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Between the Seen and the Said

Deleuze-Guattari's Pragmatics of the Order-Word

by

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Abstract

This thesis investigates Deleuze-Guattari's notion of *stratification* through a series of investigations into their material on language. Stratification is their term for the process by which matter-energy comes to assume the relatively stable historical formations of our social world, and in particular the relationship between subjects, objects and words. The complex notion of the *order-word/password* is proposed as key to this process, with its role in the articulations of the strata (as order-word) and in movements of creation and escape (as password). I explore this apparatus from a variety of angles, in order to present an account of Deleuze-Guattari's pragmatics that demonstrates both its basis in philosophy and its connections with the world.

I begin by introducing the notion of 'difference in itself', through Deleuze/Deleuze-Guattari's critique of representation and their account of subjectification, the creation of the subject in space and time (in relation to Bergson and Kant) — and then feed this material through an encounter with Judge Schreber, in the process filling out our account of the subject. The resulting diagram of stratification is further explored through a dialogue with two other key thinkers of language — Wittgenstein, in relation to his social conception of meaning as use, and Derrida, in relation to his critique of Austin and Searle's Speech Act theory — in either case, demonstrating important connections and contrasts with Deleuze-Guattari. I then examine the specifics of *stratoanalysis* through an examination of the related zones of the formal, the abstract and the incorporeal, bringing this to bear on Deleuze-Guattari's appropriation of the linguist Hjelmslev, and to the criticisms of Ruthrof. The final step is to relate this apparatus both to linguistic and everyday understandings of language, connecting this pragmatics of the order-word with the notion of an 'art of living' through a consideration of standardised language and 'verbal hygiene'.

Table of Abbreviations

- AL Bolinger, *Aspects of Language*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1975
- AO Deleuze-Guattari, *AntiOedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, tr. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, London: Athlone 1984.
- B Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, New York: Zone Books, 1991
- CC Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical* tr. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, London: Verso 1998
- CE Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, London: Penguin, 1993
- CEv Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, tr. Arthur Mitchell, New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1911
- CM Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, tr. Mabelle L. Andison, New York: The Wisdom Library, 1946
- CPR Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith, London: MacMillan, 1964
- DB Ruthrof, 'Deleuze and the Body: Eluding Kafka's "Little Death Sentence"', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 96: 3, Summer 1997, 563-578
- DP *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, tr. Alan Sheridan, London: Penguin 1991
- DR Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, tr. Paul Patton, London: Athlone 1994
- F Deleuze, *Foucault*, tr. Seán Hand, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1988

- GM Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, tr. Carol Diethe, Cambridge University Press, 1994
- HH Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human*, tr. Marion Faber and Stephen Lehmann, London: Penguin, 1994
- I, II Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford: Blackwell 1998, Parts I and II
- K Deleuze-Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, tr. Dana Polan, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986
- KL Chomsky, *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin and Use*, London: Praeger 1986
- LI Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, London: Penguin, 1994
- LT Carruthers and Boucher, ed., *Language and Thought: Interdisciplinary Themes*, Cambridge University Press, 1998
- LR Chomsky, *Language and Responsibility*, tr. John Viertel, Sussex: Harvester Press 1979
- LP Honey, *Language and Power*, London: Faber & Faber, 1997
- LS Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, tr. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, London: Athlone, 1990
- Ltd Derrida, *Limited Inc.*, tr. Alan Bass and Samuel Weber, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press 1993
- M Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, tr. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988
- MM Sass, *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature and Thought*, London: Harvard University Press, 1992

- MP Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, tr. Alan Bass, Brighton: Harvester Press 1982
- MPG Santner, *My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996
- N Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, tr. Martin Joughin, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995
- P Derrida, *Positions*, tr. Alan Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981
- SB Ruthrof, *Semantics and the Body: Meaning from Frege to the Postmodern*, Melbourne University Press 1997
- SS Guattari, *Soft Subversions*, tr. David L. Sweet and Chet Wiener, New York: Semiotext(e), 1996
- TI Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ* tr. R.J. Hollingdale, London: Penguin, 1990
- TP Deleuze-Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, tr. Brian Massumi, London: Athlone, 1987
- VH Cameron, *Verbal Hygiene*, London: Routledge, 1995
- WCE Phillips Griffiths, ed.: *Wittgenstein Centenary Essays*, Cambridge University Press, 1991
- WD Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985
- Words Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford University Press 1976
- WP Deleuze-Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, tr. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson, London: Verso 1994

Introduction: The Visible and the Articulable

[I]t is in vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say.¹

This thesis concerns what Foucault calls the ‘infinite relation’ (OT 9) between words and things — or more accurately, the seen and the said, the visible and the articulable, since ‘words’ and ‘things’ are but vague approximations of these two poles or forms of a single stratum.² Indeed (as we will see in Chapter 6) Deleuze-Guattari, drawing on Hjelmslev, propose taking the poles he called *expression* and *content* to ever more abstract levels, the foldings of matter-energy, (or *differenciations* from virtual to actual), always mappable in terms of this double articulation (matter/function).³ In each case, there is neither correspondence nor a common nature to these two levels. They intertwine in a relation of mutual presupposition, forming at any given point a single stratum, a particular physico-chemical, or biological, or historical formation. Despite the astonishing breadth of Deleuze-Guattari’s account, it is only the last of these with which we will be concerned. These two intertwined levels are not equal, however: the level of the articulable (expression) is

¹ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (hereafter OT), tr. Alan Sheridan, London: Routledge, 1970: 9.

² For this reason, the original title of *The Order of Things*, *Les Mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), was intended by Foucault as ironic, as Deleuze reports (Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (hereafter F), tr. Seán Hand, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1988: 52).

³ Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, tr. Francis J. Whitfield, Madison, Milwaukee and London: University of Wisconsin Press 1969, hereafter PTL. The relations between ‘virtual’ and ‘actual’ are examined in Chapter 1; Deleuze-Guattari’s relation to Hjelmslev is examined in Chapter 6; their use of ‘abstract machinery’ and the theme of double articulation run throughout the thesis. The present paragraph summarises what the rest of our study will make clear.

determining, while that of the visible (content) is the *determinable*, and the 'agent' of the determination is the order-word.⁴ Our method is one of tracking these processes, and in particular, the dual tendencies of this central element: on the one hand, towards the order and regularity of the strata — where visible and articulable are clearly and distinctly distributed, and on the other, towards creation, disruption and change, the plane of the inarticulable and unrecognisable.

Deleuze-Guattari designate their shifting method with a variety of names: 'RHIZOMATICS = SCHIZOANALYSIS = STRATOANALYSIS = PRAGMATICS = MICROPOLITICS'⁵, an open-ended series to which Justin Barton has added INTENSIVE CARTOGRAPHY, and I will add, as appropriate, SCHIZOPRAGMATICS and MATERIAL SEMIOTICS.⁶ Though their 'system' could be seen as an 'anti-system',⁷ I hope to show it to be an apparatus that not only avoids the more harmful trappings of totalising philosophy, it also serves to connect philosophy with living — in particular, in the present context, with linguistic (and metalinguistic) practices.

In more conventional terms, then, the focus of this study is language, but language considered from a point of view from which it is impossible to isolate it from the rest of the worlds with which it is always intertwined. While Deleuze-Guattari have the taste never to talk about language in isolation, and to express their weariness with language-centred

⁴ This relation of determining to determinable is taken up in relation to Kant's critique of Descartes in Chapter 1, while also referring to Deleuze's account of the priority of the statement in Foucault (F 47-69).

⁵ *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (hereafter TP), translated by Brian Massumi, London: Athlone, 1987: 22. (Originally published as *Mille Plateaux*, Paris: Minuit, 1980)

⁶ Justin Barton, *Thought, Bodies and Intensive Cartography: Departures from A Thousand Plateaus*, unpublished manuscript, 2000

⁷ as Robert Maggiori notes, in Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972-1990* (hereafter N), tr. Martin Joughin, New York: Columbia University Press 1995: 31

philosophy, this thesis will attempt to explore from various angles the role of language in their conceptual machinery, as a means both of laying out crucial aspects of that machinery, and of shoring up its importance as antidote to the fixation on language of much recent philosophy. The level of *expression or the articulable*, the appropriate area of study for 'semiotics', encompasses for them more than language as generally understood (as, for example, human speech and writing). It encompasses *more*, because it is always intrinsically related to the other plane, that of *content or the visible*, though the specificities of that relation cannot be determined in advance, and must be approached through a consideration of both levels at once. It is never simply a matter of signs, still less of signifiers, but instead one of shifting relationships between *regimes of signs and formations of power, collective assemblages of enunciation and machinic assemblages of bodies, their actions and passions*.⁸

What, then, are the aims of this investigation? It must be admitted that the thesis is primarily critical rather than positive, in that its bulk is involved with challenging a number of specific constraints on thought, rather than exploring the uncharted waters that are opened up by such moves.⁹ In this respect, it is an unpacking and application of Deleuze-Guattari's engagement specifically with language in *A Thousand Plateaus* (in particular, 'Postulates of Linguistics'), drawing also on material from *AntiOedipus* and Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*¹⁰. Deleuze-Guattari have argued that they were really more

⁸ These two pairs of terms are from TP: 63 & 88 respectively.

⁹ It is far from clear, in any case, that the form of doctoral thesis would lend itself to such explorations.

¹⁰ 'November 20, 1923: Postulates of Linguistics', TP 75-110.

Deleuze-Guattari, *AntiOedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (hereafter AO), tr. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R Lane, London: Athlone, 1984 (originally published as *L'Anti-Oedipe*, Paris: Minuit, 1972). Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (hereafter DR), tr. Paul Patton, London: Athlone 1994 (originally published as *Difference et Répétition*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France: 1968). Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* (hereafter

concerned with other zones such as music, and have noted their lack of 'competence' in linguistics,¹¹ and there is no doubt that their work can be approached through any number of different zones (such as psychopathology, economics, history, biology, art, music, literature — some of which will be touched on here). Nevertheless, there are compelling reasons for dealing with Deleuze-Guattari through questions of language.

The first is the relation between language and the subject. On an everyday level, our speech plays an enormously important role in defining who we are, from what we say (and therefore do through saying), to the way we say it (and thus betray — or manage to disguise — our class, education and regional origin, as well as our mood and intentions). To this end, Chapter 4 discusses speech acts, while Chapter 7 looks at the notion of 'verbal hygiene'. On a deeper level, the relation between language and the subject involves the extent to which language determines thought, or thought language — raising the questions, 'Is thought possible without language?' and 'Can you change the language without changing the thought?'

In keeping with our attempt to demystify language, to 'reduce it upwards', it will be argued that thought is independent of language, but that neither language nor thought are independent of the assemblage in which they occur — i.e. that the real question in the case of both language and thought is their role in the flows of *deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation* that characterise the assemblage. To this end, the notion of the 'between' in the title is intended to point in two directions —

LS), tr. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, London: Athlone, 1990 (originally published as *Logique du Sens*, Paris: Minuit, 1969).

¹¹ 'I don't think we, for our part, are particularly competent to pronounce on linguistics. But then competence is itself a rather unclear notion in linguistics' (N 28-29). We turn to Chomsky and his notion of competence in Chapter 7. In any case, as Deleuze writes,

firstly to the common sense opposition between words and things, and the supposedly straightforward relationship between them, which we have just seen Foucault call into question. Secondly, the 'between' points to the process of division itself, and to a 'before' where the obviousness of such a division is no longer apparent; where objects, letters, signs and symbols all circulate on the same Plane, interacting in an unlimited variety of ways. 'Prior to', or indeed 'after', the dominance of the human subject (who, it is presumed, is responsible for most of the seeing and saying¹²), it is possible to glimpse, or even engage with, this Plane.

That this is carried out *in language*, as opposed to an already more fluid medium such as music, both restricts us and aids us in our task. It restricts us, because one limit-point of the present approach would be the refusal to speak or write any more, the abandonment of language altogether, an effectively *Self-defeating* move akin to suicide. Instead, we are forced despite our reservations, to remain entirely complicit with the restrictive mechanisms of representation, perpetuating the same old game ('we already have this [written down]'¹³). On the other hand, it aids us, as the resultant interplay between partial escape and recapture is *precisely* the map of material life we are drawing: we are always already in the middle of this interplay; escape on one level can always mean recapture on another (and vice versa); absolute escape and absolute capture are both equivalent to death.

To bring these points together (in short, the extent to which we are determined by discourses¹⁴ of the human, and the extent to which it is

'How else can one write but of those things one doesn't know, or knows badly? It is precisely there that we imagine having something to say' (DR xxi).

¹² where to see is understood as to *recognise* and to say, to *mean*.

¹³ the phrase Judge Schreber would hear repeated, every time a thought reoccurred to him (see Chapter 2).

¹⁴ As we will see, *discourse* here can only be understood as one uneven half of the story, the other being the actions and passions of bodies, and their discipline and

therefore possible to recast the relation between 'us' and 'language'), we need to summarise both method and targets. The targets are not, for the most part, individual philosophers, groups or institutions, but rather are received ideas that things have to be this way. The 'transcendental illusion' or 'regulative ideal' of necessity, the naturalistic fallacy, is one facet of the broader problematic of stratification, the processes by which engagements between bodies are blocked or hypostatized — in other words, the machineries of domination. For Deleuze-Guattari, *this* is God, as master of the disjunctive syllogism, the overarching principle of judgement and order, whose principal domain is grammar.¹⁵ Our many-monikered method, then, is that of opening up a set of ways of talking about and understanding language which are both more abstract and more concrete than representational approaches. More abstract, in that they expose patterns and relations in the interzone between words and things that remain invisible to representational accounts. More concrete, because this invariably involves a turn away from empty or pernicious generalities (the types of 'abstraction' based on invented constants and standards), and towards the singularities of particular, real situations.

Is it to overstate the case that the limits of what can be expressed in language mark the limits of what it is possible to experience? It has already been indicated, and cannot be emphasised enough, that language, while of course central to human experience as we know it, is nevertheless only one faculty or mode of engagement with the world, and one whose control over all the others (on the accounts provided not only by much language- and linguistics-based philosophy and semiotics, but

control. Stories which would give 'discourse' or 'text' an originary position are in profound opposition to the present approach.

¹⁵ 'Grammar' here is not simply the stuff of textbooks, but rather, the homeostatic social machinery of normalisation, as elliptically staked out by Wittgenstein (see chapter 3) — which must be understood in tandem with 'training'. The couple 'grammar-training', which corresponds to 'discourse-discipline' or 'collective assemblage-machinic assemblage', forms the single machine that produces 'this complicated form of life'. All this will be fleshed out in future chapters.

also to a large extent by representational common sense, as we will see in Chapter 1) is the stranglehold this investigation aims to break. Therefore the answer is undoubtedly 'yes': nonrepresentational modes of engagement are in progress everywhere and at all times, both within and outside language use. However, the overcoding of these engagements by representation — while not to be seen as 'evil' in some facile sense — are what need to be critiqued, both on philosophical and on everyday, practical levels.

Before tackling the intricacies of the order-word itself, our first task must be to lay out what is meant by representation, and why it can no longer suffice as our guide to understanding thought and language. This task takes us through Deleuze/Deleuze-Guattari's account of the philosophical problem as a subset of the creativity of matter through the interplay of the actual and the virtual. I contrast this with the restrictions imposed by what Deleuze calls the Image of Thought, the presuppositions of representation that have tended to govern philosophy, and which make it impossible to reach an understanding of the human and its outside. Finally, we bring these threads together in a discussion of the *three syntheses*, material operations that take both representational and nonrepresentational forms, to show how the former, rather than being primary (as the Image of Thought would have us believe), are actually dependent upon the latter. The result, it is hoped, will be a grounding for the rest of the thesis, with regard to the nature of the real, the possibility of philosophy and the role in both of language.

1. An Image Held Us Captive

1.1 The Role of Philosophy

This chapter lays the groundwork for the investigations that follow, taking a number of our key preoccupations in turn. The first, and most important (while at the same time being the most general) is the overriding concern with the struggle between creation and change on the one hand, and stability, control and order on the other. This seemingly simplistic opposition will turn out to be central to the role of philosophy, and to our particular concerns with language, consciousness, and social control¹⁶. The two key figures for this chapter are Bergson and, later, Kant, who (along with Spinoza and Nietzsche) are perhaps the most important canonical reference-points for Deleuze. It is in his work *Bergsonism*¹⁷ that Deleuze first mentions the notion of the *order-word* (although in a less sophisticated form than it will later appear in his work with Guattari, as we will see in later chapters), and he mentions it in a context that could hardly be less central to the present work — that of the formation of philosophical problems.¹⁸

In order to explain why the opposition mentioned should play a role in questions of the nature of philosophy, it is necessary to examine Bergson's accounts of what metaphysics is, and what it should be. Bergson, often dismissed as a mystic because of the misunderstood

¹⁶ or in *AntiOedipus*' phrase, the system of 'social repression-psychic repression' (AO 113).

¹⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism* (hereafter B), tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, New York: Zone Books, 1991.

¹⁸ A society's order-words "set up" ready-made problems, as if they were drawn out of "the city's administrative filing cabinets", and force us to "solve" them, leaving us only a thin margin of freedom', whereas 'true freedom lies in a power to decide, to constitute problems themselves' (B 15). In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze reiterates: 'As if we would not remain slaves so long as we do not control the problems themselves, so long as we do not possess a right to the problems, to a participation in and management of the problems' (DR 158).

notion of the *Élan Vital*, sought change through philosophy in several ways, not simply because he saw change (as opposed to unity, permanence and totality) as the underlying fact of existence, and hence as a necessity for any approach interested in what is actually there.¹⁹ If there is an element of mysticism in his work, it is in the notion that through a heightened attention to the Real (via the rigorous method he names 'intuition'), we can reach absolutes of existence, absolutes with implications for how we live our lives. Philosophy is not a 'simple game' — 'it can be a preparation for the art of living'²⁰. An ethics/aesthetics of living in this sense must be strenuously distinguished from morality or moralism — the two are opposites, the latter a commitment to transcendent rules of behaviour (the archetype of which is the abstract form of morality itself in Kant's categorical imperative), the former a shedding of rules, of received ideas, and an immersion in, and submission to, the immanence of the Real. As we will see, this commitment to the real is the attempt to examine, not merely the conditions of *possible* experience, but the conditions of *real* experience, where the conditions are found to be entirely immanent to the conditioned (as opposed to forming some 'other world' of transcendent cause(s) of the visible world).

In order to make clear the connection with Deleuze-Guattari in this regard (for it is their accounts of such an ethics with which we are concerned throughout much of the following — in terms that will be clarified below, the pragmatics of the order-word is at once an ethics of the password), the idea of an 'art of living' appears in Foucault's Preface to their

¹⁹ *Élan Vital* is introduced in Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (hereafter CEv), tr. Arthur Mitchell, New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1911. In Deleuze's terms (which we will examine presently), it 'is always a case of a virtuality in the process of being actualized, a simplicity in the process of differentiating, a totality in the process of dividing up: Proceeding "by dissociation and division", by "dichotomy", is the essence of life' (B 94, quoting CEv 99-101).

²⁰ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics* (hereafter CM), tr. Mabelle L. Andison, New York: Citadel Press, 1946: 106.

AntiOedipus. Foucault proposes reading the book not simply as ethics, but as ‘an *Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life*’, where fascism is

not only historical fascism, the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini — which was able to mobilize and use the desire of the masses so effectively — but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behaviour, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us (AO xiii).

Of course, Foucault’s rhetorical use of the term ‘fascism’ in this context borders on the fatuous, which, were it to be combined with our initial opposition between creation and order, would imply that order and control are intrinsically fascistic, intrinsically about domination and exploitation. The line taken here, however, is that the world we inhabit is precisely this interplay between order and control, the processes Deleuze-Guattari call *stratification*, and those of escape and change. We begin already necessarily embedded within the strata, and rather than it being a question of gesticulating rebelliously at the ‘fascists’, it is instead one of mapping or diagramming stratification, the immanent processes by which our world is formed and arranged, and attempting to discover whether there is any possibility of things being otherwise. To this end, we will now examine the way Deleuze refigures the notion of the possible.

1.2 Possible/Real versus Actual/Virtual

Another problem to signpost at the outset is that of the risks in proposing a guiding light for philosophy in the Real — in what ways is this different from its previous illustrious guarantors, such as the Good and the True? This question opens the terrain of immanence and transcendence, and gives us an initial approach to the problem of representation. What Deleuze-Guattari call ‘the magic formula’, ‘PLURALISM=MONISM’ (TP 20 — inscribed elsewhere as ‘Nietzsche=Spinoza’, e.g. N 135) is central to this question. The notion of immanence is the notion of ‘a’ real in which we are always already immersed. It is opposed to the notion that there is another, better world somewhere else, whether this world is Heaven, the

realm of Platonic forms, or the True or the Good that we must always do our best to approximate — such notions are illusions of reason, yet this is not to say that there is therefore a world of illusions that exists in parallel to this world. As Bergson suggests in *The Creative Mind*, the problem is mistaking *more* for *less*: in setting up an opposition between the immediately given world of our perceptions, intuitions and intellections, and something else we imagine might be lying behind or above it. Having been convinced by this dream of a beyond as *distinct* from the immediate, we then find ourselves having to explain the immediate. The question Bergson wants us to ask is: Why should this idea of a beyond be so compelling, that it leaves us forever oscillating between the two poles of immediate and beyond, subjective and objective, phenomena and noumena, mind and matter?

The reason is to be found in the very nature of life, which, in Deleuze's words, 'is essentially determined in the act of avoiding obstacles, stating and solving a problem. The construction of the organism is both the stating of a problem and a solution' (B 16). To see life in terms of problems, and to consider them as something 'stated' and 'solved', is not to be read as exporting a linguistic or philosophical model back to the origins of the organism. By 'stated' is meant 'actualised', or called into existence, not 'uttered' — though as I will try to show in the chapters to follow, utterances or statements are themselves instances of actualisation in exactly this sense. Problems are sets of relations or engagements in a state of turmoil or conflict; solutions are the crossing of thresholds which retroactively affect the whole. The *philosophical* problem, is, on one level, not essentially different from the problem of the creation of oxygen through photosynthesis in the primeval soup, or of relieving subterranean pressure build-up through a volcanic eruption — they are each moments in the play between the actual and the virtual, terms we will explain momentarily.²¹

²¹ The question of the boundaries of life (necessarily carbon-based? necessarily cellular?) is not one that can be dealt with directly in this thesis, as our investigation of

'Reality,' writes Bergson, 'is global and undivided growth, progressive invention, duration: it resembles a gradually expanding rubber balloon assuming at each moment unexpected forms' (CM 96). We may quibble that there is no incontrovertible ground for assuming that this invention is 'progressive' in a strong sense (i.e. getting nearer to some perceived ideal or goal), but the weak sense of progression (where what is meant is insofar as we can pick out abstract states, we can see that consecutive states are intimately and intrinsically connected with one another) is an entirely plausible, and perhaps necessary, claim. Indeed, the error of the intellect that Bergson diagnoses in the traditional problems of metaphysics, is to assume there is some backdrop, a void or empty space, against or within which the balloon of reality inflates. Having posited Nothingness, we are then trapped in the unanswerable question of why anything should exist at all. But this Nothingness, insofar as it drives us off on the endless search for causes and causes of causes, is an illusion. Bergson writes,

"Nothing" is a term in ordinary language which can only have meaning in the sphere, proper to man, of action and fabrication. "Nothing" designates the absence of what we are seeking, we desire, expect. Let us suppose that absolute emptiness was known to our experience: it would be limited, have contours, and would therefore be something. But in reality there is no vacuum. We perceive and can only perceive occupied space. One thing disappears only because another replaces it. Suppression thus means substitution. We say "suppression", however, when we envisage, in the case of substitution, only one of its two halves, or rather the one of its two halves that interests us; in this way we indicate a desire to turn our attention to the object which is gone, and away from the one replacing it. (CM 97)

order-words neither depends upon nor directly concerns it. May it suffice to say that while Bergson no doubt would have reservations about this, for Deleuze-Guattari and myself, 'life' goes *all* the way down, while differing vastly in terms of complexity and duration (or 'relative speeds and slownesses', according to Deleuze-Guattari's Spinozism).

This tendency, to hang onto what was or what will be in the face of what is, is entirely appropriate for most of our daily dealings, propelling us to struggle to maintain or create what we want. However, when applied to metaphysics, the tendency to conceal from ourselves the nature of this operation (whereby we concentrate on the no-longer-there or the still-to-come rather than what is) means we imagine that the very notion of nothing somehow makes existence itself in need of explanation. Bergson shows firstly that this 'nothing' is the intellect's attempt to suppress *everything*; secondly that all suppression is necessarily a substitution; and therefore that Nothing (as a substitution which is somehow not a substitution) is logically self contradictory, and psychologically a matter of self-deception.

In other words, this so-called representation of absolute emptiness is, in reality, that of universal fullness in a mind which leaps indefinitely from part to part, with the fixed resolution never to consider anything but the emptiness of its dissatisfaction instead of the fullness of things (CM 98).

The Nothing is simply the All with the addition of this act of will or operation of thought (it is *more* rather than *less* than the All).

This mistake appears again in the notion of the possible, which Deleuze-Guattari wish to supersede with the opposition of actual and virtual. This pair is to be understood in contrast to possible/real, where the former pair exhaustively comprise the Real, while the latter pair posits an outside to the real — but one which is nevertheless modelled on it — an abstraction by the mind that is some aspect of the Real *plus* the mental operation of displacing it in time, back to before it appeared, or forward to where it is yet to appear. Again, we mistake this 'more' for the 'less' of the supposedly non-existent or not-yet-existent, and imagine we then have a problem of 'why this rather than that possibility?' In contrast, the actual and virtual are both entirely real. Insofar as certain relations or engagements can be said to be virtual, they are not to be taken to be

existing on a plane other than that of reality. There is but the real, and every (conceivable and inconceivable) element or relation subsists within it. The notion of possibilities, of possible worlds or events, is refigured as *unactualised* worlds or events which are distinguishable at all only insofar as they have real effects in this world (whether in the domains of fiction, dreams and speculation, or in those of ontogenesis, thermodynamics or quantum mechanics).

What does it mean, then, to say that certain organic mutations, certain social formations, certain chemical bonds are possible or impossible? If we recognise them as possible (using the resources of the appropriate discipline) it means that we recognise their possibilities (whether ever actualised or not) as aspects of the relevant processes — virtual (i.e. unactualised) relations or processes the reality of which can be demonstrated by experiment, or testified to by history. If we argue for their impossibility, it is most likely we are talking about processes so extremely unlikely or difficult to countenance that it would obviously be a waste of time expecting them to happen, and in this respect we may turn out to be mistaken, or we may be protecting our interests by preventing them. In any case, even to get as far as declaring something impossible is already to have posited a relation on the level of the operations of thought, and hence to have actualised it on that level (if on no other) — and the relation can therefore be seen as virtual insofar as its reality (as impossibility) serves in guiding research programmes, allocating funding and so on.²²

²² There remains the problem of the deeply ingrained everyday uses of 'possible' and 'impossible' — words it is often difficult to avoid, and still more difficult to adequately translate into the language of actual and virtual. This is a problem that will recur below, and which we will deal with on a case-by-case basis, in the process effecting a shift towards a complex Deleuzian ontology.

1.3 True and False Problems

What was said above about the 'stating and solving of problems' being a pertinent description of what matter does, of what the Real consists in, can now be clarified. All problems are not alike; indeed the discussions above of the possible, or of Nothing, testify to the existence of *false problems*. The falsehood of such problems bears not simply on their being blind alleys down which metaphysics has been led, due to its confusion of the practical and the intuitive (a confusion we will explore more deeply shortly). Another key example of a false problem is that of Oedipus, which, far from being a cul-de-sac we can simply reverse out of, is an all-pervasive and powerful myth the strength of which can be seen in every appeal to the importance of the Family and of Normal sexuality and behaviour. Deleuze-Guattari show that the oscillation between Oedipus-as-structure and Oedipus-as-crisis is not simply one of Freud's many errors or flights of fancy, any more than the importance of Christ can be reduced to the texts of the Gospels. Just as Christian Messianism had precursors in a variety of religions, the Oedipus of Freud (in its various forms) and of his successors served to articulate (in far from homogeneous fashion) a set of demands on the human individual to become-subject in certain limited, predefined ways, and served also to unite the bourgeois values of the Family and the discourses on madness and sanity.²³

The way in which Oedipus can be seen as a false problem is instructive, because it shows how discerning *true* problems (for example, *an*Oedipal notions of subjectification) is a radical project which can disrupt overarching structures, or at least shore up the means by which they

²³ Deleuze-Guattari approvingly cite Foucault's account of this development in *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, tr. Richard Howard, London: Routledge 1995 (AO 93).

protect and maintain themselves. It also allows us to trace a path through the first half of *AntiOedipus*, showing how it relates on the one hand to the picture of matter, the actual and the virtual (with respect to the question of the subject), and on the other to the opposition between creation/change and stability/control. Finally, it lays out a space in which to examine the issue of language more directly, and begins to show why approaches to language based on representation, information and signification, derive from *false problems* and present the dangers and restrictions for thought that this entails.

1.4 The Image of Thought (Fig. 1, overleaf)

False problems, and false problematics, need to be seen in two ways, the first being as 'pictures that hold us captive'²⁴ — actual structures that restrict and delimit thought, presuppositions of common sense that must be challenged. Secondly, they are epiphenomena of real problems/problematics: the task is to 'break open' the false problems and reveal the real problematics which generate them. The most important sets of false problems for our purposes are those to do with the construal of language and thought in terms of representation. For both perspectives, the central texts of Deleuze are those on what he calls the Image of Thought, the intertwined ideas grounded in the Same and the Similar that infest common sense and good sense, and to which he opposes the notion of 'thought without image' (DR 167).

The key passage in this respect is Chapter 3 of *Difference and Repetition*, and it specifies as the location of the problem that which, supposedly, 'everybody knows' (DR 129-130) — for example, Descartes'

²⁴ to paraphrase Wittgenstein, referring in the *Philosophical Investigations* to his earlier position in the *Tractatus*. (We examine aspects of the later work in Chapter 3.) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, tr. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974. *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, Oxford: Blackwell 1953

Fig. 1: The Image of Thought**DOXA**

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COMMON SENSE**a naturally upright thought...****'the norm of identity from the point of view of the pure Self and the form of the unspecified object which corresponds to it' (DR 133)****'contributes the form of the Same' (DR 134)****GOOD SENSE****...and the good sense that follows from this 'in principle'.****'the norm of distribution from the point of view of the empirical selves and the object qualified as this or that kind of thing (which is why it is considered to be universally distributed)' (DR 133-4)****'determines the contribution of the faculties' (DR 134)****The Form of RECOGNITION****'harmony of the faculties grounded in the supposedly universal thinking subject and exercised upon the unspecified object' (DR 134)****'What is recognised is not only an object but also the values attached to an object (values play a crucial role in the distributions undertaken by good sense).' (DR 135)**

presuppositions about what it is to think and to be, which allow him to present 'I think therefore I am' as a basic proposition in need of no further explanation. As Deleuze argues, while apparently foregoing *objective* presuppositions (such as there is a world, there are bodies, etc), the philosopher merely substitutes them with *subjective* presuppositions (there is thought, there is existence). And '*Everybody knows, no one can deny,*' Deleuze writes, 'is the form of representation and the discourse of the representative' (DR 130), or more simply, it is the archetypal speaking-for, speaking-on-behalf-of, not one or several other individuals or groups, but for all humankind. This starting point for philosophy is precarious, however, because all that is needed to disrupt it is a lone voice 'with the necessary modesty not managing to know what everybody knows, and modestly denying what everyone is supposed to recognise' (DR 130).

At first glance, this runs the risk of looking like a denial of the possibility of any such statements (there is thought, there is existence), which it is not. Deleuze is not denying what we could initially describe as the possibility of such objective statements; indeed, Deleuze-Guattari talk enthusiastically in *AntiOedipus* of the capacity of 'revolutionaries, artists and seers' to be content to be 'objective, merely objective' (AO 27). What the Image of Thought material is attacking is not philosophy's pretensions to objectivity over and above a subjectivity we are supposedly imprisoned in; rather, this very dichotomy is the problem, as is the idea that we must forever oscillate between these two poles. The problem with the 'objectivity' of the Image of Thought is not that it purports to be objective, but that it shapes and controls the *type* of objectivity available or desirable to us. It takes for granted that objectivity is necessarily a function of 'what everyone knows'. In contrast to this, the objectivity of revolutionaries, seers, visionaries and true philosophers, is a much rarer commodity, characterised not by whether everyone agrees with it, but by its consistency with a particular milieu, with the number of affective connections it begets/springs from

within and between milieus.²⁵ The importance of the lone voice raised in opposition is that it can create/give voice to these connections, such as are closed down by the harnessing of thought to the Same and the Similar.

What is the first thing at which such a voice would express bewilderment? It is the founding principle of common sense, the assumption of *Cogitatio natura universalis*, that the thinker is naturally upright and of pure intention, and that thought is a faculty with a natural affinity with the true (DR 131). This need not be explicitly stated; it is unquestioningly assumed, with the result that

it matters little whether philosophy begins with the object or the subject, with Being or with beings, as long as thought remains subject to this Image which already prejudges everything: the distribution of the object and the subject as well as that of Being and beings (DR 131).

Before philosophy has even gotten started, then, and regardless of whether it goes on to question whether truth is attainable or not, it has already perpetuated judgement (with respect to the True) and morality (with respect to the Good) as transcendent, guiding principles. And this is likely to be the case wherever common sense is not explicitly challenged and its presuppositions explicitly critiqued.

In an echo of many other stages in Deleuze/Deleuze-Guattari's thought, the point is not to set up an opposition between the pre-philosophical and the philosophical (as with pre-Oedipal and Oedipal, with pre-signifying and signifying, and so on), but rather to find an outside to the opposition from which both terms are shown to be poles of a false problem which can then be denounced as non-philosophical (DR 132) or illegitimate (AO 110). The bipolar structure common to false problems is what Deleuze-Guattari call

²⁵ Both 'begets' and 'springs from', so as not to overemphasise the role of individual subjects (revolutionaries, seers, visionaries, etc.)

double articulation, the ‘double pincer’ movement from which it is necessary to find a diagonal that escapes both pre-given outcomes.²⁶

How then to critique this in-principle element of common sense? It will not do merely to cite empirical examples of imbeciles or reprobates; it must be tackled on the transcendental level of the principle itself. It is necessary to spell out the model or map this principle carries with it, and this model is that of recognition, which Deleuze defines as ‘the harmonious exercise of all the faculties [*concordia facultatum*] upon a supposed same object: the same object may be seen, touched, remembered, imagined, or conceived’, giving the famous example of Descartes’ wax (DR 133).²⁷ Thus, the unity of the subject (the harmony of the faculties) guarantees the identity of the object (common sense). This is the *Image* of Thought because it is thought contenting itself with its most banal instance (recognition), *representing* itself to itself as that which *recognises*. Its critique, therefore, must take the form of a demonstration that, despite the fact that ‘thought and all its faculties may be fully employed therein’, recognition ‘has nothing to do with thinking’ (DR 138). ‘The form of recognition has never sanctioned anything but the recognisable and the recognised’ (DR 134).

1.5 Deleuze’s Critique of Representation (Fig. 2, overleaf)

What form does this demonstration take? There are two principal sides to Deleuze’s attack — on the one hand, his reformulation of the doctrine

²⁶ The term ‘double pincer’ first appears in *AntiOedipus* (83), and is taken to great lengths in ‘10,000 B.C.: The Geology of Morals’ (TP 39-74), where it is declared that God (the God of the illegitimate syntheses of representation) ‘is a lobster’ (TP 40).

²⁷ Horst Ruthrof, as we will see in Chapter 5 below, characterises this as ‘intersemiotic corroboration’, and it lies at the heart of his ill-fated attempt to restore the body to the theory of meaning. As I will argue, the theory of meaning has much more fundamental problems than the absence of the body, namely that it is intrinsically representational (based on recognition, the similar and the Same), and it remains so despite Ruthrof’s intervention.

Fig. 2: The Form of Representation**REPRESENTATION**

'The 'I think' is the most general principle of representation' (DR 138)

'I conceive'	'I imagine/ I remember'	'I judge'	'I perceive'
identity with regard to concepts	opposition with regard to the determination of concepts	analogy with regard to judgement	resemblance with regard to objects
'constitutes the form of the Same with regard to recognition' (DR 137)	'implies the comparison between possible predicates and their opposites in a regressive and progressive double series...' remembrance/ imagination as re- creation (DR 137-8)	'bears upon the highest determinable concepts', and/or 'the relations between [them] and their respective objects' ... 'calls upon the power of distribution present in judgement' (DR 138)	'relie[d] upon [by the object of the concept] as a principle of continuity' (DR 138)

'difference becomes an object of representation always in relation to

<i>a conceived identity,</i>	<i>an imagined opposition,</i>	<i>a judged analogy,</i>	<i>or a perceived similitude.'</i>
			(DR 138)

'Having discovered the superior or transcendent exercise of the faculties, Plato subordinated this to the forms of

identity in the essence	similitude in reminiscence	analogy in the Good	[and] opposition in the sensible'
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of the faculties, and on the other, his account of what it is to think. From these two perspectives, we can home in on the crucial notion of *intensity*. First of all, his reformulation of the notion of faculties serves to make them function separately, each travelling to its limit, to the point where it is dissolved, rather than (as in the Kantian picture) having each resonate with the others under the principal faculty of thought in the unity of the Cogito. What are the faculties? For Kant, they consist in the trinity of imagination, reason and understanding. Kant offers three different ways in which these faculties resonate (corresponding to the three *Critiques*). In the first two cases, one faculty provides the form or model of the Same, with which the other two collaborate: understanding in the case of knowledge, reason in the case of moral sense. In the third case of aesthetics, the faculties attain a free accord, but without ever breaking with the rule of the appropriate variety of common sense. For Deleuze, Kant's account of the faculties is riven with problems because it traces them on empirical notions of thought. Instead, the list of faculties must be open-ended, and the behaviour of each must be the subject of detailed investigation, 'For nothing can be said in advance' (DR 143) — besides those such as thought, sensibility, imagination, there are those such as language²⁸, vitality, sociability, and who knows how many more.²⁹

²⁸ There are two aspects to the faculty of language: the 'diabolical faculty of the order-word', presented in *A Thousand Plateaus* and explored throughout this thesis, and that cited in *Difference and Repetition*: corresponding to the sensible which is also imperceptible, the memory which is also immemorial, and the imaginable that is also impossible to imagine, is the speech which would be 'silence at the same time' (DR 143).

²⁹ Another is the visionary faculty of *fabulation*, posited by Bergson in *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, and cited by Deleuze-Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* (230n8). Henri Bergson, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, tr. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton with the assistance of W. Horsfall Carter, New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1935. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (hereafter WP), tr. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson, London: Verso 1994.

The point of the doctrine of the faculties, then, is as a focal point for *transcendental empiricism*, Deleuze's attempt on the one hand to pick up where Kant left off in the exploration, 'not of another world, but of the upper or lower reaches of this one' (DR 135) — in other words, of the 'prodigious domain of the transcendental' (ibid) — and on the other hand, to do so through empiricism, considered not as 'a simple appeal to lived experience' but as 'the most insane creation of concepts ever seen or heard', where the concept is the 'object of an encounter, as a here-and-now, or rather as an *Erewhon* from which emerge inexhaustibly ever new, differently distributed 'heres' and 'nows'" (DR xx; see also 285, 333n7). So far, so inspiring and poetic, but can the notion of transcendental empiricism be expressed in more down-to-earth language? Indeed it can, and with particular regard to the faculties. The transcendental field for Kant was a zone accessible by critique, where could be found the conditions of possibility of experience; the fundamental structures necessary for existence of selves. However, he was content to trace these structures from the 'empirical acts of a psychological consciousness' (DR 135) (namely, his own), with the result that his own epistemological, moral and religious preoccupations are raised up to the level of the conditions of possibility of thought itself.

