PART II

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Chapter 5

Deleuze and the Anarchist Tradition

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The notion that Deleuze is an 'anarchist' thinker – or, at the very least, that his thought may be interpreted in whole or in part as an expression of 'anarchistic' sensibilities – is said to originate with Todd May's formative volume *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (1994).[1] Since that time, May's thesis has become something of a truism among certain students of Deleuze, especially those who identify with the broad and loosely defined movement known as 'postanarchism',[2] and has inspired similar claims regarding Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Levinas, Rancière and other thinkers (Koch 1993; Jun 2007; Verter 2010; May 2011; Absensour 2013). One of the most often cited criticisms of such claims is that the figures in question were not associated in any meaningful sense with the historical anarchist movement and did not identify themselves as anarchists.[3] The underlying assumption here is that the term 'anarchist' is anchored in a specific tradition characterised by a fixed set of principles, in which case it is incorrectly applied to Deleuze and other thinkers who at best express an affinity with some of these principles or else are interpreted as doing so. For some critics, at least, this further implies that the thinkers in question are completely unrelated to anarchism and, by extension, that it is altogether inappropriate to discuss them in this context.

Drawing on ideas from Michael Freeden's theory of ideology, I contend that the anarchist tradition is better understood as a constellation of diffuse and evolving concepts than as a fixed set of principles. This, in turn, invites a crucial distinction between what I call 'anarchist' thought – that is, thought that emerges within and in response to historical anarchist movements – and 'anarchistic' thought – that is, thought that emerges outside such movements but is conceptually proximate to core anarchist commitments. Inasmuch as the latter has often played a significant role in the historical development of the former, and vice

versa, neither can be fully understood apart from the other. As I will argue, this is precisely how we ought to understand Deleuze in relation to the broad anarchist tradition.

Who Is an Anarchist?

What is required in order for a given individual[4] to qualify as an 'anarchist'? The first and arguably most commonsensical answer is that the individual in question must explicitly identify herself as such. Taken by itself, however, this would seem to imply that *anyone* who self-identifies in this way *just is* an anarchist regardless of her actual political perspective. A better answer, perhaps, is that an individual is properly regarded as an anarchist if she professes distinctively anarchist ideas, beliefs and commitments. This would apply even to individuals who did not – or, indeed, could not – explicitly identify themselves as anarchists, in which case it is possible that anarchists have existed in various cultures throughout human history.[5] The problem, obviously, is that it is by no means clear what qualifies a given belief, idea or commitment as 'distinctively anarchist'. While the prevailing tendency has been to define anarchism as the principled rejection of the State,[6] such an approach 'inevitably creates the impression that anarchism is contradictory as well as unfocused, and renders the theoretical analysis of anarchism a frustrating task at best' (Schmidt and van der Walt 2009: 18). As Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt point out:

> If anarchism can encompass economic liberals, Marxists, radical Christians, Taoism, and more, it is hardly surprising that the standard works on anarchism describe it as 'incoherent'. Such an approach is not useful. Given that there are few intellectual traditions that do not have at least some negative comments about the state and some positive views on the individual, it is not easy to specify an upper limit on the traditions that may be assimilated, in some form, to the anarchist category ... Once ... [the anti-statist] definition is accepted, it is a short step to [Peter] Marshall's work, where the 'anarchist' gallery includes the Buddha, the Marquis de Sade, Herbert Spencer, Gandhi, Che Guevara, and Margaret Thatcher. And if the notion of anarchism can cover so vast a field – and let us not forget that the case can be made to include Marx and his heirs – then the definition is so loose as to be practically meaningless. (Schmidt and van der Walt 2009: 41)

In an effort to avoid this alleged incoherence, Schmidt and van der Walt propose a third answer, namely that anarchism should be strictly identified with the 'core beliefs' of the historical anarchist movement of the nineteenth century. This movement, the origins of which are traced

with great specificity to the conflict between Marx and Bakunin in the First International, is explicitly associated with 'class struggle' anarchism (Schmidt and van der Walt 2009: 19). It is characterised first and foremost by its commitment to direct action and the mass organisation of the 'popular classes' in the struggle to replace capitalism, the State and other hierarchical political, social and economic institutions with a 'free [that is, stateless] socialist society based on common ownership, self-management, democratic planning from below, and production for need, not profit' (2009: 6).

