902), p. 168. ["*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*"]. And: "Capital [...] is not at all accumulated labour, or at least it is not that essentially, but is, first and foremost, accumulated invention." *La logique sociale*, (Paris: Alcan, 1893), p. 352. ["*Le capital [...] n'est nullement du travail accumulé, ou du moins ce n'est pas cela essentiellement, mais bien, avant tout, l'invention accumulée.*"].



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 religious, juridical, economic, and beyond; at the level of infinitesimal, unheard of becomings. This is why Tarde will say, quite humorously, that the force of invention that translates quanta into value has its site in 'little men'.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, what prevents us from reducing invention to the level 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 occurs at the pre-individual level of infinitesimal transformations. If we understand innovation as difference, then every innovation is accompanied by a necessary repetition. Invention only arises through repetition, but repetition has its only 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. Invention and imitation explain how molar organisations are dissolved by the intensities that these two forces communicate. Thus, the question is not "What is the relation between the individual and society?", but "Which forces territorialize flows and re-territorialize deterritorialized flows?"

## VI. Micro-politics

### a) Capitalism and the Unconscious

The influence of Tarde's conception of desire as social quantum influence on TP accounts for the subtle change of emphasis from AO to the later work. TP still operates with much of the same vocabulary as AO, such as,

<sup>27</sup> "What we must grant to the opponents of the theory of individual causes in history is that the latter has been distorted by speaking of great men where instead one should have spoken of great ideas, often appearing in little men, and even of little ideas, infinitesimal innovations brought by each of us to the common endeavour." *Les lois sociales*, p. 126. ["Ce qu'il faut accorder aux adversaires de la théorie des causes individuelles en histoire, c'est qu'on l'a 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'infinitesimal innovations apportées par chacun de nous à l'œuvre commune."]

for example, 'molar and molecular', 'territorialization and deterritorialization'. However, TP cannot merely be seen as elaborating on the key concepts of AO. There is a change of emphasis with regard to two crucial problems: the status of the unconscious and the status of capitalism. First of all, considering the importance of the unconscious in AO, the fact that it rarely appears in TP seems puzzling. One reason for this change, of course, is that psychoanalysis is no longer the key enemy. There is, however, a far more important reason why the unconscious does not play such a pivotal role in the argument of TP, and it has to do with Tarde's famous statement: "every thing is a society, since every phenomenon is a social fact."<sup>28</sup> Of course, there is an ineluctable parallelism between the psychic and the social in AO. This is why the shift from AO to TP should not be regarded in terms of opposition, but rather as a change in emphasis. Nonetheless, the parallelism between the psychic and the social in AO still contains a *formal* distinction between the two terms. For example, Deleuze-Guattari speak of the unconscious as being neither expressive nor representative, whereas they refer to the social machine as 'symbolic'.<sup>29</sup> Formal oppositions like these are present throughout the argument of AO. In TP, the distinction between unconscious machines and social machines, desiring-production and social production, is no longer present. There are only abstract machines, actualised within concrete social assemblages. In other words, the anthropomorphic *strata* are populated by impersonal, 'social' quanta, generating and functioning within them.

### b) The Outside

Although both AO and TP talk about absolute and relative deterritorialization, the aforementioned change in emphasis signals the difference in the functioning of these concepts. In AO, absolute deterritorialization is almost imagined as the Outside of the social. There are two reasons for this: the first concerns AO's 'Marxist' account of capitalism in terms of the contradiction between an absolute and a relative limit; the second concerns the manner in which the machinic unconscious is social only to the extent that it constitutes the exteriority

<sup>28</sup> *Monadologie et sociologie*, p. 58. ["[T]oute chose est une société, que tout phénomène est un fait social."]