In contrast, for Deleuze, the faculties are engagements with intensity. This difficult notion lies at the heart of Deleuze's philosophy — it is the repetition of difference and difference-from-itself of repetition; the 'internal genesis' of matter that constitutes the orders of 'extrinsic differences and intrinsic conceptual differences', where 'conceptual' pertains not to the level of concepts as Deleuze-Guattari will later formulate them (as multiplicities —see, for example, *What is Philosophy?* (127), where concepts and functions are distinguished as different types of multiplicity), but instead to the notion of *representational* concepts of the understanding. Intensity is '*pure difference in itself*' (DR 144, my emphasis) and it can only be intensity that can take the faculties to their limits, for anything other than pure difference in itself is somehow

mediated by the forms of the Same and the similar, and therefore pertains to an already established Image of Thought, or *Doxa* (modelling the nature of thought on the moral and political concerns of the age, rather than on the primal, prehuman encounters from which it begins). In contrast, then, to the in-principle organisations of common sense/good sense, Deleuze posits an in-principle difference that 'is both formal and in kind', between the new, the 'unrecognised and unrecognisable *terra incognita*' (DR 136), and all that is amenable to recognition. On this point, Deleuze cites Nietzsche as having shown that the new is *never* established: 'The new, with its power of beginning and beginning again, remains forever new, just as the established was always established from the outset...' (DR 136).²⁹

As long as we are content to understand the faculties as pertaining to already-established empirical relations between subjects and objects, subjects and subjects, subjects and ideas and so on, we continue to trace the transcendental on the empirical, making it not a 'prodigious domain', but a 'sterile double'. If we are to think difference in itself, or indeed the very possibility of creation; if we are to prevent thought being strangled by *Doxa* before it begins; if, indeed, we are to find a way through the compelling mysteries of existence (and distinguish true from false problems), we must pursue this notion of the *new*. It is for these reasons that the faculties must be thought *at their very limits*, their 'superior or transcendent exercise' (DR 143) rather than in their banal everyday exercise. In this way, the terms of the doctrine of the faculties, as the attempt to understand the manifold ways in which bodies can engage with one another, is transformed from those of psychological, anthropological accounts of what humans actually do, to the immanent criteria of real (rather than 'possible') experience. The superior exercise of the faculties

²⁹ Earlier in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze remarks that 'Repetition is never a historical fact, but rather the historical condition under which something new is effectively produced' (90). Repetition in this sense is the 'dark precursor' to which we will shortly return.

(the typology of which may be radically transformed in the process) is their *unhinging* through an encounter with the new, where the very hinge is common sense itself, as that which ‘causes all the faculties to function and converge’ (DR 141).³⁰

To approach from the other side — that of what it means to think — is to flesh out the notion that recognition has ‘nothing to do with thinking’. Instead, thinking is necessarily this involuntary encounter with the new, with the differential element or ‘*dark precursor*’ (DR 119).³¹ It is through this notion that Deleuze frees thought from the human, since thought is redefined as the communication between series in a system, *any* system (where both ‘system’ and ‘communication’ are defined in terms of difference):

A system must be constituted on the basis of two or more series, each series being defined by the differences between the terms which compose it. If we suppose that the series communicate under the impulse of a force of some kind, then it is apparent that this communication relates

³⁰ The apparent strangeness of suggesting that a faculty’s superior exercise is in its ‘unhinging’ from that which causes it to function is not accidental, and parallels *AntiOedipus*’s assertion that ‘Desiring-machines only work when they break down, and by continually breaking down’ (AO 8). The point is that faculties (and desiring-machines) are constituted in their operation (in the connections they form) — there is no distinction between their form and function. It is only from the point of view of common sense that sees faculties or machines as constituted *for a particular purpose*, introducing a distinction between what they are and what they can do (they are *x* and their purpose is *y*). By collapsing this distinction, Deleuze/Deleuze-Guattari strip faculties/machines of their teleological interpretation, and demand that both be understood through what they do, what they produce, rather than in terms of a predetermined order (such as that of *human* faculties or *technological* machines (gadgets)).

³¹ As Badiou remarks, ‘Let this be a warning to those who would see in Deleuze an apologia for spontaneity: whatever is spontaneous is inferior to thought, which only begins when it is constrained to become animated by the forces of the outside.’ Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, tr. Louise Burchill, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000: 86.

differences to other differences, constituting differences between differences within the system. These second-degree differences play the role of the 'differentiator' — in other words, they relate the first-degree differences to one another (DR 117)

The three stages, or syntheses, of this process, Deleuze here describes as

adequately expressed by certain physical concepts: *coupling* between heterogeneous systems, from which is derived an *internal resonance* within the system, and from which in turn is derived a *forced movement* the amplitude of which exceeds that of the basic series themselves (ibid).

These three syntheses are covered in detail (but from quite different perspectives) in both *Difference and Repetition* and *AntiOedipus*, as we will see below. The central point here, however, is that it is through the notion of the 'dark precursor' ('difference in itself or difference in the second degree' (DR 120), the 'paradoxical element or *perpetuum mobile*' (LS 66)) that Deleuze shows identity and resemblance (raised up to the highest position in the Image of Thought) are 'inevitable illusions — in other words, concepts of reflection which would account for our inveterate habit of thinking difference on the basis of representation' (DR 119) — *themselves the effects of difference in itself*. The key formula is 'only differences are alike' (DR 116), which, though it sounds similar, is the opposite of 'only that which is alike differs'. The latter makes difference subordinate to resemblance, the former makes resemblance an effect of difference.

1.6 The Empty Form of Time

How many of us have reached, as Deleuze-Guattari appear to say of themselves in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 'not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I' (TP 3)? Whether important to us or not, most of us indeed still say I, yet the very notion of the I had already been fractured by Kant in the

first *Critique*.³² In their beautifully concise account in *What is Philosophy* (29-32), Deleuze-Guattari claim that Plato founded everything on the realm of forms or Ideas (i.e. the only things which *are what they are*, as opposed to the things of our world which compete to participate in particular forms to a greater or lesser extent). Then Descartes' scepticism introduces the concept of the Cogito, removing Plato's pre-existent harmonious unity of the forms, and substituting it with the self-founding subject of 'I think therefore I am'. But Kant reintroduces *time* into the Cogito, on the basis of the distinction between two sides of the I (the 'I think' and the 'I am').³³ 'Kant therefore "criticises" Descartes for having said "I am a thinking substance," for nothing warrants such a claim of the "I" (WP 31). The *undetermined* existence of the 'I am' as 'a passive and phenomenal self, an always affectable, modifiable and variable self' (ibid), is *determined* by the active self as the Other:

The cogito now presents four components: I think, and as such I am active; I have an existence; this existence is only determinable in time as a passive self; I am therefore determined as a passive self that necessarily represents its own thinking activity to itself as an Other that affects it. This is not another subject but rather the subject who becomes another (WP 31-32).³⁴

This progression is given a slightly different emphasis — turning, this time, on the role of time — by Deleuze in 'On Four Poetic Formulas That Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy'.³⁵ Kant's "criticism" of

³² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (hereafter CPR), tr. Norman Kemp Smith, London: MacMillan, 1964.

³³ Reintroduces, because a certain view of time, that of a kind of 'intensive movement of the soul' (CC 29), was present in ancient notions of the self, and was all but eliminated from Plato to Descartes.

³⁴ In a moment, we will examine Rimbaud's formula 'I is another'.

³⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical* (hereafter CC), tr. Daniel W Smith and Michael A Greco, London: Verso 1998. An earlier version appears in Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Descartes marks the former's transformation of the form-content relation of Plato, retained in Descartes, where there is an amorphous content (the Self) which is given form by the active principle of the I. Rather than the I being the form instantaneously and unilaterally imposed on the self, seemingly making the statement 'I am a thinking substance' possible, Kant shows that a third term is required to explain the possibility of a relation between undetermined and determination.³⁶ This third term is the 'medium' through which the cogito is constituted — namely time. This is not time understood in terms of movement or succession — to base time on these is to subordinate it to them. Instead, time as the form of inner sense is radically distinct from space: nothing but

a thread, a pure straight line [...] Everything that moves and changes is in time, but time itself does not change or move, any more than it is eternal. It is the form of everything that changes and moves, but it is an immutable form that does not change — not an eternal form, but precisely the form of what is *not* eternal, the immutable form of change and movement (CC 28-29).

It is wrong, therefore, to see time as 'eternal' on this view, because eternity is only thinkable under the determination of time itself as empty form. Eternity as a notion ceases to make any sense — there is only the finite, as determined by the immutable form of time.³⁷

³⁶ Deleuze makes the illegitimacy of Descartes' move clearer in his Kant seminar of 28 March 1978 (published on the web at <http://www.imaginet.fr/deleuze/TXT/ENG/280378.html>, translated by Melissa McMahon). Descartes' unjustifiable jump is from the determining 'I think' and the determined 'I am' to the statement that there is therefore a *substance* which thinks. Kant shifts the goalposts from questions of substance (extended and unextended) to the question of form, in the process making it a relation of insurmountable division *interior* to thought (the significance of which we will see shortly).

³⁷ It should be noted at this point that this is time according to Deleuze's Kant. For Deleuze himself, time is not this 'pure straight line' — its pure form is that of the Eternal Return (the difference-in-itself of repetition-for-itself). Following Nietzsche, Deleuze seeks to overcome both the oppositions temporal/non-temporal and historical/eternal, to deal only with the *untimely* (DR xxi). 'Eternal return' then, must be seen as productively

What distinguishes the subject, then, is the fact that it *represents* to itself this determination. For Kant, Descartes' formula tells the story of the birth of self-reflexivity — the 'me' is reflected at itself through thought, recognises itself as the thinking thing, *and* as the thing doing the recognising, *and* as the thing recognising the recognising (and so on to infinity), but at each twist, the mirror is time. Why, then, need this be the split running from end to end of the subject, that Deleuze-Guattari so need it to be?

The key, as Deleuze argues, is in Rimbaud's formula '*I is another*' (CC 29; cf. the seminar cited in fn38).³⁸ The critique of the Cartesian, self-founding cogito, if it is to make any difference, works by doing precisely that — making the *difference* between I and self, active and passive, determining and determined, a real and absolute difference. The self, as totally unsynthesised, unconditioned and passive, 'prior' to its representation to itself by the I, is constituted as self only in this act of representation, the *affection* of self by I. Consciousness, or at least cognisance, can only occur 'in time' — i.e. consciousness of difference. If we attempt to think this purely spatially, as Descartes did, we have no way of explaining what on earth this thinking substance can be, except simply as a unity maintained through the benevolence of God. But by making time precisely the medium through which this affect of reflexivity occurs, we at once have an account of consciousness, the unity of the subject as that which continues or persists through time by representing its own thinking to itself. Kant, therefore, 'deduces' time as the condition of possibility of inner sense (self-affection or thought).

oxymoronic: 'return' ostensibly entails a previous presence, its departure, then finally the return itself (which is of course defined by its difference from the initial presence). The fact that this Return is 'Eternal' *undermines* the notion of an original presence — if it has *always* been returning, it has never had time to be here in the first place! What we are left with is a paradoxical consistency without Sameness: the 'balance' proper to a refigured eternity.

³⁸ Arthur Rimbaud, *Complete Works*, tr. Paul Schmidt, New York: Harper & Row, 1975, letter to Georges Izambard, May 13, 1871: 101.

It is this introduction of time as the form of inner sense into the subject that marks the emergence of the transcendental. The *empty form of time* for Kant is a necessary condition of all inner sense, that is, the capacity for the subject to be affected, to experience and to represent itself experiencing to itself. The subject is already determined or conditioned, then, by a representational model of thought, for which this active thinking (as representing) is primary, and without which there can be no individual, no thought and no stability, only 'indifferent black nothingness' (DR 276). The empty form of time plays a key role in Deleuze's discussion of the three syntheses of time in *Difference and Repetition*, which we will examine in the next section.

1.7 Repetition For Itself

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze reformulates this fracture in the self to challenge the move by which Kant manages to 'resurrect' the self in spite of its split. His first move is to extend the notion of the passive self, to dissolve and disperse it across the whole of matter, and emphasise its primacy over the *active* self which inserts representation into the heart of being. This is Deleuze's formulation of the first synthesis of time, that of Habit.

Underneath the self which acts are little selves which contemplate and which render possible both the action and the active subject. We speak of our "self" only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says "me" (DR 75).

At the heart of each contemplation is *repetition*, the repetition of difference, at each point, a certain 'questioning' of (if you like) being, which in turn sets up the problematic of the individual.³⁹

³⁹ This 'questioning' of 'being' (which is precisely the 'stating and solving of problems' that we encountered in Section 1.2 above) makes most sense to me as nothing more cerebral than the continual feedback between these little, or *larval* selves, and their environment: insofar as there is a discernible *individual*, it is in continual interaction with

Deleuze's first point against Kant, then, is to argue that the passive component of the cogito is the multiplicity of larval selves, which themselves are nothing but the contractions-contemplations of matter — as opposed to being the purely unsynthesised and unconditioned mess that awaits the active synthesis of reason. For Deleuze, it is only on the basis of synthesis of contractions-contemplations that active synthesis can come about. This active synthesis, then, amounts to what Count Korzybski called 'time-binding'⁴⁰ — the appearance of *artificial signs* through active synthesis, which allow representations of past and future in the present, as opposed to the *natural signs* of the passive synthesis, which refer 'only to the present in which they signify'.⁴¹ This synthesis, with its dual aspects of passive (questioning) and active (the problematic) can also be seen as *chronogenesis*, the immanent creation of time relative to these larval selves, and the immanent formation of the organism through the accretion of habit in this interaction between larval selves and environment. By showing how both time and the organism grow out of passive, molecular synthesis, Deleuze prevents the Subject becoming a cause or a goal of these material processes, but rather, makes it a side-effect or epiphenomenon.

its milieu, continually reorienting itself and establishing or extending its fuzzy boundaries. This account in turn shows how misleading the notion of a single 'being' can be, if taken as referring to *essential* or *intrinsic identity* over and above the specificities or singularities of a particular milieu of individuation.

⁴⁰ Alfred Korzybski *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelean Systems and General Semantics*, Clinton, Mass.: Colonial Press, 1958.

⁴¹ 'One of the great strengths of Stoicism lies in having shown that every sign is a sign of the present, from the point of view of the passive synthesis in which past and future are only dimensions of the present itself. A scar is the sign not of a past wound but of 'the present fact of having been wounded': we can say that it is the contemplation of the wound, that it contracts all the instants which separate us from it into a living present' (DR 47).

But, says Deleuze, there must be another time in which this first synthesis can occur. The first synthesis is indeed the *foundation* of time, or rather times, but this must be distinguished from its *ground*. The ground of time is to be found in the second synthesis, that of memory, which (following Bergson) is of a completely different order to that of habit. Where the latter is material, contractions of past-present, the former is spiritual, *the pure past* that has never been present — it is the backdrop against which the vast array of contracted past-presents of habit accumulate, coexist, and communicate with one another, such that different lives can replay one another at different levels, ‘as if the philosopher and the pig; the criminal and the saint, played out the same past at different levels of a gigantic cone’ (DR 83).⁴²

The key to these two characterisations of memory is the presence in the former of representation as hierarchical ordering of present over past, in contrast to the interplay between past and present in the latter as comprising a ‘block of becoming’. Once the ordering of present over past is dismantled, the pure past is refigured as an active component of the present, which is nothing more than its moment of greatest contraction. The relation is not one of images recalled by the self-reflexive subject, but rather one of contraction-dilation, speed and slowness.

The first two syntheses of time, then, Deleuze names Habit and Mnemosyne, the latter relating to Plato’s world of forms, since it must be accessed through the curious mechanism of ‘reminiscence’, whereby the philosopher does not so much discover Truth as remember it.⁴³ Yet this synthesis, that of the *pure past*, is transformed by Deleuze via Bergson.

⁴² The cone in question is of course Bergson’s diagram of the passage of time, the contraction of the vast expanse of the past into the single point of the present (B 60; Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, tr. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1911: 152).

⁴³ Deleuze draws parallels here with Freud, where in one sense the pure past is again a transcendent, mythical structure that governs what occurs in this world (DR 105).

Plato's forms, it could be argued, will always bear a striking resemblance to their inferior counterparts in this world — indeed, having established that everything from Justice to hair and dirt have their forms, we are left with the impression that the Platonic Idea is nothing but a mythical, sanitised abstraction from this world. *This enormous error, the installation of a transcendent realm or supplementary dimension that is modelled on the empirical, is the key to the Deleuzian critique.* Instead of Platonic reminiscence then, Deleuze posits the 'remembrance of lost time', again a passive (involuntary) synthesis, the recovery of a past that was never present, and once again, it is only on the basis of this passive synthesis of memory that the *active* synthesis of memory can occur. Again, it is the active synthesis which begets representation, in that (unlike involuntary memory) the active representation of the former present in the present necessarily involves the representation of the present in the present ('It is of the essence of representation not only to represent something but to represent its own representivity'). In contrast, Proustian memory testifies to the coexistence of the pure past and the present, of the entire past being in communication with the present as the virtual is to the actual. Bergson's cone (mentioned above in relation to the philosopher and the pig) takes what we could disingenuously refer to as a God's-eye view of the passage of time (as duration or real movement), with the present as the most contracted point on the cone. Involuntary memory occurring in this present is, then, the 'telescoping together' of present present and past present, with the proviso that this telescoping reduces it to neither present (an irreducibility that distinguishes memory and habit).

In summary, then, Deleuze distinguishes (in terms that recall our discussion above of 'true and false problems') *legitimate* and *illegitimate* accounts of this synthesis. The illegitimate or representational account of the first synthesis (that of the past-present and present-present) is that of Kant, which makes the active synthesis primary and reduces the passive synthesis to undifferentiated sludge. To this Deleuze contrasts a foundational contraction-contemplation of the multiplicity of larval selves,

over which the transcendental self-consciousness of the active synthesis, the I, is installed as ruler — although this rule is destructive (or conservative, depending on your viewpoint), in that it harnesses the dissolved self to the 'I' of representation, an I which is, however, already fractured, already an Other. The second synthesis, of the memory or the pure past, has its illegitimate aspect in the platonic notion of reminiscence, the seeking after of an immutable world of forms — the archetype of transcendence — which Deleuze contrasts with the Bergsonian picture in which the past *subsists* in the present: 'all levels and degrees coexist and present themselves [...] on the basis of a past which was never present' (DR 83).

There is, however, a third synthesis of time, which transforms the first two. We have already encountered its illegitimate figure in Kant's notion of time as the form of inner sense. It is primarily to this that Deleuze contrasts his version of the Eternal Return as the empty form of time, drawing largely from Klossowski.⁴⁴ This return is precisely not the return of the Same, it is characterised variously as the return of the future, a belief of or in the future (DR 90) — as well as by the phrases 'to throw time out of joint, to make the sun explode, to throw oneself in the volcano, to kill God or the father' (DR 89). This time the distinction between illegitimate and legitimate forms of the synthesis is of a different order, for what Deleuze's Nietzsche has discovered in the Eternal Return is the lived fact of nothing less than the destruction of self, world and God in both their transcendent and transcendental guises, and therefore, of the very possibility of representation. 'It eliminates the presuppositions of representation, namely the Same and the Similar, the Analogue and the Negative. For representation and its presuppositions return, but only once; [in contrast to the 'every time' of the return of the return] they return no more than one time, once and for all, thereafter eliminated for all times' (DR 301).

⁴⁴ See Pierre Klossowski *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, tr. Daniel W. Smith, London: Athlone, 1997

On this view, the eternal return is linked to repetition not of the whole of time (return of the same), but to the notion firstly that the repeated is always different, and moreover, that therefore the only thing that returns is difference. This formulation allows Deleuze to say that eternal return is ‘the same of the different, the one of the multiple, the resemblant of the dissimilar’ (DR 126) — in a phrase that we will return to in relation to the Plane of Consistency, it is *that which things with nothing in common, have in common*. The power of this notion is to fill the place formerly occupied with some notion of origin or telos (that would clearly be a prime example of transcendence) with an immanent principle of creative difference:

The eternal return has no other sense but this: the absence of any assignable origin — in other words, the assignation of difference as the origin, which then relates different to different in order to make it (or them) return as such (DR 125).

1.8 The System of the Transcendental Ideas (Fig. 3, overleaf)

In the interests of clarifying these notions, it is clearly necessary to go round this strange loop again, except differently. This time, Kant will again feature prominently — appropriately enough, since each time we come across the figure of three syntheses in Deleuze, regardless of whether he is dealing with Kant directly, it is no doubt a reference to Kant.⁴⁶ We must plunge into the first *Critique*, and for reasons that will be made apparent, to the ‘First Book of the Transcendental Dialectic’, ‘The System of the Transcendental Ideas’ (CPR 322).

⁴⁶ most obviously, perhaps, to Kant’s Threefold Synthesis of knowledge (apprehension in intuition, reproduction in imagination, and recognition in a concept) (CPR 129-138). I argue in this section that a different set of three syntheses which appears later in the *Critique*, is more closely connected with the Deleuzian conceptions we will shortly examine.

Fig. 3: System of the Transcendental Ideas (Concepts of Pure Reason)

All transcendental ideas can be arranged in three classes:

the absolute unity of the thinking subject	the absolute unity of the series of conditions of appearance	the absolute unity of the condition of all objects of thought in general.
These correspond respectively to		
<i>psychology</i>	<i>cosmology</i>	<i>theology</i>
for which pure reason furnishes the ideas for		
a transcendental doctrine of the soul	a transcendental science of the world	a transcendental knowledge of God
With Deleuze*, these are superseded by		
a logic of neutral meaning	a metaphysics of incorporeals	a thought of the present infinite

*as rendered by Foucault in 'Theatricum Philosophicum', *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, tr. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977: 176

Before we can understand, even something as rudimentary as a syllogism, deduces Kant, there must be a concept or concepts embedded in reason itself, which make this possible. Since the essence of the syllogism is the derivation of a specific conclusion from some kind of universal (e.g. 'all men are mortal'), Kant decides that 'the transcendental concept of reason [that concept which is necessarily prior to the exercise of the understanding] is [...] none other than the *totality* of the *conditions* for any given conditioned' (CPR 316) — and the *totality of conditions* is itself necessarily the *unconditioned*. We need to grasp the *unconditioned*, or unconditionally or a *priori* true, to establish the truth of any given syllogism.

The number of pure concepts of reason will be equal to the number of kinds of relation which the understanding represents to itself by means of the categories. We have therefore to seek for an *unconditioned*, first, of the *categorical* synthesis in a *subject*; secondly, of the *hypothetical* synthesis of the members of a *series*; thirdly, of the *disjunctive* synthesis of the parts in a *system*. (CPR 316)

In other words: reason is defined by three Transcendental Ideas which are the *unconditioned* of the three categories of relation (*substance, causality, community*) of the understanding that relate to inner sense (the empty form of time). In each case, the unconditioned can be reached by travelling backwards up a syllogism — as Kant puts it ‘*ascending*, in the series of conditions, to the unconditioned, that is, to principles’ (CPR 325) — that is, to the Ideas that in each and every case, govern the attribution of one of these three categories (see Fig. 3). Pure reason, then, furnishes the governing Ideas for three posited transcendental sciences: from the categorical synthesis we arrive at the ‘thinking subject,’ the ‘transcendental doctrine of the *soul*’ and the corresponding discipline of psychology; from the hypothetical synthesis we arrive at ‘the sum-total of all appearances’ and the corresponding discipline of cosmology; and from the disjunctive synthesis we arrive at the ‘thing which contains the highest condition of the possibility of all that can be thought (the being of all beings)’ and the corresponding discipline of theology. Kant goes on to state explicitly *why* the transcendental Ideas *must* be thus and so:

...in treating of the transcendental concepts of reason, which, in philosophical theory, are commonly confused with others, and not properly distinguished even from concepts of the understanding, we have been able to rescue them from their ambiguous position, to determine their origin, and at the same time, in so doing, to fix their precise number (to which we can never add), presenting them in a systematic connection, and so marking out and enclosing a special field for pure reason (CPR 326).

What exactly are the status of these transcendental Ideas? Self, world and God have become nothing more than *regulative ideals* — markers of

the very limits of knowledge. In carrying out the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant has shown *once and for all time* that these *a priori* limits are imposed on us by the very nature of reason itself. While pure reason cannot give more 'substance' (so to speak) to these notions, it nonetheless legislates that we must proceed *as if* there was a unity of the soul, a unity of the world and a unity of all that is possible for all time as determined by the ultimate unconditioned, the existence of God. Kant writes

..the regulative law of systematic unity prescribes that we should study nature *as if* systematic and purposive unity, combined with the greatest possible manifoldness, were everywhere to be met with, *in infinitum*. For although we may succeed in covering but little of this perfection in the world, it is nevertheless required by the legislation of our reason that we must always search for and surmise it; and it must always be beneficial, and can never be harmful, to direct our investigations into nature in accordance with this principle. (CPR 568)

'To anyone who asks: "Do you believe in God?" we should reply in strictly Kantian or Schreberian terms: "Of course, but only as the master of the disjunctive syllogism..."'⁴⁷ Eliding Kant and his schizophrenic compatriot Judge Schreber is characteristic of Deleuze-Guattari's happy hostility towards Kant. Crucial to this is the attempt not so much to overthrow or dismantle his system, but to willingly take it onboard as the account of Occidental rationality it claims to be — yet at the same time, opening up its underside, bringing to the fore that which it excludes. In a paper appended to *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze draws again on Klossowski to make this explicit.⁴⁸ His refiguration of the 'philosophical Christian God', defined as *Omnitudo realitatis*,

⁴⁷ "...or as its *a priori* principle (God defined as *Omnitudo realitatis*, from which all secondary realities are derived by a process of division)" (AO 13). We will deal with this strange equation of Kantian and Schreberian terms in the next chapter.

⁴⁸ Pierre Klossowski, *The Baphomet*, Sophie Hawkes and Stephen Sarterelli, New York: Eridanos Press, 1988

has no other sense than that of founding this treatment of the disjunctive syllogism, since distributive unity does not allow us to conclude that his Idea represents a collective or singular unity of a being in itself which would be represented by the Idea. In Kant, therefore, we see that God is revealed as the master of the disjunctive syllogism only inasmuch as the disjunction is tied to exclusions in the reality which is derived from it, and thus to a *negative and limitative use* (LS 296).

Here we return to the third synthesis of time, in its illegitimate (i.e. '*negative and limitative*') use. To this God of exclusions, of the either/or of identity, Deleuze-Klossowski oppose the Antichrist of *inclusions*, of the 'either...or...or...', where everything (philosopher and pig, criminal and saint alike) must pass through every position in the eternal return of return. Instead of everything resolving into its right and proper identity, the same for all time (thus subjugating difference to the Same), reality becomes an ever-open field of problems or problem-fields. The disjunctions of the Kantian God have not gone away, but the idea of an originary reality has — and the point is, we are well shot of it. Rather than being the sludgy, indifferent morass that Kant worried about, the order of the Antichrist is infinitely more finely differentiated.

The disjunction is always a disjunction [but] Rather than signifying that a certain number of predicates are excluded from a thing in virtue of the identity of the corresponding concept, the disjunction now signifies that every thing is opened up to the infinity of predicates through which it passes, on the condition that it lose its identity as concept and as self (LS 296).

This is Eternal Return as principle of selection; what must be affirmed is change, transformation and difference, i.e. all things, everything, considered not as a distributive unity but as an infinitely diverse in-finity. What is necessarily destroyed in this process are the exclusions and limits that belong to representation, of the idea that transcendental of self, world and God.

1.9 Immanence of Criteria

The debt of *AntiOedipus* to Kantian critique is huge. As Deleuze-Guattari put it,

In what he termed the critical revolution, Kant intended to discover criteria immanent to understanding so as to distinguish the legitimate and illegitimate uses of the syntheses of consciousness. In the name of *transcendental* philosophy (immanence of criteria), he therefore denounced the transcendent use of syntheses such as appeared in metaphysics. In like fashion, we are compelled to say that psychoanalysis has its metaphysics — its name is Oedipus. And that a revolution — this time materialist — can proceed only by way of a critique of Oedipus, by denouncing the illegitimate use of the syntheses of the unconscious as found in Oedipal psychoanalysis, so as to rediscover a transcendental unconscious defined by the immanence of its criteria, and a corresponding practice that we shall call schizoanalysis (AO 75).

In this section I will summarise the appearance of the three syntheses in *AntiOedipus*, not so much to focus on what they are ostensibly presented in relation to (namely, the tired myths of psychoanalysis), but rather by way of explaining why the disjunctive synthesis has been seemingly demoted to second place, apparently superseded in importance by the *conjunctive synthesis*.

The *connective synthesis* of *AntiOedipus* takes us to the visceral flows of the machinic unconscious, a diabolical world of connections, of flows and their interruptions: 'It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks' (AO 1); the 'larvae and loathsome worms' (AO 9), the 'fields of anuses' and barrels of rats, the 'amniotic fluid, spilling out of the sac and kidney stones; flowing hair; a flow of spittle, a flow of sperm, shit, or urine' (AO 70). But under the metaphysics of Oedipus, these impersonal, non-specific flows, so-called 'partial objects' that do not lack a wholeness (precisely because they are not already whole), are taken as always already subject to the triangulation of 'mommy-daddy-me': 'a definable and differentiable ego in relation to paternal images serving as co-

ordinates (mother, father)' (AO 70). Oedipus, as a regulative ideal, tells us what we are *not* allowed to do (i.e. identify with either parent too much and risk killing one and sleeping with the other — or any of the endless range of symbolic equivalents of these acts) — and then assumes for all time that this is all we wanted to do in the first place. 'In reality, global persons — even the very form of persons — do not exist prior to the prohibitions that weigh on them and constitute them' (AO 70), write Deleuze-Guattari, giving us some insight into a possible response to the Kantian monolith. As with Oedipus, the extent to which we are governed by the Kantian model is the extent to which we are constituted by its prohibitions. The Deleuze-Guattarian schizo is content to get on with other things. Since he does not recognise himself either in Oedipus or in the transcendental doctrine of the soul — he would not even recognise himself in a bloody mirror — they have no power over him.

The disjunctive synthesis as figured in its Oedipal use as restrictive or exclusive (and in full accord with the Order of God) is the mechanism whereby you are determined in terms of successful avoidance of or collapse into one of the three 'familial neuroses': 'the phobic person can no longer be sure whether he is parent or child; the obsessed person, whether he is dead or alive; the hysterical person, whether he is a man or a woman' (AO 75). Here is the Oedipal equivalent of the horrors of undifferentiation, that await anyone who fails to fall on one side of the disjunction or the other — pointing to the bigger and nastier disjunction that underlies all the others, the 'either/or OR ELSE!' that keeps us back from the brink of *supposedly inevitable* catatonic, abyssal undifferentiation. The Deleuze-Guattarian schizo, in contrast, escapes both undifferentiation *and* exclusive disjunction:

He does not reduce two contraries to an identity of the same; he affirms their distance as that which relates the two as different. He does not confine himself inside contradictions; on the contrary, he opens out and, like a spore case inflated with spores, releases them as so many singularities that he had improperly shut off (AO 77).

The *conjunctive synthesis* is characterised as the consumption of intensive quantities (affects), setting the 'I feel' as prior to the 'I see, I hear' of hallucination and the 'I think' of delirium. (This 'I feel' involves not the I of the subject, but a fleeting I of presubjective sensibility, the encounter that begets thought: 'In effect, the intensive or difference in intensity is at once both the object of the encounter and the object to which the encounter raises sensibility' (DR 145).) The conjunctive synthesis sees two versions of the realisation, 'So it's me!' In psychoanalysis, this is the *recognition* of the self in the mythical form of Oedipus. Everything — all familial, racial, political conflicts and alliances, all the states through which we pass — has supposedly been shown to relate to the name of the Father. For the schizo, this is not *identification* once and for all but the *investment* in a series of masks, of simulacra, with no one true identity being formed or revealed, and if it has anything to do with the Father it has as much to do with every other relation any of us are engaged in:

...everything commingles in these intense becomings, passages and migrations — all the drift that ascends and descends the flows of time: countries, races, families, parental appellations, divine appellations, geographical and historical designations, even miscellaneous news items. (*I feel that*) I am becoming God, I am becoming woman, I was Joan of Arc and I am Heliogabalus and the Great Mongol, I am a Chinaman, a redskin, a Templar, I was my father and I was my son (AO 84-85).⁴⁹

⁴⁹ The illegitimate use of the conjunctive synthesis (reactionary unconscious investment), from which Oedipus is derived, is characterised as 'I am of the superior race', the legitimate use (revolutionary unconscious investment) as 'I am not of your kind, I am the outsider and the deterritorialized' (AO 105).

1.10 Concluding Remarks: Fourth Person Singular

The problem that was posed at the end of Section 1.5 was how to relate the uses of notions of synthesis found in different moments of Deleuze/Deleuze-Guattari, and my provisional answer is as follows. There is no one-to-one correspondence between the three syntheses of time in *Difference and Repetition* and the three syntheses of desiring-production in *AntiOedipus*; instead, tendrils run back and forth between the two series in a movement of mutual complication. What is crucial in both series is the distinction between the *transcendent* or 'illegitimate' uses (illegitimate from the point of view of the machinic unconscious, and unable to withstand the Eternal Return of Return) and their immanent, legitimate or schizophrenic uses. The three syntheses of time combine to shatter representation; at least on the level of transcendental philosophy (thereby challenging certain strains of philosophy of mind, cognitive science, psychoanalysis, linguistics and many other disciplines); while the three syntheses of desiring-production build on this to initiate a full-blown positive pragmatics under the (admittedly problematic) name of schizophrenia. However:

It is not a question of opposing to the dogmatic image of thought another image borrowed, for example, from schizophrenia, but rather of remembering that schizophrenia is not only a human fact but also a possibility for thought — one, moreover, which can only be revealed as such through the abolition of that image (DR 148).

We have seen the abolition of that image both through the three syntheses of time, and the three syntheses of desiring-production. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze-Guattari reappraise what we have called true and false problems (or legitimate and illegitimate syntheses) in terms of *stratification*: the field of the true problem is the Plane of Consistency, false problems (representation, recognition) are the illusions of the strata (though nonetheless pernicious for being illusory). In the next chapter, through an engagement with Judge Schreber, we explore the interplay

between the two sides of the strata (content and expression) and movements between the strata and the Plane.

The possibility that has been repeatedly raised in this chapter was that we can get by without representation, without identity. These themselves are, as I have shown, dependent on the unmediated immanence of the contractions of our larval selves, the preindividual singularities, intensive quantities, partial objects or desiring-machines that comprise the zone of intensity or difference in itself, or the 'fourth person singular' (LS 141).⁵⁰ *Fourth* person because it is prior even to the They, way before You and knows nothing of the I think or I perceive of representation, but only a flowing, intensive, *presubjective 'I feel'* — which if we are to go along with Deleuze's relentless optimism on this point, can never do anything but affirm, to 'sing the glory' *not of God*, but 'of the heavens, the goddesses and gods' (DR 75) which are at once the demons, nerves-rays or breaths-spirits of the Order of the Antichrist.

⁵⁰ Deleuze is quoting Lawrence Ferlinghetti: 'Uses of Poetry' (a poem) and 'Poetry as News' (an essay) at <http://www.envy.nu/christa/uses.html> and http://www.corpse.org/issue_4/critical_urgencies/ferling.htm respectively.

2. Semiotics and Soul Murder

2.0 Introduction

Having argued for the foundational importance of difference in itself, which we have shown to be synonymous with *intensity* (Section 1.5), we must now try and establish why such a stance puts us in any better position to understand the functioning of language.

In the last chapter, we examined Deleuze/Deleuze-Guattari's accounts of the formation of the subject and its faculties in a way which demonstrated the derivative nature of good sense and common sense, and of the Same and the Similar, and proposed the notion of *difference in itself*, or *intensity*, as the origin of matter and life — a notion that differs from any *transcendent* origin (such as God), since intensity is *immanent* to matter/life. On this view, rather than being a radical break in the history of the world, the human subject is and remains an offshoot of this immanence of difference, and further, that the stories told by religion and philosophy of its special place in the universe delimit and restrain the modes of engagement open to the human bodymind, as well as harmfully overemphasising the dichotomy between it and the rest of Nature.

In pointing to difference or intensity as the 'common' origin of all matter and life, it should be noted that this does not entail any homogenisation: rather, it allows for greater differentiation across the board.⁵¹ In suggesting as I have just done, that the emergence of the human subject of common sense/good sense is not a discernible moment or decisive break in history, the point is not to play down or devalue the relative achievements of humans in comparison to other configurations of matter. The point is that these achievements must be themselves understood as configurations of matter, certain aspects of which not only have

⁵¹ in both the sense of the theoretical explanation of the 'really different' and of a better theoretical approximation of *difference in itself*.

remarkable and diverse ways of affecting other aspects. The unwieldy nature of this mode of description offers the benefits (as well as the challenges) of freeing us from thinking in terms of isolated human actors, as though these were figures in a primitive animated cartoon, moving around against a static backdrop. Instead we wish to lay out the resources needed to explore the configurations of matter in our tiny region of the Cosmos, on a variety of levels and without eliminatively reducing from one to another.

In this chapter I propose the notion of 'material semiotics', a method dedicated to the exploration of signs as components in material systems, as opposed to being mysterious entities belonging to some purely semantic realm (signifiers or representations).⁵² In order for this not to be reductionist — for example, by attempting to explain the effects of 'meaning' in terms of brute physical processes — this method requires the resources both of the actual/virtual opposition (discussed in the previous chapter), and that of *double articulation* (introduced below and spelled out in further chapters). These two apparent dualisms are erected on a pragmatic basis according to the specificities of particular cases, and do not detract from the underlying insistence on the singular immanence of difference in itself, being as they are not transcendent realms, but inadequately explored aspects or modes of this one. As we will see, material semiotics concerns signs as active components functioning in three modes: on the level of expression, at the intersection between content and expression, and on the Plane of Consistency (the all-encompassing level of pure immanence) itself. From the angle of the

⁵² The point is that signs are signs only in relation to the assemblage of which they are components — nothing is essentially signifying in its own right — but also that the assemblage does not constitute a unity, but only relates its components to one another through their sheer difference. As we argued in the last chapter, the subsequent appearance of 'unities' or 'essences' is an effect of sheer difference. See also Daniel W. Smith, 'Introduction: "A Life of Pure Immanence": Deleuze's "Critique et Clinique" Project', CC: xxii-xxiii.

relations between actual and virtual, these active signs concern movements both of differentiation and differentiation (respectively, movements virtual→virtual and virtual→actual).⁵³

In this section, we pursue the nature of the subject, through the remarkable case of Judge Schreber. Our aims in this section are to open up other zones of Deleuze-Guattari's apparatus, most importantly the two sides of the Assemblage (machinic and collective). Along the way we will examine selected contributions from psychology, psychiatry and analytic philosophy, in order to present a picture of subjectivation that brings together the preindividual singularities, or 'fledgling and larval selves', of the previous chapter, with the notions of the order-word and stratification. A number of themes will be raised in condensed form, to be unpacked in later chapters. Since there is no easy way to present these ideas, I have chosen to set in motion at least a fraction of the huge range of elements present in Schreber's *Memoirs*, by way of avoiding a move from simple (or simplistic) to complex, and instead moving from an irreducible whole, through a process of subdivision (as opposed to reduction), to an illumination of some of its constituent processes. That Schreber's story, itself a recurrent motif in *AntiOedipus*, is eminently amenable to this approach, is what I will show in this chapter.

Did Deleuze-Guattari actually read the *Memoirs* of Daniel Paul Schreber?⁵⁴ Samuel M Weber, in his introduction to the *Memoirs'*

⁵³ This terminology is introduced in DR 207. Differentiation is drawn by Deleuze from mathematics, differentiation from biology, and he uses them to refer respectively to the determination of the components and relations of the problem field (or 'Idea' in the terms of *Difference and Repetition*, 'concept' in those of *What is Philosophy?*), and the 'incarnation' or actualisation of these components and relations. The key to these two processes is that neither have anything whatever to do with the negative, with negation — this only arises insofar as the actualised relations are cut off from 'the virtuality which they actualise' (ibid).