Schmidt and van der Walt's proposal has two especially significant ramifications. First, the notion that the historical anarchist movement was necessarily 'a product of the capitalist world and the working class it created' implies that anarchism as such did not – indeed, *could not* – exist in precapitalist contexts (Schmidt and van der Walt 2009: 96). This entails, in turn, that anarchism did not exist as a distinctive political ideology prior to the 1860s, in which case earlier radicals like Godwin and Proudhon cannot be counted among its major proponents. Second, the notion that the historical anarchist movement uniformly espoused a socialistic 'class struggle' orientation implies that individualism and other non-socialist tendencies (for example, post-left anarchy and primitivism) do not qualify as authentic iterations of anarchism, in which case genuine anarchism has been virtually nonexistent in the world since the collapse of that movement following the Second World War.

There are several problems with this approach, a few of which are worth noting in brief detail. In the first place, the notion that the 'broad anarchist tradition' is coextensive with 'class struggle' anarchism assumes that the latter itself can be clearly defined. In lieu of formulating such a definition, however, Schmidt and van der Walt merely enumerate generic beliefs and commitments of the sort cited previously. In so doing, they take for granted that 'class struggle' anarchists share a uniform understanding of concepts like 'direct action', 'common ownership', 'self-management' and the like, thereby overlooking the considerable extent to which different tendencies, orientations and schools of thought within 'class struggle' anarchism itself have disagreed over the meanings of said concepts. On the other hand, virtually all of the individuals Schmidt and van der Walt identify as 'class struggle' anarchists – for example, Kropotkin, Goldman and Malatesta – explicitly deny the notion that anarchism is 'a fixed, comprehensive, self-contained, and internally consistent system of ideas, set of doctrines, or body of theory' (Jun 2012: 49; cf. Rocker 2004: 31) or that it is 'necessarily linked to any [one] philosophical system' (Malatesta

1965: 19). Ironically, this would seem to imply that the rejection of Schmidt and van der Walt's central thesis is itself a core belief or commitment of 'class struggle' anarchism, in which case strictly identifying anarchism as such with a particular form of anarchism is inconsistent if not altogether self-contradictory.

A much more useful approach is provided by Michael Freeden, who defines ideologies in general as complex 'clusters' or 'composites' of decontested political *concepts* 'with a variety of internal combinations' (Freeden 1996: 88). For Freeden, ideologies are not constituted by generic beliefs or commitments but by particular political *concepts* 'characterized by a morphology' (1996: 77) – that is, an inner structure that organises and arranges those concepts and, in so doing, removes them 'from contest by attempting to assign them a clear meaning' (Freeden 2015: 59). The assignment of fixed meanings and degrees of relative significance to concepts is achieved in two ways: first, by identifying, defining and organising their 'micro-components' – that is, the particular referents that specify what they are concepts *of* – and second, by arranging concepts within a hierarchy of 'core', 'adjacent' and 'peripheral' elements, each level of which specifies degrees of relative significance among concepts of the same type and, in this way, determines their overall significance within the ideology itself (Freeden 2013: 124–5). Taken together, these operations allow for 'diverse conceptions of any concept' (124) and an 'infinite variety' of 'conceptual permutations' within 'the ideational boundaries . . . that anchor [them] and secure [their] components' (126, 128, 125). For Freeden, it is precisely conceptual permutations of this sort that account for variation within otherwise stable ideological families as well as their development and evolution 'at variable speeds across time and space' (124).

Deleuze and Guattari's theory of concepts as outlined in *What Is Philosophy?* (1994) displays certain interesting similarities with the foregoing account. Philosophy, they famously maintain, involves the creation of new concepts with a view to analysing 'problems which are thought to be badly understood or badly posed' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 16). This is roughly of a piece with conceptual decontestation in Freeden's theory, which seeks to assign fixed meanings to essentially contested concepts and, in so doing, to bring order out of the chaos of ideological dispute. For Deleuze and Guattari, all concepts are essentially contestable in this way precisely because 'the concept has no reference: it is self-referential; it posits itself and its object at the same time it is created' (1994: 22). As in Freeden's account, moreover, the concept is 'defined by . . . its endoconsistency [that is, by its internal

'micro-components'] and exoconsistency [that is, by its relation to other concepts]' (1994: 22).