<sup>29</sup> "The unconscious does not speak, it engineers. It is not expressive or representative, but productive. A symbol is nothing other than a social machine that functions as a desiring-machine, a desiring-machine that functions within the social machine, an investment of the social machine by desire." AO, p. 213, AOb, p. 180.

proper to every social formation. This might explain the residual romanticism, if one may use such a word, of AO, a trait expressed in the figure of the schizoid, who exists outside the limits of every society, the paradigmatic instance of which is the famous stroll of Büchner's Lenz, presented at the opening of AO.<sup>30</sup> This is why one cannot underestimate the importance of Tarde to TP. After Tarde, there is no need to invoke a psyche that would, regardless of all parallelism, somehow still remain distinct from what is ultimately the source of all of its constitutive components, the 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 two forces directing the social flows of belief and desire. Or, in Deleuze-Guattari's vocabulary, the flows of affect either go in the direction of stratification, or in the direction of absolute destratification. Of course, this is not a vision directed against AO, rather it merely radicalises the latter's immanence. 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 TP constructs the political. The micro-politics of TP differs from the schizo-politics of AO. This difference manifests the transformation of the problematic of psycho-social parallelism as well as that of the status of capitalism at the 'end of history'.

### c) The Molar and the Molecular

The difference in the way that AO and TP construe the political 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 plateau entitled 'Micro-politics and Segmentarity' in TP. Here, the distinction between the molecular and the molar is initially used to describe the difference between a 'soft' and a 'hard' segmentarity. One of the examples given concerns the relation between the sexes. One can conceive the relation between the sexes as a hard segmentarity, as Freud does in his formulation of sexual difference. Alternatively, one may conceive the relation between the sexes as inclusive rather than exclusive, so that one can no longer speak of a femininity opposed to a masculinity (embodied in the two distinct sexes), but rather of a masculinity or femininity passing *between* sexes. One may also think of other relations, or *becomings*, that these two sexes could entertain, beyond sexual

<sup>30</sup> AO, pp. 7-8, AOb, p. 2.

difference.<sup>31</sup> These molecular couplings are first of all defined in terms of a 'soft segmentarity'. Having made this distinction between a 'hard' and a 'soft' segmentarity, later in the plateau Deleuze-Guattari actually correct themselves. Rather than the distinction existing at the level of segments, whether rigid or not (e.g. whether modern or primitive, ethnographically speaking), the real distinction is now placed between two kinds of segments, on the one hand, and flows of quanta, on the other. Segmentarity belongs to molar, flows to the molecular.<sup>32</sup> Not that we should see these two forces as being opposed to one another; rather they are indissociable, reciprocally presupposing.

Accordingly, it is never possible to say of a given society or organisation that it is molar or molecular. In effect, there are always deterritorializing flows across molar organisations, whilst these flows are always being reterritorialized in turn. Deleuze-Guattari propose the example of money. Money has two aspects: molar and molecular. As molar, it is 'payment money'; a money-segment linked to money's molecular aspect, the 'flow of financing-money'.<sup>33</sup> Every element within the social field can be described in the same way: caught within molar organisations at one moment; carried away by mutant flows at another. These deterritorializations are also the site of new territorializations, as one can see, for example, with the emergence of the bourgeoisie after the dissolution of feudal structures.<sup>34</sup> This description of the difference between the molar and the molecular is subtly different from the one in AO. It is true to say that in AO the molecular is thought on the side of deterritorialization, and the molar on the side of reterritorialization. And yet, the difference lies in the fact that, in AO, the molecular is on the side of desiring production itself, whereas the molar is thought only on the side of social production. In TP, on the other hand, both the molar and the molecular are descriptions of social forces acting upon social quantities and producing lines of flight or of segmentarity. The question we have to ask ourselves, is: "Do these subtle differences change the way we need to think about politics?" Or: "Are schizoanalysis and micro-politics the same thing?"

<sup>31</sup> MP, p. 260, TP, p. 213.

<sup>32</sup> MP, p. 264, TP, p. 217.

<sup>33</sup> MP, pp. 264-65, TP, p. 217.

<sup>34</sup> MP, p. 269, TP, p. 221.