⁵⁴ Daniel Paul Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (hereafter M), tr. Ida MacAlpine and Richard Hunter London: Harvard University Press, 1988

translation, takes Deleuze-Guattari as 'exemplary' among those for whom Schreber is but a member of the 'canon of the often mentioned but never read' (M xiii and li, note 16). Yet the Judge plays a crucial role in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, particularly in *AntiOedipus*, where he seems to stand for all those who have been subject to wilful misinterpretation at the hands of psychoanalysis. His pivotal position in this respect leads Louis S. Sass to suggest that Deleuze-Guattari (and other radical antipsychiatric writers, such as R. D. Laing, Norman O. Brown) uncritically *accept* the psychoanalytic reading of psychosis as something childlike or Dionysian, though they then make the romantic move of valorizing rather than pathologizing these supposedly primitive and uncontrolled conditions.⁵⁵ Another writer, Eric Santner, takes Deleuze-Guattari's Schreber as providing 'a storehouse of protofascist fantasies and fantasy structures' making it apparent, as the present alternative approach will try to show, that it is Deleuze-Guattari who are not being read.⁵⁶

What follows, then, comprises the beginnings of a 'material semiotics' of 'the Schreber case', where 'case' is seen not as indicating Schreber's interior world in isolation. Rather, his name is taken to designate the singular nexus of a variety of different assemblages or machines discussed below. After a short discussion of Deleuze-Guattari for purposes of orientation, I will employ elements from Daniel Dennett's demythologisation of mentalist explanations in *Consciousness Explained*

⁵⁵ Louis A. Sass, *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature and Thought* (hereafter MM), London: Harvard University Press, 1994: 11

⁵⁶ Eric Santner, *My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity* (hereafter MPG), Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996: x. Santner claims that Deleuze-Guattari ultimately follow Elias Canetti's reading of Schreber in this regard (Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (hereafter CP), tr. Carol Stewart, London: Penguin 1984). I will examine aspects of Sass and Santner's readings of Schreber below.

to examine Louis Sass's Schreber.⁵⁷ Sections 2.3 and 2.4 will concentrate on Eric Santner's superlative reading of Schreber, which I will arrange in terms of collective assemblages of enunciation (2.3) and machinic assemblages (2.4), attempting to elucidate these terms and their relations in the process. The last section will look at Schreber's becoming-woman, before finally approaching the issue of Deleuze-Guattari's 'schizophrenia'.

2.1 Immanence

If there is one basic move Deleuze-Guattari make, it is the abandonment of transcendental stability, that is, the refusal to leave any terms uninterrogated. It is on this basis that the nearest Deleuze-Guattari get in pointing towards some kind of origin or ground is the notion we encountered above of *difference in itself*. At different stages in their work, this key idea is presented in slightly different forms, in such guises as Body without Organs, Plane of Consistency and Abstract Machine — each relating to a base-level of materiality, which functions as a degree-zero, from which everything emerges as differences in intensity. Whether this corresponds to a local Body without Organs (such as that of a particular individual or a particular social or biochemical assemblage) or the Cosmos as a whole — this question remains open — the point of this move is to place a big Zero where other theoretical interventions retain some transcendental principle or other (e.g. for Kantians or phenomenologists, this is the transcendental subject; for Saussurean linguistics and semiology this is the Signifier; for Marx as for Hegel, History; for empiricists, this might be the World or its experience through sense data; for realists and anti-realists alike, this is some Real whether obtainable or unobtainable, and so on). Deleuze-Guattari deal not with *words and things*, but with the processes of production that facilitate the articulable and the visible. While both volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* present different versions of a kind of Universal History,

⁵⁷ Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (hereafter CE), London: Penguin, 1993.

this is an account of contingency rather than necessity — each are nonformal, ideographic accounts of how things happen to be.⁵⁸

Given this approach, theory is never a matter of discovering essences, underlying structures or gesturing towards unknowable Ur-realities, but always a matter of experimentation. Rather than collapsing into postmodern relativism, Deleuze-Guattari do not abandon Reality; rather, for them it encompasses both things as they are and how they could be, with the manifold potentials of sometime-, seldom- or never-actualised relations having *real* effects as the virtual-but-real. This is a thoroughgoing immanence of substance (tagged by the ‘magic formula’ of PLURALISM=MONISM we encountered in the last chapter) which sees distinctions between Natural/Artificial, Man/World, Organic/Inorganic not as originary but as the products of particular, contingent machineries — the Strata — which must be *diagrammed* or ‘reverse-engineered’. The term ‘reverse engineering’ is associated with evolutionary biology, where natural selection is presented as an explanation for the emergence of particular organs or capacities. The point is not to unveil a secret teleology that was driving the process all along, but to show how a particular series of contingencies resulted in the capacity (or power) concerned became ‘locked in’ and allowed to propagate. According to Dennett, this approach focuses (like Deleuze-Guattari) on the *processes of production* — what he calls ‘abstract architecture’ and they call ‘abstract machines’ — and the material constraints in play every step of the way, rather than producing teleological hypotheses on the basis of the characteristics of the eventual artefacts (CE: 212-220).

Such an endeavour is not any kind of disinterested inquiry in the name of Science or Rationality (or their cross-cousins Medicine and Psychiatry), since both of these are themselves rooted in (and in some sense, constitutive of) the Strata. It is necessarily pragmatic, and (as Deleuze-Guattari say of the book) there is no difference between ‘what it talks

⁵⁸ We return to Universal History in Chapters 5 and 6.

about and how it is made' (TP 4) — the diagram is not a representation of the processes with which it is concerned, it is an intervention on those processes. There is no disinterested vantage point from which to survey the Strata: the praxis of schizoanalysis involves both de- and re-stratifying tendencies. Material semiotics attends experimentally to this distinction *both* in the strategically-delimited zone it is engaged with, *and* in its own functioning — an inclusive disjunction which constitutes its pragmatics. What follows is an attempt to distinguish this approach from that of other readers of Schreber (to whose work I am nonetheless indebted).

2.2 Understanding the Nerve-Language

How best to approach Schreber, whose *Memoirs* are an astounding mixture of charnel house meat-dream, Cosmic conspiracy theory and grotesque theological horror-comedy?⁵⁹ It might be argued that since

⁵⁹ The initial symptoms recorded in his medical records include: increasingly morbid hallucinations (from the softening of his brain to his actually being dead and rotting); the notion 'his penis [had been] twisted off by a "nerve probe"' (M xxi) and that he was now a woman, and that he was under threat of rape; several suicide attempts and repeated pleas for cyanide; and states of near catatonia as he became immersed in his delusional world — the character of which ranged from fantasies of being tortured to those of a more supernatural nature, involving ghosts, demons and gods. In his *Memoirs*, Schreber traces the developments of these fearsome developments, and how they lead him to the conclusions he draws about the nature of God, the afterlife and the fracture in the Order of the World that centres around him.

The early and most extreme period of his ordeal, running from March to May 1894, Schreber dubs his 'holy time', as it was then that he was in most frequent 'nerve-contact' with the rays of God. The paraphysiology Schreber presents as the fruits of his investigations is based on the idea, widely accepted at the time, of the inherence of the human soul in its body, though Schreber develops this notion into a cosmic architecture of nerves 'Not even the soul is purely spiritual, but rests on a material substrate, the nerves' (M 244) — meaning that its continued existence after bodily death is predicated on the body not being cremated or otherwise destroyed. If, following Schreber's advice, you arrange to be buried instead, following your death your nerves will become rays (the terms are broadly synonymous in the *Memoirs*), described as fine threads or filaments, that will embark on a process of purgatorial purification, involving the gradual 'forgetting'

Schreber was quite clearly barking mad, nothing he says can be relied upon, except as evidence of his madness. In any case, for material semiotics, the Author (whether sane/reliable or mad/unreliable) cannot be serve as explanandum, any more than cosmology can be content with God as cause of the universe.⁶⁰ The book is not a representation of the world or an object in-the-world, but a (literary) machine with a set of shifting relations with other machines. For us now, these are most obviously psychiatric, juridical and psychoanalytic (taking the form, for instance, of the reports by Dr Weber, the court proceedings and Schreber's essay in jurisprudence, and the essays by Samuel Weber and the translators MacAlpine and Hunter, that came bundled with the English edition), but they also include the specific machines of stratification in their physical and symbolic aspects by which Schreber was processed in his lifetime, as we will examine shortly.

There are certain parallels with this approach and that of Daniel Dennett. Dennett's 'heterophenomenology'⁶¹ accepts the importance of individual

of your earthly identity, until finally you will be subsumed in the 'forecourts of heaven', becoming one with the rays of God himself. This process of purification is not to do with punishment, which Schreber deems an earthly concept appropriate to the courts, but irrelevant to the realms of God. Hell is merely a fairy story, concocted by humans to control other humans. The process may take hundreds of years, and often involves migration to distant planets (Cassiopeia, for example, is the home of a group of Students Union members, who form the impudent 'so-what-party'). Before your nerves are subsumed by God, they may converge with those of your compatriots. Schreber lists these 'soul-complexes' as including Jehovah-rays, Zoroaster-rays, Thor-rays and Odin-rays. As such, all your identity gone, you should finally achieve the State of Blessedness. Unfortunately the 'cursed Schreber affair' has meant the suspension of all further allocations of Blessedness until further notice.

⁶⁰ 'A book is neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds. To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations. It is to fabricate a God to explain geological movements' (TP 3)

⁶¹ This method is presented as a solution to the problem of how to obtain scientifically respectable data from people's descriptions of their own experiences, as is required in a significant proportion of psychological investigations. The key is the method's neutrality

testimony, but leaves open the question of a 'Central Meaner', that is, the notion that there is something irreducible and mysterious at the heart of experience that repels all attempts to understand it in purely scientific terms. Dennett's explorations are far from definitive; however, he insists that the translation of many 'mentalist' descriptions into physical terms need not involve an *impoverished* reduction. The rich descriptive account he is aiming at shuns the tendency to rely on 'black boxes' of both traditional psychological explanations of the mind (most famously Skinnerian behaviourism with its explanations of behaviour simply as the result of whatever conditioning there 'must have been' to have caused it — the *virtus dormitus* explanation⁶²), and also those which rely on homunculi of one form or another, that is, 'little men' in the brain supposed to explain behaviour, while themselves remaining completely mysterious. In other words, the project is one of demythologisation.

in relation to questions of its subjects' *consciousness* (as opposed to any potential interference by mad professors or zombification), and to the objective reality of the phenomena they report. Dennett applies his notion of the 'intentional stance', whereby experimental subjects' utterances are taken not as random noise, but rather as the *speech acts* of an integrated individual: 'we must treat the noise-emitter as an agent, indeed a rational agent, who harbours beliefs and desires and other mental states that exhibit *intentionality* or "aboutness", and whose actions can be explained (or predicted) on the basis of the content of these states' (CE 76). The subject is taken to be describing his or her 'heterophenomenological world', and the successful experiment will be designed to ensure as little chance of the subject's bothering to lie, or of having misunderstood the instructions, as possible. But, while the subject's words will be taken at face value, that is, they will be interpreted on the basis that they express what the subject 'meant to say'. Where material semiotics and heterophenomenology diverge is on the question of the subject. Where Dennett must assume this subject despite bracketing off questions of its ontological status, material semiotics regards Schreber's testimony as interesting insofar as it describes the set of external relations that *constitute* the subject rather than originate from it.

⁶² 'Skinner Skinned' in Daniel C. Dennett, *Brainstorms: Philosophical Essays on Mind and Psychology*, Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1979

Perhaps the most suggestive material in the *Memoirs* for Dennett's approach is Schreber's account of the 'nerve-language'.⁶³ Louis Sass makes this the focus of a chapter in his *Madness and Modernism* in which (in a nutshell) he argues for a conception of schizophrenia which doesn't involve, as is traditionally assumed, a regression to infantile states, but instead is a kind of *hyperrationality* — a state which finds parallels in much 20th Century art, literature and philosophy. In Schreber's case, this is manifested in his panoptical state of self-observation. Sass interprets the nerve-language as inner speech, an idea for which there is more support in the *Memoirs* than Sass himself allows.⁶⁴ Schreber makes clear that the nerve-language is opposed to the spoken language of humans, and is what goes on in sleep. This allows God, who is ignorant of the whole realm of humans as social beings, to influence sleepers and those in contemplative states — hence the divine inspiration of the poets and prophets. Schreber also makes a strong distinction between what he sees with his 'bodily eye' and what he 'pictures' with his 'mind's eye' — though this last technique has both active and passive forms. The rays, despite often being described as 'little men' (such as those who climb up his legs and pump his spinal column out of his mouth in clouds of steam (M137)), are for the most part known only by the phrases they utter.⁶⁵

Sass writes, 'According to Vygotsky's classic *Thought and Language*, the structure or skeleton of normal adult thought is largely provided by an "inner speech" that initially derives from and mimics overt, vocalised

⁶³ For Schreber, the 'nerve-language' covers all the 'silent talking' (my phrase, not Schreber's) of the rays (their mechanical vibration), and is fundamentally different from the spoken language of individual humans.

⁶⁴ for example, his description of counting upwards in the nerve-language — '1, 2, 3, 4—.' (M 233) makes it sound identical to simply 'counting in one's head'.

⁶⁵ Again, Schreber makes an active/passive distinction, in this case between the phrases learnt by rote, and reeled off automatically in response to certain stimuli (such as the 'We have already got this [written down]' whenever a thought occurs that has occurred before) and those spoken with genuine feeling. The latter category is reserved for certain communications from God himself, particularly the lower God Ariman.

speech' (MM 256).⁶⁶ Such speech is (for reasons of efficiency) simplified and condensed into the most minimal of phrases. This truncation is possible because the content of the thought is largely carried by the particular context in which the individual having it finds itself. For the most part, we are unaware that our thoughts are not spelled out completely and exhaustively; indeed even in introspection we may fail to detect these half-phrases as objects of our consciousness. This is because, Sass maintains, in a certain sense they *are* our consciousness — it is one and the same with this flow of thoughts, observations and decisions.⁶⁷

Sass sees Schreber as laying bare these mechanisms of thought, and draws on Foucault's account of the panopticon in *Discipline and Punish* to describe the hyperreflexive state in which Schreber unwillingly finds himself.⁶⁸ The panopticon instils the belief that the prisoners are constantly visible to an external power thus building a self-monitoring faculty into their own awareness (the famous 'cop in the head'). For Schreber, this takes the form of God and the rays, challenging his every thought, and tormenting him with accusations of impropriety (e.g. 'are you not ashamed in front of your wife?' and 'fancy a person who was a Senatspräsident allowing himself to be f...d' (M149)). Sass, who presents Schreber as offering an 'allegory of innerness', concludes: 'The strange medium of the nerve-language might perhaps stand as a metaphor for

⁶⁶ Lev S. Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, tr. E. Hartmann and G. Vakar, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1962

⁶⁷ This account fails to explain certain characteristics of the rays. For Schreber, the rays that plague him seem in some way to travel from distant stars by means of speech — in later stages, their phrases are elongated in a manner reminiscent of the technique of time-stretching found in contemporary dance music. Thus, a phrase like 'Why do you not then shit?' becomes 'W.w.w.h.h.h.y.y.y d.d.d.o.o.o.....etc.', lasting 'perhaps thirty to sixty seconds' (M 175-6). In later stages, the rays fade to a kind of ambient hissing. If they are to be identified with the inner speech of consciousness, from whence come these developments? My alternative account is picked up in the next section.

⁶⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (hereafter DP), tr. Alan Sheridan, London: Penguin 1991.

modern subjectivity in general. For, though the most intimate and familiar part of the self, this ghostly product of self-scrutiny nevertheless exists as a quasi-external object, an alien, mysterious realm that must constantly be examined and decoded by the very being who creates and lives it' (MM 260).

Sass's account of Schreber's nightmare of hyperreflexivity is extremely convincing, and recalls the remark in *AntiOedipus*, 'It is not the slumber of reason that engenders monsters, but paranoid, insomniac rationality' (AO 112). However, there are certain problems with Sass's account, one of which is his insistence that these processes must be read as metaphor, as must Foucault's use of the panopticon itself, as opposed to its ostensive reality for both Schreber and the subjects of modernity Sass takes the Judge as to some extent representing. Rather than Foucault's panopticon being a metaphorical allusion to Bentham's design for a prison, it designates an abstract machine of surveillance that is actualised in schools, hospitals and prisons alike (DP 195-228). This point need not detract too much from the importance of Sass's insight. However, in a subsequent study dedicated to Schreber and Wittgenstein, *Paradoxes of Delusion*, Sass makes clear his orientation to Schreber, in contrast to most of the other commentators:

In my view, to grasp the distinctive meaning of sex and power in the Schreberian cosmos — and in the worlds of many schizoids and schizophrenics — one must understand the dimension that is more fundamental for such individuals, that of knowledge.⁶⁹

I contend the implication that Schreber's problems are therefore primarily epistemological. Epistemology, in a Deleuze-Guattarian or Foucauldian view, is hardly capable of grounding the processes of sexuality or power, and is not usefully separated off from them — particularly as regards

⁶⁹ Louis S. Sass, *The Paradoxes of Delusion: Wittgenstein, Schreber, and the Schizophrenic Mind*, London: Cornell University Press, 1994: 119.

Schreber. Knowledge is indeed fundamental to Schreber's ordeal, but it is knowledge *in relation to* the plot laid against him, his striving to retain control over his person (both from God and his rays, and from the psychiatric regimes he endures, and the court that imposes his tutelage), and also his strategies in cultivating that which provides some little relief, his soul-voluptuousness in becoming-woman. These elements will be explored in more detail below. There is, however, another sense still of knowledge, that of Deleuze-Foucault, whereby the strata (as visibilities and articulabilities) comprise the forms of the knowable — and it is indeed this type of knowledge with which Schreber is locked in conflict.

A further caveat to my support of Sass, is that following the heterophenomenological approach, we are not obliged to accept as yet the idea that this is all going on in Schreber's head. Returning to Dennett, we can sophisticate Sass's account by interrogating the Vygotskian notion of inner speech. The debate about whether our thoughts are in their own language (often called 'Mentalese') is long and complex. Dennett's *Consciousness Explained* seeks ways round this assumption, as part of his programme of breaking down the barriers between scientific and common sense understandings of the mind. One of the problems with the postulation of Mentalese is it requires more explanation than it provides (as a kind of distributed homunculus). When finally called upon to give a positive account of consciousness by his sceptical interlocutor 'Otto', Dennett introduces the notion of *presentiments* as the stuff from which consciousness can be said to emerge. After Dennett has presented his explanation of what presentiments are, Otto exclaims, 'So presentiments are like speech acts except that there's no Actor and no Speech!' (CE 364-365).

The idea is that *beneath* the Vygotskian picture Sass utilises of a stream of nerve-language, is a Pandemonium⁷⁰ of presentiments, or ‘events of content-fixation occurring in various places at various times in the brain’ (CE 365). In a recent essay, Dennett describes this Pandemonium as

an anarchic, *competitive* arena in which many different sorts of things happen — Grand Central Station, in which groups of visitors speaking many tongues try to find like-minded cohorts by calling out to each other, sweeping across the floor in growing crowds, waving their hands, pushing and shoving and gesturing.⁷¹

This highly suggestive passage contains several key points. There are ‘many tongues’ being spoken, rather than a single Mentalese, or *lingua franca* of thought — a notion that is all too compatible with the reinstating of a Central Meaner whose mother tongue it would be.⁷² The crowds of preindividual impulses, relating to the different options afforded the individual by its surroundings, and imposed on it by the syntheses of Habit and Memory, compete with one another for control of the body’s utterances and movements. These singularities have the character of speech acts in that they are judgements that are completely context-dependent. They do not possess any signficatory value; they do not refer to or represent anything outside themselves — they are unmediated relationships of action and reaction between nervous system and environment, brain and its habits, bodymind and its memories. They are events of orientation, of ordering, that collectively, situate the body in the world: they *territorialise* it. For these reasons, Dennett’s presentiments can be usefully elided with Deleuze-Guattari’s *order-words* — i.e. there is

⁷⁰ ‘The pioneer model of this sort of process is Oliver Selfridge’s early Pandemonium architecture in *Artificial Intelligence*, in which many “demons” vied in parallel for hegemony.’ (CE 189)

⁷¹ Daniel Dennett, ‘Reflections on Language and Mind’, in Peter Carruthers and Jill Boucher: *Language and Thought: Interdisciplinary Themes* (hereafter LT), Cambridge University Press, 1998: 285.

⁷² We return to this debate in relation to Stephen Pinker in Chapter 7.

a strong parallel between the *intra*-personal events of context-fixation, these speechless speech acts that are prior to the actor, and the *inter*-personal level of order-words. It is in this respect that they account for Schreber's experience of compulsive thinking.

These presentiments are precisely what Deleuze talks about as the 'fledgling and larval selves' we encountered in Section 1.7 above. In his contact with the nerve language, Schreber effects a partial escape from the Self into the realm of preindividual singularities — and it could be argued that it is through his paranoia that he overcodes these as real people or portions of real people, while at the same time never losing the sense of himself as an integrated subject to whom this is all happening. From a common sense perspective, from which all these 'little men' (e.g. M 83), 'fleeting-improvised-men' (e.g. M 43), and nerves-rays in general, appear as clearly delusional, Schreber has confused these different parts of himself, these different fabulations of his own diseased mind, with objectively extant personalities. However, from the present perspective, the truth is rather that we are all immersed in this oceanic tumult of proto-persons (each of which exists purely in relation to particular roles, environments and other proto-persons), adopting now this persona, now that, as our 'subject' traverses this interplay of pre-individual singularities. In other words, the individual is characterised at any given point by the dominant pre-individual tendencies in line with which it acts. As Dennett puts it,

most successful activities depend on enlisting large multi-modal coalitions, involving the excitation of several largish areas [of the brain] simultaneously, but occasionally swifter, more efficient contacts coordinate activity with hardly any commotion at all (LT 285).

These latter, more efficient transitions depend on the role of language in thought, which we will discuss in much more detail in later chapters.

2.3 Symbolic Investiture and Order-Words

Eric Santner's *My Own Private Germany: Daniel Paul Schreber's Secret History of Modernity* brings together material from a range of sources on Schreber, and teases out a range of fascinating implications in three areas. These I will outline and then rearrange according to the priorities of a material semiotics. In the first section, Santner examines Freud's reading in detail, suggesting that the 'crisis of symbolic investiture' that faced Schreber in his new post of Senatspräsident closely matches Freud's own, as he barricades his own brand of psychoanalysis against those who would usurp his throne.⁷³ Secondly, Santner presents an account of the 'surplus father' (personified most clearly in the lower god Ariman and certain of the Flechsig souls) — which far from being simply the return of Schreber's repressed homosexual desire for his father, is the concretisation of the insidious, all-pervasive machineries of surveillance and control that Schreber suffered both as the child of a sadistic pedagogue and as what might now be called 'mental health services consumer'. The third section attempts to rescue Schreber from Canetti's diagnosis of proto-fascism (CP 505-537) by characterising the *Memoirs* as 'a forceful intervention in the European debates on the "Jewish Question":

The claim is that when, at the end of the nineteenth century, a German man belonging to an elite (such as the judiciary) comes, for whatever reasons, to feel his identification with his status disturbed, he will automatically find himself in the symbolic position of the marginal figures of that culture — in this instance women and Jews — and begin, unconsciously and conflictually, to elaborate the consequences of his new set of identifications using whatever images and fantasies are ready to hand in the cultural "archive" (MPG 99)

⁷³ In Freud's case, his anxieties are shown by his claims of originality, distancing his own insights from those of his contemporaries, and from anything Schreber himself directly (if inadvertently) contributed to his analysis (MPG Chapter 1, 'The Passions of Psychoanalysis').

This 'crisis of symbolic investiture' is Schreber's recognition of the mechanisms of exclusions and cruelties on which his symbolic roles (white German Protestant heterosexual male judge etc.) are based, and his inability to metabolise this situation, except through his becomings-woman and -Jew. Santner's account of symbolic investiture is based on a nuanced account of what Deleuze-Guattari call the order-word. Santner opens up the realm of symbolic power, as discussed by Bourdieu, as related to the crisis of authority and legitimation that faces any juridical or bureaucratic system (including of course the machinery of psychiatry) — for example, in the words of the title of Schreber's contribution to the debate, 'In what circumstances can a person considered insane be detained in an Asylum against his declared will?' (M 363).⁷⁴

Schreber makes clear that his crisis is intimately connected with the legitimacy (or rather, the self-legitimation) of power. Once circumstances pertaining to the Order of the World are contravened, it is a free-for-all, God is drawn into conflict with himself and power is up for grabs (M 58). Symbolic power concerns not the relative strength of individual bodies, though it may in a roundabout way depend on the relative strength of armies and police forces. It cannot be claimed by an ambitious individual on his or her own, it must be vested in particular individuals by the structures already in place: it is therefore the property of particular modes of social organisation — and subsists beyond the tenure of particular administrations. We could perhaps distinguish between such administrations and 'Administration as such', that which, for example, in Kafka's story 'The Great Wall of China', makes it unimportant which particular emperor happens to be in power at any given time.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, tr. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991.

⁷⁵ Franz Kafka, 'The Great Wall of China', tr. Willa and Edwin Muir, *The Complete Short Stories*, London: Minerva, 1995: 235-248.

There are compelling correspondences between Santner's account of symbolic investiture and Deleuze-Guattari's order-word, which, they argue, is the 'elementary unit of language' and is a function 'coextensive with language' (TP 76). Contrary to the assumption that language is a tool for the communication of information first and foremost, is the assertion that the order-word functions through redundancy: language refers not to an extra-linguistic world, but rather back to what has been said before: 'language does not operate between something seen (or felt) and something said, but always goes from saying to saying'. Where for deconstruction, the symbolic chain cannot be broken and no access to a world beneath can be had, Deleuze-Guattari insist that the connection of language to the outside is intrinsic to language: the transmission of an order word is always a concrete event, and depends for its effects entirely on the specifics of the enunciation in question. As we will see in Chapter 4, Deleuze-Guattari draw on the speech-act theory of J.L. Austin, and (like Bourdieu) free it up from semantics, so the efficacy of a speech act lies not in the meanings of words, so much as in the specifics of the situation.⁷⁶ Speech act theory, then, is not limited to blatant examples such as 'I promise that...', 'I'm warning you,' etc, nor even to all the intricacies of Gricean implicature (such as A getting his audience to realise he means the opposite by saying "X is a fine friend" when they are well aware that A knows that X has in fact betrayed him).⁷⁷ Rather, it eats up all of spoken language use, and by extension all written language, since all saying and writing (or listening and reading) is *doing*: each utterance transmits a statement — its *implicit presupposition*, or 'sense'. This sense can be stated explicitly, but only while simultaneously producing *its own* implicit presupposition, which must be stated separately. In any case, the order word is produced in the site of the utterance, and is not a matter of signification or semantics, but of the

⁷⁶ J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (hereafter *Words*), Oxford University Press 1976.

⁷⁷ H.P. Grice, 'Logic and Conversation' in *Readings in Language and Mind*, ed. Heimar Geirsson and Michael Losonsky, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996: 129

variables of the particular situation, and the way they are affected by the utterance; i.e. the *incorporeal transformations* it effects.

In other words, what Schreber's *Memoirs* could be said to be 'about', is the essential relation between the level of symbolic power, and the level of the bodies it serves to order and discipline. For Deleuze-Guattari, these levels correspond to the double articulation of the Strata, which they designate (following Hjelmslev, as we will see in Chapter 6) respectively: expression, the level of collective assemblages of enunciation, and content, the level of machinic assemblages. The two aspects are 'really distinct' (i.e. dealing with different compositions of matter-energy) but are in a relation of reciprocal presupposition. The order-word is a defining moment of double articulation; it is a moment of reinforcement, of repetition or redundancy production. It finds its distorted reversal in the 'password', inherent in every order-word as its potentials for breaking open new zones of relations, rather than reaffirming (helping to lock in) the relations already in place. Santner draws from Judith Butler the account of gender-assignment in these terms — 'it's a boy' (in the circumstances of the maternity theatre) is an order-word, containing the imperative that acceptable gender roles are adhered to, while the very failure of the categories boy and girl to encompass the range of actual and potential sexualities of which the individual body is capable, opens up zones of 'deviance' and experimentation, as well as zones of torture and destruction.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York: Routledge, 1990. In this regard, it should be noted how reductive Freud's assumption of Schreber's homosexuality seems, particularly in light of the range and nature of his mystic/erotic experiments in 'soul voluptuousness.' I will return to sexuality and Schreber's becoming-woman in Section 2.5 below. 'Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides) (Schreber)' in Sigmund Freud, *Case Histories II, The Pelican Freud Library Volume 9*, tr. under the general editorship of James Strachey, London: Penguin, 1981

As we have seen, Sass connects the repeated phrases of the nerve-language with the commands issued to the subject first by parental and other authorities, and then issued internally from a panoptical superego. Deleuze-Guattari's account of the redundancy of the order-word is clearly visible in Schreber, where the scoldings, demands and abuse Schreber suffers have a cumulative effect through their frequent repetition. Schreber even manages to harness this redundancy through adopting the repetition process himself. Where at first he is compelled to attend to the *significance* of the words each time anew, filling in the missing words to show he has recognised the sentiment concerned, he learns to simply repeat the words themselves to himself over and over again, evacuating them of their symbolic content and facilitating the blessed 'not-thinking-of-anything-thought'.⁷⁹ While on Sass's account mentioned above the commands issued by the rays are already linguistic, I contend that the linguistic aspect is secondary to that of the command itself, allowing Schreber to use the irrelevance of the *actual words* as a way of escaping the force of the command of which they are the effect.⁸⁰ The question now

⁷⁹ He develops other strategies that achieve the same effect, such as hammering at the piano in a 'disturbing manner', reciting poetry or counting, swearing out loud or simply bellowing like a maniac: all these facilitate the blessed 'not-thinking-of-anything-thought' and grant him (if not those around him) a little respite. What he is combating through all these practices is the signifying power of the words, and the demand he *interpret, understand* — despite his awareness of their total redundancy. His strategies all involve fleeing signification, whether through the nonsignifying activities of playing the piano or counting, to repeating the phrases himself till he is no longer bothered by their meanings.

⁸⁰ The irrelevance of the words themselves is backed up by three factors: 1. Schreber's assertion that the rays — who sometimes appear as talking birds of various sorts — have merely learned by rote, and there is no feeling behind their words (i.e. Schreber must attend to the effect they are intended to have on him in the broad scheme of things — to destroy his reason — rather than what the rays, as speaking subjects, are expressing); 2. the fact the phrases are often euphemistic, ironic or otherwise context-dependent, again implying that Schreber's foreknowledge of the sentiment rather than the words themselves is what is important; 3. the process called the 'writing-down-system', which ensures all his thoughts are recorded and endlessly repeated back to

is to analyse the machineries which give the order-words their force, that are the preconditions of those phrases being attached to those meanings in the first place.

2.4 Schreber's Becoming-Minor

Santner's rich and subtle argument finds for Schreber's diagnosis of '*something rotten in the state of Denmark*' (M 164) corroborations in Kafka's 'The Metamorphosis', in Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter* and Panizza's 'The Operated Jew'.⁸¹ Santner's reading of Kafka has Gregor Samsa function as the sacrificial victim in the name of authority, both before his transformation, working his guts out despite the fact his dad has been keeping secret a strongbox full of cash all along, and after, where he becomes the monstrous, perverse wretch that embodies the breakdown and impotence of that authority — and must ultimately be taken out with the trash, allowing the family to flourish. Weininger, coming from the opposite side as it were, presents a neo-Kantian (and in certain respects proto-Lacanian) account of autonomy, which he defines as the metabolization-without-remainder of the categorical imperative. He takes it for granted that the likes of women and Jews, who are without souls, can never achieve this internalisation of the moral law, and will forever suffer conflicts between their own interests and those of the law. The Panizza story is ostensibly a piece of virulent anti-Semitism in which a particularly grotesque caricature of Jewishness called Faitel Stern goes to bizarre lengths (ultimately surgical) to be transformed into an authentic German, only to have his bestial and depraved Jewish frame and deportment burst out of its disguise at his wedding banquet. Santner suggests that Panizza's purpose is to arouse in his 'Aryan' readership the suspicion that they themselves can never quite claim to embody their

⁸¹ Franz Kafka, 'The Metamorphosis', tr. Willa and Edwin Muir, *The Complete Short Stories*, London: Minerva, 1995: 89-139; Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung*, Munich: Matthes and Seitz, 1980; Oskar Panizza, *The Operated Jew: Two Tales of Anti-Semitism*, tr. Jack Zipes, New York: Routledge, 1991.

ideal, that all humanity is tainted with the 'lying substance' (*Lügensubstanz*), the slimy taint of dissimulation.

In all these cases we have an account of the rottenness, Schreber's 'poison of corpses', the redundancy on which the power of the order-word is based. This aspect of Santner's account focuses on the level of expression, dealing with the formation and breakdown of the notions of the pure German that physically affect Schreber — the conflicts raging between the *majoritarian* Aryan male, whose shaky identity is constituted on the basis of the exclusion of the *minoritarian* non-subjects of Jews, women and so on.⁸² Schreber, as former National Liberal Party candidate, and as a judge involved in the wranglings over the formation of Germany's Civil Code, suffered in madness a visceral critique of his Protestant subjectivity. As mentioned above, it is not a matter of 'identification' with the repressed Other. If there is a 'return of the repressed', it is the very mechanisms of subjectification which Schreber encounters. Schreber's BwO is the surface on which these elements are arranged and classified, and assigned their identity — Schreber's contact with them is not through identification, but through the breakdown of his capacity to identify with 'himself' as dictated by categories he was thrust towards from birth.

Santner also provides great insight into the level of content, as the controls on the body. Here he builds on the insights of Nederland and Schatzman, who point out the many correspondences between Schreber's delusions and specific practices of his father, and the

⁸² At one point, Schreber adjourns to Brazil to build a castle against a syphilitic 'yellow flood tide' (M 87). Santner demonstrates how syphilis, and other diseases of the nerves (such as increased soul-voluptuousness) would have been linked up with notions of Judaism and femininity — both of which are combined in Schreber's rebirth as the Eternal Jew, whose role is to have the new race of superhumans spring from his miracled-up womb (MPG Chapter 3).

corresponding insights of Lothane and Kittler relating instead to the practices of Schreber's psychiatrists, Flechsig and Weber.⁸³ In the former case, for example, miracles directed at Schreber's eyes (including one point where a Flechsig soul lives for a time as a watery substance on the surface of Schreber's eyeballs) are taken to relate to his father's insistence that the eyeball itself be sponged clean several times a day from shortly after birth; similarly, Schreber's distressing encounters with a 'head compressing machine' are seen to have begun with Moritz Schreber's orthopaedic devices for improving posture. In the latter case, Schreber's accusation of 'soul murder' against Flechsig is taken to correspond to Flechsig's pioneering forays into eliminative materialism, his passion for legitimating psychiatry as a science on the basis of a 'psycho-physics' of the brain.⁸⁴ This project clearly runs contrary to the Order of the World as far as Schreber is concerned, since, through the study of dead brains on which it is founded, it *literally* dissects the human soul.

⁸³ Niederland, William: *The Schreber Case: Psychoanalytic Profile of a Paranoid Personality*, Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1984. Morton Schatzman, *Soul Murder: Persecution in the Family*, New York: Random House, 1973. Zvi Lothane, *In Defense of Schreber: Soul Murder and Psychiatry*, Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1992. Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, tr. Michael Metteer and Chris Cullens, Stanford: University of California Press, 1990

⁸⁴ Schreber is tormented by a variety of Flechsig nerves (particularly 'upper' and 'middle Flechsig'), though when it comes to publishing his *Memoirs*, he takes great pains to insist he harbours no grudges against the living Flechsig (though he would be grateful if Flechsig could confirm that certain nefarious experiments in nerve contact were carried out). Schreber is informed by rays that there has been a war between Flechsigs and Schrebers for around three centuries. An ancestor of Flechsig's who was also a 'nerve specialist', though who worked in the Church rather than in as-yet non-existent psychiatry, was conducting illicit experiments in nerve-control. This 'country clergyman' tasted undreamed-of power through his experiments, and sought to 'retain his hold on divine rays' that resulted, with little inkling of the consequences. (His achievement was great, considering how easy it would be for future 'nerve-specialists', with whole asylums to play with.)

The importance of Schreber's father to his delusions is not, then, as the original object of Schreber's homosexual desire. Moritz Schreber's pedagogical practices are in no uncertain terms the systematic disciplining and docilising of the child's body, at the same time as it is trained to internalise the father's authority and good sense. Schreber senior was a scholar of the disciplinary techniques necessary for breeding a generation worthy of their Germanic heritage.⁸⁵ As Santner notes, there are remarkable parallels between Moritz's techniques and those applied to Fitel Stern in Panizza's story. Fitel ultimately has all his bones broken and reset in the name of achieving that upright Aryan posture. And in Weininger's account of the transition from heteronomy to autonomy, there are close links with Moritz's methods for forcibly imposing the categorical imperative on the psyche of the child, in such a way as to make it incapable of distinguishing its own desires from its Duty.

⁸⁵ Among Moritz Schreber's many publications are such titles as *Medical Indoor Gymnastics; or, A System of Hygienic Exercises for Home Use To Be Practised Anywhere without Apparatus or Assistance by Young and Old of Either Sex, for the Preservation of Health and General Activity, Anthropos, the Structural Wonder of the Human Organism, and The Family Friend as Educator and Conductor to Domestic Happiness, to Popular Health and to the Refinement of Man, for the Fathers and Mothers of the German People*. He achieved fame as pioneer of the young science of 'remedial gymnastics', and as inventor of the *Schrebergarten*, a specially designed exercise yard for the improvement of the nation's youth. Little is known about Daniel Paul's childhood, though it can be presumed that Moritz tested many of his authoritarian principles on his children, including the use of specially designed machines for shaping and disciplining bodies, for example keeping the back straight and head facing forward at table, or preventing any nocturnal indiscretions. The missing third chapter of Daniel Paul's *Memoirs* was specifically about his father and brother (the latter was also in the legal profession, but shot himself in 1877 within weeks of being appointed judge), but was apparently removed by other surviving Schrebers before publication. Aside from this there is no reference to his childhood in the *Memoirs*, though Moritz Schreber is fleetingly mentioned as being among the departed souls with whom Schreber has contact.

Santner introduces the notion of the 'surplus father' to designate the machineries of constant and invasive discipline and surveillance that characterise the rays' frequent attacks on Schreber's person, as delusional actualisations of the same abstract machines of control acting on Schreber in childhood and in hospital. For Santner, Schreber diagnoses the advent of Foucault's disciplinary society in these terms: that God, in conditions consistent with the Order of the World (the lost Golden Age that has been irreparably altered), knows only the departed souls who assimilate in him (apart from the occasional contact with dreaming poets). Following the catastrophe around which the *Memoirs* centre, God is forced into disastrous proximity with Schreber and his ignorance of the needs of the living human result in Schreber's many tortures and indignities.⁸⁶ The 'surplus father' is this harmful overproximity of forces insensitive to the needs of man — and its presence reconfigures the relationship between Schreber and the world, making necessary his active participation in the processes of unmanning he initially regards with horror.

2.5 Schreber's Becoming-Woman

We have looked briefly at the machineries of stratification, both on physical and symbolic levels, the suggestion being that forces acting on Schreber all his life *actually* reappear in his delusions. Perhaps we can transduce in the opposite direction Schreber's strategies of resistance — and submission — to these forces. Crucial among these is his cultivation (despite immense resistance to the plan to begin with) of soul voluptuousness, through a paradigmatic example of what Deleuze-Guattari describe as 'becoming-woman'. The process Schreber refers to

⁸⁶ For example, the 'writing-down-system' and the language of the rays that fail to distinguish between a *human* understanding of the meanings of words, and their learning by rote and mechanical repetition (which invariably results in falsification). This bears interesting comparison with the distinction between oneself as individual consumer under Late Capitalism, and one's representations on any number of governmental, judicial and commercial databases across the globe.

as 'unmanning' is tied closely to soul murder, though while soul murder is more or less straightforwardly the destruction of Schreber's reason, unmanning is much more ambiguous, its status depending on whether it is occurring in consonance with the Order of the World, i.e. in the procreation of a new race in a miraculously fecund Schreber, or in opposition to the Order, i.e. as a tool of human origin, used in the plot to destroy Schreber's reason (M 72). On the one hand it pertains to Schreber's transformation into a woman, that he may be 'forsaken', i.e. used as a harlot and left to rot (M 71). However this gradually takes on a more positive tone, as he realises it is the best way to *preserve* his reason (and as he says, 'I would like to meet the man who, faced with the choice of either becoming a demented human being in a male habitus or a spirited woman, would not prefer the latter' (M 149)). Now that soul-contact has been established between Schreber and God, his well-being is index-linked to the proximity of God's nerves to his body. Schreber's nerves have reached such a pitch of excitation that God (or at least his posterior realms) are inexorably drawn into Schreber's body, to perish within with plaintive cries for help.