The notion that anarchism is better understood as a more or less stable cluster of morphologically arranged political concepts than as a fixed set of first-order claims, assertions or propositions strongly belies Schmidt and van der Walt's thesis. Although there is no question that anarchist ideas are 'fluid and constantly evolving' and that their 'central content . . . changes from one generation to another . . . against the background of the movements and culture in and by which they are expressed' (Gordon 2008: 4), different tendencies within anarchism nonetheless 'have largely similar morphologies' (Franks 2012: 63), meaning that they tend to affirm the same set of core concepts even though '[these] are expressed in different ways, depending on context' (Gordon 2008: 4). Were it not the case, it would be difficult to account for the ubiquitous tendency to regard anarchism as a distinct political perspective, let alone the fact that conventional treatments of anarchism consistently highlight particular concepts rather than others. All of this being said, ideologies are not simply abstract conceptual assemblages but

> clusters of ideas, beliefs, opinions, values, and attitudes usually held by identifiable groups that provide directives, even plans, of action for public policy-making in an endeavour to uphold, justify, change or criticize the social and political arrangements of a state or other political community . . . (Freeden 2004: 6)

In other words, ideologies encompass ideational content as well as various forms of concrete political activity. Because this activity, no less than the ideational content it expresses, emerges in response to particular historical circumstances, ideologies cannot be understood apart from the historical contexts within which they arise.

Anarchism, accordingly, is not *just* a collection of ideas but a historically evolving '*movement* composed of dense networks of individuals, affinity groups and collectives which communicate and coordinate intensively, sometimes across the globe, and generate innumerable direct actions and sustained projects' (Gordon 2008: 3, emphasis added). As Gordon notes, the 'major features' of this movement include:

> a shared repertoire of political action based on direct action, building grassroots alternatives, community outreach and confrontation; shared forms of organizing . . . ; broader cultural expression in areas as diverse as art, music, dress and diet . . . ; [and] shared political language that emphasizes resistance to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and more generally to hierarchy and domination. (2008: 3–4)

Although these features are manifestations of an underlying ideational content, that content is itself a product of concrete political activity. Thus, while it is surely a mistake to identify anarchism exclusively with 'a historically-embodied movement or movements (Graham 2015: 2), it is equally mistaken to characterise it as a mere amalgamation of political concepts divorced from historical context.

A distinction must be drawn, therefore, between anarchism as a historically embodied ideological phenomenon, and the range of ideas, beliefs, attitudes, commitments, activities, ways of living and so on that might be termed 'anarchistic' in virtue of their ideological proximity to anarchist movements or to the 'family of shared orientations for doing and talking about politics, and to living everyday life' that are associated with anarchism more generally (Gordon 2008: 4). Although they may lack any explicit connection to anarchism in the former sense, individuals and movements that profess anarchistic beliefs or engage in anarchistic activities have had a profound impact on its historical development and, in many cases, been influenced by it in turn. As I will argue below, this distinction is the key to understanding Deleuze's relationship to the broad anarchist tradition.

While the question of which concepts comprise the ideological core of anarchism – no less than how these concepts have been decontested within the broad anarchist tradition – is very much a matter of dispute, few would deny that anarchism is crucially distinguished by its commitment to *freedom* and corresponding opposition to political, economic and social structures that limit or altogether deny the same. For classical anarchists, at least, the individual's 'consciousness of self, of being different from others' instils a 'craving for liberty and self-expression' (Goldman 1998: 439) and a desire to 'grow to [his or her] full stature . . . [to] learn to think and move, to give the very best of [himself or herself] . . . [to] realize the true force of the social bonds that tie men [*sic*] together, and which are the true foundations of a normal social life' (Goldman 1910: 67). Freedom, accordingly, is associated with the actualisation of 'the material, intellectual, and moral powers that are latent in each person' (Bakunin 1972) and 'the all-around development and full enjoyment of all physical, intellectual, and moral faculties' (Bakunin 1992: 46). Although this 'liberty of actual and active opportunity' is not a '*negative* thing' that involves 'being free *from* something' but rather 'the freedom *to* something . . . the liberty to be, to do' (Goldman 1998: 98), it is only achievable when 'self-thinking individuals' are 'educated to freedom and the management of their own interests' and 'left to act for themselves, to feel

responsibility for their own actions in the good or bad that comes from them' (Malatesta 1981: 36). This, in turn, requires the eradication of externally imposed restrictions that 'inhibit or prevent people from participating in determining their actions or the conditions of their actions' (Young 1990: 15).