#### d) Schizoanalysis and Micro-politics

The subtlety of this difference should come as no surprise. What schizoanalysis and micro-politics share is their irreducibility to 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-Guattari write that "schizoanalysis *as such* has strictly no political program to propose. If it did have one, it would be grotesque and disquieting at the same time."<sup>35</sup> Equally, in TP, they will sharply distinguish between micro-politics and macro-politics, the latter describing all organised political groupings, irrespective of size.<sup>36</sup> Both texts share an analysis of capitalism that cuts across the theory/practice divide: to practise schizoanalysis or micro-politics *is* to analyse. It consists in drawing maps of the lines of deterritorialization that cut across segmentary divides.<sup>37</sup> And yet, at the level of the content of this analysis, there is a subtle difference between schizoanalysis and micro-politics. Both operate within critiques of capitalism, but the former sees capitalism as a social formation existing at the end of a linear history, whereas the latter regards capitalism as co-extensive with other social formations. This means that in schizoanalysis it is only with the end of history that a politics of desire becomes possible, and that this possibility, reformulated here within the language of desire, is due to capitalism's internal contradictions. Micro-politics, on the other hand, is turned towards those infinitesimal encounters that Tarde was one of the first to describe.<sup>38</sup> Here the subtle difference is not only a matter of scale, but also of pathos.

In AO, becoming-revolutionary is understood through the difference between subjected and subject-groups, whereas in TP, becomings (including becoming-revolutionary) are happening everywhere, beneath the homogenous spaces hollowed out by the State Apparatus. This is because the possibility of deterritorializations does not come from a subject-position, even if this subject is understood as impersonal and unconscious, but from that side of the abstract machine turned towards the plane of consistency: a whole nexus of criss-crossing lines surging through the stratified layers of society. But this also comprises a change

<sup>35</sup> AO, p. 456, *AOB*, p. 380.

<sup>36</sup> MP, p. 270, TP, p. 221. And also: "In short, everything is political, but every politics is simultaneously a *macropolitics* and a *micropolitics*." MP, p. 260, TP, p. 213.

<sup>37</sup> MP, p. 20, TP, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> "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." *Monadologie et sociologie*, p. 39.

in pathos, toward a greater optimism. In AO, there is still a faint shadow of the melancholia characteristic of a certain Marxism, which views the contradictions upon which the possibility of revolution depends as infinitely iterative. Rather, as soon as one situates becoming-revolutionary *between* the interstices of power, *within* infinitesimal changes occurring between and beyond binary oppositions of every kind (not just the one between capital and labour), then a kind of optimism becomes intelligible.<sup>39</sup>

#### VII. *Amor Fati*: the Impersonal, the Fold, and the Self

Although it may seem paradoxical, this change of pathos, or optimism, is furthered in Deleuze's later works, by way of the question concerning the possible redefinition of subjectivity. Thus, Deleuze's book on Foucault proposes a very different conception of subjectivity from the one delineated in TP: rather than being the point of application of power, subjectivity is the '*foyer de resistance*' (focal point of resistance) to power; and instead of being a pure form of interiority, it is conceived as a 'derivative of the Outside'.<sup>40</sup> To discover this new kind of subjectivity, we need to re-examine the Greeks. There are two reasons for this. First of all, Deleuze remarks that, at least at the level of morality, we still seem to be weighed down by many old problems. But an even more important reason for this return to the Greeks can be discerned in Deleuze's reading of Foucault, in the shape of what he calls an 'Absolute Memory' of the Outside. According to the Deleuzian reading of Foucault, this memory of an Outside bequeathed to us by the Greeks is in truth far more significant than that 'opening of the question of Being' celebrated by Heidegger in his reading of Hellenic tradition.<sup>41</sup>

This absolute memory of an Outside is to be understood in terms of a *doubling* of the subject. Greek power operates by way of external governance; yet through a process of doubling, this external governance

<sup>39</sup> See for instance Deleuze's remarks in Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, (Paris : Flammarion, 1996), p. 174. *On the line*, (New York : Semiotexte, 1983), pp. 110-11.