Schreber discovers the happiest situation for all concerned is if he can keep the rays' attention by making himself appealing to them, allowing him to avoid either assimilating them or enduring the pain of their withdrawal. This he does by occupying his mind with all things feminine, dressing in trinkets and bows and posing sweetly before the mirror, and by imagining himself as a man and woman making love. There is no simple way in which Schreber simply thinks of himself as, for example, a woman trapped in a man's body. Rather he has been picked up and thrust onto a trajectory of becoming, saturated with feminine nerves, the presence of which, he remains certain, would be confirmed by a physical examination (M 205-206, 295). Schreber's extreme experiences bequeath him a certain healthy arrogance that enables him to pursue this course, despite its obvious dissonance with everything befitting a man of his position — 'he who entered into a special relationship to divine rays as I have is to a

certain extent entitled to sh.. on all the world' (M 177) — even if he is still at great pains to emphasise his divine transformations have 'nothing whatever to do with any idea of masturbation or anything like it' (M 208).

From the above, we can construct a pleasing fairy story (with a moral):⁸⁷ Schreber, as former National Liberal Party activist, was fundamentally concerned with the rights of individuals, the juridical safeguarding of their freedom (most specifically, against being detained against their will). But in his illness, he is confronted with the dark underside of this idealism. He confronts the nonmetabolisable outside of the rational (i.e. sane) male Protestant German subject position he formerly took for granted. His eventual solution is to explore the restorative potential of abandoning that position, having by this stage been through ordeals far more terrifying than the disapproval of his peers. And where as judge he would have left the distinction between sane and insane to the psychiatrists, when he finds himself on the wrong end of such a judgement, he challenges the right of the state to keep him locked up — and wins.⁸⁸ (We will paper over his relapse and death in hospital, for the purposes of a 'happy ending' to this paragraph.) Such a version of Schreber's importance could well arise from the kinds of nonreadings of Deleuze-Guattari mentioned in the introduction, where 'schizophrenia' is a lifestyle choice of the 'right-on' white-faced man, as is becoming-woman: wacky, naughty simulated deviances which our Everyman is already better placed to enjoy than either actual mental patients (who have carelessly let themselves be institutionalised — they should have preserved that little bit of strata to wake up to, should they not!⁸⁹) or actual women (who have to bother with

⁸⁷ Lest my intentions be unclear, this paragraph parodies alternative readings of Schreber/Deleuze-Guattari.

⁸⁸ However, it is pertinent to note his contempt for his fellow patients — as far as we are told, all lunatics and rough types of low humour, with whom Schreber regularly got into punch-ups.

⁸⁹ 'You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn [...] and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality' (TP 160). Easy for them to say, Schreber might respond.

the irksome detail of actually fighting for their rights, taking valuable time away from private becomings).

Material semiotics is not interested in the residual voluntarism which drives such readings (be they critical or celebratory). What I have attempted to do here is approach Schreber as a complex of both territorial machines (the processes of discipline/surveillance and symbolic investiture) and deterritorialising vectors (finding new joy through becoming-woman, neutralising command by harnessing its redundancy) — to arrive at an account of Schreber-as-subject as a shifting point along these trajectories. There is no one founding point or principle to be arrived at, though the *order-word* has emerged as the locus of switchings between these paths, constitutive of both sub- and inter-personal levels — most noticeably in Schreber, where such a distinction between levels collapses: it doesn't matter from the command's 'point of view' whether it has been actualised in a courtroom or hospital, or in a single individual's head.

In avoiding anything like the moralising, voluntarist position caricatured above, it must be stressed that the territorial and deterritorialising distinction does not correspond to 'bad' and 'good' — the two are opposite sides of the same process, and the issue of whether one is preferable to the other cannot be prejudged: 'Good and bad are only the products of an active and temporary selection, which must be renewed' (TP 10). Soul murder, for example, is for Schreber initially understood as the destruction of his reason, and is related by Santner (among other things) to Schreber's anxieties about the dehumanising effects of early materialist psychiatry (which knows only of corpses). Should we then criticise such scientific ventures, because of their indifference to the sensitivities of a Schreber? Dennett's *Consciousness Explained* would have given him *more* nightmares, as no doubt would *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. One point is that such ventures cannot get off the ground merely through human effort, they must be taken up by the appropriate economic, political

and libidinal assemblages — if Schreber had not felt the impact of these ideas directly on his body as already imbued with symbolic and physical power, it is unlikely they would have had such dramatic effects. Schreber suffers in his conflict with such assemblages, finding his rights eroded and identity-assumptions dismantled or decoded. But *as it happens*, what relief Schreber achieves is through the other side of soul murder, unmanning, where the limitations of these processes, their failure to lock down all the potentials for experimentation open to Schreber, give rise to the heightened intensities of his transformations — but these transformations were dependent on soul murder in the first place.

Deleuze-Guattari use schizophrenia as the immanent end-point of capitalism as a planetary machine, the ‘subject of the decoded flows on the body without organs’ (AO 34). While there is not room to explore this properly, this thesis is intended to be consonant with that use, in the sense that capitalism’s decoding of flows, the dismantling of traditional structures, of familial roles and of hierarchical organisations of businesses and states alike, and most crucially to drastically changing conceptions of the subject, tends towards schizophrenia as ‘soul genocide’. Material semiotics, which oscillates between the Strata and schizophrenia in the aforementioned sense, tracks this (inexorable?) process, and the new instabilities and potentials it generates.

2.6 Conclusion: Homuncules

To retrace the somewhat frantic steps of the preceding, I present now some words of clarification. I drew on Dennett’s notion of ‘heterophenomenology’ to allow us to take Schreber at his word. We did not attempt to explain away his account, but rather to set it in a relation of mutual illumination with the theoretical approaches outlined. This was done by shedding the foregone conclusion that Schreber’s account must be read first and foremost as delusional, but rather that it gives insight not only into his own experience but also into ours (however far apart they may initially seem). Schreber thus becomes exemplary in his contact with

the prepersonal and suprapersonal, rather than being the difficult anomaly he would be for most accounts of language and the human.

What, then, has Schreber illuminated for the project we have been calling material semiotics? Firstly, and in continuation of the ideas presented in Chapter 1, we presented a 'bottom-up' rather than 'top-down' account of thought and consciousness, whereby the human body is immersed in crowds of preindividual singularities, which struggle for domination of the body and its movements. These 'entities', we proposed, are the manifold of connections between body and environment. Rather than a preexistent division between subject and objects, we have the continual interplay between nervous system and environment impacting on one another in all kinds of different ways, the boundary between the two constantly contested. There is no Central Meaner that receives and sends out information to the world; different parts of the bodymind act on and react to the world in different (but more or less consistent) ways. These connective syntheses that precede the subject are never neutral, but are always already weighted with relative degrees of intensity or desire — relative to others on the same level and relative to emergent, global syntheses of the kind that could appear as conscious judgements ('bad, scared, help!') or instinctive, spontaneous reactions (such as the complex corrective movements people exhibit to avoid falling over, if you give them a hefty shove).

Because these subpersonal syntheses between body and world *have never been neutral*, we avoid the charge that the departure of the homunculus or Central Meaner in any way leaves a void that needs filling, or that it impoverishes our account of the subject. We see with Schreber ways in which this Pandemonium of connections is forcibly integrated into a global whole — with varying degrees of success. The question of how to compare Schreber's consciousness to that of 'normal' humans is not one I feel needs to be tackled in those terms, since I do not wish to emphasise the pathological side of his story, but rather those interconnected aspects

(subjectification, inner speech, receptivity and resistance to command) with which we are all engaged in different ways. Though we now leave Schreber, we will proceed to develop these aspects, to show how Deleuze-Guattari's account (combined with other influences in future chapters) opens up this approach to thought, language and identity.

3. Schizoanalytic Investigations: Deleuze-Guattari and Wittgenstein

3.0 Introduction

My contention at the end of the last chapter was that our examination of Schreber had relevance not simply for the Judge himself (nor just for sufferers of paranoid schizophrenia), but that it raised questions regarding the formation of human subjects in general. In this chapter, I will examine this approach more broadly, while at the same time making connections between Deleuze-Guattari and a philosopher with whom they have seldom been mentioned in the same breath — Ludwig Wittgenstein. This will orient our Deleuze-Guattarian project of a pragmatics of order-words, as well as setting the stage for later discussions of some limited convergences between so-called analytic and Continental philosophy. The central point in what follows is the ‘exteriorising’ of language carried out in different ways by both Wittgenstein and Deleuze-Guattari — their rejection of the possibility of considering problems of meaning without also considering specific uses; the importance at every step of the level of social practice (the *socius* in *AntiOedipus*’ term).

At first sight, the project of engineering unnatural congress between experimental schizoanalysts and concept-creators Deleuze-Guattari, and the scourge of philosophical mystification Wittgenstein, may seem misguided. Deleuze says virtually nothing about Wittgenstein himself, but he does not mince his words when it comes to Wittgenstein’s followers. In a 1988 television interview with Claire Parnet, the *ABC Primer*, he describes the school of Wittgensteinians as ‘a philosophical catastrophe’, a ‘massive regression’ of all philosophy, and in an aside in his Leibniz book of the same year, he refers to ‘Wittgenstein’s disciples spread[ing]

their misty confusion, sufficiency and terror'.⁹⁰ Likewise, there is much in Wittgenstein's painstaking, incremental and notoriously elliptical method and his explicit and implied attacks on metaphysics to suggest he would have little time for Deleuze-Guattari's deceptively 'fast and loose' approach to their vast range of subject matter. Wittgenstein's derision of the kinds of 'non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm[s]' (I 108)⁹¹ that philosophy is inclined to invent, indicate that he would strenuously object to such slippery notions as Body-without-Organs, desiring-production and, indeed, phantasm, that liberally season Deleuze/Deleuze-Guattari's work. My main concern is to illuminate the small but crucial zone where their respective approaches overlap — specifically, in relation to the irreducibly social nature of language — in the hope of finding a Wittgenstein independent of the schools who have taken his name, and a Deleuze-Guattari who perhaps are not as anathema to trends within so-called analytic philosophy as may first appear.

3.1 Meaning is Use

For present purposes, I will concentrate on Wittgenstein in his guise as demystifier of philosophical obsessions with mental processes, and with language understood on that basis. I propose a reading, which I hope will be largely uncontroversial, of the *Investigations* as dissolving traditional philosophical problems into problems of language use, but with the proviso that 'language use' is not taken as 'purely' linguistic, but to always refer outwards to specific social situations. Wittgenstein regularly mocks philosophy's attempts to understand the mechanics of language in isolation from social interaction — such as trying to understand naming by

⁹⁰ *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze, avec Claire Parnet* (Gilles Deleuze's ABC Primer, with Claire Parnet), TV series directed by Pierre-André Boutang, filmed in 1988 and broadcast 1994-1995. Quotes from the overview of the series, prepared by Charles J. Stivale, 1996: part 3, published on the web at http://www.langlab.wayne.edu/Romance/FreD_G/ABC3.html. *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, tr. Tom Conley, University of Minnesota Press 1993: 76.

⁹¹ References are to Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, Blackwell 1998, and are of the form (book, section).

repeating a name over and over (I 38) — as well as the attempt to capture the sense of expressions like ‘to understand in a flash’ by trying to catch hold of that intangible feeling by introspection (e.g. I 131, 197). He even goes so far as to issue the injunction ‘Do not try to analyse your own inner experience’ (II xi) — somewhat ironically, given the amount of time he appears to spend doing it. His private language argument, and the famous discussions of the experience of pain, can be seen as prime mobilisations of a technique which can be described as *subtracting a dimension*, a strategy proposed by Deleuze-Guattari (TP 21), that is, resisting the temptation to posit a supposedly explanatory transcendent notion and critiquing such notions where they are bequeathed by common sense. For Wittgenstein, this dimension is most often that special, private something (such as whatever it is that might actually be in each of our beetle-boxes (I 293)) which is appealed to by way of explaining how language works. Such appeals to the first person perspective, on the archaic, Cartesian assumption of its privileged access to reality, are shown to be appeals to ‘a wheel that can be turned but nothing else moves with it, [which hence] is not part of the mechanism’ (I 271).

A central proposal that follows from this rejection of mentalist accounts of language and thought as adequate justifications, is that the meanings of words cannot be separated from their *use*, a move Deleuze endorses in *The Logic of Sense* (146).⁹² The idea that there is something that is the

⁹² This endorsement is not without anti-representational qualification: ‘[S]uch use is not defined through a function of representation in relation to the represented, nor even through representativeness as the form of possibility. Here, as elsewhere, the functional is transcendental in the direction of a topology, and use is in the relation between representation and something extra-representative, a non-represented and merely expressed entity. Representation envelops the event in another nature, it envelops it at its borders, it stretches until this point, and it brings about this lining or hem. This is the operation that defines the living usage, to the extent that representation, when it does not reach this point, remains only a dead letter confronting that which it represents, and stupid in its representativeness’ (ibid.) This seems to connect with Wittgenstein’s notion that to mean is ‘to go up to’, ‘to aim at’, which in his later work replace notions of

meaning of a particular word, that can be accessed in isolation from any particular use in a particular context, is thoroughly dismantled in the *Investigations*: ‘only someone who already knows how to do something with it’, writes Wittgenstein, ‘can significantly ask a name’ (I 31), and later, ‘When one says “He gave a name to his sensation” one forgets that a great deal of stage setting in the language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense’ (I 257).

Wittgenstein can repeatedly be seen to emphasise the remarkable range of uses and applications of language, with a view to hacking any story — such as that of naming (as we have seen), or that of communication (to which we will return) — which might claim to capture what is essential about language. Indeed (in I 92), he criticises the notion that there *is* an essence to language that lies below the surface, arguing instead for what is ‘already lies open to view and that becomes surveyable by a rearrangement.’ One of his methods is to take a particular word, such as the verbs ‘to believe’ (e.g. I 587), ‘to obey’ (e.g. I 206, 219), or ‘to be’ (e.g. I 558), and by means of hypothetical examples and extreme cases, he shows that whenever it seems we have a grasp on their supposed essence, it evaporates into thin air, and all we are left with is the varieties of usage and the corresponding varieties of contexts or language-games in which they occur. An example whose significance will become clear in what follows, is that of the statement

“My broom is in the corner,” — is this really a statement about the broomstick and the brush? [...] Suppose that, instead of saying “Bring me the broom”, you said “Bring me the broomstick and the brush which is fitted onto it!” — Isn’t the answer “Do you want the broom? Why do you put it so oddly?” [...] This sentence, one might say, achieves the same as the ordinary one, but in a more roundabout way (I 60).

stupid in its representativeness’ (ibid.) This seems to connect with Wittgenstein’s notion that to mean is ‘to go up to’, ‘to aim at’, which in his later work replace notions of representation, as though the latter required the specification of this movement, if it were not simply to be static and dead.

In other words, what appears to be a case of analysing a statement into its logical components, or basic constituents, turns out to take us further away from rather than closer to understanding. To better understand statements and commands concerning brooms, we need not dig around for the essence of broomness, but instead are referred upwards and outwards, firstly to situations where brooms come in handy (as wholes rather than connected bits) and more broadly to the sphere of social interactions in which remarks and commands *in general* can be understood to function. We can clumsily refer to this direction of analysis as 'reducing upwards', and we will discover more of its importance in what follows.

3.2 Language Games

Wittgenstein's famous notion of the 'language-game' has been instrumental in his frequent alignment with relativist linguists such as Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf, and the associated suggestion that different cultures can have no hope of understanding each other — the idea that language and thought are intertwined to the extent that speakers of different languages live in incommensurable realities, between which only vague, approximate and ultimately futile bridges of translation can be built. Since on this view there is a one-way determination from language to thought, the 'facts of the matter' are said to be accessible only to fully-fledged players of a particular language-game, and one language-game changes in nature when subsumed or assimilated by another. I propose to leave this position of linguistic determinism and translative nihilism hanging in the air for the moment, and approach the question of the nature of language from a slightly different angle, that of the command and the rule, the analyses of which take up a large proportion of one the key texts for present purposes, Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.

To examine one of Wittgenstein's suggestions, most relevant to Deleuze-Guattari's account, could a language exist which consists entirely of

commands? Right at the start of the *Investigations* Wittgenstein proposes a language shared by builder A and his assistant, B, consisting only of four words, “block”, “pillar”, “slab” and “beam”. A calls one out, and B fetches the appropriate item — ‘Conceive this as a complete primitive language.’ (I 2) That this thought experiment is at all plausible has been questioned by a number of commentators: *surely* the builders need to have more means of communication open to them than these four words?⁹³ However, it is here that we have a striking connection with Deleuze-Guattari, who in *A Thousand Plateaus* propose that the ‘basic determination’ of language is the command, or order-word. Raimond Gaita phrases what seems to be the insight,

something which is like what the builders do *must* have been the origins of all natural languages — that in their beginnings, natural languages must have consisted of a few names which were devised and used to further a common enterprise, and that the features of natural languages which are essentially connected with peoples, their histories and cultures, are sophisticated developments from such primitive languages. Therefore (the thought continues) whatever qualitative discontinuities there may be between language as we have it and what the builders do, they are not of a kind which mark the difference between language and a mere semblance of it (WCE 102).⁹⁴

Gaita goes on to argue that this view, if it can indeed be taken as what Wittgenstein is proposing in these passages, marks a moment of divergence from the main thrust of the rest of the *Investigations*, and

⁹³ Such commentators include: Newton Garver, *This Complicated Form of Life: Essays on Wittgenstein* Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court 1994; Raymond Gaita, ‘Language and Conversation: Wittgenstein’s Builders’, in A. Phillips Griffiths, ed.: *Wittgenstein Centenary Essays*, Cambridge University Press, 1991; R. Rhees, *Discussions of Wittgenstein*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970

⁹⁴ Wittgenstein tackles the apparent incompleteness of this language of orders in I. 18, drawing the analogy between our language and an ancient city with streets, squares and suburbs added through the ages. Prior to which addition was it not yet a town, not yet a city?

hence for Gaita, an unrepresentative approach not crucial to the work as a whole. The problem is that the builders appear to lack what is central to natural (as opposed to purely artificial or functional) languages, namely the capacity to distinguish between sense and nonsense, which, he insists, depends on the capacity for conversation. Though a situation (proposed by Norman Malcolm) can be imagined in which A utters something resembling nonsense — such as ‘Slab!’ in a situation where, clearly, only beams will do, causing B to fall about laughing, and A to slap his forehead and chuckle when he realises his mistake — this is not convincing for Gaita, because he *assumes* that they would only find it funny if they had experience of other situations of nonsensical uses of words, i.e. in a conversational setting.⁹⁵ Gaita believes this to be a Wittgensteinian insight into the difference between natural, public languages which are intertwined with the human beings that are capable of conversing in them, and the mere *semblances* of language we might find amongst robots, say, or amongst a tribe of Wittgensteinian builders. Natural language is for Gaita characterised by the very necessity that *more* than simply commanding can happen in it.

3.3 The Abominable Faculty

In contrast to Gaita’s emphasis on *conversation*, I hope to show that a more sophisticated and all-encompassing notion of the command, namely Deleuze-Guattari’s order-word, can indeed be taken as language’s ‘elementary unit’ (TP 76) — more fundamental, even, than subjects or signs, information or communication — and that this approach to language coheres with much in Wittgenstein’s *Investigations*.

As with his other peculiar and occasionally disturbing examples of inability to recognise, to understand, to follow rules, Wittgenstein shows that given the underdetermination of rules themselves, and the fact that when you

⁹⁵ Norman Malcolm, ‘Language Game (2)’, in *Wittgenstein: Attention to Particulars, Essays in Honour of Rush Rhees*, ed. Phillips, D. and Winch, P, London: Macmillan, 1989.

start looking for the rules for how to correctly obey rules, you end up in an infinite regress, that the understanding of rule-following has to stop somewhere. He writes

“How am I able to follow a rule?” — if this is not a question about causes, then it is about the justification for my following the rule in the way I do.

If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: “This is simply what I do” (I 217).

Need we be satisfied with this apparent dead end?

Rather than pursue the intra-linguistic line towards the infinite regress of rule-upon-rule, Wittgenstein, on a number of occasions, appeals to *training* [*Abrichtung*] as the basis for language functioning the way it does — the teaching of language is not explanation (I 5), nor can it simply be ostensive definition (I 6), ‘but only [these] together with a particular training’ (ibid.). Later, he writes ‘Following a rule is analogous to obeying an order. We are trained to do so; we react to an order in a particular way’ (I 206). This is why it is nonsense to assume that conscious operations of interpretation or understanding are necessary components of the order.

When I obey a rule, I do not choose.

I obey the rule *blindly*’ (I 219).

As Gordon Bearn writes, this is ‘Training in the sense that we train animals to do tricks, or the sense in which we break a horse’.⁹⁶ It *could* be otherwise, but it is not, and we are unable to fully accept as plausible, people who are in other respects normal (i.e. not completely insane), who nonetheless think it intuitively likely, for example, that the instruction ‘continue the series $n+2$ ’ means one thing up to 1000 — 2, 4, 6, etc — and another — 1004, 1008, etc — thereafter (I 185). This is because, as

⁹⁶ Gordon C.F. Bearn, ‘Derrida Dry: Iterating Iterability Analytically’, *Diacritics*, 25.3: 3-25, Fall 1995: 21

Deleuze-Guattari say, the whole process of induction into language is one of learning to obey commands, to accept as given the 'semiotization' of reality on the basis of the social practices in which we must participate.

When the schoolmistress instructs her students on a rule of grammar or arithmetic, she is not informing them, any more than she is informing herself when she questions a student [...] The compulsory education machine does not communicate education; it imposes upon the child semiotic coordinates possessing all of the dual foundations of grammar (masculine-feminine, singular-plural, noun-verb, subject of the statement-subject of enunciation, etc.) (TP 75-76).⁹⁷

We are trained, disciplined and docilised, to the point that we tend not to be particularly aware of the 'abominable faculty' that has been instilled in us, 'consisting in emitting, receiving and transmitting order-words' (TP 76). This semiotization occurs through the interlocking of the rules of linguistic and paralinguistic expression on the one hand, which have as much to do with gesture, facial expression and posture as to do with word order, matching tenses and the like, and on the other hand, the networks of social practices (such as the way the day is divided up into work time and free time, or the differing etiquette of communication with peers, elders and juniors) *segmentalised* with appropriate behaviours for each situation.⁹⁸ They call these two sides of the social machine *the machinic*

⁹⁷ Of course, that there is a 'child' upon which these semiotic coordinates are imposed is in a certain sense only true *after* their imposition, since the opposition 'child-adult' is as weighted with social-grammatical significance as the other oppositions mentioned. As with sexual difference, age difference involves an admixture of biological and cultural factors that use the former to justify and naturalise the latter. 'Not only are prisoners treated like children, but children treated like prisoners. Children are subjected to an infantilization which is alien to them.' Deleuze in conversation with Foucault, 'Intellectuals and Power', tr. Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon, in Michel Foucault, *Foucault Live: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, New York: Semiotext(e), 1996

⁹⁸ Wittgenstein gives weight to this picture in several ways, e.g. 1. his many examples of misuses of language or rules of maths which are inescapably odd and uncanny,

assemblage of bodies (training, discipline) and *the collective assemblage of enunciation* (the statements or order-words in circulation at a given point). The difficulty of fully distinguishing these levels mirrors the difficulty in Wittgenstein of distinguishing the corresponding terms, *form of life*, and *language-game*.⁹⁹ I propose reading the two sides as mutually, *holistically* interdependent, yet without referring to or representing one another, a relationship Deleuze-Guattari describe as *reciprocal presupposition*: neither side can be adequately understood except in relation to the other; neither is primary or foundational, they both appear at once (in the double articulation of the strata). Our language-games do not *represent* our form of life — philosophy cannot create some special language that gets more deeply into the heart of things, nor can it use ‘some sort of preparatory, provisional one [...it can only] use language full-blown [...] this by itself shews that I can adduce only exterior facts about language’ (I 120).¹⁰⁰ Why so? *Because language has no interior*. As Deleuze-Guattari put it, ‘If language always seems to presuppose itself, if we cannot assign it a nonlinguistic point of departure, it is because language does not operate between something seen (or felt) and something said, but always goes from saying to saying’ (TP 76).

showing us that disagreements of grammar don't concern merely the intellect or aesthetic sensibility but run all the way to our sense of what it is to be 'normal', safe, acceptable. 2. his linking of such familiar and fundamental notions as truth and pain with training — arguing that neither notion and its associated behaviours comes to us over and above our training as social animals (truth: I. 136-137; pain, e.g.: I. 257, II. xii).

⁹⁹ Wittgenstein is not entirely helpful when he says ‘to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life’ (I 19), and ‘the term “language-game” is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life’ (I 23).

¹⁰⁰ In the first of these notions, what is being rejected is the possibility of a ‘perfect language’ which is absolutely flush with the Real, mapping it point for point *not* the notion that linguistic invention (combined, necessarily, with the practice of a people) has the potential to transform their relation with the world, such as by increasing their affects and powers. I take it that the latter notion is central to the philosophy of Deleuze-Guattari, if not Wittgenstein. The difference between the two possibilities is that the former is predicated on an entirely representational notion of language, the latter on the *exteriorised* notion of language I present here.

The necessary exteriority of language (Wittgenstein's idea that everything is already on the surface), and the all-encompassing nature of the order-word, are made clearer in the following passage from *A Thousand Plateaus* (with an explanatory sentence from me inserted in the middle): 'Order-words do not concern commands only, but every act that is linked to statements by a "social obligation", Every statement displays this link, directly or indirectly' — because every statement commits us to other statements through the rules of grammar, and ultimately to acts, which we are forced to carry out if we are not to be shown to be mad, or lying, or stupid, or otherwise unable to function socially. 'The only possible definition of language is the set of all order-words, implicit presuppositions, or speech acts current in a given language at a given moment' (TP 79). Wittgenstein is close to this, when he muses 'The civil status of contradiction, or its status in civil life: *there* is the philosophical problem' (I 125, my emphasis). How would we react to people who constantly contradict themselves in their words and actions? How willing would you be to spend an entire weekend, as an experiment, deliberately contradicting yourself? This would seem to suggest, that no matter how *willingly and deliberately* we aspire to consistency, correctness and consideration for others in thought and deed, we are from time to time reminded what awaits us when we mess up. Is this sheer coincidence, or can we discern a pattern here? The point is that as long as we behave in accordance with the grammar of behaviour, conforming to others' expectations, we are allowed to get on and mind our own business, but when we break the rules, or apply them in peculiar new ways, we might either be praised for creating something new, or else we risk admonishment, censure, ostracism, imprisonment or a damn good hiding. (Clearly these controls do not govern each of us in the same way — they vary dramatically in their effects across bodies, genders, situations, and we are affected by and respond to them in vastly different ways. It is in this continuous interaction that we 'become who we are'.)

It could be argued that to focus in this way on this allegedly intrinsic *normativity* of linguistic interaction is paranoid, sensationalist and possibly destructive. Surely we should attend to the content of what people say rather than this dark level on which we are supposedly preoccupied with emitting and receiving commands all the time? Unfortunately such a naïve view fails to get to grips with how the system keeps itself stable, mistaking the level of information and communication for the bottom line, the zone of most importance. It fails to see that the ostensive content of conversations and other linguistic interactions (newspaper articles, colloquia, sessions in parliament or court, bureaucracy, etc) is entirely dependent on the normative, behavioural level, and that the content itself is often entirely redundant — ‘the redundancy of the order-word is [...] primary and [...] information is only the minimal condition for the transmission of order-words’ (TP 79). We will return to the centrality of redundancy shortly — but here it will suffice to say that for a pragmatics of the order-word, *what is said* is subordinate in importance to, and entirely dependent on, *what is being done in saying it*.

To rehearse the objection again via a return to Gaita’s argument against a language consisting solely of commands, surely for all the implicit and explicit commanding that goes on, there is a lot more to our linguistic behaviour, most of which seems to be unrelated to commands? What is wrong with Gaita’s notion that it is conversation rather than commanding or ordering that characterises natural language? It should help to emphasise two basic notions that Deleuze-Guattari share with Wittgenstein. Firstly, we again have the idea that to speak is to do something (which may succeed or fail), something necessarily public (even if one is alone).¹⁰¹ This speech-action depends on the backdrop of shared social practices (which are divisible — though not absolutely or

¹⁰¹ I allude here once again to Wittgenstein’s Private Language Argument as evidence that language is necessarily public and social; I am not suggesting that private utterances are not possible, but rather that insofar as they are linguistic, they are dependent on (if not entirely governed by) social machinery.

straightforwardly — into linguistic/symbolic and nonlinguistic regularities (and irregularities)). Secondly, Deleuze-Guattari argue that the most basic properties of utterances are the ways in which they conform to, or break away from, these regularities — moves characterised respectively as *order-word* and *password* — corresponding to the extent to which utterances are, in Wittgenstein's broad sense, *grammatical*, by which I take to mean not just rules of sentence formation, but the rules of applications of different terms in different situations, as well as their links with non-linguistic behaviour (facial expression, intonation, gesture and so on). What Deleuze-Guattari call the password, then, corresponds (in the first instance) to deviant, inventive, experimental uses of language.¹⁰² This can be from such a case as Wittgenstein urging us to change our associations from one set of pictures to another (e.g. I 115), or when he suggests that conceptual moves in philosophy (such as the proposal that 'sense-data are the material of which the universe is made') are less 'grammatical movements', or moves within an already-established language-game, as 'a new way of looking at things [... like] a new way of painting; or again, a new metre, or a new kind of song. —' (I 401).

What exactly am I proposing here? There are two aspects which we now examine in greater detail — the notion of *reciprocal presupposition*, and how it differs from relations of representation or signification, and the notion of the *normativity* of the order-word, its status as mechanism of normalisation.

Reciprocal presupposition is the codependence of the two levels we have been discussing — that of language-game, or collective assemblage of enunciation, and that of form of life, or machinic assemblage. The former consists in events, the latter in bodies, their actions and passions. Paradoxically, they differ in nature but are both equally material — the

¹⁰² 'In the first instance' because later in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the password, or component of passage, is given a much wider role in nonlinguistic circumstances, especially in 'Of the Refrain' (TP 310-350).

level of events inserts itself into the flows of bodies, as *incorporeal transformations* effected by speech-acts or other emissions of order-words (gestures, memos, publications, legislations, etc). The 'instantaneousness' of the incorporeal transformation is not to be taken in terms of clock-time, since its effects on the level of bodies may be staggered (for example, the discovery of an historical document that resonates in the present, connecting up moment of emission and moment of reception across history; or a 'no spitting' poster in a department store, imposing a transformation on each customer into potential spitter and/or spat-on).¹⁰³

For the purposes of this section, the point is to introduce reciprocal presupposition as an initial assumption from which the investigation proceeds: rather than separating language from the rest of behaviour, we separate the level of event (or expression) from the level of bodies (the corresponding content). As far as this goes here, the point is that the two must be examined in tandem, neither is primary or foundational.

3.4 Relativism and Mentalese

It is time to return to the question of linguistic or cultural relativism, which I take to be the thesis (often known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis) that

1. 'the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organised by our minds',

¹⁰³ '...the most obscure, seemingly trivial part of the whole puzzle appeared in a department store in Houston. It was a sign that said: "NO SMOKING. NO SPITTING. THE MGT." This replaced an earlier sign that had hung on the main showroom wall for many years, saying only "NO SMOKING. THE MGT." The change, although small, had subtle repercussions. The store catered only to the very wealthy, and this clientele did not object to being told that they could not smoke. The fire hazard, after all, was obvious. On the other hand, that bit about spitting was somehow a touch offensive [...] Resentment festered. Sales fell off. And membership in the Houston branch of God's Lightning increased [...] (The odd thing was that the Management had nothing at all to do with the sign.)' Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson, *The Illuminatus Trilogy*, New York: Dell, 1975 71-72

2. 'this means largely by the linguistic system in our minds',
3. that there is 'an agreement [to organise and classify in this way] that holds throughout our speech community', and
4. that 'we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organisation and classification of data which the agreement decrees'¹⁰⁴.

This position leads one to severe pessimism when it comes to the possibility of ever understanding or communicating with speakers of other languages, and makes the task of learning another language seem nigh-on impossible, since it would involve displacing the terms of one's own speech community, which Whorf sees as '*absolutely obligatory*'. But moreover, it *reifies* language to the godlike position of providing the very structure of our experience, indeed of being the very condition of possibility of conscious thought.

In this extreme form, the thesis is relatively easy to dismiss. Steven Pinker does a good job of dismantling the usual arguments in its favour, which tend to rely on extremely dodgy anthropological evidence (mystificatory accounts of Apache grammar, the Hopi conception of time or the astounding range of Eskimo words for snow (almost as many as can be found among professional skiers!); physiologically ignorant accounts of different languages' supposedly bizarre colour spectrums, and so on). However, he goes on to stretch our credulity a little when, in the interests of demonstrating how thought is entirely possible without any form of language, he cites the example of Idefonso, hero of Susan Schaller's *A Man Without Words*.¹⁰⁵ I quote Pinker's gloss and italicise the more blatant contradictions. Idefonso, a deaf adult who allegedly lacked 'any form of language whatsoever — no sign language, no writing, no lip reading, no speech', was

¹⁰⁴ Quotes from J.B. Carroll, ed., *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1956, cited by Steven Pinker, *The Language Instinct* (hereafter LI), London: Penguin, 1994.

¹⁰⁵ Susan Schaller, *A Man Without Words*, New York: Summit Books, 1991

a twenty-seven-year-old immigrant from a small Mexican village whom she met while working as a sign language interpreter in Los Angeles. Ildefonso's animated eyes conveyed an unmistakable intelligence and curiosity, and Schaller became his volunteer teacher and companion. He soon showed her that he had a full grasp of number: he learned to do addition on paper in three minutes and had little trouble understanding the base-ten logic behind two-digit numbers. In an epiphany reminiscent of the story of Helen Keller, Ildefonso [as opposed to "the nameless one"] grasped the principle of naming when Schaller tried to teach him the sign for "cat". A dam burst, and he *demanded* to be shown the signs for all the objects he was familiar with. Soon he was able to convey to Schaller parts of his life story: how as a child he had *begged* his desperately poor parents to send him to school, the kinds of crops he had picked in different states, his evasions of immigration authorities. He led Schaller to other languageless adults in forgotten corners of society. Despite their isolation from the verbal world, they displayed many abstract forms of thinking, like rebuilding broken locks, handling money, playing card games, and *entertaining each other with long pantomimed narratives* (LI 67-68).

Was Ildefonso really completely isolated from our 'verbal' form of life? Pinker needs him to be because he is trying to show the presence of 'Mentalese', the universal language of thought, which we each translate into our particular language/dialect/ideolect — or in the case of Ildefonso, leave untranslated. Pinker enlists Alan Turing as an ally, using his notion of the Turing Machine to show that reasoning is independent of language, and contends that

Knowing a language, then, is knowing how to translate mentalese into strings of words and vice versa. People without a language would still have mentalese, and babies and many nonhuman animals presumably have simpler dialects. Indeed, if babies did not have a mentalese to translate to and from English, it is not clear how learning English could take place, or even what learning English would mean (LI 85).

In place of this notion of mentalese, I wish to point to the zone of fledgling and larval selves discussed in the last two chapters — the continual

pandemonium of context-fixated 'judgements' that orient the organism in its world: indeed they *precede* the organism as integrated whole: it is not at all clear that non-linguistic creatures have any need of an overarching concept of self-identity, over and above the consistency of their perceptions and impulses. However, to posit an innate mental language common to all one's subselves is firstly to export an already constituted conception of language back to the origins of the subject, as if that could then serve as an explanation of language or thought. It is also to risk taking thought as representational, before the notion of representation can have taken root in the neonate's bodymind: the idea of mentalese, conceived as strings of mental tokens for things in the outside world, places the child at one remove from the world, rather than being always already immersed in it. There is undoubtedly *mediation* between self and world, but it need not be conceived of as necessarily representational. Rather, it is mediated through its multiplicity: the idea of a single integrated self surveying the world, and perhaps internally narrating its survey in vividly descriptive prose, is a *result of*, rather than any kind of explanation for, the many connections between organism and world, categorisable (at least *after* the emergence of the organism as a supplementary dimension) as impulses from within and impingements from without.

It is not necessary to appeal to mentalese in order to dispute linguistic relativism, nor is it necessary to propose linguistic relativism to dismiss the notion of mentalese. Mentalese is tantamount to the suggestion that fundamentally, all humans at least *think* in the same language, even if they often have trouble *listening* to one another. My proposal would be that even speakers of what is ostensibly the *same* language are as likely to misunderstand one another as those of different languages: in both cases, what matters as much as the tongue spoken, are questions of shared or conflicting aims and the balance of power between the speakers — their respective capacities to coerce or willingness to cooperate. This is not to do with their having equivalent capacities to

represent in their heads what is occurring, since on the level of the order-word, 'understanding' is irrelevant anyway, if it means anything over and above being able to reproduce the appropriate behaviours. As Wittgenstein takes pains to show, this kind of explanation is irrelevant in comparison to *descriptions of what people actually do*. The point is that there is much more at play in any interaction than simply the words that are spoken and the 'thinks' that are 'thunk.'

As regards Ildefonso, he as much as anyone else had been coercively initiated into the social whirl, and even if he did not have conventional language, he clearly had developed, of necessity no doubt, ways of surviving in amongst particular groups. The common factor between him and, say Steven Pinker, and the explanation for the empathy the latter feels for him, is due not to a common mental language representing the world identically in either head, but rather the shared *social* world, the world where one is shaped through a mixture varying degrees of coercion and encouragement — *training* — to the extent that one can achieve a degree of independence. Despite the huge differences between the situations in which Pinker and Ildefonso grew up, and despite the fact that Pinker could hear and speak, they both had to spend much of their time interacting with other people without getting beaten or killed, and neither of them needed an innate representational language to learn this fact. In any case, over and above this basic level of 'common humanity', the differences between Ildefonso and Pinker need to be emphasised — indeed, it is the vast difference between their respective economic situations that makes it extremely hard to draw anything conclusive from such a comparison!

3.5 Relativism Revisited

At the start of section 3.2, I alluded to the problem of linguistic relativism, the notion that the differences between languages and the cultures they characterise are insurmountable. I would like to propose that the present picture gets over this difficulty by giving an account of the functioning of

language which shows the impossibility of separating it from the functioning of a culture as a whole, and hence aspires to an objectivity that is not founded in 'universals of communication.' Communication is not the be-all and end-all of language, because communication is impossible without a common *form of life* — that is, a common training, resulting in compatible notions of rules and how to follow them, and the constant background threat of what might happen if you don't. The corresponding point is that language is not the be-all and end-all of culture, and hence that there are approaches open to us which, while necessarily expressed through language, point far beyond it, and indeed collapse the supposed boundary between linguistic and non-linguistic phenomena. In Wittgensteinian terms, the idea that "Language (or thought) is something unique" [...] proves to be a superstition [...] itself produced by grammatical illusions' (I 110). In Deleuze-Guattarian terms, to reify language or thought and appeal to them for answers about the nature of things, is to make them transcendent, to see them as in some way standing outside the complex interactions of machines of all kinds — social, technological, biological, physical and so on.