For the classical anarchists, repression of the latter sort is problematic not only because it prevents human beings from 'bring[ing] to full development the powers, capacities, and talents with which nature has endowed [them]' (Guérin 1998: 57) but also, and more importantly, because it opposes both collective aspirations towards self-determination as well as individual persons' ability to think and act for themselves (Goldman 1998: 98). In this way, it exemplifies what Deleuze calls 'the indignity of speaking for others' (Deleuze and Foucault 1977: 209) – that is, 'the act of representing the other's needs, goals, situation, and in fact, *who they are*, based on [one's] own situated interpretation', thereby 'participating in the construction of their subject-positions rather than simply discovering their true selves' (Alcoff 1996: 100–1). For Deleuze, as for the anarchists, the existence of political, economic and social structures that 'claim to be representative [or] make a profession of speaking for others . . . lead[s] to a division of power, to a distribution of this new power' that denies people the ability not only to act autonomously but also to decide who they are and what they (should) want or need (Deleuze and Foucault 1977: 209). If I am right to suggest that the critique of representation is an integral component of anarchism's ideological core, then there is an important sense in which any thinker who significantly emphasises the role that representative practices play in political, social and economic oppression – including Deleuze – may be understood as 'anarchistic' in virtue of operating within close conceptual proximity to anarchism.

Anarchism and the New Left

Contemporary anarchism is, for the most part, historically discontinuous with the classical anarchist movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Uri Gordon writes:

> the roots of today's anarchist networks can be found in the processes of intersection and fusion among radical social movements since the 1960s, whose paths had never been overtly anarchist. These include the radical, direct action end of ecological, anti-nuclear and anti-war movements, and of movements for women's, black, indigenous, LGBT and animal liberation. (2008: 5)

Although contemporary anarchism 'often draw[s] directly on the anarchist tradition for inspiration and ideas', it is 'in many ways different from the left-libertarian politics of 100, and even 60, years ago' (Gordon 2008: 5). These differences – including the replacement of 'unions and federations' with 'networks of collectives and affinity groups . . . as the organizational norm'; a broadened agenda in which 'ecology, feminism and animal liberation are as prominent as anti-militarism and workers' struggles'; and 'a stronger emphasis . . . [on] prefigurative direct action and cultural experimentation' (2008: 5) – are indicative of the strong influence of New Left, which emerged in the 1960s as an explicit reaction to orthodox Marxism-Leninism and other Old Left ideologies.

Generally speaking, the New Left's critique of such ideologies consists of four basic charges: (1) that they rely on totalising macropolitical discourses which overlook the 'politics of everyday life'; (2) that they reinforce the alienation and reification of individual subjects by subsuming them under abstract, universal categories like 'human nature', 'species-being' and the like; (3) that they deny the creative dimension of power, regarding it instead as a uniformly repressive force that is deployed against otherwise passive, independently constituted subjects; and (4) that they reduce all forms of oppression to a single overarching source (that is, economic oppression). By emphasising 'cultural, psychological, and aesthetic patterns of domination' alongside 'the structural underpinnings of capitalism', New Left movements such as situationism offered a broader conceptualisation of oppression and 'the range of "disciplinary" practices' that serve to maintain it (Curran 2007: 4). As Richard Gombin notes:

> For the situationists, the bureaucratic system of industrial society [had] considerably increased the sum total of the exploitation and repression of man in comparison with the competitive capitalism and the liberal nineteenth century state. The tremendous development of science and technology . . . led to the individual being completely taken over by the system; the individual is no more than a commodity, a reified object, placed on show, and manipulated by the specialists in cultural repression: artists, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, sociologists and 'experts' of all kinds. (1971: 24)

Commodification and reification of this sort involves *subjectivation*, the process of 'manufacturing images of, or constructing identities for, individuals and groups' and, by extension, divesting them of 'their power to create, transform, and change themselves' (Jun 2012: 127–8). To this extent, the principal mode of oppression in a 'spectacular society' is not so much exploitation, violence or direct physical coercion as it is *representation* – the generic practice of 'giving people images of who

they are and what they desire', thereby 'wrest[ing] from them the ability to decide those matters for themselves' (May 1994: 48).