<sup>40</sup> G. Deleuze, *Foucault*, (Paris: Minuit, 1986), pp. 108-109. [Hereafter F]. English translation: *Foucault*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1986), p.101. [Hereafter Fb]

<sup>41</sup> "What the Greeks did is not to reveal Being or unfold the Open in a world-historical gesture. According to Foucault they did a great deal less, or more." F, p.107 and Fb, p.100.

becomes self-government; for how can one govern others unless one has learnt to govern oneself? Although this doubling is not interesting *per se*, it is through this process that self-mastery (*enkrateia*) becomes detached from external relations of power and knowledge. The doubling of external forces into internal ones actually changes the status of the forces themselves. That which is intrinsic to external relations of force, the capacity for affecting or being affected by others, is repeated or doubled as a power for affecting oneself. This capacity for 'auto-affectation' engenders a new form of subjectivity; one that is independent of power and knowledge even though it is 'derived' from them.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the account of subjectivity proposed in Deleuze's *Foucault* differs significantly from the one found in TP. Interestingly, the French word used to describe this new form of subjectivity, 'subjectivation', is the very same word that was used in TP to describe the way in which molecular assemblages became ensnared within molar representations. In *Foucault*, by way of contrast, the term *subjectivation* becomes a positive term; the better to be contrasted with that other form of subjectivity designated by the French word '*asujétissement*', which is translated in English as 'subjugation'. In other words, while 'subjectivation' characterises the subject as a derivative of the Outside, 'subjugation' describes the subject as *subjugated* by someone else (the latter being precisely the operation designated by the process of 'subjectification' in TP). Thus, subjectivity indexes a double operation: that of the molecular singularisation through which the 'absolute memory' of the Outside becomes folded into the form of the self; and that of the molar subjugation through which the subject becomes tied to a constrictive identity. Of course, far from consisting in some putative 'return to the Greeks', the question of 'subjectivation' concerns the possibility of mobilising the 'absolute memory' of the Outside as a way of resisting subjugation. In reconsidering the issue of subjectivity, as Deleuze remarks in a footnote, "we are obviously looking [...] for a different type of relation that is unique to our own social field."<sup>43</sup> Consequently, it is a question of discovering contemporary means of resistance to subjugation; of resisting molar individuation, and the manner in which every individual becomes bound to a recognisable identity. It is a struggle for "difference, variation and metamorphosis", and therefore one that is similar to the micro-politics of MP — except that in *Foucault*, Deleuze is no longer afraid of

<sup>42</sup> "Foucault's fundamental idea is that of a dimension of subjectivity derived from power and knowledge without being dependent on them." F, p. 109, Fb, p. 101.

<sup>43</sup> F, p. 113, fn. 28, Fb, p. 148, fn. 28.

couching this struggle in terms of the self.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps it is at this point that one might speak of a movement from politics towards ethics in the Foucauldian sense, that is to say, ethics as a way of answering the question 'How does one relate to oneself?'

How can the subject be a derivative of the Outside? That is to say: "How does the process of doubling help one to escape subjugation?" It is by way of responding to this question that Deleuze formulates what is perhaps the most important concept in his later work: that of the fold. The fold, Deleuze writes at the beginning of his book of the same name, is the 'operative function' of the Baroque. But it is equally operative in that doubling of the self through which a subjectivity independent of the codes of power and knowledge is produced.<sup>45</sup> The doubling of the self consists in a folding of the Outside — or, from the other perspective, the inside of the self, that part of it which escapes subjugation, is a fold of the Outside: an *interior exteriority*. Compare this with the account of the relation between the interiority of the State Apparatus and the exteriority of the nomad War Machine in TP. In the latter, although both forms are co-extensive and continually related to one another, so that the State Apparatus is continually appropriating the outside, while the outside is continually encroaching upon the State Apparatus — ultimately in the form of an imperceptible becoming — both nevertheless manage to retain their purity of form. In the the Deleuzian account of the fold, by way of contrast, interiority is *infracted* by the Outside from within because it is nothing other than the fold of this Outside: the self is invaginated, involuted, and the I is an Other.<sup>46</sup> Thus, 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 fold that continually escapes the codes of power and knowledge. The motto of self-mastery becomes: place yourself within the fold of the Outside. 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.<sup>47</sup> It is this last fold that constitutes the

<sup>44</sup> F, p. 113, Fb, p. 106.