We can happily, therefore, reject the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of the futility of translation, arguing that a thorough enough description of linguistic *and* social practices of different cultures give as much (or as little) hope of understanding as do similar descriptions of our own. To reject this possibility would be to reify language, ascribing to it powers way beyond its actual capabilities. Nor would accepting this stance entail an appeal to a universal human nature or any other homogenising notion — instead, schizoanalysis sets about differentiating the different machines at work, looking for the ways they vary independently yet mutually presuppose one another, without ever coming to rest on a single founding principle (such as Language, Being, Man, Spirit or God).

In place of such a foundation is an armoury of material relations, an open-ended series of concepts which can be applied or ignored as the

investigation dictates. The key notion in what we have been talking about is *double articulation*, the separation of material flows (of bodies, events, signs) into two reciprocally-presupposing levels. I have suggested that Wittgenstein's terms 'language-game' and 'form of life' designate the double articulations of the social machine, which Deleuze-Guattari call respectively the collective and machinic assemblages. On either side, two opposing tendencies can be observed, that towards stability and regularity, and that towards creation and change. In Wittgensteinian terms, the former would be speech-actions in accordance with Grammar — unproblematic and smooth social functioning — while the latter is seen in his many examples of failure to apply rules correctly, of attempts to misuse language (such as attempting to *mean* 'The weather will change' by *saying* 'a b c d'). He often seems to be presenting these possibilities (or impossibilities) as disturbing, strange, uncannily counterintuitive notions, yet by emphasising their ever-present possibility he once again shifts our focus away from isolated intra-linguistic problems to the complex and inseparable threads of language, thought and social behaviour — which are themselves inseparable from our nature as disciplined, docilised subjects of control. Perhaps *this* is the common state of humanity, as Wittgenstein suggests, when he writes

Suppose you came as an explorer into an unknown country with a language quite strange to you. In what circumstances would you say that the people there gave orders, understood them, obeyed them, rebelled against them and so on? The common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language (I, 206).

3.6 Conclusion: Creativity and a People

In conclusion, while the differences in their respective views of the role of philosophy must remain insurmountable, we can nonetheless see in both Wittgenstein and Deleuze-Guattari the insistence on tackling in a non-reductive fashion the whole field of social practice, the changing field of discipline and training that produces and sustains it, and the possibilities for creation, disruption and anomaly it produces in spite of itself. If we

have shown that this approach gets out of linguistic relativism, does it have anything to say about non-humans? Is it limited in scope to human language-users, allowing *a priori* rejections, like Gaita's, of, for example, the possibility of thinking, conversing robots? I would argue no, since to be a language-user, to be a human, *already presupposes* the social machinery we have been discussing. If you are a participating member in a group of humans, if you have learned strategies enough to avoid getting beaten or killed, you are to all intents and purposes human. If, however, you somehow manage to change this social machinery, or discover completely new forms, you are no longer concerned with the human as we know it — but you are still 'schizoanalysing': investigating the *nature, formation and functioning* of all the different machines and their dual tendencies — restrictive, habitual, stabilising, and disruptive, explosive, revolutionary — yet without raising any one above the rest as first cause or prime mover. The aim is that of demonstrating the possibilities for invention and intervention that accompany the recognition that there is nothing standing apart from the contingencies of our social practices and the resulting understanding of ourselves they produce, that grounds them as eternal or immutable. If we change our practices we change ourselves, and change what it is to be human.

What we most lack is a belief in the world, we've quite lost the world, it's been taken from us. If you believe in the world, you precipitate events, however inconspicuous, that elude control, you engender new space-times, however small in their surface and volume [...] Our ability to resist control, or our submission to it, has to be assessed at the level of our every move. We need both creativity *and* a people.¹⁰⁶

Our discussion has led us back to the notion with which we began (Section 1.1) — the existence of two tendencies, that of stability, regularity and control, and that of creation, change and disruption. What is the status of these tendencies, and can they be shown to be fundamental?

¹⁰⁶ Deleuze, in conversation with Toni Negri, N 176

This raises the question of Deleuze-Guattari's method of *stratoanalysis*, the point of which is to examine the contingencies of matter and life, on the basis of a complex materialism which refuses an *a priori* distinction between the behaviour of humans, that of animals, and that of organic and inorganic processes. This is not to propose a universal homogeneity of the interactions of material processes — some ludicrously simplistic cosmic reductionism — but instead to recast our investigation of language in terms of layer after layer of immense complexity where the primary terms are no longer human subjects and their conscious needs and desires.

As we have seen, the purpose of the analysis is to strip out transcendencies, terms such as 'human' and 'language' which remain unchallenged or uncritiqued throughout the investigation. Instead, we are reaching for a 'bottom-up' approach which tries to keep in view both the pandemonium of low-level interactions and the emergent, high-level controls and regularities that are exhibited by the most complex systems. Such an analysis cannot proceed without its interests being declared from the outset; it is a philosophical or ethical enterprise and not a scientific one; its targets are dictated not by the determinacy of some sort of scientific objectivity but by an interest in transforming our notions of language and the human, of opening up the paths closed off by traditional approaches, of increasing our powers and potentials, the possibilities of creation, of a *people*.

This last term is to be emphasised on the basis of the social conception of language elucidated above. The weight of our common sense assumptions about subjects and their signs can be dissolved by due attention to collectivities, both extant and potential, possible and impossible. Language, we have argued, is always already public and social; each enunciation is the product of a collectivity, and only secondarily is it attributable to a single individual. While on one level it could be seen as nothing more than a distinction in points of view —

whether collective or individual is seen as primary, or whether the collective is universal or relative, global or local — it should become apparent that if the account is successful it will show the standpoint of the individual to be a small subset of the interactions of collectivities, and that the shifting constellations of these collectivities produce an unlimited range of possible individuations.

4. Deconstruction and Schizopragmatics¹⁰⁷

4.0 Introduction

Having in the last chapter illustrated some connections between Deleuze-Guattari and Wittgenstein, and in the process filling out our pragmatic approach to language, I now continue this process by contriving a confrontation of sorts between Deleuze-Guattari and Derrida. I will begin with a sketch comparing the respective approaches of Derrida and Deleuze-Guattari, to make at least some of my prejudices and preconceptions apparent at the outset, before attempting an analysis of the role of Austin's speech acts in either corpus. The main focus of this analysis will be to show how Deleuze-Guattari escape the deconstructive deadlock and attempt to *do something*.¹⁰⁸ In so doing, the analysis will argue that Derrida's approach — for example, how he might respond to the previous sentence (grist enough for one or two small volumes there, surely) — could be said to be a 'restricted economy', in comparison to the more 'general economy' proposed by Deleuze-Guattari.¹⁰⁹ A second aim

¹⁰⁷ By 'schizopragmatics' I coin a term to designate Deleuze-Guattarian practice. Rhizomatics, stratoanalysis, schizoanalysis, material semiotics, pragmatics would also have done.

¹⁰⁸ The deadlock which, for example, if 'allowed to' infect one's writing organs, prevents the completion of any sentence without the insertion of multiple qualifying parentheses, scare quotes and footnotes — a fine but infuriating testimony to Derrida's uncanny, mortal rigour.

¹⁰⁹ I refer here to Derrida's essay 'From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism Without Reserve' in *Writing and Difference*, tr. Alan Bass, London: Routledge, 1993, in which Derrida examines the problem of escaping Hegel's *Aufhebung*, the move by which any contrary philosophical move is reincorporated into the progressive movement of the dialectic. An adequate discussion of the foregoing suggestion, i.e. that Derrida himself remains within a kind of restricted economy, will only be carried out elliptically in the present essay, the explicit examination in *economical* terms being postponed for the time being. See, for some remarks on Derrida's relation to Hegel, fn113 below.

will be to show how, nonetheless, many of Derrida's conceptual innovations are consistent in certain ways with those of Deleuze-Guattari, and how an account of such connections is useful for our broader discussion of Deleuze-Guattari. I do not disagree with the arguments Derrida presents, but my position is that he does not go nearly far enough.

4.1 Differences in Method

The '*general strategy*' of deconstruction, writes Derrida, is 'to avoid both simply *neutralizing* the binary oppositions within metaphysics and simply *residing* within the closed field of these oppositions, thereby confirming it'.¹¹⁰ It is thus a 'double science', consisting in the critical project of 'overturning' metaphysics' binaries, and the positive project of enacting a 'double [or multiple] writing'. Derrida's cautionary tone as regards the critical move is reminiscent of Deleuze-Guattari's circumspection in *A Thousand Plateaus*.¹¹¹ To deconstruct is to

overturn the hierarchy at a given moment. To overlook this phase of overturning is to forget the conflictual and subordinating structure of opposition. Therefore, one might proceed too quickly to a *neutralization* that *in practice* would leave the previous field untouched, leaving one no hold on the previous opposition, thereby preventing any means of *intervening* in the field effectively (P 41).

The positive move involves the emergence of a new "concept" (or "word", where the meanings of 'concept' and 'word' have subtly changed) — a "concept" that cannot be assimilated by the old regime. For example,

¹¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (hereafter P), tr. Alan Bass, London: Athlone, 1981: 41.

¹¹¹ Examples of Deleuze-Guattari's circumspection are the dire warnings about 'the line of flight crossing the wall, getting out of the black holes, but instead of connecting with other lines and each time augmenting its valence, *turning to destruction, abolition pure and simple, the passion of abolition*' (TP 229). Despite similarity of sentiment, the difference in style/content of the analysis is staggering — clearly there is more at stake here than the danger of languishing within metaphysics.

Derrida's expanded and transformed "concept" of 'writing' (to which we will return), which

simultaneously provokes the overturning of the hierarchy speech/writing, and the entire system attached to it, *and* releases the dissonance of writing within speech, thereby disorganising the entire inherited order and invading the entire field (P 42).

This is, for the most part, a completely different philosophical approach from that of Deleuze-Guattari's schizoanalysis, as evinced by the contrast between their respective styles and subject matter. In practice, this means that while Derrida will focus on a small set of specific texts in each work, often only one at a time, and from these draw sweeping but inconclusive conclusions about the whole Western metaphysical tradition (which for him is intrinsically linked to problems in 'everyday language'¹¹²), Deleuze-Guattari will cover a massive range of cross-disciplinary sources and draw sweeping but ambivalent conclusions about the Cosmos itself (see 'Concrete Rules and Abstract Machines', the conclusion to *A Thousand Plateaus*). Both are doing something new with (and to) philosophy. Derrida is its self-styled outside, enacting the "confrontation" (that may never actually happen) 'between *the* tradition and its other, an other that is not even "its" other any longer'.¹¹³ His approach is often joyful and light

¹¹² 'Now, "everyday language" is not innocent or neutral. It is the language of Western metaphysics, and it carries with it not only a considerable number of presuppositions of all types, but also presuppositions inseparable from metaphysics, which, although little attended to, are knotted into a system' (P 19). This use of 'presuppositions' by Derrida corresponds to Deleuze-Guattari's use of 'order-word'.

¹¹³ Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993 (hereafter *Ltd*): 71 — this quotation refers specifically to the relation between deconstruction as practised by Derrida himself and the speech act theory of Austin and Searle, but can be broadened out following Derrida's remark that Austin and Searle proceed in the same way as '[a]ll metaphysicians, from Plato to Rousseau, Descartes to Husserl' (*Ltd* 93). The common structure to the thought of each of the above — simply, the derivation of deprivileged terms from their prioritised, idealised opposites (impure

(brimming with puns and irony) but is nevertheless permeated with the painstaking gravity of its relation — as the *Aufhebung* that is not an *Aufhebung*¹¹⁴ — to Western Philosophy.¹¹⁵ The interminability of the deconstructive process (at least from the point of view, perhaps astoundingly naïve, from which *other* paths are possible) seems to lock its progenitor (and much of the disparate ‘school’ he has engendered) into a certain neutered agnosticism.

Deleuze-Guattari, on the other hand, are ‘pop analysts’ (TP 24), explicitly concerned with writing for the short- as opposed to long-term memory (TP 15-16). In ‘The Geology of Morals’, they adopt as spokesman Professor Challenger, readily graspable as a caricature of “themselves” — not only is his relation to any particular extant discipline decidedly shady (‘the professor was not a geologist or a biologist, he was not even a linguist, ethnologist or psychoanalyst; what his speciality had been was long since forgotten’ (TP 42-43)) and effectively bicephalous (he ‘was double, articulated twice [...] people never knew which of him was present’ (TP 43)), he also shared Deleuze’s predilection (N 6) for an intimate but unorthodox relation to the ‘authorities he appealed to’: ‘The professor cynically congratulated himself on taking his pleasure from behind, but the offspring always turned out to be runts and wens, bits and pieces, if not

from pure, evil from good and so on) — is described by Derrida as ‘*the metaphysical exigency*’ (Ltd 93).

¹¹⁴ Hegel’s *Aufhebung*, the move by which everything is profitable for the speculative economy of the dialectic, endowed with meaning through a simultaneous negation/raising up (*Aufhebung*). Derrida translates this as *la relève*, from the verb *relever*, meaning both ‘lift up’ but also relieve, relay — thereby injecting a splash of *différance* to transform the concept. We will return to this move below.

¹¹⁵ the inseparability of these two aspects of Derrida’s strategy serves itself to deconstruct the distinction between ‘play’ and ‘rigour’ — or ‘serious’ and ‘nonserious’, about which more below — preferring to ask of his critics, ‘On what basis is such a distinction being made?’ Christopher Johnson, *Matrix and Line: System and Writing in the Philosophy of Jacques Derrida*, Cambridge University Press 1993: 203)

stupid vulgarisations' (TP 42)¹¹⁶. There is more to this than jokey self-deprecation. In laying things out thus, Deleuze-Guattari make a 'virtue' of everything that differentiates their projects from the logocentric, onto-theological approach with which Derrida remains locked in conflict — and thus, arguably, achieve a more positive movement than Derrida's resolutely critical endeavours. 'Even in the realm of theory, especially in the realm of theory, any precarious and pragmatic framework is better than tracing concepts, with their breaks and progress changing nothing' (TP 24). By way of contrast, consider Derrida's self-restricting announcement that 'we are not concerned with comparing the content of doctrines, the wealth of positive knowledge; *we are concerned, rather, with discerning the repetition or permanence at a profound level of discourse, of certain fundamental schemes and of certain directive concepts*'.¹¹⁷

To pre-empt the fuller discussion that must follow (but only in part in the present thesis) about the relation between deconstruction and schizopragnatics, one which tentatively awaits the long-rumoured book on Deleuze by Derrida, let me suggest a simplistic version of that relation. Derrida limits himself to talking about what in Deleuze-Guattari's terms is the level of expression, and never reaches its necessary interrelation (double articulation) with the level of content. In their account of the Strata (TP 39-74), Deleuze-Guattari show the futility of analysing one without the other, of succumbing to the illusion that everything is in some sense linguistic (and for this we could read 'writing' in Derrida's sense¹¹⁸) is 'the illusion that one can grasp and shuffle all the strata between one's pincers' (TP 65) — which misses the real, categorical differences, both among the systems of signs belonging to different strata, and between the

¹¹⁶ We will examine the content of Professor Challenger's lecture in Section 5.3 below.

¹¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (hereafter MP), tr. Alan Bass, Brighton: Harvester Press 1982: 153, my emphasis.

¹¹⁸ though of course Derrida's sense of writing is, as I will show, non- or super-linguistic — rendering this formulation highly provisional.

two levels of each stratum (content and expression — which, as we will show in Chapter 6, are not to be confused with signifier/signified!).

4.2 'Writing' and 'Indirect Discourse'

Before launching into the illocutionary, I will examine Derrida's "concept" of 'writing', in order to point to certain correspondences between it and the primacy of the notion of 'indirect discourse' in Deleuze-Guattari's account of language, *en route* touching on the problematic role of the sign in either approach.

In 'Signature Event Context' (Sec)¹¹⁹ Derrida begins by restoring the polysemic¹²⁰ value of the word 'communication', arguing that to assume it can be ascribed a '*proper* or *primitive*' meaning — whether this is a semantically or semiotically orientated definition, e.g. 'the vehicle, transport or site of passage of a *meaning*, and of a meaning that is *one*', or alternatively a nonsemiotic definition, e.g. 'the transmission of a shock, tremor or force' — is inadmissible. This is because, given that we are already dealing with the communication of notions of communication, and the meaning of notions of meaning, there is no foundation on which we can complacently rest our analysis — the very concepts we are appealing to in using language, in *writing*, at all, are undergoing transformation. For example, to suggest that either of the above definitions of 'communication'

¹¹⁹ Published both in *MP* and *Ltd*

¹²⁰ Part of the aim of *Sec* is to distinguish between polysemia (the irreducible multitude of meanings of any given word) and dissemination ('which is also the concept of writing' (MP 316) which Derrida is presenting in *Sec* — see below), undermining the common criticism of Derrida that he simply ends up with an unhelpful notion of 'the free play of signification', where 'anything goes', any word can mean anything. Strangely, however, Derrida *almost* (barring scare quotes) seems later to re-equate the two, when he says of Austin's account of context that 'No remainder ['escapes the present totalization'], whether in the definition of the requisite conventions, or the internal and linguistic content, or the grammatical form or semantic determination of the words used; no irreducible polysemia, that is no "dissemination" escaping the horizon of the unity of meaning' (MP 322).

is primary and that the other stems from its metaphorical application elsewhere, *presupposes* some notion or other of transport or transmission as that which is 'constitutive of the very concept of metaphor' (MP 309-310).¹²¹

With this in mind, Derrida tries to get at that which is constitutive of writing, namely *iterability*, or the inherent possibility of repetition-transformation, that belongs to every system of marks or 'graphemes'. Writing is classically defined as that which inscribes a mark or series of marks, each of which is 'not exhausted in the present of its inscription, and which can give rise to an iteration both in the absence of and beyond the presence of the empirically determined subject who, in a given context, has emitted or produced it' (MP 317). It is part of 'the very structure of the written' that 'a written sign carries with it a force of breaking with its context' — that is, the written sign, or the mark in general, has an *inherent legibility*, 'by virtue of its essential iterability', which is in no way tied to its 'original' meaning, the writer's intention, or indeed anything that belongs purely to the context of the inscription (ibid). Derrida thus distinguishes this context-independent functionality of the sign, the possibility that it can always be *grafted* into other chains of signs, from its (now severely circumscribed) capacity for communication.

This structural possibility of being severed from its referent or signified (and therefore from communication and its context) seems to me to make of every mark, even if oral, a grapheme in general, that is, as we have seen, the nonpresent *remaining* of a differential mark cut off from its alleged "production" or origin. And I will extend this law even to all

¹²¹ Derrida similarly problematises the three notions of the title ('Signature Event Context') and is bemused when Searle, in his response to that essay entitled 'Reiterating the Differences', fails to broach the subject of a single one of them, and proceeds to rely (in his discussion of speech acts and where Derrida misinterpreted Austin) on such concepts as they were before Derrida got his hands on them (*Ltd* 46).

"experience" in general, if it is granted that there is no experience of *pure* presence, but only chains of differential marks' (MP 318).¹²²

The 'sign' for Derrida is no longer composed of a relation of signifier and any kind of determined signified. He takes Saussure's injunction that the sign is determined by its difference from all other signs to its extreme — inserting difference (or rather *différance*, whose crucial aspect here is that it is not to be conceived negatively, but rather positively or productively) into the structure of the sign itself, the possibility of repetition-difference or iterability that belongs to the sign *qua* sign. This is to say, having abandoned any ideal notion of 'pure presence', the sign is a sign because of this capacity to be differentiated from itself through repetition. Thus whether or not it remains tied to a particular signified, or tied to any signified at all, is undecidable in advance. Having transformed the notion of the sign in this way, Derrida finds its application is unlimited: *the thing itself is a sign*.

Henry Staten in his fascinating study *Wittgenstein and Derrida*¹²³ argues that this move, contrary to the accounts of many of Derrida's critics (and followers), does not amount to saying that

"there isn't really any 'thing in itself'; nor does it mean 'the thing is really all in your mind'; nor 'there are really only words — we can't get outside of words.'" Instead, 'it means approximately this: "Let us consider the experience of what we call 'things themselves' as structured more like the presence of signs than like the experience of an idealized 'full presence'" (WD 58).

Earlier in his argument, Staten states that 'The deconstructive critique of language could even be phrased as a *denial that there is language*' — or

¹²² It is 'within' such a "concept" of writing that Derrida introduces his far-reaching but 'discreet graphic intervention' (MP 9), that which is neither word nor concept, *différance* — for which any pithy gloss would be merely facetious.

¹²³ Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (hereafter WD), Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985

rather, 'a denial that there is any *boundary of essence* between what we call language and what we think of as nonlanguage' (WD 20-21). But in broadening writing and the sign in this way, and correspondingly deprivileging language (as understood by linguistics for example), can it seriously be claimed that Derrida leaves us with anything other than a linguistic metaphor that encompasses everything, with nothing but severely underdetermined signifiers circulating around from chain to chain? Staten's formulation above suggests this metaphoricity, as well as a (perhaps irreducible) phenomenological orientation:

"Let us consider the *experience* of what we call 'things themselves' as structured more *like* the presence of signs than *like* the *experience* of an idealized 'full presence'" (WD 58, my emphasis).

There are two responses I wish to present to this reading — intra- and extra-Derridean respectively. Derrida's aforementioned gesture towards the problem of metaphor in *Sec* could be developed as either a defence or a critique of Staten's formulation, both making the same point: to complain about metaphoricity as a literary or stylistic technique as opposed to a suitably philosophical one is to rely on uninterrogated oppositions such as literal/metaphorical or philosophical/literary that Derrida would not countenance. Thus in defence of Staten, we could say that the power of the '*like*' in his formulation is as good a way as any to approach the account being presented, it is simply more explicit about the non-literal, impure, underdetermined relation to its object that *must* belong to it as writing. Alternatively, and to Staten's cost, we could complain that he is inaccurately — or let us say, unhelpfully — reinserting Derrida's thesis into the economy of 'mere' metaphor with which Derrida has already had done.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ I am more convinced by the first option — though either would seem to make the point at hand.

A second response, and one more central, if not to this chapter then to the thesis of which it forms part, is the possibility of a connection with Deleuze-Guattari. I have proposed that there are important convergences; this is in spite of the many passages in the work of the latter that are directed against any linguisticisation or semiologisation of reality that are symptomatic of many Derridean approaches: for example, in 'The Geology of Morals' where they talk of the twin dangers of 'the imperialism of language affecting all of the strata', and 'the imperialism of the signifier affecting language itself, affecting all regimes of signs, and the entire expanse of the strata on which they are located' (TP 65). The question of the sign, and the ways in which Deleuze-Guattari wish to retain but circumscribe its usage (limiting it to 'signs of deterritorialization and reterritorialization', and thus applicable to asignifying instances as well as signifying ones (TP 67-68)) will be raised in Chapter 5. The current proposal is that Derrida's account can be read as compatible with that of Deleuze-Guattari (in that it releases the sign from signification), and the extent to which it describes *signification* is the extent to which it is also critical of it.

What if we were to assume that, by 'writing', Derrida had in mind the same notion that Deleuze-Guattari designate by 'indirect discourse'?¹²⁵

¹²⁵ The key quotations in this respect are: 'the "first" language, or rather, the first determination of language, is [...] *indirect discourse*' (TP 76-77). 'If language seems to presuppose itself, if we cannot assign it a prelinguistic point of departure, it is because language does not operate between something seen (or felt) and something said, but always goes from saying to saying. We believe that narrative consists not in communicating what one has seen but in transmitting what one has heard, what someone else said to you. Hearsay.' (TP 76) 'Indirect discourse is the presence of a reported statement within the reporting statement, the presence of an order-word within the word. Language in its entirety is indirect discourse. Indirect discourse in no way supposes direct discourse; rather, the latter is extracted from the former, to the extent that the operations of signifiacance and proceedings of subjectification in an assemblage are distributed, attributed and assigned, or that the variables of the assemblage enter into constant relations, however temporarily ...' (TP 84)

There are two directions to which such a move lends itself, either towards Derrida (thus making Deleuze-Guattari's account of language, of order-words, stretch out across all the strata in some way, relating every sign, signifying or not, to the 'implicit presupposition' of the order-word: such a move could be made to insert Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense* (in which 'sense' is presented as just this implicit presupposition that constitutes particular signs and subjects) into the Cosmic materialism of *A Thousand Plateaus*) or else towards Deleuze-Guattari (where Derrida's 'writing' is instead taken to relate only to the level of expression on the alloplastic or cultural stratum). This choice depends on one's interests, and there are strong arguments for moving in either direction. The former movement returns us to the idea (introduced in Section 1.2) of matter itself 'stating' and solving problems, with human writing as a subset of this all-encompassing view. The latter move has the advantage of focusing the discussion on the tangible level of the human. However, let us leave aside this discussion and return to the more concrete and less fantastically speculative notion of the speech act.

4.3 Austin and the Illocutionary

In this section and the next, I will draw some connections and divergences between Deleuze-Guattari and Derrida, showing the extent to which either account connects with and surpasses the speech act theory of J L Austin. As far as Deleuze-Guattari are concerned, Austin is a valuable stepping stone in their critique of the 'Postulates of Linguistics' (TP 75-110), and the setting up of their pragmatics. By opening up the zone of the illocutionary, Austin has tied language to action: words are primarily something one *does things with* — and communication of information is but a tiny subset of all the things one can do.¹²⁶ However for Deleuze-

¹²⁶ The performance of an illocutionary act is, writes Austin, 'performance of an act *in* saying something as opposed to performance of an act *of* saying something' (*Words* 99-100), though all explicit *locutionary* acts (acts *of* saying something: asking a question, giving a warning, pronouncing sentence, etc) also fall into this broader category of the *illocutionary* (*Words* 98).

Guattari (and in a less extensive way for Derrida) the status of the 'one' (or 'many') doing things with words changes radically. Language can only be defined as 'the set of all order-words, implicit presuppositions, or speech acts current in a language at a given moment' (TP 79). The move cannot be from identity (of speakers and intentions, of signifiers and signifieds, of words and things), to speech acts (the successful utilisation of these relations in order to inform, communicate or otherwise act). For Deleuze-Guattari, the signification required by information-transmission and the subjects in communication both presuppose or 'depend on the nature and transmission of order-words in a given social field' (ibid). What, then, becomes of speech acts as we knew them? We must backtrack and examine the Derridean route.

Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, for Derrida, marks a Nietzschean moment in English philosophy:

Austin had to free the analysis of the performative from the authority of the *value of truth*, from the opposition true/false, at least in its classical form, occasionally substituting for it the value of force, of difference of force (*illocutionary or perlocutionary force*) (MP 322).

As Derrida shows (both in *Sec* and at considerably greater length in *Limited Inc*), however, Austin reintroduces precisely this distinction in his initial move of bracketing off all 'unhappy' or 'infelicitous' speech acts as being 'parasitic' on the paradigmatic cases of those which are deemed happy or felicitous. To qualify for the latter honour, you must first be in no doubt as to your own intentions in performing the act; you must succeed fully and totally in the articulation of these intentions; said articulation must therefore be the pure coincidence of you-the-speaker's words and intentions (there must be no element of 'merely acting' — i.e. *citing* the words without *really meaning* them, all the way down — or any other kind of deviation from good sense and gravity); those to whom they are directed must share your language and conventions of behaviour; they must hear your enunciation clearly and with no margin for

misunderstanding or confusion; they must then act precisely according to what is appropriate and do so *because* of your enunciation and not for any other reason... (these criteria must proliferate until all possible errors or impediments to the success of the act are removed). Austin admits that such a pure instance of a speech act may never actually exist, but nevertheless takes this idealised case as the model from which all our everyday, messy and otherwise unhappy speech acts are derived.

John Searle, in his *Reply to Derrida* (itself quoted in total by Derrida in his response, 'Limited Inc a b c...' (*Ltd*)) insists that this is a straightforward strategic move on Austin's part which does not involve any kind of evaluation of the differing degrees of felicitousness in speech acts, nor any kind of ontological prioritising of the model over its copies — but as Derrida convincingly shows, this defence is untenable. Austin and Searle both require this idealisation of speech acts for their analyses to get off the ground in the first place, since neither wants to accept or even consider Derrida's moves as will shortly be described, since they would seem to preclude any possibility of a science, philosophy or pragmatics of speech acts as Austin and Searle have formulated them.

For Derrida, Austin's illegitimate move, his lapse back into ontotheological metaphysics, is the move of setting the ideal instance up as that against which all imperfect instances are measured. Derrida employs his characteristic technique of turning the author's words against himself — in this case, Austin's allowance that error or infelicity, while incidental to the ideal model, is nonetheless a latent possibility within any performative (MP 323, *Words* 18-19).

Derrida deconstructs the notion that statements proceed or function through identity (whether identity of words and intention, or of words and things). Rather, he argues, this posited, ideal identity is permeated by the essential, immanent possibility of error, abuse or 'infelicity'. Therefore, if there can be a theory of speech acts at all, it cannot proceed on the basis

of such an unattainable ideal, without a) presupposing a fundamentally inaccurate model of how language works (where the ideal has to be the rule rather than the impossible exception); b) having to admit its interminability — in *Ltd*, Derrida argues that the ‘set’ of papers which constitute this “particular debate” necessarily remains open, as each new instalment will itself be subject to the application and re-application of all the questions and categories accredited by the theory of speech acts,

whether or not they are performatives, in what measure and aspect they depend upon the per- or illocutionary, whether they are serious or not, normal or not, void or not, parasitic or not, fictional or not, citational or not, literary, philosophical, theatrical, oratorical, prophetic or not, etc. (*Ltd* 39);

and therefore c) remaining subject to speech act theory’s ‘fundamentally moralistic’ presuppositions (*ibid.*).

This last point Derrida applies to Foucault’s archaeology (in ‘To Have the Ear of Philosophy’, a conversation with Lucette Finas, cited in *Ltd* 108, note 1), and given the ties between Foucault’s archaeology (specifically, his account of the ‘statement’) and Deleuze-Guattari’s appropriation of Austin, the same issue can be raised in relation to *A Thousand Plateaus*.¹²⁷ To what extent is the notion of the order-word, as illocutionary act, infected with Austin’s moralism? Is a pragmatics of the order-word inevitably moralistic? Or, do Deleuze-Guattari depend on aspects of speech act theory that Derrida has blown out of the water?

4.4 The Order-Word

What exactly is the order-word? We need to tease apart the various elements of Deleuze-Guattari’s analysis — simultaneously flagging the correspondences with deconstruction. The order-word emerges in their attack on the presuppositions of linguistics (their headings to the four

¹²⁷ Derrida, Jacques: ‘Avoir l’oreille de la philosophie’, a conversation with Lucette Finas *Ecarts, Quatre essais à propos de Jacques Derrida*, Paris, 1973

sections of the chapter 'Postulates of Linguistics' in *A Thousand Plateaus*), i.e.:

- I. "Language is Informational and Communicational" (TP 75)
- II. "There Is an Abstract Machine of Language That Does Not Appeal to Any 'Extrinsic' Factor" (TP 85)
- III. "There Are Constants or Universals of Language That Enable Us to Define It as a Homogeneous System" (TP 93)
- IV. "Language Can Be Scientifically Studied Only under the Conditions of a Standard or Major Language" (TP 101)

'Postulates of Linguistics' is a circle, its four sections (corresponding to the four postulates above) tracing a path through the following stages: I. the introduction of key concepts (order-word, indirect discourse, incorporeal transformation and collective assemblage of enunciation, which presents the pragmatics of the order-word (as an aspect of language's intrinsic continuous variation/relation to the outside) as prior to syntax and semantics, and as prior to any reified notions of information or communication); II. the situating of the collective assemblage of enunciation as always tied to a particular machinic assemblage of bodies, where the latter (as bodies, their actions and passions) are distinguished from the former (incorporeal transformations, redundant complexes of statement and act that are attributed to or inserted instantaneously into the realm of bodies) — they thus enact the critique of linguistics insofar as it ignores this necessary interweaving of language and life; III. the presentation of language as in continuous variation, and amongst whose variables are to be found nonlinguistic as well as linguistic factors — thus, language as a set of constants is replaced by the Abstract Machine as the set of lines of variation which are effectuated in particular Concrete Assemblages (with both machinic and collective aspects, both of which are more or less relatively deterritorialised at any given point); and finally IV. the introduction of the distinction between Major and Minor languages,

which does not distinguish between types or categories of language, but between ways of approaching the same language — i.e. from the quasi-scientific standpoint of linguistics, with its insistence on grammaticality, on syntactic and phonetic constants and so on, and the concomitant political project of legislative standardisation, or from the standpoint of indirect discourse itself, where language's intrinsic variation is encouraged, exacerbated ('making language stammer' (TP 104), becoming a foreigner in one's own tongue), everything is set in motion, and the capacity of order-words to become components of passage (passwords) is utilised. In what follows, I will trace a path through this argument that will make things more clear.

The order-word is presented as command/judgement/death sentence (TP 76) — an initial definition which shores up the key aspects of the order-word seen more generally (as the 'elementary unit of language' (TP 76)). These intertwined aspects can be summarised as follows: a) that it is the *implicit, nondiscursive presupposition* of a statement (TP 77 and 524n9), it is the illocutionary act that is in a relationship of redundancy with the statement; b) that the order-word is the effectuation (through this redundancy of statement and act) of an *instantaneous, incorporeal transformation* that is attributed to bodies; and c) that since this statement-act can only occur in certain circumstances, the order-word is noted as 'precisely that variable that makes a word an enunciation' (TP 82).

Deleuze-Guattari are rejecting the picture of words and things, signifiers and signifieds. Instead, words, even statements, are things or bodies alongside other things or bodies. What constitutes the 'superlinearity of expression',¹²⁸ however, what distinguishes the cultural or alloplastic

¹²⁸ This phrase relates to the new *form* of expression that emerges on the cultural stratum, its *temporal* linearity (as opposed to the spatial linearity of, for example, the genetic code (TP 62)). The most important feature of this temporal linearity is its facilitation of *general translatability*, not simply from language to language, but also in

stratum from the physical and biological strata, is the variability intrinsic to language that allows it (if the circumstances are right) to effect incorporeal transformations of bodies — instantaneous, immediate changes that are distinct from the incremental modifications of bodies and their actions and passions.¹²⁹ Deleuze-Guattari's examples of incorporeal transformations range from the familiar courtroom scene in which the accused becomes the convict through the judge's performative, to the 'mass-media act'¹³⁰ whereby the passengers of a hijacked plane are turned into hostages, not by the gestures of the Uzi-wielding terrorist but by the international news bulletins. The illocutionary is defined as the set (or continuum) of (possible, or rather, 'virtual-real' (TP 100)) order-words in a given society.

Do Deleuze-Guattari therefore face the problem raised by Derrida, of the felicity of speech acts? Are they dependent on a model whereby everything works out and everyone concerned is acting in good faith, in spite of the numerous cases in which, for example, hoodlums laugh in the faces of policemen, pupils intimidate teachers and politicians' insistence on 'family values' are often roundly derided by the general populace? Deleuze-Guattari raise the problem of the circumstances of the order-word in order to show that the order-word can be equated with the variation within language that makes incorporeal transformations possible — the obvious example being the distinction between any old fool shouting 'I declare a general mobilization' and the situation in which that old fool happens to have the authority to do so (TP 82). In the latter case,

the emergence of the capacity of language to *overcode* the other strata. Temporal linearity facilitates formalisation, the freeing of form from substance, allowing 'the same form to pass from one substance to another' (ibid), for instance, from chemical reactions in a lab to their reproduction in a system of signs. I will examine the issue of the formal more thoroughly in Chapters 5 and 6.

¹²⁹ In line with the previous footnote, we can consider such incorporeal transformations as a species of translation, particularly since 'all human movements, even the most violent, imply translations' (TP 63).

¹³⁰ '...in the sense in which the English speak of "speech acts"' (TP 81).

the appropriate variable has been effectuated, constituting the necessary redundancy between statement and the act in which it simultaneously consists. But what is at stake here is not a 'context' external to language. Still less is it the intentions or good faith of an individual actor. Rather, the effectuation (or not) of the appropriate variable is a function of the *collective assemblage of enunciation*, which we have encountered already as the illocutionary realm of a particular society at a given moment, the set of order-words appropriate to it, or (in a formulation that will become crucial) the particular mixtures of *regimes of signs* that are dominant.

So, rather than begin from the point of speech act theory as conceived of by Austin and Searle, where it is regarded as an innovation to consider those instances where things are being done with words, as opposed to their merely being deployed to inform or communicate, and where the general set-up of a society of free individuals whose *normal* mode is to act honestly and rationally towards one another, Deleuze-Guattari, like Derrida, start from another position entirely. For Derrida, as we have seen, what must precede any setting up of speech act theory is the whole system of writing, the notion of the sign as intrinsically iterable, and the necessary flaw or fissure this inserts into any notion of full presence — the sign as something which by its very nature is differentiated from itself is necessary before any confused individuals can set about trying to insist otherwise. For Deleuze-Guattari, instead of 'writing' we have 'indirect discourse' (see fn125 above), the movement from saying to saying of language, the many voices within a single voice, the presence in any one enunciation of all others of the same 'family' (the set of all 'I do's, of all 'Did you spill my pint?'s, of all 'This is not Philosophy!'s). On this basis, such phenomena as 'intuition', glossolalia and seances can be understood in terms of special attention to, or celebration or exploitation of this aspect of language. Every enunciation is in this way already collective, whether the population in question is that of subpersonal singularities, ('larval and fledgling selves') or of a particular minority, or

other particular spatio-temporal cross-section of the socius. *Direct* discourse is an *extraction* from this ‘anonymous murmur’ (F 18), it can only be reached via a ‘dismemberment of the collective assemblage; but the collective assemblage is always like the murmur from which I take my proper name, the constellation of voices, concordant or not, from which I draw my voice’ (TP 84).

This extraction of direct discourse from indirect discourse, and its establishment in a position of supposedly self-evident primacy, is one aspect of stratification, which proceeds through the ossification of continuous variation, of the intensive micro-variations of matters-functions on the Plane of Consistency. Deleuze-Guattari’s list of ‘linguistics’ postulates above defines the assumptions of Major language, language considered in terms of an underlying syntactic or phonetic structure (often assumed to be a structure or capacity hard-wired in the human brain), a homogeneous system with listable constants or universals, from which the everyday deviances of speech are the exception and precisely *not* the rule. To assume language ‘really is’ like this, underneath all the colloquialisms, dialects, patois and so on, as well as all the variations, inflections and idiosyncrasies in an individual’s speech depending on who she is talking to and where she is, is not simply to adopt the disinterested position of the scientist, it is to adopt a State-centred politics that must deprivilege the inherent variations in language and label them incompetent or ungrammatical:

Linguistics can claim all it wants to be nothing but a pure science — it wouldn’t be the first time that the order of pure science was used to secure the requirements of another order (TP 101).¹³¹

¹³¹ In Chapter 7, we will examine challenges to this view, as we explore issues of grammaticality, linguistic deficiency and ‘verbal hygiene’ (and also the issue of the gender of the third person pronoun).

4.5 Conclusion: Resplendent in Divergence

So far, then, we can see at least two correspondences between Derrida and Deleuze-Guattari: 1. In either case, the basic linguistic element (the sign for Derrida, the order-word for Deleuze-Guattari) has the characteristic of iterability or difference-from-itself. 2. Just as Derrida notes Austin's complicity with metaphysics in his extraction of self-present, self-identical constants (in his idealisation of actor, context and the capacity to exhaustively describe them both), Deleuze-Guattari note a corresponding complicity between linguistics' attempts to regulate and standardise language, and the State's stratic procedures for disciplining and regulating bodies. The correspondence between these otherwise very different moves can be summarised in the suggestion that Derrida's deconstruction of phallogocentrism, of onto-theological metaphysics (and of the "everyday language" that presupposes it) is (in its critical aspect) entirely consonant with Deleuze-Guattari's account of the Strata. Both wish to have done with identitarian accounts of language, whether based on unproblematised notions of signification, of notions of timeless structure, or on a sense-giving transcendental subject. For both parties, then, the theorisation of 'speech acts' on the basis of such constants will only ever be a strategic, pragmatic project, and not one that can claim exhaustive scientificity, or any other form of 'the last word'.

However, while Derrida titillates himself with page after page of the ritual humiliation of John Searle (at least in *Ltd*), Deleuze-Guattari present an account of language which, arguably, is more *practical* than that of Derrida in a number of ways.