Representation manifests itself not only at the political, social and economic levels of society but at the sexual, psychological and cultural levels as well (Gombin 1971: 24–5). Although 'modes of subjectivation' can be 'foisted upon individuals or groups through direct or indirect . . . coercion', they are typically 'enforced and reinforced more subtly' – for example, through processes of normalisation that encourage individuals and groups 'to identify with the normalized representation, to conform to it, and so to regulate themselves absent any direct coercion' (Jun 2012: 128). For this reason, they are not so much active forces bearing down on already constituted subjects as they are reactive forces that divest subjects of their power and, in so doing, render them docile (Deleuze 1983: 58). Because subjectivation emanates from multiple sites, combating it necessarily requires an 'all-out attack' (Gombin 1971: 24–5) aimed at turning reactive forces against themselves and, by extension, re-empowering the active force of individuals. This, in turn, requires a 'politics of difference' grounded in anti-authoritarianism, personal (and especially sexual) liberation, the celebration of unorthodox 'lifestyles and dress codes' and the deployment of 'Do-It-Yourself direct action' strategies (Curran 2007: 5).

Poststructuralism – the school of thought with which Deleuze is most commonly associated – was both a product of, as well as a major influence on, the French New Left. It comes as no surprise, accordingly, that Deleuze and other 'poststructuralist' thinkers made a common cause of systematically dismantling 'representational barriers between people and who they can become' (May 1994: 131). As Todd May has argued, however, this rejection of representation, no less than other key elements of New Left and poststructuralist critique, is significantly foreshadowed in classical anarchism in so far as the latter denies 'that people have a nature or a natural set of interests that their political liberation will allow them to express or fulfil' and so rejects the practice of 'representing the interests of others as though those interests were either natural or given, even in the unfolding of a historical destiny' (May 1994: 97). In this way, May thinks, classical anarchism is philosophically (if not historically) of a piece with poststructuralism and other New Left-inspired movements, including contemporary anarchism.

In France, the visible culmination of New Left politics was the events of May 1968 – events which, as we will see, had a profound impact on Deleuze's intellectual and political development. Unlike earlier events of this sort, the so-called Paris Spring was 'fomented in mostly spontaneous

fashion by a decentralized and non-hierarchical confederation of students and workers' who, despite their otherwise varied political persuasions, tended to share the classical anarchists' rejection of political representation as manifested in 'centralization, hierarchy, and repressive power' (Jun 2012: 165). The most consistently anti-authoritarian among them 'refused to betray their . . . beliefs by taking on leadership roles of any sort [and] repeatedly thwarted attempts by others to consolidate the leadership of the movement, thereby preventing its appropriation by outside political parties' (2012: 166). In place of 'centralized leadership', they organised 'self-managing councils such as the Sorbonne Student Soviet and the Commune of Nantes' (166), transforming the universities into 'cities unto themselves, with virtually everything necessary for normal life' (Decker 1977: 407).

Although there is no doubting 'the existence of anarchist ideas and concepts within the sum total of [their] ideological utterances' nor 'the libertarian character of [their] methods of contestation' (Gombin 1971: 19), the anti-authoritarians of 1968 were mostly unaffiliated with the French Anarchist Federation and other groups associated with the prewar anarchist movement. Indeed, such groups 'supplied very little of the driving force in the events (unlike the FAI and the CNT in the Spanish Civil War)' nor were they 'a direct source of inspiration (as were the Russian anarchists in relation to the Makhnovshchina)' (Gombin 1971: 22). This suggests that the Paris Spring was not so much an anarchist intervention *sensu stricto* as it was a powerful expression of broadly *anarchistic* sensibilities – chief among them the rejection of representation – that significantly challenged the hegemony of orthodox Marxism and opened up a whole new generation of radicals (including Deleuze) to a more straightforwardly anti-authoritarian brand of politics.