<sup>45</sup> G. Deleuze, *Le Pli. Leibniz et le baroque* (Paris: Minuit, 1988), p. 5. English translation: *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (London: Athlone, 1993), p. 3. Strangely enough Deleuze does talk about a Greek 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*. See *Le Pli*, p.53, *The Fold*, p. 38.

<sup>46</sup> G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1991) [QP], p.199; *What is Philosophy?* (London: Verso, 1994) [WP], p. 211.

<sup>47</sup> F, pp.111-12, Fb, p.104.

absolute memory of the Outside, escaping beyond every strata or diagram. This is the fold that goes beyond every body, power, or knowledge. Is not this ultimate fold of the outside the impersonal as the expression of life, similar to Spinoza's beatitude, described by Deleuze in his last published work 'Immanence, une vie...' as the final aim of philosophy? Not a philosophy *of* ethics, but philosophy *as* ethics.<sup>48</sup> It is perhaps the equivalent to the becoming-imperceptible proposed TP, recast within the stoic language of self-mastery. Ethics in this sense no longer has to do simply with an art of living, but also with philosophy as a way of life; this is the stoic, Spinozist ethics proper to a materialist ontology.

The ontological approach to the parallelism of politics and ontology entails that philosophy itself come to be defined as ethics in a Spinozist sense. These are the questions that need to be asked: "How do we increase our *puissance*?", "How do we become active?", and "How do we become joyful?". Here ethics goes beyond any notion of good and evil, beyond the discourse of liberal theory, which is nothing but thought as captured by the State. In this context of a redefined ethics, freedom is understood as a process, a process of liberation, a process of becoming. Freedom is not innate 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."<sup>49</sup> Thus, revolution occurs at all places and all times, in the interstices of power. These are only micro-revolutions though, occurring in the various fields of arts, science and philosophy as they constantly cross over into one another. They take place through invention but also through its propagation. Revolution is no longer a unitary, forceful overthrowing of the State, nor is it a massive transformation of the State.<sup>50</sup> It is not a question of the State at all. Rather, it works against the State and its form in thought, but can never replace it; never act as a State against the State. These micro-revolutionary forces are the impersonal forces of creation, transformation, and becoming.

<sup>48</sup> 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. English translation in Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence* (New York: Zone, 2001)

<sup>49</sup> Spinoza, *Ethics*, Book IV, Prop. 68, (Cambridge: Hackett, 1992), p. 192.

<sup>50</sup> 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: "It is true that the idea of revolution itself is ambiguous; it is Western insofar as it relates to a transformation of the State, but Eastern insofar as it envisions the destruction, the abolition of the State." MP, p. 478, TP, p. 385.

Yet, there is a time, say Deleuze-Guattari in *What is Philosophy?*, that is the time proper to philosophy. They call this the *amor fati* and describe it in terms of a dignity of events that is inseparable from philosophy itself: "being equal to the event, or becoming the offspring of one's own events. [...] There is no other ethic than the *amor fati* of philosophy. Philosophy is always meanwhile."<sup>51</sup> 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. Philosophy's aim is not to tell us about the end of history. Like Spinoza's beatitude, it does not announce the arrival of absolute enlightenment. The relation of the philosopher or the intellectual to others is not that of the sage to the people. Rather, in the impersonal *potentia* of thought, their relation follows the logic of the fold.<sup>52</sup> In this way philosophy resists death, servitude, and the intolerable ... This it does with its own War Machine. The War Machine of a kind of writing that does not have battle as its object. On the contrary, "One always writes to give life, to liberate life there where it is imprisoned, to draw lines of flight."<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> QP, p. 151, WP, p. 159.

<sup>52</sup> "The people is internal to the thinker because it is a 'becoming-people', just as the thinker is internal to the people as no less unlimited becoming." QP, p. 105, WP, p. 109.

<sup>53</sup> G. Deleuze, *Pourparlers* (Paris: Minuit, 1990), p.192. ["*on écrit toujours pour donner la vie, pour libérer la vie là où elle est emprisonnée, pour tracer des lignes de fuite.*"]