- In ways we will explore more thoroughly in the remainder of the thesis, Deleuze-Guattari's account presents ways of understanding the relations between words and things, or rather statements-acts, and the bodies on which they intervene, *leaving signifier and signified behind*, while Derrida just keeps agonising over the irreducible psychologism of Saussure (P 23).

- This theorisation in terms of bodies and events is certainly no less pragmatic and flexible than Derrida's; indeed his suggestion that 'the thing is itself a sign' makes some kind of sense, since gestures, expressions and so on are obviously as efficacious as transmitting certain order-words as statements are, in the appropriate circumstances. Yet these circumstances are dependent on the collective assemblage of enunciation, itself in reciprocal presupposition with the machinic assemblage — and both assemblages being Concrete instantiations of a singular Abstract Machine. All this takes us a long way from the individual thing which may or may not be a sign, and demands a *diagrammatics* of the Concrete Assemblage (in terms of the arrangements of bodies on the one hand and the mixtures of regimes of signs on the other) before we can talk about individual signs: not a particularly straightforward way to proceed, but nonetheless a practical one.
- Their account of Minor Language (and the related discussions of Minor Literature¹³²) provides tentative suggestions for effectuating this setting-in-variation of language, this becoming-minoritarian: subtract the 'supplementary dimensions' of the superimposed constants of grammaticality, and saturate all the intrinsic variation — *make language stutter*.¹³³

As for the queries with which we ended section 4.3: do Deleuze-Guattari rely on a moralistically normative account of speech acts? This point is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, for Austin and Searle the ideal situation is primary, but for Deleuze-Guattari, *indirect discourse* is primary,

¹³² most notably, in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (hereafter K), tr. Dana Polan, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, a book which prefigures much of the apparatus of *A Thousand Plateaus*.

¹³³ See also 'He Stuttered' (CC 107-114), where Deleuze specifies that this 'making language as such stutter' is the creation of 'an affective and intensive language', where 'the stuttering no longer affects preexisting words, but itself introduces the words it affects; these words no longer exist independently of the stutter, which selects and links them together through itself' (CC 107).

the continua of all a society's order-words at a given point, including all their ecstatic, cheerful, indifferent, gloomy, and despairing instances, and all are virtually present in each. Deleuze-Guattari are happy for Derrida to pop up and insist that the possibility of 'infelicity' is always present whether you like it or not, since for them, this is what is great about the order-word, its redeeming feature — acting not as 'little death sentence' but as password. This capacity (the priority of indirect discourse) is what can set it in motion and give it the virtual-real capacity to rearrange things in creative new ways, through an inclusive disjunction of contrary instances and impulses. On this level at least, Derrida's account of the productivity of *différance* seems to obtain.

Secondly, Deleuze-Guattari undoubtedly have a normative slant to their account of language, consisting as it is in an attack on the 'molar' presuppositions of linguistics, as opposed to the 'molecular' linguistics of variation and transformation they propose. Yet this is strictly speaking an ethical rather than a moralising approach, as, I would argue, was that of Foucault (against whom Derrida initially made the claim), i.e. it concerns an immanent pragmatics in which the rules are subject to transformation with every move — there is no categorical imperative, or indeed any Universal laws, nor even any implicit, normative assumption of 'good' or 'common sense', or of a Normality that should be striven for.

5. Corpo-real-ising Judgement

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter we will trace two different approaches to language and judgement, the pragmatics or schizoanalysis (schizopr pragmatics for short) of Deleuze-Guattari, and the realist textualism of Horst Ruthrof.¹³⁴ Both approaches have many differences with traditional philosophical and linguistic approaches to language. Both seek to reintroduce bodies as fundamental components of any understanding of language — semantics, unless it is dealing with purely formal languages, is nothing without pragmatics. For an adequate understanding of how meanings are produced, its irreducible connection to the social, corporeal or material must be articulated, particularly if one's interests are political. While Deleuze-Guattari are more explicitly concerned with the political aspects of language, Ruthrof, in an article in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, argues that due to lingering formalist tendencies in Deleuze-Guattari, they fail to articulate an account of language that gives an adequate role to the body, hence crippling their political project and undermining their philosophical credibility.¹³⁵ I will attempt to answer this charge, in the process, articulating again the key components of Deleuze-Guattari's approach to language, which as we will see, hinges on their ambivalence towards the order-word.

After introducing Ruthrof's project as presented in his *Semantics and the Body*, I will examine his application of this approach to Deleuze-Guattari, taking the opportunity to work through *their* account, with particular reference to the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. From this I

¹³⁴ Horst Ruthrof, *Semantics and the Body: Meaning from Frege to the Postmodern* (hereafter SB), Melbourne University Press 1997

¹³⁵ Horst Ruthrof, 'Deleuze and the Body: Eluding Kafka's "Little Death Sentence"' (hereafter DB), *South Atlantic Quarterly* 96: 3, Summer 1997, 563-578

will draw some problems both with Ruthrof's reading of Deleuze-Guattari and with his project as a whole.

5.1 The Non-Semiotic Noumenon

At the heart of Ruthrof's problematic is the relationship between language, meanings and the world. Linguistics, linguistic philosophy and the philosophy of language have all neglected the non-verbal, the non-linguistic, the corporeal — namely 'sign systems (visual, tactile, olfactory, proximic, haptic, gustatory, auditory ... etc)' (SB 35). His central thesis, as expressed in the last lines of *Semantics and the Body*, is that 'For meaning to occur the non-verbal must inhabit the linguistic schema. In itself language is no more than a symbolic grid which does not mean at all' (SB 261). Earlier in the book he writes

both [empiricism and phenomenology] duck the question of how a signifiatory system such as language can be linked with something non-signifiatory. Perception, experience and world need to be translated into signs before the link can be made. Paradoxically, two philosophical traditions — one following Frege, the other Husserl — by committing themselves to opposite positions commit similar errors: the assumption of ideality in natural language meanings and of the possibility of non-signifiatory phenomena (SB 169).

It is particularly the second point ('the possibility of non-signifiatory phenomena') that relates to Ruthrof's reading of Deleuze-Guattari, in whom he finds traces of a Husserlian eideticism. I will focus on two of his claims. First, the inconceivability of asignifying signs, and second, the impossibility or at least irrelevance of formalist approaches to a 'corporeal semantics'. As regards the first, I will argue that Deleuze-Guattari succeed both in relativising the sphere of signification to a small subset of actual acts of meaning-creation, namely those associated with judgement or semiotic subjection, but a disproportionately huge part of the theorising that has accompanied, and attempted to describe, meaningful activity in general. The second point causes more problems for Deleuze-Guattari,

which we will tackle in reference to their use of the linguist Louis Hjelmslev in the next chapter.

I would like to argue that non-significatory phenomena are not impossible, nor can they only be postulated as 'a kind of non-semiotic noumenon', as Ruthrof decrees (SB 33). In fact, in arguing that appealing to non-signs is implausible or a challenge to our 'intuitive grasp of what typically goes on when meanings are being produced' (SB 33), Ruthrof shores up the underlying basis of his approach in thoroughgoing Kantian defence of common sense. Meaning, as Ruthrof argues, does not reside either in the dictionary or in language considered as a whole; it is a property of the much wider sphere of social doings. 'Let us say that social doing of any kind is regarded as either meaningful or meaningless by a community,' where the community could be 'a tiny group or the population of the planet.' This community 'knows' its world by imposing its 'significatory matrix' on it. The community can never escape this matrix of its own devising, since the very notion of an outside — an outside to the matrix of socially recognisable meaning — is indescribable. Understandably, Ruthrof writes,

for the purpose of describing meaning [...] this [non-semiotic noumenon] is of no further interest, since everything we can see, touch and talk about is available to us only in the form of signs: more or less meaningful and very rarely meaningless (SB 33).

Reference for Ruthrof is redefined in terms of intersemiotic corroboration — the coherence of different semiotics, governed on the one hand by our cultural form of life and on the other by physical laws. A kind of natural selection of cultures has ruled out all those where the accepted beliefs about the world are significantly divergent from how the world actually is, so that there are no forms of life in which drinking mercury or leaping off high buildings are seen as compatible with the preservation of life. The limits of our world are also those of our significatory matrix, writes Ruthrof, and despite his stated aims of bringing the Body back to semantics, he is

happy to restate this as the ‘semiotic extension’ of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*:¹³⁶ ‘The limits of our ‘world’ are not constituted solely by our language but by our sign systems in toto. The limits of our signs are the limits of our ‘world’ (SB 34). I would argue that this constitutes a semiotic idealism which is little improvement on the linguistic idealism that Ruthrof attacks — and what is more, it prevents him accessing bodies, their actions and passions, altogether.

5.2 Having Done with Judgement

Ruthrof, in ‘Deleuze and the Body’, writes ‘We are dealing here with a machinic pragmatics that has political effects. So we need to ask how Deleuze’s semantic politics can operate as a pragmatics *in a signficatory frame, a semiotics*’ (DB 566, my emphasis). Perhaps the reason this question (to quote Ruthrof again) ‘does not seem to have been asked in the relevant literature’ (DB 566) is that for Deleuze-Guattari, pragmatics is prior to semiotics, to signficatory frames, so in their terms at least, the question does not make sense. Clearly there are fundamental differences in Ruthrof’s and Deleuze-Guattari’s initial orientations: Ruthrof is concerned with semantics, with the sphere of human communication, whereas Deleuze-Guattari’s pragmatics, in principle, is unlimited in scope, and has applications, or rather *is* its applications, everywhere or nowhere. Yet this would not seem to explain Ruthrof’s criticisms.

The Deleuze-Guattarian critique of signification functions on (at least) two levels — firstly signification as a process or event, which they show to be exclusive to specific periods in human history, to be more about subjugation than communication or representation, and to function on the basis of transcendental illusions (though nonetheless real for all that — transcendental illusions are real processes that affect behaviour as well as belief; the two are not helpfully separated); secondly signification as a theory, whereby the signifier is shown to fail to explain anything, and is

¹³⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, tr. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974

itself in need of explanation. In short Deleuze-Guattari show that there is much more to be explored, there is much more to life as we are experiencing it now, than signs and their vicissitudes, and there is much more to signs than relations of signifier/signified. Just because Ruthrof prefaces his remark with the words 'Strictly speaking', it doesn't make it any more true that 'the only asignifying signs we have are formal signs in homosemiotic systems' (DB 567).

In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze-Guattari's target is not simply psychoanalysis, but also the fundamental notions about man as being separate from nature, and constituted necessarily as a free, responsible individual, in a certain overdetermined set of relationships with his parents, siblings, spouse and offspring. Oedipus is figured in a variety of ways in the book, as a myth perpetuated by psychoanalysis (in its attempts, for instance, to 'discover' Oedipus amongst the savages) but also as a very real structure of subjectification (the processes by which subject-positions are assigned), at once transcendental illusion and material process with very real effects. Indeed it is in their account of the emergence of Oedipus, which they demonstrate to be closely associated first with 'primitive', then despotic, and finally capitalist society, they present the origins of writing and speech, and the way signification has eaten the Cosmos. This account, 'Savages, Barbarians and Civilised Men', (*Anti-Oedipus* chapter 3) is the tale of how Man came to see himself as an isolated unit whose prime characteristics were defined by his limited freedoms, his weighty responsibilities and his wishes, beliefs and needs. Their dense account has many levels, regarding their relationship with Marxism, psychoanalysis and ethnography, but for us the key stages are: the separation of the personal from the social, the changing relationship between the written and spoken word, and the bases for a schizoanalytic approach to language.

As proposed at the end of Chapter 2, for our purposes here, *schizophrenisation* is equivalent to capitalism's process of decoding,

where old customs, authorities, institutions and so on are privatised, to become yet more business opportunities and industries, whose significance is to be discerned purely in their success in the stock market. This decoding is always accompanied by a corresponding overcoding in terms of revived archaisms, whereby their old functions in the interests of the State are resuscitated in the interests of homeostasis; kept alive as mechanisms of control and stability, despite their anachronism. This is true even of language. 'Writing has never been capitalism's thing' write Deleuze-Guattari,

Capitalism is profoundly illiterate. The death of writing is like the death of God or the death of the father: the thing was settled a long time ago, although the news of the event is slow to reach us, and there survives in us the memory of extinct signs with which we still write (AO 240).

This astonishing claim, drawing as it does on Nietzsche, stakes out the problematic in Deleuze-Guattari's assault on everyday language as a battlefield of social repression-psycho repression.¹³⁷ Grammar, in this sense, as an organising principle in language, emerged with the original coupling of speech and writing, at stage two of Deleuze-Guattari's universal history — the era of the despotic, Imperial State. They present an ironic, critical 'universal history', tracing the development from the 'savages' of the primitive territorial machine, to the 'barbarians' of the despotic State machine, to the 'civilised men' of capitalism. This account is ironic, because, as a history of sheer contingency, it nonetheless results in capitalism as a universal standpoint (yet at the same time entirely singular) from which alone it becomes possible to trace a universal history.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ 'I fear we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar', Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ* (hereafter TI), tr. R.J. Hollingdale, London: Penguin, 1990: 48

¹³⁸ Deleuze-Guattari quote Maurice Godelier — 'The West's line of development, far from being universal because it will recur everywhere, appears universal because it recurs nowhere else [...] It is typical therefore because, in its singular progress, it has

For each of the three stages, Deleuze-Guattari delimit a 'body without organs' (BwO) on which the appropriate regime of representation is played out.¹³⁹ The BwO is a polyvalent concept for Deleuze-Guattari with a variety of applications, but in each case, the BwO is what stands in the place of a notion of origin or telos, and instead, while serving as surface of the whole, is figured as one machine-part alongside the rest in a shifting constellation — a proviso which prevents interpreting the BwO as a totality or unity. The general characteristics of the BwO are that it is pure immanence, pure desire, the zero intensity upon which worlds are played out — yet one could equally say that it is produced in and by those worlds, as their limit and end. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they ask 'How Do You Make Yourself a Body without Organs?' a process that is equivalent, as we will see shortly, to *having done with the judgement of God* TP 150-151.¹⁴⁰

The three bodies without organs that correspond to the three stages of

obtained a universal result. It has furnished a practical base (industrial economy) and a theoretical conception (socialism) that permit it to leave behind, and to cause all other societies to leave behind, the most ancient and the most recent forms of exploitation of man by man [...] The authentic universality of the West's line of development lies therefore in its singularity, in its difference, not in its resemblance to the other lines of evolution' (AO 140, citing Maurice Godelier, *Sur le mode de production asiatique*, Paris: Editions Sociales, 1969). Universal history, then, retrospectively traces the contingencies that have allowed this universal viewpoint on the global decoding that industrial capitalism has performed.

¹³⁹ We have already noted the close proximity of the concept BwO to the Deleuze-Guattarian terms Abstract Machine and Plane of Consistency (see Section 2.1).

¹⁴⁰ Antonin Artaud, *To Have Done with the Judgement of God*, a radio play, in *Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag, tr. Helen Weaver, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976

universal history are the full body of the earth in territorial representation, the body of the despot in imperial representation, and finally the body of capital itself. In territorial representation, it is the full body of the earth itself that is the repressed represented of all representation — repressed because it is through the coding of all relations in terms of the socius that conceals the body of the earth and instantiates the territorial regime of the primitive socius: the earth becomes the *territory*. On this surface are played out diverse relationships of direct connotation — rituals in which bodies are marked, segments of power are maintained, social roles are reinforced — yet crucially, voice and graphism remain independent. The territorial machine does not lack writing. Such cultures are deemed oral because voice and graphism are not yet coupled, isomorphically locked in a single ‘language’ — instead, their graphic system ‘marks signs on the body that respond to the voice, react to the voice, but that are autonomous and do not align themselves on it’ (AO 202). The governing principle is that of use and function: the two levels of mark and word are connected by *the eye* that ‘evaluates the suffering caused by the graphism’ (AO 204). In what Deleuze-Guattari call the ‘magic triangle’ of ‘voice-audition, graphism-body [and] eye-pain,’ we find a ‘system of cruelty where the word itself has an essentially designating function, but where the graphism itself constitutes a sign in conjunction with the thing designated, and where the eye goes from one to the other, extracting and measuring the visibility of the one against the pain of the other’ (AO 204). From the point of view of this universal history, there is one key break in history, that diagnosed by Nietzsche in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, the arrival all-at-once of the State, bringing with it the beginnings of the modern-day subject of bad conscience and cynicism.¹⁴¹ Nietzsche writes of ‘a leap, a compulsion, a fate which nothing could ward off’, the emergence of the ‘oldest state’ ‘as a terrible tyranny, as a repressive and ruthless machinery’, which ‘continued working until the raw material of people and semi-animals had been finally not just kneaded and made

¹⁴¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On The Genealogy of Morality* (hereafter GM), tr. Carol Diethe, Cambridge University Press, 1994

compliant, but *shaped*' (GM 62-63). It is with the arrival of the despot, the conquering and enslaving of the primitive socius by the 'blond beast' (GM 25, 63), that the magic triangle is crushed: 'the voice no longer sings but dictates, decrees; the graphy no longer dances, it ceases to animate bodies, but is set into writing on tablets, stones and books; the eye sets itself to reading.' (AO 205) The key transition has been from a socius in which all the radiating networks of 'words, bodies, sufferings [...] formulas, things, affects [...] voices, graphic traces and eyes' (AO 204) are linked in relations of use and function, to a socius in which *meaning* reigns: everything must now be traced back to the despot himself. 'The triangle has become the base for a pyramid, all of whose sides cause the vocal, the graphic and the visual to converge toward the eminent unity of the despot.' (AO 205). In Nietzsche's words, within this 'structure of domination that *lives* [...] there is absolutely no room for anything which does not first acquire 'meaning' with regard to the whole' (GM 63).

In what sense does the arrival of the despot constitute 'meaning'? As I understand this transition, it is one from a situation where the chieftain of the primitive socius occupies a temporary, contingent hold on power, where the territory itself holds sway, to one where such notions as the divine right of kings or pharaohs, the instantiation of a line of rulers, whose authority is absolute — the move, say, from Earth Mother to Holy Father, the emergence of monotheism (which is not to rule out the possibility that there can be monotheistic, despotic conceptions of the Earth Mother). The network of 'polyvocal graphisms flush with the real' (AO 206) is replaced the emergence of transcendence as such. The plane of connotation, evaluation in terms of function, is superseded by the plane of subordination: instead of networks of detachable segments, a single term is detached and reified, causing a *linearisation* of the chains: this is the emergence of *writing*, a deterritorialised flow of graphisms that are infused with the 'silent voice' of the despot:

The mouth no longer speaks, it drinks the letter. The eye no longer sees, it reads. The body no longer allows itself to be engraved like the earth, but

prostrates itself before the engravings of the despot, the region beyond the earth, the new full body (AO 206).

It is necessary to be more specific about the distinction between signs in general and signifiers in Deleuze-Guattari's sense. They write: 'The signifier is the sign that has become a sign of the sign, having crossed the threshold of deterritorialisation; *the signifier is merely the deterritorialised sign itself* (AO 206). This particular deterritorialisation, or detachment from the territory, is the constitution of transcendence: the detached object or supplementary dimension on which the whole chain depends. At this point language — not signs in general, but the specific complex of voice and graphism, a writing which presupposes the voice of the despot — is born: and this is the meaning (for Deleuze-Guattari at least) of Nietzsche's 'deification' of grammar. Language, considered in terms of signification, and hence everything else that is considered in terms of signification, consists in the biunivocal relationship between a linear chain of signifiers (each signifying other signifiers) and the transcendent object (whether God, Pharaoh, Pope, phallus, Being — or even Being, absence, nothingness). 'Despotism', writes Nietzsche, 'with its subjugation of the independent nobility, always prepares the way for some sort of monotheism' (GM 66). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze-Guattari call this the regime of signification, and of it, write:

The signifier is the sign in redundancy with the sign. All signs are signs of signs. The question is not yet what a given sign signifies but to which other signs it refers, or which signs add themselves to it to form a network without beginning or end that projects its shadow onto an atmospheric continuum (TP 112).

That this is a 'funereal world of terror' (TP 113) is because *everything* has been subordinated to signification, *everything*, or *content* dissolves in the infinite network of signifiers: there is nothing but the infinite gravity of a recursive 'What does it *mean*?'

5.3 The Death Sentence

Guattari, speaking at Columbia University in 1975, describes the change of focus that he and Deleuze undertook between the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, away from a focus on psychoanalysis:

We thought the most formidable enemy was psychoanalysis because it reduced all forms of desire to a particular formation, the family. But there is another danger, of which psychoanalysis is but one point of application: it is the reduction of all modes of semiotization. What I call *semiotization* is what happens with perception, with movement in space, with singing, dancing, mimicry, caressing, contact, everything that concerns the body. All these modes of semiotization are being reduced to the dominant language, the language of power which coordinates its syntactic regulation with speech production in its totality. What one learns in school or in the university is not essentially a content or data, but a behavioural model adapted to certain social castes.¹⁴²

The story of the rise to ascendancy of 'language' (conceived of in its signifiatory aspect) — the *semiotization* of the world under the great redundant signifier — is presented in *A Thousand Plateaus* as part of a universal 'geology' to correspond to the universal history of *Anti-Oedipus*. Moving even further from a personalist account, the 'geology of morals' presents (through a bizarre lecture by the bicephalous conceptual persona of Professor Challenger) the global process of stratification. Stratoanalysis, the mapping of the transition from intensity to the extensive world, utilises stratificatory processes itself — axioms, formulae, abstract relations — to diagram these processes from the molecular to the cultural. That there is this ambiguity, in Deleuze-Guattari's (and our) complicity, or at least immersion, in the strata, is reflected by the way Professor Challenger, as he mutates and deterritorialises, gradually develops pincers, stigmata of the holy lobster.

¹⁴² Félix Guattari, *Soft Subversions* (hereafter SS), ed. Sylvère Lotringer, New York: Semiotext(e), 1996: 11

The key to stratification are the 'double pincers' of content and expression: the terms are arbitrary but the distinction is always real — yet it does not pre-exist the double articulation of the strata. You either have both content and expression, or you have neither. Deleuze-Guattari write 'we must combine all the resources of real distinction, reciprocal presupposition, and general relativism' (TP 45). What constitutes a content in relation to one plane of expression could also constitute the expression of a different content. Each plane may itself be subdivided into content and expression. Despite this relativity, the distinction is nonetheless *real*, in that although they can be isomorphic to one another (TP 108), the two planes must be capable of some degree of independent variance: if not, it makes no sense to distinguish two separate planes, and we have reached instead the level of *form and substance of content*, and *form and substance of expression*. In both cases, the *substance* (from a paradigmatic point of view) is an amorphous continuum (for example, the colour spectrum, which is chopped up differently in different languages), or (from a syntagmatic point of view) a purport — to take a linguistic example, substance of content as a particular thought, such as 'I need to go to the bathroom', and substance of expression as the *words* 'I need to go to the bathroom'. In both cases, the *form* that articulates these unformed purports into substances are dictated by the particular language in question: the form of content being 'I need to go to the bathroom' *rather than* 'Ich möchte zum Badezimmer gehen', and the form of expression being 'I need to go to the bathroom' rather than 'Far aboot's yer shunky?'

Deleuze-Guattari draw this terminology from 'the Danish Spinozist geologist' Louis Hjelmslev, who, they write, 'was able to weave a net out of the notions of *matter, content and expression, form and substance*. These were the strata, said Hjelmslev' (TP 43, referring to PTL). For Hjelmslev himself, engaged in the program of inventing Linguistic Theory as the source of metasemiotic and metasemiological analyses unlimited in scope, this net, which casts its shadow onto the amorphous continuum, is the ordering of nature according to the vast ranges of linguistic and

semiotic systems of humanity, for Deleuze-Guattari the net is *neither* 'linguistic in its scope or origin' (TP 43), and the *matter* onto which it casts its shadow is far from inert or amorphous. It is the Body without Organs:

the unformed, unorganized, nonstratified, or destratified body and all its flows: subatomic and submolecular particles, pure intensities, preital and prephysical free singularities (TP 43).

Here the BwO, the full body of the earth, is the Plane of Consistency — on whose surface the strata of Hjelmslev's net congeal, fold upon one another and ossify.

Deleuze-Guattari's use Hjelmslev's formal resources in ways which, as we will explore in the next chapter, elude Ruthrof's criticisms. *Form* is to be understood in terms of Deleuze-Guattari's notion of abstraction. Forms of content and expression are statistical regularities with only relative stability and porous boundaries. They are completely dependent on the populations, packs, multiplicities, who are the 'subjects' of particular strata (TP 54). Whether we are talking geologically, biologically or socially, it is never a case of autonomous forms being imposed on inert matter. Intensive immanence is not homogeneous sludge, it is already fully differentiated. As we saw in Chapter 1, intensity *is* difference, it does not change in degree without also changing in kind. The appearance of formed substances in the strata is a result of their foldings, their selection of the more homeostatic organisations, so that regularities and correspondences are amplified through the machinery, generating localised areas of stability, and giving the illusion of a pre-existing natural order.

Formal transformation is possible in the material world, if we conceive of form in this way, as an aspect of virtual — incorporeal, yet fully material — processes, acting on and through stratified assemblages. What constitutes 'incorporeal transformation' can be conceived both as the instantaneous crossing of a threshold (resulting, for example, in the

switching in a chemical clock) or as change imposed on a multiplicity from *outside*, from an exterior milieu. Deleuze-Guattari's view of language, of which for them the basic determination is the *order-word*, is in terms primarily of such switching. The two aspects of stratified social assemblages, corresponding to content and expression, are the machinic assemblages of bodies, and the collective assemblages of enunciation. The emission of order-words by collective assemblages can be speech acts, but equally be mere gestures, the issuing of memos, the presentation of university degrees, passing of sentence, even (in certain circumstances) tacitly assenting in conversation — in each case a judgement has been performed, an instantaneous insertion into the flows of bodies (content) has been made from the deterritorialised flows of social signs (expression), causing a sudden shift in the relative relations of forces that may be anything from barely perceptible to catastrophic.

That language is not primarily about information or communication for Deleuze-Guattari is clear — rather, what we saw earlier in terms of the redundancy of signification also applies to the order-word: commands are not interested in conveying an understanding; they are miniature death sentences, little 'stings' to use Elias Canetti's term (CP 351), which lodge in us until we can pass them on to someone else. And we all have massive investments in these controls, for if you play by their rules, accept willingly the stings from those higher up the structure and happily pass them on to those below, you will go far, my son. To summon up Nietzsche once again: in *Human, all too Human*, he writes,

In social dialogue, three-quarters of all questions and answers are framed in order to hurt the participants a little bit; this is why many men thirst after society so much: it gives them a feeling of their strength.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, all too Human* (hereafter HH), tr. Marion Faber and Stephen Lehmann, London: Penguin, 1994: 50

However the order-word carries the ever-present possibility of a transformation of a different kind. It can also be a password, a component of passage, a switching point a new arrangement of forces, with greater rather than fewer available directions. While it is seldom as simple as this, the two *extremes* of the order-word continuum are death, as we have seen; the full force of social repression-psycho repression in the name of normalisation — how ever relative those norms may be to particular social milieus — and at the other end, creation, the ‘liberation of desire’, escape from bad conscience, blame, responsibility — away from the internalisation and reproduction of social norms, towards a transformed relationship of forces. Nietzsche at one point uses the concept of *justice* in reference to this bright new day — unshackling *justice* from *judgement*:

No one is responsible for his deeds, no one for his nature; to judge is to be unjust. This is also true when the individual judges himself. The tenet is as bright as sunlight, and yet everyone prefers to walk back into the shadow and untruth — for fear of the consequences (HH 44).¹⁴⁴

5.4 On the Formal

In what might be either irony or a typo, Ruthrof himself goes on to describe his single conceivable variety of asignifying signs as *signifiers*, albeit ‘signifiers that act as nothing more than placeholders for whatever variables we wish to substitute’ (DB 567). Several remarks: First, if Ruthrof finds ‘asignifying signs’ oxymoronic, what about ‘asignifying signifiers?’ Second, what is the force of ‘*nothing more than* placeholders?’ Is it that the signs in question are *arbitrary*, that they are not determined by the ‘variables we wish to substitute’? The insight that linguistic signs are arbitrary, the disputes over rigid designators, natural kinds and so on (about which the jury are still very much out), would at the

¹⁴⁴ Deleuze makes an analogous move in ‘To Have Done with Judgement’ (CC 126-135) where he writes ‘Herein, perhaps, lies the secret: to bring into existence and not to judge. If it is so disgusting to judge, it is not because everything is of equal value, but on the contrary because what has value can be made or distinguished only by defying judgement’ (CC 135).

very least suggest that this arbitrariness is not a property of formal languages that sets them apart from natural languages. Third, is the point that in formal languages *particular individual logicians*, say, decide what the signs stand for, where as in natural languages everything is determined on the level of our intersubjective *Vorstellungen*? The remarkable immunity to social constraints and influences that Ruthrof grants logicians, these *Übermenschen* who alone can meddle in the formal realm, would suggest a reification of formal languages on his part — they arrive like thunder, immune to social representations, and capable of transformations belonging to an order distinct from everything else that happens. I would counsel that logicians and their adventures are as much permeated by social constraints and political/libidinal investments as the rest of us.

If Ruthrof does not regard logicians in this way, it certainly seems to be the case that he allows for a dualism between the corporeal and the formal — for example, in his discussion of Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense*, he asks 'Is sense [placed by Ruthrof's Deleuze in the 'no-man's-land between world and full formalisation'] quasi-propositional or quasi-corporeal or both?' (DB 570) (Might it not rather be neither?) This strange isolation of the formal from the corporeal — if by corporeal Ruthrof means 'standard social conceptuality' — makes the formal an incorporeal netherworld, *even if* Ruthrof conceives of it only as a misguided technique or resource of logic-influenced philosophy. Is he denying that the formal is a part of the real world? If it is not, how come it seems to have so many applications (consider the chastening success of the 'hard' sciences, mathematics, and the design and functioning of computers as three interrelated examples)? If he is not denying that formal languages are as much active components of our world, as much as economies, exchange rates, particle accelerators and so on, might it not after all be the case that some 'formalisation' of natural languages could be possible? In any case, I contest Ruthrof's claim that

the description of language, especially from the perspective of a politically engaged pragmatics, gains nothing from the stipulation of empty signification, such as asignifying signs (DB 567).

On the contrary, if the choice is between a pragmatics that *entertains the possibility* of 'empty signification', and one which a-prioristically refuses to, it is the latter that would seem in danger of being politically limiting. What Deleuze-Guattari show is that it is far more dangerous dogmatically to insist that everything necessarily signifies, than to insist that it does not. The former makes 'signification' empty and redundant (even if a zone of supposedly non-signifying algebraic placeholders is staked out).

I would argue that Ruthrof is misguided in noticing an 'impression of formalism' (i.e. an antipathy towards a properly 'corporeal' semantics) lurking, as is the support he finds for it in Brian Massumi's remark, ' $x = x = \text{not } y$ ($I = I = \text{not } \text{you}$) [is replaced in Deleuze-Guattari's work] with an open equation: $\dots + y + z + a. \dots$ ($\dots + \text{arm} + \text{brick} + \text{window} + \dots$).'¹⁴⁵ It is true that Massumi's formulation does not capture 'what actually occurs in natural language and in standard social conceptuality' *as Ruthrof sees them*. This is because Deleuze-Guattari are critiquing natural language and understandings thereof in terms of 'standard social conceptuality' — a critique which (as usual with Deleuze-Guattari) applies both on the level of 'standard social conceptuality' as such and on the level of theoretical approaches which extract a notion of 'standard social conceptuality' from the polyvocality and continuous variation of actual language use, and attempt to use this standard in a legislative, limiting way whilst claiming (as Ruthrof would seem to be) to be purely descriptive. How else are we to take his appeal to such a standard, as though it were not his own abstraction but were in fact the way things *have* to be, the way things must be described by any theoretical approach to be taken seriously.

The problem with Ruthrof's injunction against formalism is that it constitutes an a-prioristic prohibition on philosophy: formal languages, all

¹⁴⁵ 'Translator's Forward' (TP xiii)

the resources of logic and syntax, are strictly limited to those particular spheres, and cannot be applied to any corporeal phenomena without resulting distortion — and by the same token, how are we ever to understand where formalism came from, its achievements as well as its black holes, if we cannot talk about the relations it describes? Deleuze-Guattari draw on formalist techniques as they draw on everything else: pragmatically, knowingly — so that each ransacked discipline is contextualised within the machinery of the strata. They do indeed talk of forms, of formal distinctions — such as form and substance of content and form and substance of expression — but these relationships are components of machines and are always relative to particular concerns, particular perspectives.¹⁴⁶ Their discussions of immanence, of incorporeal transformations, if at all productive, have the potential to explain formal relations as Ruthrof understands them. It is a function of the (super)linearity of natural language that allows the inscription and function of formal languages. The same properties of language that facilitate its universal takeover, its imperialism, are those that allow the quasi-linguistic apparatus of logic to appear with such force and efficacy.

5.5 Conclusion: The Ruin of Representation¹⁴⁷

Representational thought is analogical; its concern is to establish a correspondence between these symmetrically structured domains [‘the subject, its concepts and also the objects in the world to which its concepts are applied’]. The faculty of judgement is the policeman of analogy, assuring that each of the three terms is honestly itself, and that the proper correspondences obtain. In thought its end is truth, in action justice. The

¹⁴⁶ To quote once again, ‘We must combine the resources of real distinction, reciprocal presupposition, and general relativism’ (TP 45).

¹⁴⁷ Dorothea Olkowski, in her *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, London: University of California Press, 1999, proposes a reading of Deleuze/Deleuze-Guattari that is entirely compatible with the present one, except with the advantage of a strong engagement with Freud and Lacan, and some excellent material on Deleuze-Guattari and feminism.

weapons it wields in their pursuit are limitative distribution (the determination of the exclusive set of properties possessed by each term in contradistinction to the others: *logos*, law) and hierarchical ranking (the measurement of the degree of perfection, of a term's self-resemblance in relation to a supreme standard, man, god or gold: value, morality). The *modus operandi* is negation: $x = x = \text{not } y$. Identity, resemblance, truth, justice, and negation. The rational foundation for order.¹⁴⁸

Ruthrof's analysis of language need not be dismissed but rather refigured as descriptions of the *proper functioning* of language. Another author I would cite in this respect is Ruth Millikan.¹⁴⁹ I see such authors as exemplary theorists of the level of order-words. Their *aporia* is to miss the underside to language's regular, proper functioning, its social determinations and standardised representations, and examine the deviant, the transitional, the unprecedented, that cannot be accounted for in terms of proper function or 'standard social conceptuality' at all.

By setting up culturally sanctified, intersubjective intersemiotic corroboration as the ground of all possible meaning, Ruthrof installs his own despot above the world, its silent voice ringing through every meaningful act. This despot is the Community, and it reduces all possibility of meaning to intersemiotic redundancies, the translations between different semiotic chains on the model of language. Just as we saw in Nietzsche's account of the first state machine, 'there is absolutely no room for anything which does not first acquire 'meaning' with regard to the whole' (GM 63). Thus Ruthrof's signification is not merely lexically similar to the regime of signification described by Deleuze-Guattari. He may have introduced aspects of meaning generally neglected by linguistic accounts, but because he conceived of them in terms of signifiers, whose importance is to be judged in terms of corroboration, his 'metasemiotics' retains language as text as its central model. His notion of corroboration,

¹⁴⁸ Brian Massumi, 'Translator's Foreword', TP xi-xii.

¹⁴⁹ Ruth Garrett Millikan, *Language, Thought, and other Biological Categories*, London: MIT Press, 1984

an interchangeability between verbal, haptic, olfactory, tactile and all other types of signs would itself indicate a rather formal, empty notion of sign — not to mention a complete absence of anything distinctly corporeal or non-linguistic. More importantly, corroboration, coherence, analogy, *redundancy* between signs as necessary for any kind of meaning, is an abstract principle of community-sanctioned order, correctness. It is not that this is inaccurate, that meanings are not created and fixed in this manner. It is that in an age where capitalist representations are all-pervasive, a critical standpoint on community-sanctioned meaning, or better still, an investigation of those experimental zones where such meaning itself is of no interest, where the outcome is not determined in advance, is surely where philosophy comes into its own.

In the next chapter, we examine in more detail the relationship between Deleuze-Guattari and Hjelmslev, from whom they have drawn their crucial notion of stratification. Of central importance will be the apparent paradox that they should draw from a linguist (indeed, one with far from modest notions about the role of language in life — see Section 6.5) a theory which aims to transform our understanding of language, which (as we saw in Section 4.4) is antagonistic to the central tenets of linguistics, and which seemingly aims to describe the whole of matter in ostensibly linguistic terms, while at the same time denying language any foundational role! Meanwhile, in parodic deference to the faculty of judgement, I will end this chapter with a slogan, hopefully more password than order-word, for a truly corporeal account of meaning: **not ‘body as text’, but text as body, text as machine.**

6. FORMAL//INCORPOREAL

6.0 Introduction

In *AntiOedipus*, Louis Hjelmslev is introduced as the originator of ‘the only modern — and not archaic — theory of language’ (AO 243), a ‘purely immanent theory [...] that shatters the double game of the voice-graphism domination’ (AO 242). In the *Kafka* book, though they do not mention him, Deleuze-Guattari present a Hjelmslevian account of content and expression as an antidote to readings of Kafka based on the Signifier (K 3-8). However, it is not until *A Thousand Plateaus* that Hjelmslev is made central to their work. The bulk of this chapter concerns the *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language* by Louis Hjelmslev and its use by Deleuze-Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*. I’ll examine the tensions in their utilisation of his theory, particularly the role of language in it, and hope to show why his Danish posterior was so inviting to Deleuze-Guattari’s alter-ego Professor Challenger, the mouthpiece for their ‘Geology of Morals’.¹⁵⁰ What does this have to do with the terms ‘formal’ and ‘incorporeal’? I will show that the extent to which Deleuze-Guattari utilise formal resources is more or less the extent to which they take up Hjelmslev’s approach, and that the incorporeal, far from being a merely formal category, is the key to their transformation and radicalisation of Hjelmslev’s embryonic transcendental empiricism.

In the last chapter I examined Horst Ruthrof’s ‘realist textualism’, an attempt to put the body back into discussions of language. Ruthrof’s attempt, as I think I showed, fails on almost every level. Not only does he have a completely linguicised notion of the body, he also has a very bizarre notion of formal relations. I argued instead that Deleuze-Guattari, with their much wider ranging Spinozist conception of bodies, and their notion of incorporeal transformation, show the way towards a *material* as opposed to Ruthrof’s corporeotextual approach to language — and much

else besides. They show firstly that an analysis of language cannot be separated from an analysis of the bodies involved, their relations and intermixtures, and secondly that the whole approach cannot get off the ground while a reified notion of the Signifier or of Meaning is allowed to govern the relations between bodies. Instead, meaning and signification are seen to be but a small subset of the functioning of language and the movements of signs, and a new vocabulary of incorporeal relations is required in order to get at the various abstract machines involved in assemblages with linguistic or semiotic components. The resulting methodology, then, what Deleuze-Guattari at one point call a 'linguistics of flows' (AO 241), is no more confined to language than a Nietzschean or Foucauldian genealogy is confined to family trees.

The problems I seek to address in this chapter are: the mechanics of this analytic approach, the empirical and ontological claims it makes, and the status of the corporeal and incorporeal relations involved. I will demonstrate how Ruthrof's charge of formalism, levelled at Deleuze-Guattari, conflates formal relations in Ruthrof's own impoverished sense, with the sphere of the incorporeal in Deleuze-Guattari, a resource which is essential to an analysis which must take pains to avoid erecting any supplementary dimensions to simply take the place of Meaning, Representation or Signification. The result will necessarily be an approach which is ultimately aformal, anexact — it will not be reducible to an algebra of formal relations between predefined and delimited terms — but the method will be rigorous, drawing (as Deleuze-Guattari do, but in different ways) on the Linguistic Theory of Louis Hjelmslev, on Deleuze's Bergsonian empiricism, and on Deleuze-Guattari's Geology or stratoanalysis.