Deleuze and Anarchism

Unlike other figures associated with poststructuralism, Deleuze was largely removed from organised political activity prior to 1968 (Patton 2000: 4). At the time, Francois Dosse writes,

> Deleuze was teaching at the University of Lyon and quickly became quite sympathetic to the student protests. He was one of the rare professors at Lyon, and the only one in the philosophy department, to publicly declare his support for and attend events of the movement. (2011: 177)

Following this initial foray into radical politics, Deleuze 'became involved with a variety of groups and causes, including the *Groupe*

d'Information sur les Prisons (GIP) begun by Foucault and others in 1972' (Patton 2000: 4), His work, too, began to follow a much more explicitly political trajectory that reached its apex in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Deleuze and Guattari 1977, 1987).

Poststructuralism, as noted previously, may be understood as radically extending the anarchistic critique of representation beyond the narrow boundaries of the political. Yet whereas Derrida and Foucault conceived of this project in largely epistemological and sociolinguistic terms, Deleuze's own account draws on a complex ontological framework that had already been developed in *Difference and Repetition* and other earlier works. At the centre of this framework is the notion that Being itself is an expression of difference or multiplicity rather than identity (Deleuze 1994: 36–40). For Deleuze, reality does not consist of stable, transcendent entities that exist external to and independent of the forces that act upon them; rather, it emerges from the material actualisation of 'relationship[s] of forces', where force itself (which Deleuze refers to as 'desire') is a virtual capacity for the expression of such relationships (Deleuze 1983: 40). This actualisation or expression, Deleuze writes, is 'on the one hand an explication, an unfolding of what expresses itself, the One [that is, force as such] manifesting itself in the Many [that is, particular relationships of force]' (Deleuze 1990: 16). On the other hand, because 'the One remains involved in whatever expresses it, imprinted in what unfolds it, immanent in whatever manifests it' (Deleuze 1983: 40), its expression as multiplicity is always already an expression of unity. In this way, Being is wholly immanent; it is neither constituted nor determined by fixed identities but by multiplicities – that is, variable processes, operations and relations of force.

As Deleuze writes, 'every force is related to others . . . [that] it either obeys or commands' (Deleuze 1983: 40). Whereas those of the latter sort (active forces) are capable of transforming themselves by affecting weaker forces, to 'go to the limit of what [they] can do', those of the former sort (reactive forces) are capable of being transformed by stronger forces but strive to prevent this by 'separat[ing] active force from what it can do' by taking away 'a part or almost all of its power' (58). In so far as desire (that is, force as such) is immanent to all particular relations of force and, in this way, constitutes the ultimate source of their affective qualities, it 'must itself have qualities, particularly fluent ones, even more subtle than those of force . . . the immediate qualities of becoming itself' (53–4). These qualities of desire (affirmation versus negation), which Deleuze elsewhere describes as qualities of power or life (Deleuze 1983: 85; cf. Deleuze 1990: 102, 218), are 'immanent to

every force, every expression of or relation among forces' and, as such, 'actual force is not only determined by its own quality (its sense) but by the quality of the virtual desire . . . immanent to it (its value)' (Jun 2012: 171). Thus, every force – whether active or passive – has the capacity to either affirm or deny life (Deleuze 1983: 67).

Because epistemological representation – which Deleuze refers to as 'the dogmatic image of thought' – is founded on identity rather than fluid and variable relations of force, it 'fails to capture the affirmed world of difference' (Deleuze 1994: 55–6). The same is true of political representation which, as a species of the dogmatic image of thought, relies on already-constituted individuals with uniform, rationally appreciable interests. In rejecting the concept of identity in general, Deleuze also rejects the concepts of universalisable human subjectivity (Deleuze 1992: 162) and universal 'reason' (Deleuze 1995: 145–6), redefining them as, or replacing them with, 'variable processes of rationalization . . . [and] subjectivation' (Smith 2003: 307). In *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Deleuze and Guattari refer to such processes as 'machinic'. Unlike the universalisable subject of traditional political theory, a machine is 'fluid, mobile, and dynamic . . . capable of changing, of connecting and reconnecting with other machines . . . immanent to the connections they make, and vice versa' (Jun 2012: 171). It is not a 'bounded whole with an identity and an end'; on the contrary, it is 'nothing more than its connections; it is not made by anything, and has no closed identity' (Colebrook 2002: 56; cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 1).