The aim will be to set out the primary concerns of a pragmatics of the order-word, principal among which will be that the apparatus itself is seen as nothing more than provisional, the terms arbitrary, and the approach as

¹⁵⁰ We encountered Professor Challenger earlier, in Sections 4.1 and 5.3.

open to transformation as the phenomena to which it can be applied. I see the applications of this apparatus as something that will inevitably be put to the service of philosophical prejudices and preoccupations — how could it not be? — which therefore (like the work of Deleuze-Guattari itself) contain enough safeguards against reification as possible. In the effort not to confuse the map with the territory, while at the same time keeping open the possibility of destabilising the boundary between the two (in the move towards the couple *diagram* and *phylum*, where this separation is lost), the method constantly teeters on the edge of self-destruction, or of lapsing into futility and impotence. This machine can only function by breaking down, by devouring its own components, since only in this way can it produce something new.

6.1 Ruthrof Reprise

Central to this approach is the notion of the incorporeal transformation, which I will concentrate on in the final section. Ruthrof can only get his head round this in terms of what goes on in logic or algebra, where from one step of (for example) a syllogism to the next, something pertaining to a realm other than that of marks on a blackboard or the firings of neurones has taken place. Hence Ruthrof accuses Deleuze-Guattari of joining the ranks of philosophers and linguists who in one way or another have evacuated the body — considered by Ruthrof in terms of fields of resonances between the different senses — from an understanding of ‘natural language.’

In this narrow conception of the formal, Ruthrof leaves himself with two grim options. Either he must commit himself to this oddly Platonic realm of formal relations, which is separate from everyday uses of language (which for him must be understood in terms of a socially created, intersubjective semiotic matrix) — giving himself the unenviable task of trying to explain where this timeless realm emerged from and how on earth it connects up

with everything else.¹⁵¹ Alternatively, his formal realm could be seen as the creation of particularly imaginative logicians, who have somehow escaped the *corporeal imperative* he has imposed on all other manipulators of symbols — the imperative that all symbolic transformations (all possible meaning) involves traces of the body, 'synaesthetic' resonances between different corporeal sign systems.

Ruthrof's overarching problems, which prevent him getting to grips with bodies at all, are due to his commitment to semantics, *meaning*, above all else. It seems clear that in raising the notions of meaning (and hence communication, information and understanding) above all the other aspects of linguistic and semiotic functioning — at the expense of such non-significatory behaviours as ordering, seducing, humiliating, supplicating, consenting, attacking, ingratiating and so on — Ruthrof erects a normalising view of the uses of language and signs whose governing principle is *recognition*. The lives of bodies, their attempts to find their own ways, maintain and increase themselves and their powers, is ignored or at least subordinated to the life of disembodied rational reflection. Disembodied, because despite the fact that Ruthrof brings in olfaction, touch, taste and so on, he treats them not as unstable zones of real difference, of intensive engagement (as in, for example, Deleuze's account of the faculties in *Difference and Repetition* that we saw in

¹⁵¹ A comparison could be noted between Ruthrof's timeless formal and Deleuze-Guattari's nonchronological or atemporal zone of the incorporeal — surely the latter is as much a Platonic and inexplicable formulation as the former? Two points can be made in response. Firstly, the incorporeal is precisely *not* to be considered as a supplementary dimension, a wellspring from which everything else occurs, but instead is but a component of an 'exhaustive' and fully material analysis; it cannot be considered as apart or separate from the intermixtures of bodies, but instead as either a 'surface' or 'plane' on which bodies interact, or else a 'gas' or 'vapour' produced by their interactions. Secondly, Ruthrof's formal realm is distinguished by its complete banality: all it refers to are the steps in formal argument, the predetermined relations between predefined terms. It explains nothing and creates nothing, and is itself in need of explanation.

Section 1.5) but simply as different tickertape printouts for the rational homunculus to compare and contrast.

Underlying this, as Ruthrof freely admits, is a notion of the intersubjective Community which establishes and governs all meaning. It somehow precedes the flows of signs; all meaning refers back to it. The Community is God, the Despot, the supplementary dimension that stands outside Ruthrof's signifiatory schema and imposes order on it, yet countenances no explanation or understanding of itself.

Do Deleuze-Guattari do any better at providing the basis for an approach to language which is fully materialist? The rest of this chapter zigzags between an overview of Hjelmslev's Theory of Language and discussion of how Deleuze-Guattari take it up. Since I am primarily interested in the former in terms of the latter, a comprehensive overview of Hjelmslev has been forfeited in order to deal more carefully with the aspects of his approach that resonate with Deleuze-Guattari.

6.2 Deductive Empiricism

Hjelmslev's net, an enormous system of relations consisting of about 108 technical terms meticulously and incrementally defined (and then summarised, PTL 131-138), has the immense virtue of showing how the analysis of language and semiotics is absolutely inseparable from an analysis of the relations of bodies. It is not that language is some kind of preexistent apparatus which chops up undifferentiated reality into usable blocks, nor is it a system of ad-hoc labels we have invented to tag preexistent objects. It is precisely that the relations between what we often simplistically refer to as 'words and things' are in *reciprocal presupposition*, and in any given investigation, the entire complex of assemblage and abstract machine must be exhaustively analysed, both sides at once and with equal attention. This proviso serves to ward off the risk of using one side to 'explain' the other and thus lose sight of or lose the site of the consistency of the 'whole'. Hjelmslev could be described as

a 'deductive empiricist', and it is the sense of deduction that he employs that will show us one aspect of how Ruthrof's notion of the formal completely misses what Hjelmslev and Deleuze-Guattari are up to.

Hjelmslev writes:

A theory will attain its simplest form by building on no other premises than those required by its object. Moreover, in order to conform to its purpose, a theory must be capable of yielding, in all its applications, results which agree with so-called (actual or presumed) empirical data (PTL 10-11).

This could be taken as an indication that Hjelmslev himself is engaged in a programme of proving what we already know; of ensuring any possible results conform to an already 'given' empirical, a common-sense understanding of the world. But this would be to assume a predetermined and unproblematic empirical, which Hjelmslev, working at the coalface of material linguistics, clearly does not. Instead, his 'so-called' empiricism (as he puts it) can be seen as the attempt to construct Planes of Consistency. He presents the *empirical principle*, the basis of his entire approach:

*The description shall be free of contradiction (self-consistent), exhaustive, and as simple as possible. The requirement of freedom from contradiction takes precedence over the requirement of exhaustive description. The requirement of exhaustive description takes precedence over the requirement of simplicity (PTL 11).*¹⁵²

¹⁵² The adoption of this principle is not without its dubious perks for the unscrupulous linguist, as Dwight Bolinger points out: 'The first of the two hedges — the precedence of freedom from contradiction over exhaustiveness — gives the linguist a license to shut out inconvenient data. The second hedge allows the description to be somewhat cumbersome in order to include all the non-contradictory data.' Dwight Bolinger, *Aspects of Language* (hereafter AL), New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1975. Though Hjelmslev himself was after a *total* theory, and hence no doubt had to make the inevitable sacrifices in accommodating all data that this principle authorises, I will argue that Deleuze-Guattari's use of his theory is pragmatic rather than dogmatic. In what follows, I nevertheless defend Hjelmslev's approach, on the basis that his theory is not formalism for its own sake, as Bolinger seems to suggest. See also Section 7.1.

The prioritising over the requirements simplicity and exhaustiveness of that of self-consistency is intrinsic to Hjelmslev's deductive rather than inductive method. Induction, the movement from individual instances to the categories they supposedly exemplify, has according to Hjelmslev been the misguided approach of his linguistic forebears. Induction 'inevitably leads to the abstraction of concepts which are then hypostatized as real' (PTL 12). This movement from particular to universal I would characterise as 'bad abstraction', as opposed to the 'good abstraction' of the bidirectional relation between abstract materiality and the articulations of the strata. Induction as characterised by Hjelmslev is the age-old error of 'discovering' or rather positing universals derived from particulars, of reifying the transcendental as a field of immutable forms, from which particulars are then supposed to have somehow descended. It is apparent that no such procedure can beget anything that can function as an 'explanation'; the result of this sort of induction is often merely a wholesale justification of the status quo. Perhaps more insidious is the *selective* derivation of the ideal, which is then applied to messy reality by way of so-called 'critique': step one, focus on the apparent rules or regularities you are particularly keen on; step two, derive supposed universals from these; step three, attempt to downgrade or eliminate all those phenomena which fail to conform to your universals.

Instead of this move from particular to universal, Hjelmslev proposes a move from the initial 'totality' of the object of analysis (the *text*) to a description which homes in on its specificities, its singularities, moving from the net of relative, arbitrarily-delimited classes and categories to the *real differences* they designate, and ending with the most exhaustive and simple description which manages to retain the initial totality or consistency.

This procedure may therefore be defined briefly as a progression from class to component, not from component to class, as an analytic and

specifying, not a synthetic and generalizing, movement, as the opposite of induction in the sense established by linguistics (PTL 13).

Relating this notion of a preexistent totality of the text to the use made by Deleuze-Guattari may appear awkward, but it is simply the case that Deleuze-Guattari are more pragmatic in their delimiting of the 'unities' in question. Rather than Hjelmslev's notion of the totality of the text in its self-consistency, which precedes and survives the analysis, we should think instead of the move from particular problematics or problem fields, to a description of the assemblages and abstract machines involved. As we saw in Chapter 1, Deleuze's *Bergsonism* presents his First Rule of intuition as method, as:

Apply the test of true and false to problems themselves. Condemn false problems and reconcile truth and creation at the level of problems (B 15).

The initial step, then, is to delimit a 'self-consistent' problem field, a true problem, as object of analysis. To run the risk of confusing terminology which we will later return to tease out in more detail, we can for the moment equate Hjelmslev's 'totality of the text', Deleuze-Bergson's 'problem field', and Deleuze-Guattari's 'Abstract Machine' or 'Plane of Consistency'. Guattari writes¹⁵³

Abstract machines can always be complicated but they can never be broken down without losing their mutational specificity. So one must take them in their entirety. It is impossible to reach them piece by piece, through learning or conditioning (GR 142).

In other words, the move is from an unanalysed 'whole', to an analysed 'whole' — yet in both cases, the apparent totality is nothing other than the plane of consistency itself. Not an essence or form in any sense, it is

¹⁵³ Pierre-Félix Guattari, *The Guattari Reader* (hereafter GR), ed. Gary Genosko, Oxford: Blackwell 1996

rather a machine part that functions as surface, or else that inserts itself in the assemblages in question. Guattari continues

[Abstract machines] cling to each other, every part of them becoming a process. They assimilate themselves into an assemblage and change its "destiny". Or they silence themselves and return to a plane of pure machinic virtuality (GR 142).

6.3 The Hjelmslev Manoeuvre

How does Hjelmslev envisage his theory as proceeding? This issue of the relationship between the structure of language as revealed by the theory, and the structure of reality itself, is the problem of the *map and the territory* alluded to above.

To formulate the problem in a simplified, tendentious, and deliberately naïve form — does the object determine and affect the theory, or does the theory determine and affect its object? (PTL 13)

To flesh out this problem, Hjelmslev moves from the notion of a theory as a 'system of hypotheses' (PTL 13) to that of theory considered in terms of *arbitrariness* and *appropriateness* (PTL 14). The former factor is a move that differentiates Hjelmslev's approach from that of a naïve empiricism, giving him the freedom to build a system *independent* of any experience. This is an important sense in which the Hjelmslevian net (to which we'll shortly return in greater detail) is *formal*: it is a

purely deductive system, in that it may be used alone to compute the possibilities that follow from its premises (PTL 14).

This can be seen as a move from naïve to transcendental empiricism, where what is being sought, as we have seen, is the *immanent* structure (in this case of language), but the method refuses to abstract this structure from the given, for such a move would be to model the transcendental on the empirical.

It is the second factor, that of *appropriateness*, that makes or breaks the theory, by introducing premises

which the theoretician knows from preceding experience that they fulfil the conditions for application to certain empirical data. These premisses are of the greatest possible generality and may therefore be able to satisfy the conditions for application to a large number of empirical data (PTL 14).

So, does the theory determine the object or vice versa? Hjelmslev's answer is a resounding "both...and": he writes

by virtue of its arbitrary nature the theory is *arealistic*; by virtue of its appropriateness, it is *realistic* (PTL 15)

and then,

By virtue of its appropriateness the linguistic theory is empirical, and by virtue of its arbitrariness it is calculative (PTL 17).

Here Hjelmslev presents the two sides of his approach as *appropriate/empirical/realistic* and *arbitrary/calculative/arealistic*. He writes

Linguistic theory cannot be verified (confirmed or invalidated) by reference to [...] existing texts and languages. It can be judged only with reference to the self-consistency of its calculus (PTL 18).

While Deleuze-Guattari transform this ultraformalist notion of calculative consistency into a notion of *real or material* consistency, there is already in Hjelmslev reason to see something more than a fantastic algebra of linguistic components: he argues elsewhere against a purely logical notion of this consistency, meaning that his own use of formalism exceeds the logic of identity and contradiction, and instead works in terms of 'participation'.

Hjelmslev remarked that a language necessarily includes unexploited possibilities or potentialities and that the abstract machine must include these possibilities or potentialities (TP 99).

The *Prolegomena* is concerned primarily with applicability — fixing by definition the properties common to all “natural” languages’, as defined in the process as *those semiotics into which all other semiotics can be translated* (PTL 19). For the purposes of the *Prolegomena*, Hjelmslev performs a kind of transcendental deduction: to focus initially on “natural” languages, and then move outwards after the principles have been established, to the entirety of semiotic phenomena (sign systems that necessitate *biplanar* analysis). This focus, based on the empirical principle, safeguards the theory’s claim to immanence (PTL 19-20, 108). Another aspect of the significance of Hjelmslev’s formal approach is that the system of *formal* as opposed to *real* definitions is

not a question of trying to exhaust the intensional nature of the objects or even of delimiting them extensionally on all sides, but only of anchoring them relatively in respect to other objects, similarly defined or premised as basic (PTL 21).

There is also the option of including *operative* (temporary) definitions, to be superseded at a later stage, part of Hjelmslev’s attempt to be as ‘unmetaphysical as possible’ (PTL 20):

A purposeful attempt to eliminate implicit premisses leads to replacing postulates partly by definitions and partly by conditional propositions, so that the postulates as such are removed from the apparatus. Thus it seems possible in most instances to replace pure existence postulates by theorems in the form of conditions (PTL 21).

In addition to the elimination of all implicit premisses, Hjelmslev’s conception of the *objects* of the analysis is contextual and relational rather than in any respect essentialist.

The important thing is not the division of an object into parts, but the conduct of the analysis so that it conforms to the mutual dependences between these parts, and permits us to give an adequate account of them [...] Both the object and its parts have existence only by virtue of these dependences [...] After we have recognized this, the "objects" of naïve realism are, from our point of view, nothing but intersections of bundles of such dependences. The dependences [...] become from this point of view primary, presupposed by their intersections [...] ***A totality does not consist of things but of relationships*** (PTL 22-23).

Hjelmslev's 'wholes', then, are merely that to which all 'parts' have a uniform relation, an account which coheres with the body without organs being a machine part alongside the all the others, distinguished only by the fact that it has the same relationship to all the other components.

Hjelmslev distinguishes functions and functives, on the basis that functions are dependences, and functives are entities that *contract* functions. A function is composed of functives, which themselves may be composed of functives (and which are therefore functions of functions), or may not be composed of functives (in which case Hjelmslev calls them 'entities'). He provides a tripartite model for the types of interrelations that can occur between functions of a system in terms of *constants* and *variables*, where

constant: functive whose presence is a necessary condition for the presence of the functive to which it has function

variable: functive whose presence is not a necessary condition for the presence of the functive to which it has function (PTL 131)

The three types of interrelations are determinations, interdependences and constellations (see Fig. 5 in the section of tables and diagrams at the end of the chapter).

It is only on the basis of these relationships, which clearly have nothing intrinsically linguistic about them, that Hjelmslev gets round to talking

about *signs*.¹⁵⁴ As Deleuze-Guattari emphasise, what is special about Hjelmslev is his notion of *double articulation* of these elements into two planes, which he names (arbitrarily) *content and expression*.¹⁵⁵ It is not

¹⁵⁴ His definitions, in summary, are:

Signs: *bearers of meaning*, as opposed to words, which may or may not bear meaning, or may be composed of several signs: e.g. *inactivates*= *in/act/iv/ate/s*

Meaning: *purely contextual*. The meaning of each individual sign has precisely the same relative right (cf. Univocity of Sense in *Logic of Sense*,)

Figuræ: *non-signs* (e.g. 's' in *sell* as opposed to 's' in *inactivates*).

He writes: 'Languages, then, cannot be described as pure sign systems. By the aim usually attributed to them they are first and foremost sign systems; but by their **internal structure** they are first and foremost something different, namely systems of figuræ that can be used to construct signs' (PTL 47). Language is only a sign system in relation to its outside. One could say that the *restricted economy* of figuræ is used to construct the *general economy* of signs.

¹⁵⁵ The importance of the division into content and expression as regards language, is that there are no grounds for positing either plane as prior to the other. The division of the text into E-plane and C-plane is the first step of the analysis: these are the most inclusive paradigms. This division supersedes less helpful divisions in terms of morphology, syntax, semantics, phonetics, lexicography. On both planes, the analysis proceeds. If you like, from general to restricted economies, e.g.:

E: Sentences → clauses → words → phonemes

C: Concepts → their components and modifiers.

Hjelmslev's approach demonstrates the futility of the following approaches:

- Considering only E-forms without the C-forms they reciprocally presuppose (dictionary as inventory of E-form/C-form relations in a particular language)
- Attempting to get at E&C-substances without considering the E&C-forms
- Attempting to get at E&C-purports without seeing them as only existing as formed substances (they have no other existence, except by 'bad' abstraction).

He writes, 'Differences between languages do not rest on different realizations of a type of substance, but on different realizations of a principle of formation, or, in other words, on a different form in the face of an identical but amorphous purport' (PTL 77). What Hjelmslev shores up is the primacy of **modes of formation over types of substances**: 'The procedure is purely formal in this sense that it considers the units of language as consisting of a number of figuræ [the expression-forms which do not convey meaning] for which certain rules of transformation hold. These rules are set up without consideration of the substance in which the figuræ and units are manifested; the

immediately clear whether Hjelmslev himself would regard as legitimate any applications of double articulation to systems which do not involve signification. However, even if (as seems likely) he would reject such a possibility, the complexities of his notion of the 'sign-function', the fact that it does not entail any one-to-one mapping of the forms of expression onto the forms of content, means that it is entirely legitimate to apply this model to any system consisting of two isomorphic series which vary independently. In other words, while Hjelmslev himself may not have been able to see beyond signifying systems, his unflinching rigour has produced a system already free of any necessary connection to, or dependence on, signification.

6.5 Why, in spite of all the evidence, Hjelmslev is not *just* talking about language

The 'Geology of Morals' attempts to provide an account of the mechanisms of stratification, where stratification is seen as the process of organisation of matter on the Full Body of the Earth; it is responsible for everything we see around us, as well as for our own existence as organisms, as subjects. No wonder Deleuze-Guattari refer to these stratified structures (whether energetic, physico-chemical, geological, organic and alloplastic) as the 'Judgements of God', judgements with which in the words of Artaud, the aim is to 'have done' — or at the very least, to see that 'it is an illusion to believe that structure is the earth's last word' (TP 41). The other half of the story is matter, the Body without Organs of the Earth: 'the unformed, unorganized, nonstratified, or destratified body in all its flows: subatomic and submolecular particles, pure intensities, prevital and prephysical free singularities' (TP 43). To facilitate this massive and perhaps impossible shift in perspective, from everyday human concerns to the impersonal, intensive flows from which they arise, Deleuze-Guattari concentrate not so much on the question of

linguistic hierarchy and, consequently, the linguistic deduction as well are independent of the physical and physiological, and, in general, of the non-linguistic hierarchies and deductions that might lead to a description of the "substance" (PTL 96).

what it would mean to escape the strata, as on that of how the flows of the destratified body get imprisoned within the strata in the first place.

As might be expected, these mechanisms are far from straightforward; the fact that Hjelmslev attempted something similar and almost as ambitious a few decades previously is something Deleuze-Guattari were bound to make use of. The drawback is, in attempting to provide an alternative to conventional, anthropocentric conceptions of matter and life, the last thing Deleuze-Guattari want to do is to suggest that language, which undoubtedly is the focus of Hjelmslev's enterprise, somehow structures matter and organises life. Deleuze-Guattari warn of the imperialism of language, 'the illusion that one can grasp and shuffle all the strata between one's pincers' (TP 65), and say that 'Despite what Hjelmslev himself may have said, the net [of Hjelmslev's apparatus] is not linguistic in scope or origin' (TP 43). We now turn to Hjelmslev himself, in order to find ways to defend this patently ludicrous claim.

'Language — human speech', Hjelmslev observes — 'is an inexhaustible abundance of manifold treasures'. In an opening paragraph that more or less equates language with everything that is good and great about humanity, Hjelmslev concludes by speculating

So inexorably has language grown inside personality, home, nation, mankind, and life itself that we may sometimes be tempted to ask whether language is a mere reflexion of, or simply *is* not all those things — the very seed leaf of their growth (PTL 3).

His *linguistic theory*, then, sets out to make this inexhaustible abundance into the object of

a systematic, exact, and generalizing science, in the theory of which all events (possible combinations of elements) are foreseen and the conditions for their realization established (PTL 9).

But what exactly does Hjelmslev mean by 'language'? Hjelmslev's linguistic theory cannot merely be a combinatory analysis of the '*disiecta membra* of language' — its 'physical and physiological, psychological and logical, sociological and historical precipitations' (PTL 5) — but rather an analysis of 'language itself'. The latter, as worked out by the Theory of Language he proposes, is a 'self sufficient totality, a structure *sui generis*' (PTL 6), which is also the very 'means to knowledge' (PTL 5). Hjelmslev is confident of the importance of this theory to epistemology, though he leaves open the question of whether 'the structure of language be equated with that of reality or be taken as a more or less distorted reflexion of it' (PTL 6).

But then, in the following passage, Hjelmslev proposes 'linguistic structure as the dominating principle' of "reality" as an 'organized totality':

A linguistic theory which searches for the specific structure of language through an exclusively formal system of premisses must, while continually taking account of the fluctuations and changes of speech, necessarily refuse to grant exclusive significance to those changes; must seek a *constancy*, which is not anchored in some "reality" outside language, whatever language it may be, and that makes a particular language identical with itself in all its various manifestations. When this constancy has been found and described, it may then be projected on the "reality" outside language, of whatever sort that "reality" may be (physical, physiological, psychological, logical, ontological), so that, even in the consideration of that "reality", language as the central point of reference remains the chief object — and not as a conglomerate, but as an organized totality with linguistic structure as the dominating principle. (PTL 8)

In light of this, how on earth can Deleuze-Guattari's claims for Hjelmslev be defended? The key is that despite his eulogising of all that is good and human and calling it language, for Hjelmslev language *IS* the structure of reality as an organised totality (at least insofar as it is amenable to the analysis of deductive empiricism), and hence precisely *not* merely 'human speech'. Whereas Ruthrof, as we saw, starts from a linguistic model of

meaning, and an impoverished one at that, and moves outwards to what he sees as a theory of corporeal realism, Hjelmslev begins with a massively intricate apparatus composed of a variety of formal relations of both structure and process, and even though he claims always to be talking about language, we are deep into the intricacies of his 'net' before he has even started talking about meaning. Deleuze-Guattari, in shifting the focus of analysis from language to 'the strata', are talking about the same thing: constancies or consistencies which are not anchored in some outside "reality", but which *generate* self-identity, resemblance, continuity and stability — which is then projected back onto the "reality" outside, be it physical, physiological, psychological, logical or ontological! On all these levels, the analysis of the strata is about shoring up the mechanisms at work.

A given stratum retains a unity of composition in spite of the diversity in its organisation and development. The unity of composition relates to formal traits common to all of the forms or codes of a stratum, and to substantial elements, materials common to all of the stratum's substances or milieus (TP 502).

Where for Hjelmslev this is in order to catch a glimpse of the structure of reality itself, to bring out the Judgements of God in all their 'inexhaustible abundance', for Deleuze-Guattari it is to open them up to their outside, to demonstrate the existence of a beyond to the strata and their orders and organisations. Guattari writes

The issue is not to resume his project of a radical axiomatization of language but to start up again from those categories which appear to be the result of a truly rigorous examination of the totality of the semiotic problematic (GR 145).¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Hjelmslev would reject Deleuze-Guattari's various claims (e.g. GR 145, AO 246) that his theory is an axiomatic: 'Linguistic theory, then, sovereignly defines its object by an arbitrary and appropriate strategy of premisses. The theory consists of a calculation from the fewest and most general possible premisses, of which none that is specific to the theory seems to be of an axiomatic nature' (PTL 15).

6.6 Conclusion: The Formal and the Incorporeal

In this chapter we have examined what Hjelmslev actually says about language and stratification, and have offered an explanation and defence of Deleuze-Guattari's appropriation thereof, arguing that their taking-up of a few of his terms is not the wholesale importing of a totalising formalism of language, but rather the pragmatic deployment of a mobile apparatus (form and substance of content, form and substance of expression). Rather than form being isolated Platonic realm, it is only distinguishable from substance by a move of 'bad' abstraction, since the two are not independently variable. The terms 'content and expression' come in when there *is* independent variance between two interlocked series, and in this case, it is not an issue of the imposing of form, but one of the expressing of functions (with their own form and substance) overcoding material components (with *their* own form and substance).

The point of the incorporeal transformation, then, is not that it pertains to a formal realm as Ruthrof argues. Instead, it is of a piece with Deleuze-Guattari's utilisation of Hjelmslev in their attack on signification, representation, and other approaches to language which involve mysterious relationships of meaning or mediation. The incorporeal transformation is the simultaneity of the statement/act *and* its effects, and the archetypal example is the command. As Canetti writes, 'Commands are older than speech. If this were not so, dogs could not understand them' (CP 351). Though Hjelmslev's apparatus is complex enough to allow us, for example, to diagram language change, the relationships between different languages, and the interrelations of its different components, it also helps us to see that language (as one form of expression) can only be understood in relation to the content with which it is in reciprocal presupposition and that it is best approached as an entire system.

If we tie this in with our discussions of the order-word from the previous chapters, we see that Deleuze-Guattari take this considerably further. Rather than simply insisting on the interdependence of content and expression, they argue that this very distribution is potentially re-established or challenged with every utterance: what is transformed with the emission of the order-word is precisely the arrangements of bodies and the distribution of symbolic power. There is a continuous variation intrinsic to language, and it is not purely linguistic, it bears on matters-functions of all kinds. The incorporeal transformation can be entirely stratic, it can redundantly reassert the sovereignty of despotic meaning and the rigid distinctions between words and things. Alternatively, as 'component of passage', it can enact

a transformation of substances and a dissolution of forms, a passage to the limit or flight from contours in favour of fluid forces, flows, air, light, and matter, such that a body or a word does not end at a precise point. We witness the incorporeal power of that intense matter, the material power of that language. A matter more immediate, more fluid, more ardent, than bodies or words (TP 109).

Despite this it is in the realm of distinct bodies and words we remain for the time being. In the following chapter, from the perspective of our Deleuze-Guattarian pragmatics, we confront certain different approaches to the science and politics of language. Our particular concern will be to examine the charge that might be inspired by passages such as that just quoted, that Deleuze-Guattari do not really have anything very useful to say about language, in the face, for example, of the growing problem of illiteracy.

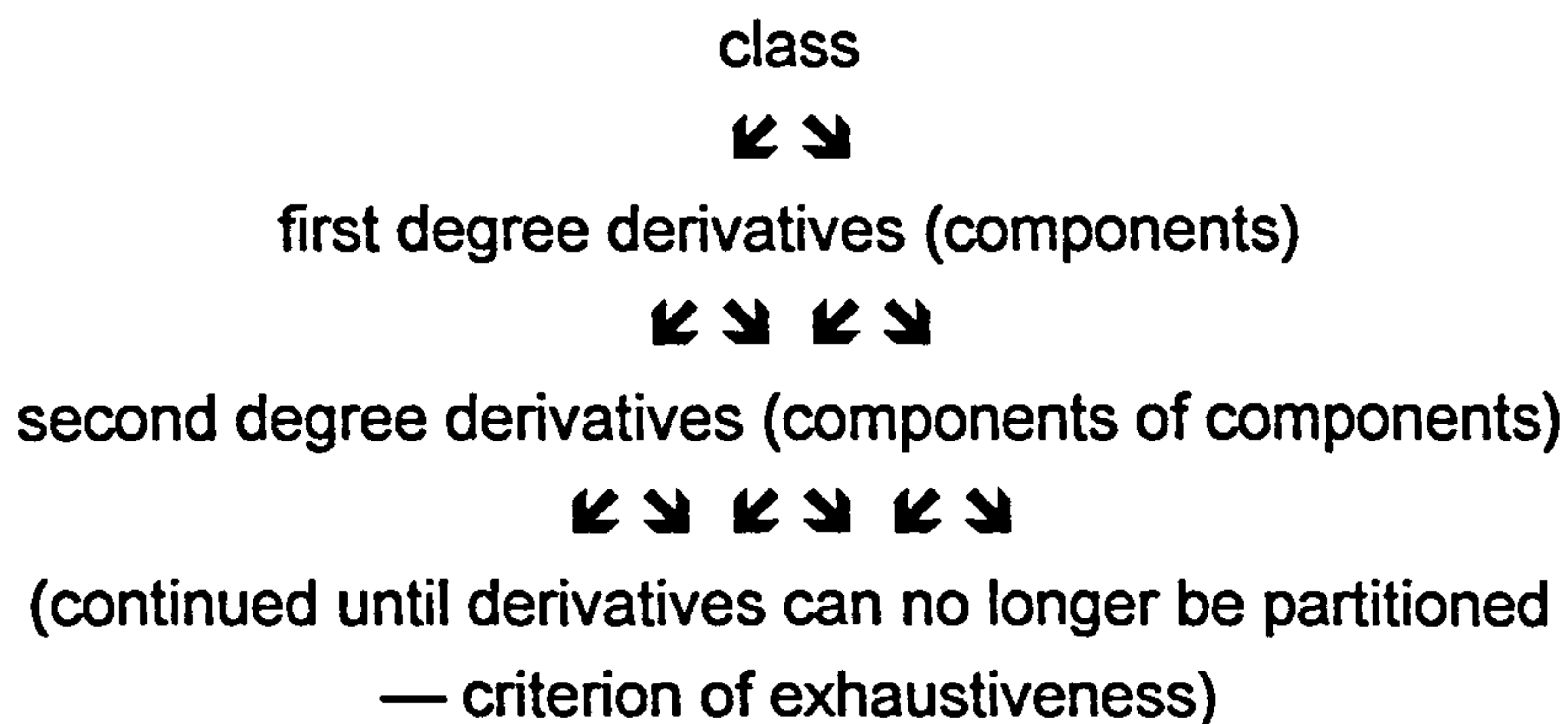
On the following pages are diagrams detailing aspects of Hjelmslev's apparatus, including his notion of the sign function, and how it compares to that of Deleuze-Guattari.

Hjelmslev's Net

Fig. 3 System and Process

Analysis proceeds in terms of both:	System (e.g. Language) based on <i>selection</i> (either/or), i.e. <i>correlational hierarchies</i>	Process (e.g. Text) based on <i>solidarity</i> (both/and) i.e. <i>relational hierarchies</i>
<i>classes:</i>	paradigms	chains
<i>components (derivatives):</i>	members	parts
<i>analysis</i>	articulation	partition

Fig. 4 The Analysis Complex



Similarly, in relational terms:

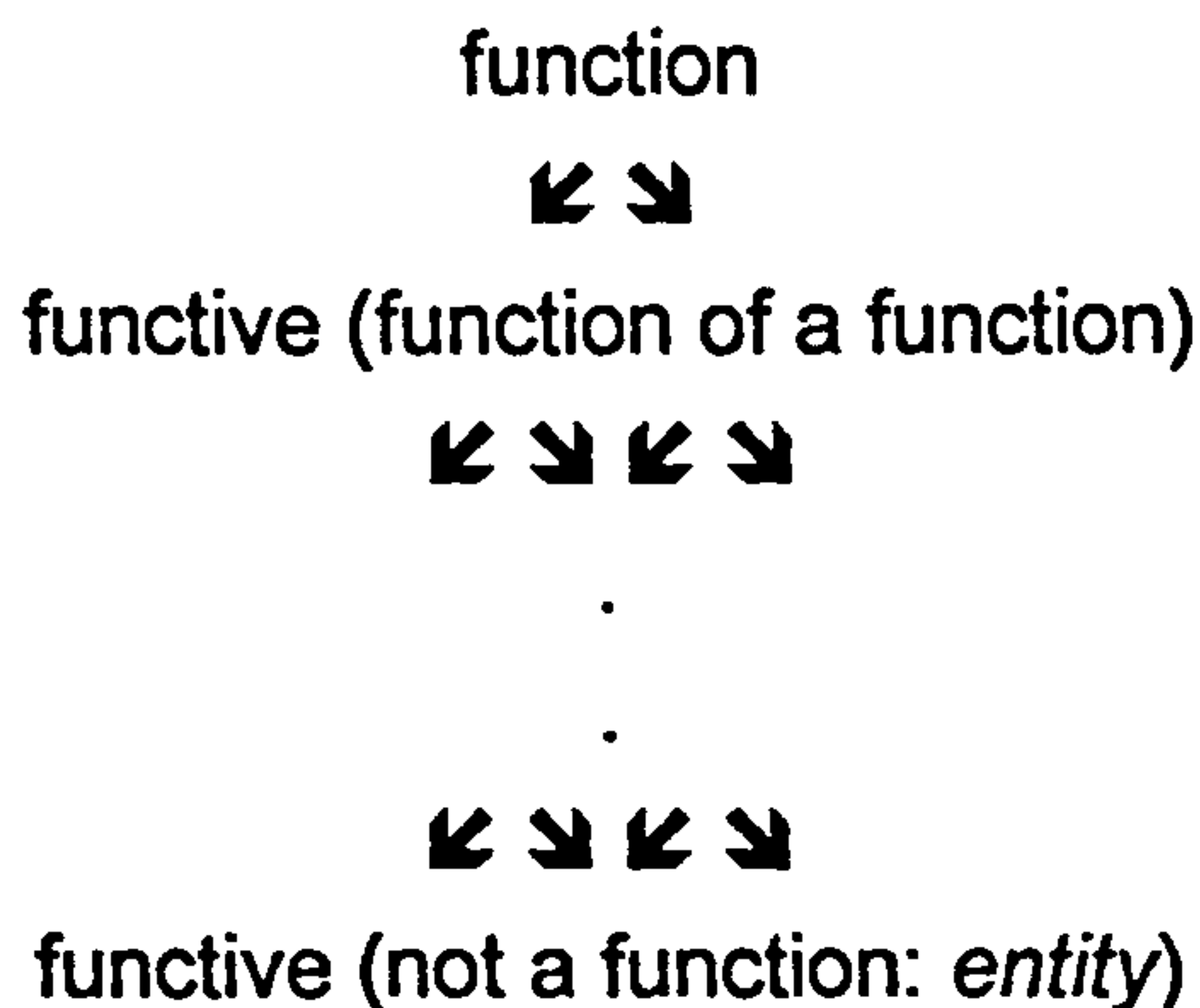


Fig. 5 Cohesions and Reciprocities

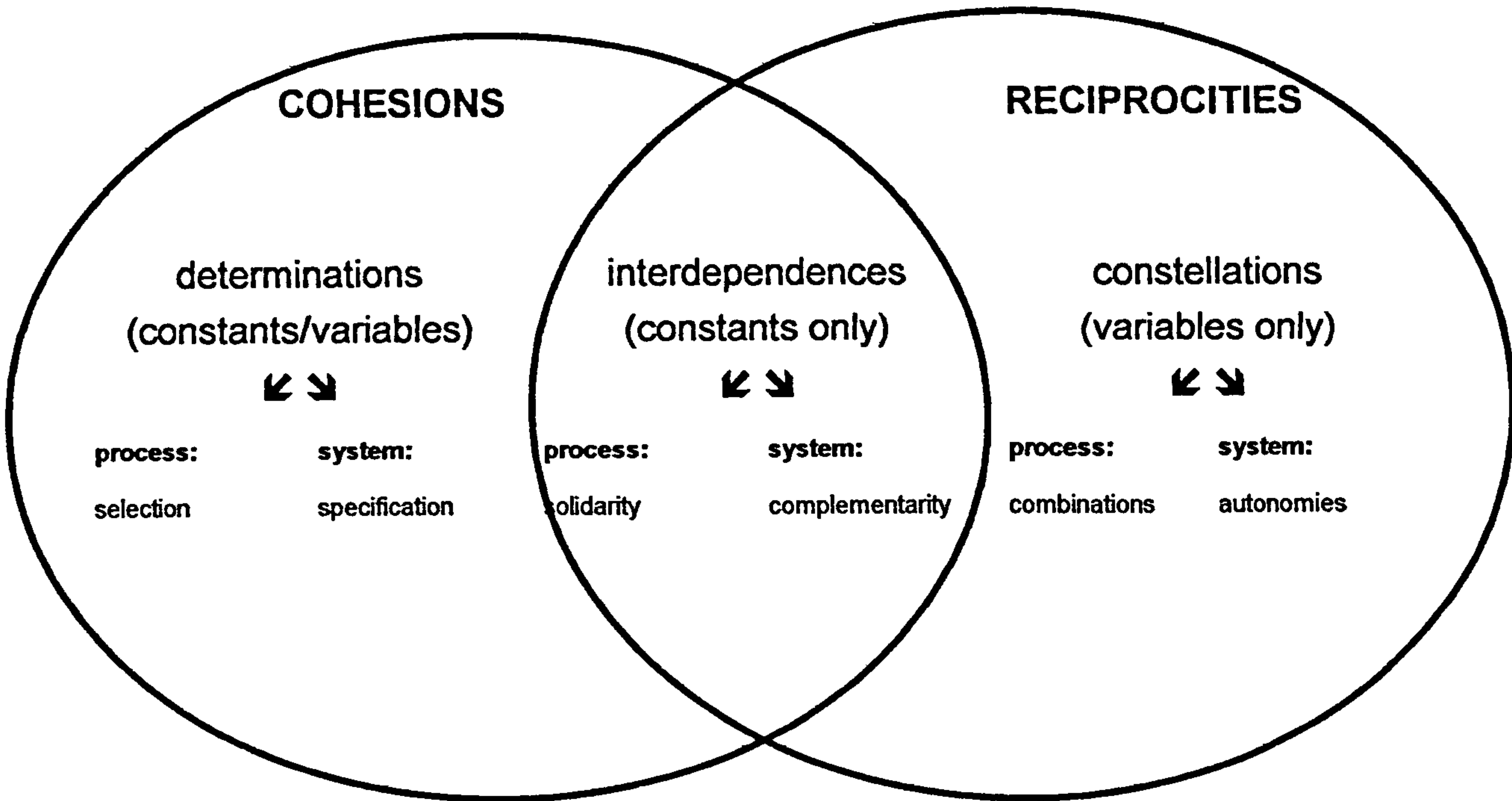


Fig. 6 Analysis in terms of System vs. Analysis in terms of Process

<p><u>e.g.</u></p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-family: cursive;">p e t →</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-family: cursive;">m a n →</p> <p style="font-size: 2em;">↓ ↓ ↓</p> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 10px auto;"> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">p</td> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">e</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">t</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; text-align: center; padding: 5px 5px 0 5px;">or</td> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; text-align: center; padding: 5px 5px 0 5px;">or</td> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 5px 5px 0 5px;">or</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">m</td> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">a</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">n</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">(members)</p> <p>system: paradigmatic (vertical) analysis</p>	p	e	t	or	or	or	m	a	n	<p>process: syntagmatic (horizontal) analysis</p> <table style="margin: 10px auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 0 10px;">p+e+t</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 0 10px;">m+a+n</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">(parts)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 20px;"> <p><i>All components of language contract both correlation [disjunction] and relation [conjunction]. The same entities (in this case, letters) are members of a paradigm and parts of a chain.</i></p> </div>	p+e+t	m+a+n
p	e	t										
or	or	or										
m	a	n										
p+e+t												
m+a+n												