The quality of machines is a function of the quality of whatever forces are dominant within the relations that comprise said machines (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 135). Thus, a machine that 'dams up, channels, and regulates' (1977: 33) flows of desire is dominated by reactive forces, whereas a machine that expands or proliferates these flows is dominated by active forces. The same is true of social or political assemblages, which are themselves constituted by relations among machines. Assemblages that are dominated by machines of the former sort 'overcode' flows of desire in the form of people, money, labour and commodities through processes of domination and control ('molar lines'). These processes, which seek to 'territorialise' subversive machinic processes ('molecular lines' or 'lines of flight') and so prevent them from decoding flows of desire (1977: 223–4; cf. Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 130), are representational in nature; they suppress difference by constructing fixed identities that serve to identify, order and discipline individuals.

When Deleuze and Guattari claim that the state 'makes points *resonate* together, points that are not necessarily already town-poles but very

diverse points of order, geographic, ethnic, linguistic, moral, economic, technological particularities' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 433), they mean that it organises various kinds of machines into an interdependent relationship with itself and with each other and, in so doing, uses these machines to overcode flows of desire and to territorialise lines of flight. Capitalism, in contrast, does not seek to control so much as to *commodify*; it does this by implementing a generic ('axiomatic') framework within which flows of desire are decoded, reterritorialised as exchange value and, finally, enclosed within the axiom of circulation and trade (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 224). That said, both rely on capturing flows of desire, suppressing difference and representing others to themselves; to this extent, they are clearly expressions of reactive force. At the same time, every social and political assemblage is defined by 'the variable lines and singular *processes* that constitute it as a multiplicity: their connections and disjunctions, their circuits and short-circuits and, above all, their possible transformations' (Smith 2003: 307). In other words, their nature is determined not only by what they do but also by the conditions of possibility for their doing otherwise – that is, their 'lines of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 216; cf. Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 125). This means that resisting reactive or oppressive assemblages is ultimately a matter of escaping along 'lines of flight' by decoding and deterritorialising flows of desire.

Deleuze's philosophy provides a sophisticated descriptive analysis of oppressive political, social and economic systems – one that highlights the role that representation plays in their operation as well as in resistance to them (Deleuze and Foucault 1977: 206–7; Deleuze 1988: 23; Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 47; Deleuze 1995: 85). To this extent, at least, there is no question that it bears an affinity to classical anarchism. For anarchists of all stripes, however, oppression is not (or not just) an empirical phenomenon that needs to be studied and understood; oppression is a wrong that needs to be condemned, combated and, ultimately, defeated. Traditional normative judgements of this sort, predicated as they are on transcendent values, are seemingly absent in Deleuze's work. Although he directly impugns the practice of 'speaking for others' and often seems to ascribe positive value to active, life-affirming modes of existence, he nonetheless fails to provide an explicit 'moral' critique grounded in what I have elsewhere termed '*nomological* (that is, law-, principle-, or rule-based) normative principles' (Jun 2011: 99). As Todd May writes:

> For Deleuze, as for Nietzsche, the project of measuring life against external standards constitutes a betrayal rather than an affirmation of life.

> Alternatively, an ethics of the kind Spinoza has offered . . . seeks out the possibilities life offers rather than denigrating life by appeal to 'transcendent values'. Casting the matter in more purely Nietzschean terms, the project of evaluating a life by reference to external standards is one of allowing reactive forces to dominate active ones, where reactive forces are those which 'separate active force from what it can do'. (1994: 127)

There is no question that Deleuze rejects the 'abstraction, universality, and exteriority to life' that are hallmarks of traditional ethical thinking (Jun 2011: 99). Such thinking, after all, 'generates norms that do not and cannot take account of their own deterritorialization or lines of flight . . . [because] they cannot provide self-reflexive criteria by which to question themselves, critique themselves, or otherwise act upon themselves' (2011: 101). Far from rejecting any and all ethical thinking, however, Deleuze instead identifies deterritorialisation itself as an 'overriding norm' (Patton 2000: 9) which, rather than generating extensive normative criteria, provides the means 'to critique and transform [such criteria], that is, to create something new' (Smith 2003: 308). In this way, deterritorialisation functions as an *intensive* normative criterion that is 'categorical, insofar as it applies to every possible norm as such, but . . . not transcendent . . . immanent to whatever norms (and, by extension, assemblages) constitute it' (Jun 2011: 101).

As it turns out, all of this is remarkably similar to the core anarchist concept of *prefiguration* which demands that the means and methods employed in achieving a desired end must reflect or 'prefigure' that end (or, more specifically, the values that are promoted by achieving it) (Bakunin 1984: 7; Avrich 1987: 7–8, 29; Goldman 2003: 261). In the absence of prefiguration there are no grounds upon which to critique the extensive norms that motivate and justify political action, which, by extension, invites the betrayal of those same norms by reproducing the very objects to which they are applied in the first place. Prefiguration is analogous to deterritorialisation, accordingly, because it serves as an intensive criterion by which to judge extensive criteria, where this, in turn, is a matter of determining whether said criteria themselves inhibit the creation of new normative criteria and, in so doing, give rise to the 'micro-fascism' of the avant-garde (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 214–15).

Conclusion

The foregoing has highlighted two important senses in which Deleuze may be understood as an 'anarchistic' thinker – that is, a thinker who

stands in a significant relation of proximity to the conceptual core of anarchism. In the first place, as we have seen, Deleuze recognises that existing political, social and economic assemblages are inexorably wedded to representational practices that separate active force from what it can do and, in so doing, inhibit or deny the realisation of latent possibilities for creativity and development. In this way, such assemblages are shown to be inherently at odds with freedom as anarchists understand it. Deleuze goes even further, however, by highlighting the extent to which oppressive assemblages actually *determine* individuals' identities and desires, which denies people the ability not only to act for themselves but also to decide for themselves who they are or what they can become. Freedom, accordingly, can only be achieved by thinking, doing and *becoming* otherwise. This requires more than the abolition of oppressive assemblages; it requires actively creating and experimenting with new possibilities at both the individual and the social levels, which in turn requires a rigorous interrogation of the conditions of possibility for what is as well as what could be.

Like the classical anarchists before him, Deleuze interrogates not only the conditions of possibility for thinking, doing and becoming otherwise but also, and more importantly, the normative framework within which these conditions can be met. Both are interested in explaining how and why ostensibly liberatory political movements end up transforming into the very monsters they seek to combat, no less than what must be done to prevent this transformation from occurring. In the end, both contend that axiomatised values or norms inhibit or altogether eliminate the capacity for self-critique that is necessary for political actors to secure and maintain the ends to which they aspire. Put another way, both insist on prefiguration (or, in Deleuze's parlance, 'absolute deterritorialisation') as a minimal requirement for a genuinely liberatory politics that avoids the self-destructive impulse towards microfascism.

Notes

1. The basic themes of *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* were first articulated in May's 1989 article 'Is Post-Structuralist Theory Anarchist?'.
2. Representative postanarchist texts include Newman (2001, 2010, 2015), Call (2002), Day (2005) and Rousselle and Evren (2011).
3. Indeed, some explicitly repudiated the label. See, for example, Derrida (2002: 22).
4. The analysis to follow takes for granted that this question also applies to texts, as well as political organisations, movements, practices and the like.
5. This is precisely the position favoured by Kropotkin, Nettlau, Rocker and other notable anarchist thinkers, to say nothing of more recent writers such as George

Woodcock, Peter Marshall and Robert Graham. See, for example, Kropotkin (1970: 287), Woodcock (1975: 13, 15, 19), Nettlau (1996: 277–8), Rocker (2004: 9–33), Graham (2005: xi–xii) and Marshall (2010: 4).
6. Arguably the most significant source of this tendency is Paul Eltzbacher's *Anarchism: Exponents of the Anarchist Philosophy* (1960, originally published 1900). See especially pp. 189, 194, 201.

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