Fig. 7 The Sign Function (take 1)

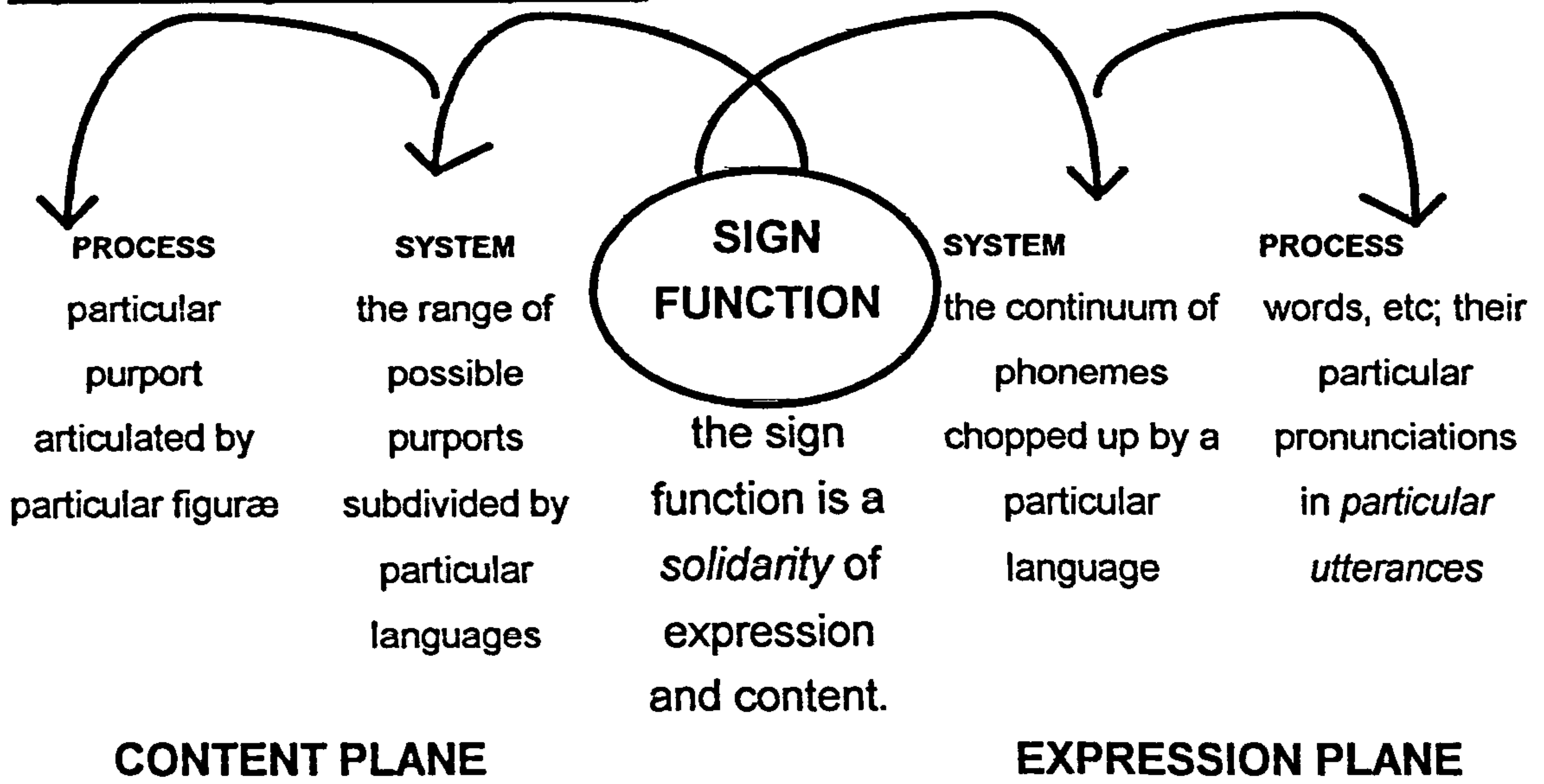


Fig. 8 The Sign Function (take 2)

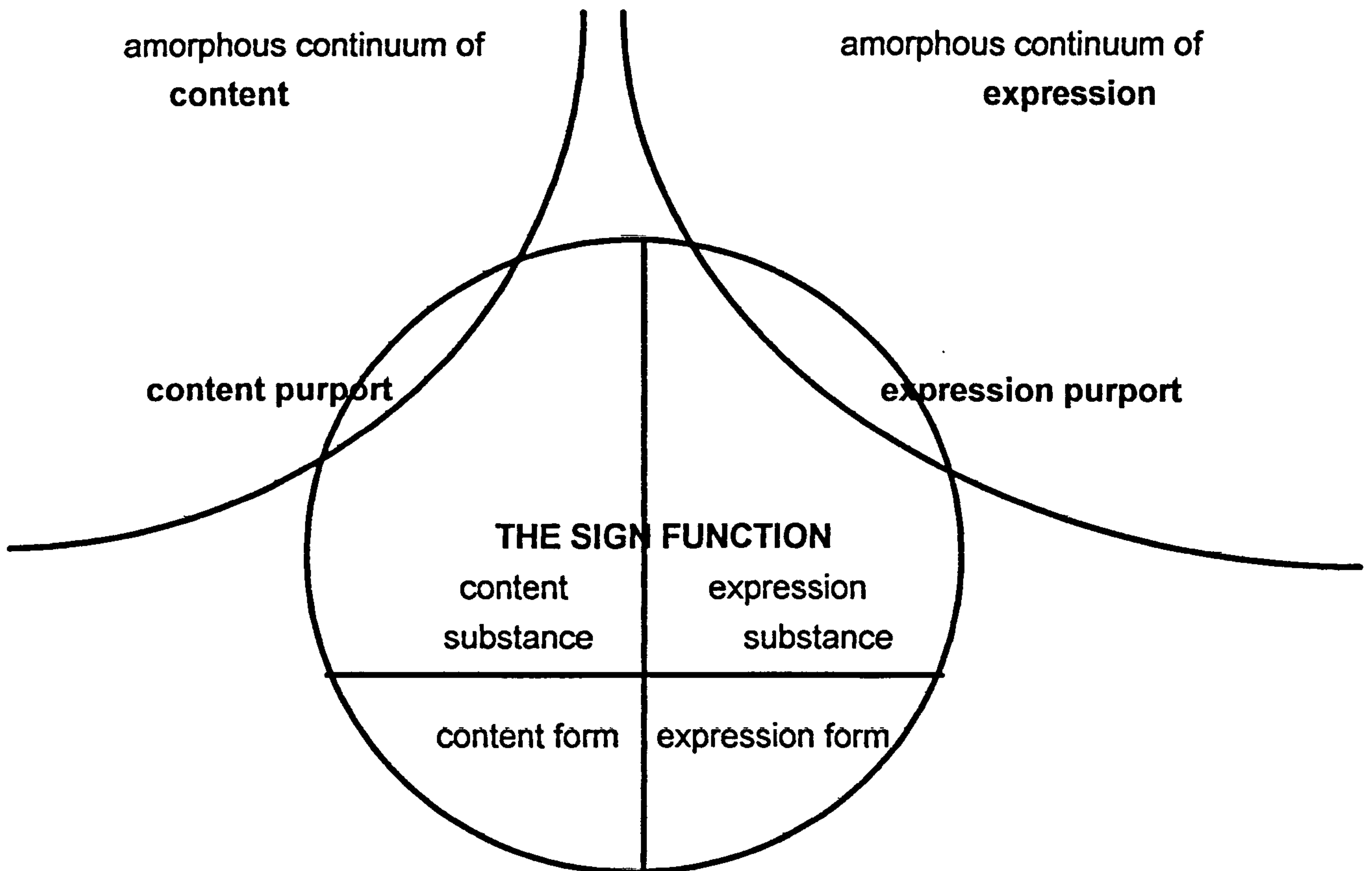


Fig. 9 Comparing Hjelmslev to Deleuze-Guattari (PTL 39/TP 100)

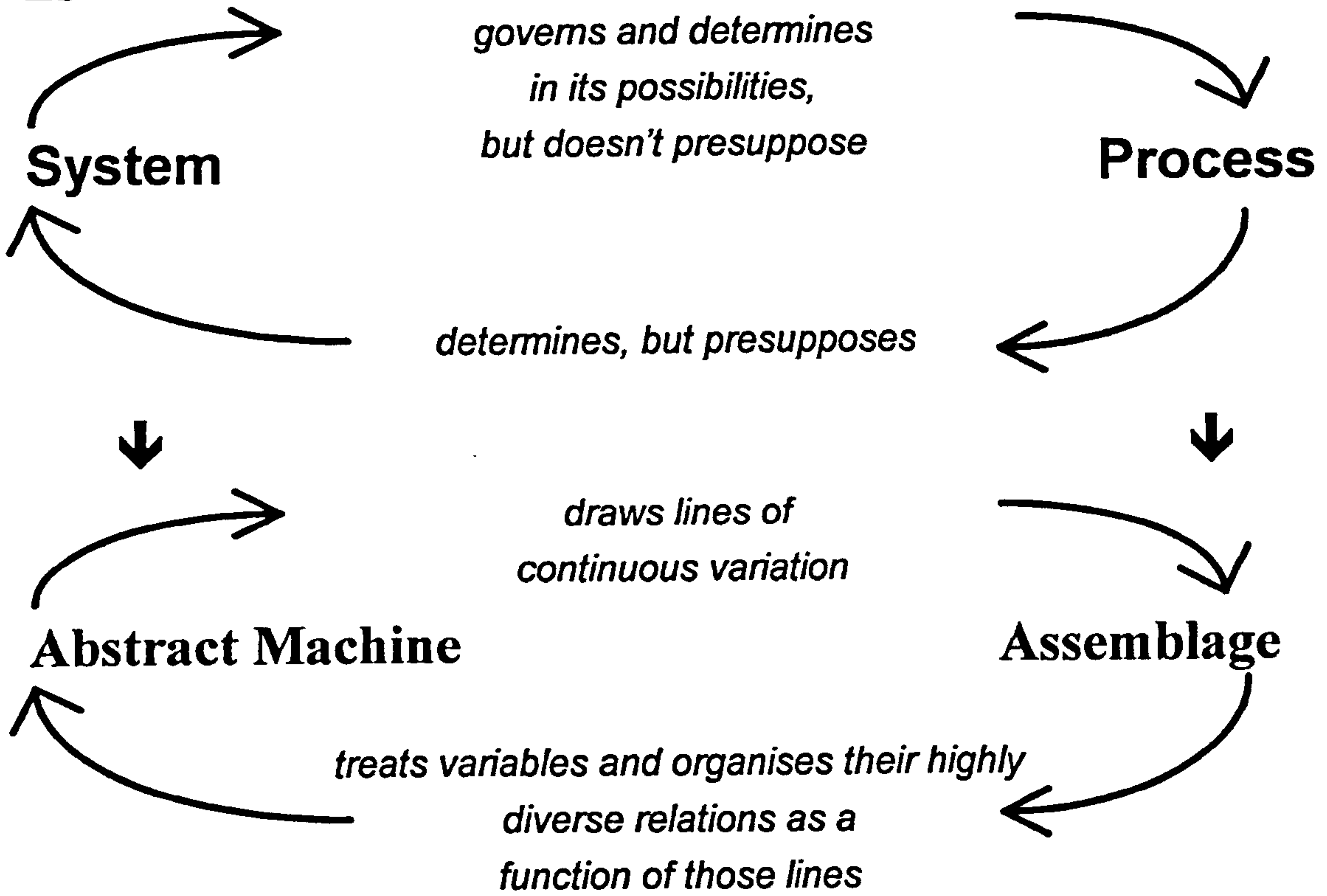
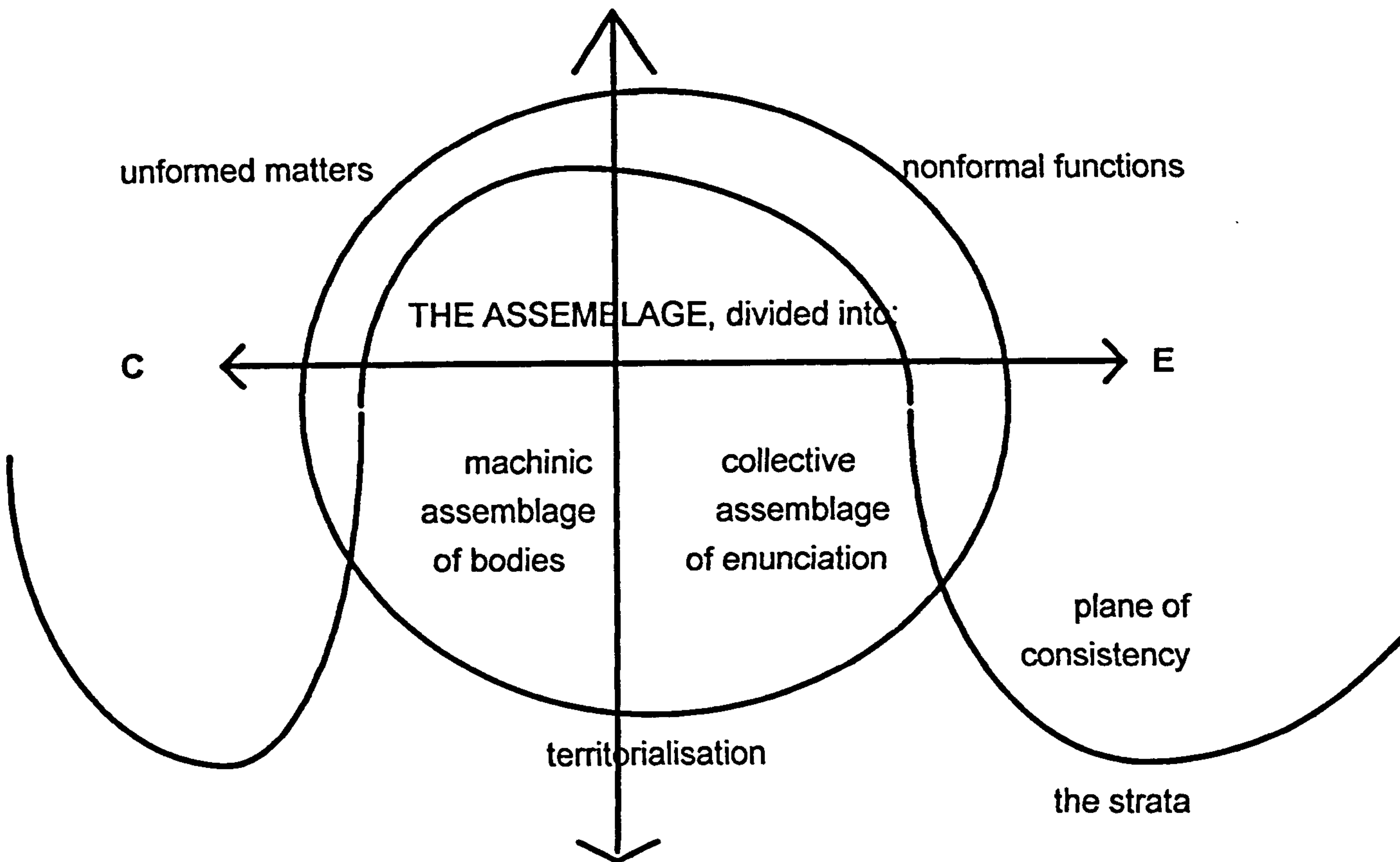


Fig. 10 The Assemblage

ABSTRACT MACHINE: cutting edges of deterritorialisation



7. Linguistic and Metalinguistic Practices

7.0 Concepts of language

The fundamental groundwork of language — the development of a clear-cut phonetic system, the specific association of speech elements with concepts, and the delicate provision for the formal expression of all manner of relations — all this meets us rigidly perfected and systematised in every language known to us.¹⁵⁷

The work of linguists like Edward Sapir played a great role in emphasising the sophistication of languages, those previously thought (as had been their speakers) to be primitive or infantile in comparison to those of Europe. By explaining through vast ranges of examples how what at first glance might appear to be unintelligible can in fact be translated/understood, if due attention is paid to differences both internal and external to language, Sapir helped undermine the West's assumptions about its inherent superiority. This valuable insight has nonetheless contributed to two approaches in the study of language which, I will argue, both fail to present an adequate picture of how language works. The first I raised back in Chapter 3 under the name of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: the notion that each different language forms a hermetically-sealed bubble encoding the flux of reality in a unique way. The second, the nativist account of language as a biological property of all humans, an innate capacity of the brain, argues that behind all the diversity of the world's languages lie the mechanics of an inbuilt Universal Grammar.

These two standpoints each come in many different forms, but there are however connections between them: they both reify language, in the

¹⁵⁷ Edward Sapir, *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech*, New York: Harvest, 1949: 22

sense that they raise it up as a founding principle of culture — whether this is seen as the single culture of all humanity (the differences between localities merely accidental) or the mutually equivalent (yet mutually incomprehensible) cultures of the world. The way they do this is by presenting it (meaning Language-singular for the nativists, or any individual language for the relativists) as a totality, a living organism in its own right, that is somehow distinct from and independent of the set of all actual utterances and inscriptions.¹⁵⁸

Instead of this I propose the Wittgensteinian notion of ‘this complicated form of life’, characterised not by an innate grammar or universals of communication, nor by a benign, Ruffinian ‘significatory matrix’, but by the *structure of normativity*, Judith Butler’s ‘highly rigid regulatory frame’ (to which we will return below).¹⁵⁹ While this will differ from culture to culture in its specificities, it will everywhere demonstrate the interplay between majoritarian tendencies of control, regularity and habit, and minoritarian tendencies of experimentation, rupture and change. These two aspects are intertwined and mark a relative difference, a difference in point of view rather than of nature:

Constant is not opposed to variable; it is a treatment of the variable opposed to the other kind of treatment, or continuous variation. So-called obligatory rules correspond to the first kind of treatment, whereas optional rules concern the construction of a continuum of variation (TP 103).

We seek an approach to language that takes this interplay as basic, rather than the ‘quest for constants’ that grounds such traditional oppositions as language/speech, synchrony/diachrony, competence/performance.

¹⁵⁸ To use Deleuze-Guattari’s phrase, they each posit ‘an Abstract Machine of language that does not appeal to any extrinsic factor’ (TP 85).

¹⁵⁹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York: Routledge, 1990

7.1 A Science of Language

The most monumental contribution to nativist linguistics is almost certainly that of Noam Chomsky, and his immensely thoughtful approach needs to be considered in order to establish more precisely the areas of the debate with which we are engaging, and those that are outside the remit of the present investigation. For Deleuze-Guattari, Chomsky is clearly damned from the outset for several reasons: his transformative grammar is intrinsically arborescent and hierarchical; his Universal Grammar would seem to be the archetype of language considered as an abstract machine in its own right (seemingly isolating linguistics from sociopolitical concerns of any kind); his approach demands the abstraction of constants from the continuous variation of language use; he seems to regard the idealised 'competence' of the individual speaker as the focus of linguistics rather than any notion of collective assemblages (with the corresponding point that the other, machinic aspect of the assemblage is also utterly irrelevant to his approach); his goal is to scientifically investigate the human 'faculty of language' imagined as an innate capacity or mechanism, the description of which is already and for all time a matter of what is necessarily true of all humans — a theoretical stance which would appear to be utterly at odds with a philosophy based on difference in itself.

Can these charges amount to substantiated criticisms of Chomsky's position, or do they simply miss the point of his enterprise? In the process of answering this question, I will examine some criticisms of nativist approaches to linguistics, as well as asking whether there are any possible points of connection between the project of generative grammar and our present concern with order-words. Along the way, we will make clearer exactly the aspects of language study and understanding to which the pragmatics of the order-word relates, and how, if at all, such an approach can communicate with that of Chomsky, or whether (as seems likely at the outset of this episode of our investigation) the differences in starting point, preferred descriptions and intended aims, are just too far apart to be of any use to one another.

7.1.1 Chomsky on Skinner

Noam Chomsky made his name with his 'Review of B. F. Skinner's *Verbal Behaviour*', in which he not only demonstrated the many flaws of Skinner's attempts to draw analogies between the responses to conditioning of various animals in the laboratory to the language use of humans, but also laid the groundwork for a brand new type of linguistics — generative grammar.¹⁶⁰ In his review, Chomsky shows Skinner's attempts to explain language acquisition and use in terms of conditioning alone (through the mechanism of stimulus and response), rather than through a combination of conditioning and internal structure, to be woefully inadequate to explain such phenomena as the successful acquisition of language in deprived circumstances, and the capacity to master the rules of sentence generation without being taught them explicitly.

The first problem with transposing Skinner's conceptual apparatus of stimulus and response from labrats to humans is the definition of the terms. Is everything that impinges on the organism a stimulus, or only that which provokes a response? Is every behaviour of the organism a response, or only that which is related to a particular stimulus in a lawlike manner? This may not pose a particular problem when you are concerned with whether a rat learns to press a lever for food, but when you are trying to explain (for example) a person's response to a painting, you either have to explain whatever her response is (assuming she has complied with your request and her response is in some way connected to the painting), by a particular property of the painting considered as stimulus, or else you have to abandon the schema.

¹⁶⁰ Noam Chomsky, 'Review of B. F. Skinner's *Verbal Behaviour*', in *Readings in Language and Mind*, ed. Heimar Geirsson and Michael Losonsky, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996

Could it be suggested that Chomsky's critique of Skinner could be turned on Deleuze-Guattari's notion of the order-word? From a Chomskian perspective, they too would seem to propose an account of language based on externalised stimulus-response mechanisms rather than paying any attention to the innate structures of the mind upon which these mechanisms surely depend. In actual fact, I would suggest that in isolating the 'faculty of order-words' Deleuze-Guattari are from a certain point of view closer to Chomsky than Skinner, in that this faculty is seen to be a property of human societies (at least since the age of the Despot, the emergence of signification and subjectification, and the conjoining of voice and graphism, as we saw in Chapter 5). The profound difference, however, is that this faculty is social, collective, rather than individual; it is ontologically prior to the notion of the isolated human subject. Its relation to postulated 'modules' of the brain is an issue we must leave open in this account — except to say that it is indeed dependent on the structure of the bodymind, but it is equally dependent on the structure of human society ('this complicated form of life') and its 'rigid regulatory frame' of normativity. Hence, Chomsky's dismissal of Skinner is largely justified, but his notions (which we will now explore in more detail) about what for him is the only conceivable way of understanding language or examining it are much more questionable.

7.1.2 Competence

In his *Linguistic Theory in America*, Frederick Newmeyer states that the key contribution of the approach to linguistics that Chomsky inaugurated, despite many differences in method and focus, is the notion of *competence*.¹⁶¹ Mitsou Ronat, in conversation with Chomsky, defines this as

¹⁶¹ Frederick J. Newmeyer, *Linguistic Theory in America: First Quarter Century of Transformational Generative Grammar*, London: Academic Press, 1997. Dwight Bolinger notes that despite the approach having been originated by Hjelmslev, no other linguist has matched Chomsky's success in bringing *formal linguistic theory* into its own — at least in its heyday from 1958 for about ten years (AL 512).

that knowledge internalized by a speaker of a language, which, once learned and possessed, unconsciously permits him to understand and produce an infinite number of new sentences. *Generative Grammar* is the explicit theory proposed to account for that competence.¹⁶²

Chomsky argues that psychology (of which linguistics is necessarily a subset¹⁶³) must start by 'identifying a cognitive domain [vision, memory, language, etc] [...] which can be considered as a system, or a mental organ, that is more or less integrated' (LR 49). This is because it is only on the basis of such a system that progress can be made in analysing the more traditional focus of psychology — namely, behaviour or *performance*. In subordinating performance to competence, Chomsky regards himself as laying out a truly rational science of psychology. Without this preliminary theoretical understanding of the *system* no understanding of the *process* — beyond the level of mere observation — is possible. Indeed, psychology necessarily has *some* implicit notion of competence, whether it is aware of it or not, even if it is simply the notion that 'language is a system of words' (LR 50). What Chomsky offers is the possibility of the 'better psychology' that would result from a 'better model of competence' (*ibid*).

7.1.3 I-Language and E-Language (part 1)

In a more recent work, Chomsky has reinscribed the competence/performance distinction as that between internal- or I-language and external- or E-language.¹⁶⁴ In presenting this distinction, he first brackets off 'the commonsense notion of language' as defined by its sociopolitical status (Chinese, English, etc), and mentions the common refrain that 'a language is a dialect with an army and a navy (attributed to

¹⁶² Noam Chomsky, *Language and Responsibility*, Based on conversations with Mitsou Ronat, tr. John Viertel, Sussex: Harvester Press 1979 (hereafter LR): 48-49.

¹⁶³ 'I cannot conceive of it in any other way' says Chomsky (LR 43).

¹⁶⁴ Noam Chomsky, *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin and Use* (hereafter KL), London: Praeger 1986

Max Weinrich)' (KL 15) — a notion Deleuze-Guattari phrase as 'There is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language within a political multiplicity' (TP 7). For Chomsky, this attitude cannot hope to furnish linguistics with any workable basis from which to examine language: 'all scientific approaches have simply abandoned these elements of what is called "language" in common usage' (KL 15). Also of no interest is the 'normative-teleological' side of the commonsense view, from which it makes sense to talk about a foreigner or child's "partial knowledge of English" (KL 16) — this too must be ruled out of the scientific approach, and replaced by an all-or-nothing 'idealized "speech community" that is consistent in its linguistic practice' (ibid.). In what he labels a 'theory-internal' point (KL 17), Chomsky then remarks that it would be impossible for this community to speak a mixture of languages, such as French and Russian, even if they do so uniformly, because

The language of such a speech community would not be "pure" in the relevant sense, because it would not represent a single set of choices among the options permitted by UG [Universal Grammar] but rather would include "contradictory" choices for certain of these options (KL 17)

Given that Chomsky just stressed the irrelevance of the sociopolitical boundaries between languages, there is something peculiar about this appeal to "purity", scare-quoted or not. The sympathetic reader has no choice but to assume that *this* kind of "pure" French (for example) is of a different order from, for example, the kind of "pure" French jealously guarded by the Académie Française. It surely also signposts a problem for the notion of a single UG (to which we will return below)!

7.1.4 Science and Idealisations

Chomsky confronts the question of the legitimacy of these idealisations, and gives the impression of arguing strenuously for their necessity, particularly that of 'property of mind P' (KL 17). Lest we are misled by the dualist implications of 'mind' in this context, Chomsky shortly makes clear he means 'mind/brain', and further remarks that while, for present

purposes we 'regard talk of mind as talk about the brain undertaken at a certain level of abstraction at which we believe, rightly or wrongly, that significant properties and explanatory principles can be discovered' (KL 22) linguistics and psychology as a whole may ultimately be reducible to biology (KL 27). I will argue that this abstraction with regard to 'mind' is flawed in the same way as Chomsky's other abstractions (UG, 'idealized speech community', etc) — it is not nearly abstract enough.

His 'argument' for the existence of his idealisations runs as follows:

Surely there is some property of mind P that would enable a person to acquire a language under conditions of pure and uniform experience, and surely P (characterized by UG) is put to use under the real conditions of language acquisition. To deny these assumptions would be bizarre indeed: It would be to claim either that language can be learned only under conditions of diversity and conflicting evidence, which is absurd, or that the property P exists — there exists a capacity to learn language in the pure and uniform case — but the actual learning of language does not involve this capacity. In the latter case, we would ask why P exists; is it a "vestigial organ" of some sort? The natural approach, and one that I think is tacitly adopted even by those who deny the fact, is to attempt to determine the real property of mind P, and then ask how P functions under the more complex conditions of actual linguistic diversity. It seems clear that any reasonable study of the nature, acquisition, and use of language in real life circumstances must accept these assumptions and then proceed on the basis of some tentative characterization of the property of mind P. In short, the idealizations made explicit in more careful work are hardly controversial: they isolate for examination a property of the language faculty the existence of which is hardly in doubt, and which is surely a crucial element in actual language acquisition (KL 17-18).

In other words, P must exist; P can only be examined on the basis of purified idealisations of language, even if normal conditions are those of 'diversity and conflicting evidence'. This P is, in all likelihood, species-specific (i.e. proper to all humans) (KL 18-19) and 'it is difficult to imagine

how [studies which do not make these assumptions] might fruitfully progress' (KL 19).

The trouble with the above 'argument' is that it starts with a foregone conclusion ('Surely there is some property of mind P...'), the only argument for which is the dismissal of its rejection as 'absurd'. One could conceivably accept the theoretical possibility that language *could* be acquired under conditions of purity, uniformity and nonconflicting evidence, without either allowing that it ever actually is, or that there is therefore such a thing as Universal Grammar. In fact, the first assumption is not that easy to accept. Supposing a group of adults modified their speech in rigid accordance with some theory or other of Universal Grammar, and brought up their children in the resulting atmosphere of a *truly* homogeneous speech community. This is not to suggest that Chomsky himself conceives of UG as in any way prescriptive, or that there is a veiled prescriptive agenda behind the notion, but rather to emphasise how odd such a community would be. It is far from obvious that the children of such a community would make fewer grammatical mistakes in their early years, or become more articulate or imaginative speakers, or be less prone to idiosyncratic constructions. What is striking, however, is the distasteful nature of such a notion — the amount of training these adults would have to undergo to strip them of every ungrammatical usage; the sense of artificiality of the resulting environment. Why, if the idea of a homogeneous speech community is supposed to be indispensable to any serious study of language, does the thought of it actually instantiated seem so contrary to the actual diversity of everyday language use? This does not amount to an argument that

'language can be learned *only* under conditions of diversity and conflicting evidence'; it does, however, cast doubt on Chomsky's insistence that such diversity *must* be considered the exception rather than the rule.

The second point about property of mind P 'common to all humans' (KL 19), is that it is one thing to insist (as Chomsky does) that (1) idealisations are 'the sole means of proceeding rationally [...] You study ideal systems, then afterwards you can ask yourself in what manner these ideal systems are represented and interact with real individuals' (LR 54). It is quite another to go on to insist that (2) the relevant 'ideal system' in the study of language is a 'property of mind P' rather than, say, a property of material systems or (more specifically) a property of sociopolitical assemblages, and (3) that this P is therefore 'common to all humans'. In actual fact Chomsky takes all three assumptions as read, when in fact all are debatable to say the least. As Bolinger writes,

There is no question that human infants come into the world with vastly more preformed capacity for language than used to be thought possible. [...] But whether or not the genetic design contains elements that are explicitly linguistic hinges on the overall question of explicitness. There is so much interdependence in the unfolding of our capacities that we cannot be sure that the linguistic ones do not start as nonlinguistic, only to be made linguistic by features of the environment (AL 284).

7.1.5 I-Language and E-Language (part 2)

To return to the distinction between E-language and I-language: the shift in focus from former to latter that Generative Grammar enacts (provided we accept Chomsky's claims about idealisation and property P) is a move in the direction both of realism, and of greater congruence between the commonsense notion of language and its linguistic counterpart. E-language encompasses most or all traditional approaches to linguistics — all those, whether structural, behavioural or what-have-you, which ignore the role of the mind/brain, or at least, do not hinge on the existence of property P. Whether conceived of as 'the totality of utterances that can be

made in a speech community' (Bloomfield, quoted by Chomsky, KL19),¹⁶⁶ a system of sounds associated with a system of concepts (Saussure's *langue*), or indeed Deleuze-Guattari's 'the set of all order-words, implicit presuppositions, or speech acts current in a language at a given moment' (TP 79),¹⁶⁷ languages in the sense of E-language are mere 'artefacts' (KL 26), 'epiphenomenon[al] at best' (KL 25), and 'artificial, somewhat arbitrary, and perhaps not very interesting constructs' (KL 26) with 'no corresponding real-world objects' (KL 27). In contrast, I-languages, conceived of as the "notion of structure" in the mind of the speaker' (KL 23), are precise, real systems to which the test of truth or falsity can apply, and hence are in line with the objects of study of any natural science.

It is the role of Universal Grammar in the respective approaches that makes this distinction possible. For E-language, it is the corresponding grammar which is the semi-arbitrary construct, in that any number of grammars could be enumerated that could account for the same utterances from the same speaker. If, however, you start from the notion of UG, characterised as the initial state (S_0), the starting point of every human by virtue of its genetic endowment, you can then move to *particular* grammars defined as 'theories of various I-languages' (KL 25), and more broadly, to the steady state S_s of knowledge of a language. The differences between I-languages in spite of their common basis in UG is due to the differences in experiences of speakers of different languages (though Chomsky hesitates to call this 'learning' (KL 26)), but it is the notion of UG that promises rich rewards to the linguist who compares,

¹⁶⁶ L. Bloomfield, 'A Set of Postulates for the Science of Language', *Language* 2, 1928. Reprinted in M. Joos, (ed.), *Readings in Linguistics*, Washington: American Council of Learned Sciences, 1957.

¹⁶⁷ It is difficult to avoid the air of tautology in this definition, though it goes with the territory — Chomsky also resorts to similarly awkward formulations, e.g. 'The I-languages that can be attained with S_0 fixed and experience varying are the attainable human languages, where by "language" we now mean I-language' (KL 25-26).

say, English and Japanese, with a view to constructing the UG necessarily common to both (and all other human languages).

These, then, are the guiding principles of the investigation: that the focus is I-language (the “notion of structure” in the head of the individual speaker — or in Chomsky’s earlier term, his or her ‘competence’), which consists of innate component (UG) and ‘learned’ component; that all speakers of all languages (excepting the pathological) share UG and hence that different I-languages have this shared basis that puts them, potentially, in relations of mutual illumination. A more dramatic result of this shift is that the things generally referred to as languages (i.e. E-languages) are of no interest to linguistics. In comparing the I-languages of an English speaker and a Japanese speaker the convergences must be conceived of as relating to UG and these individuals’ I-language, not to any real-world object called English or Japanese, for there is no such thing. The notion, therefore, of a power takeover by a dominant language (or ‘mother tongue’), with or without an army or navy, is nigh-on meaningless for this approach.

This shift serves to protect Chomsky from many criticisms of earlier versions of his approach, since when people complain that different notions of UG fail to capture what languages are actually like (their dependence on context, intonation, gesture and other ‘paralinguistic’ factors) or the differences between them, he can argue that his opponents are still thinking about E-languages, the relevance of which can only be an eventual outcome of an investigation into I-languages, to which any account of E-languages is entirely subordinate.

Chomsky dismisses the notion that there is anything problematic about basing linguistic study on an idealised notion of a homogenous linguistic community; indeed he argues that idealisation is necessary for any science to proceed, and further, that *only* idealised systems (such as competence, or I-language) ‘have interesting properties’ (LR 56). To the

charge that this idealisation in some way removes linguistics from social reality, Chomsky states

Opposition to idealization is simply objection to rationality; it amounts to nothing more than an insistence that we shall not have meaningful intellectual work. Phenomena that are complicated enough to be worth studying generally involve the interaction of several systems. Therefore you *must* abstract some object of study, you must eliminate those factors which are not pertinent. At least if you want to conduct an investigation which is not trivial (LR 57).

Linguists such as Labov, who pursue the *continuous variation* of language and are not concerned with extracting idealisations, are therefore condemned by Chomsky to be mere natural historians, like the collectors and cataloguers of rocks or butterflies, as opposed to the natural scientists who seek the *principles* of generative grammar. However, in a pithy but crucial footnote, Deleuze-Guattari cite Labov as pinpointing the paradox of much linguistics:

William Labov has clearly shown the contradiction, or at least paradox, created by the distinction between language and speech: language is defined as the "social part" of language, and speech is consigned to individual variations; but since the social part is self-enclosed, it necessarily follows that a single individual would be enough to illustrate the principles of language, without reference to any outside data, whereas speech could only be studied in a social context. The same paradox recurs from Saussure to Chomsky: "The social aspect of language is studied by observing any one individual, but the individual aspect only by observing language in its social context" (TP 524, note 7)¹⁶⁸

As we saw above, Chomsky's later I-language/E-language distinction does not mesh with that of language/speech, and since he is uninterested in the social aspect of language, he would seem to be released from the apparent paradox Labov notes. Nevertheless, from our perspective, the

¹⁶⁸ Deleuze-Guattari are quoting William Labov, *Sociolinguistic Patterns*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972: 186.

project of generative grammar is dramatically limited in its pursuit of the deep truths about language, precisely because it neglects language's intrinsically social nature, and because it takes as given this common property of all individual humans, rather than an unevenly distributed property of human society, intimately connected with normativity — society's relations of command and control.

7.2 Shibboleth¹⁶⁹

What I will be examining in this section is the issue of prescriptivism in language, the notion of correct usage, and the way linguistics seems to distance itself from this arena, leaving it to popular discussions of language. An excellent example of this stance can be found in Steven Pinker's best-selling *The Language Instinct*,¹⁷⁰ where he devotes a chapter to 'The Language Mavens', those self-appointed arbiters of word-use in popular media.¹⁷¹ Pinker's project is to show that language is 'as instinctive as spinning a web [is for a spider]', that 'every three-year-old is a grammatical genius', and that 'the design of syntax is coded in our DNA and wired into our brains' (371). Hence, the kind of thing the mavens call correctness is an irrelevant arena of pedantic hobbyism, of no interest to the scientific study of language. Pinker takes pains to show how non-standard uses conform to his scientific notion of grammar just as much as standard uses, and it is only prejudice to regard the former as inferior to the latter when it comes to utility in self-expression. He further shows that the bases on which the mavens criticise things like split infinitives, double negatives and other no-nos, themselves betray a lack of understanding of how language works. In the case of the former example, based on

¹⁶⁹ A 'shibboleth', Hebrew for 'torrent', is an offence to 'correct usage' which reveals the perpetrator as an ill-educated ignoramus. Popular examples are double negatives, split infinitives and non-standard past participles like 'drownded' and 'snuck'. In the Old Testament, the Ephraimites who, when challenged, pronounced the word 'sibboleth', revealed themselves not to be Gileadites and were duly slain (Judges 12: 5-6; LI 375).

¹⁷⁰ as cited in Section 3.4 above.

¹⁷¹ 'Maven' is Yiddish for *expert* (LI 373)

standard English grammar modelled on Latin, the rule that infinitives should not be split misses the point that because of the nature of Latin itself (where 'the infinitive is a single word like *facere* or *dicere*'), 'Julius Caesar couldn't have split an infinitive if he had wanted to'. On the other hand, in English, 'an "isolating" language, building sentences around many simple words instead of a few complicated ones', it makes perfect sense (LI 374). In the case of the latter, he points out that no one ever thought Mick Jagger actually meant that he *could* in fact get satisfaction, since only under the strictures of Standard English is there anything problematic about *emphasising* a negative with another negative just as it is commonplace in French's *Je ne sais pas*, or in English sentences like *I didn't buy any lottery tickets*, where the *any* cannot be used in the opposite sentence, **I bought any lottery tickets* because it works only to agree with the negated verb (LI 376).¹⁷²

However, by the end of the chapter, Pinker seems to have changed his mind, arguing that the written word always benefits from being carefully revised in accordance with principles of style. Is there a contradiction here? Sociolinguist John Honey certainly thinks so, and strenuously takes issue with Pinker's willingness to reassert what Honey calls the 'linguistic equality' thesis, despite the seemingly indisputable fact that everyone has notions of good and bad language use, clear and unclear expression.¹⁷³ For Honey, the 'linguistic equality' thesis is the assumption taken for granted by the majority of linguists, that every language, or dialect of a language, is as good as every other — that there can be no grounds for suggesting that one is morally superior, more advanced or more 'highly evolved' than another. There are several contributing factors to the success of this doctrine, which Honey sees as having dominated linguistics throughout the 20th Century. The first factor is linguistics' pretensions to scientific objectivity, and its attempts to distance itself from pejorative and discriminatory attitudes both to non-European languages

¹⁷² The asterisk is a convention in linguistics to designate an *unacceptable* construction.

and to supposedly deficient dialects of European ones. Both Honey and another sociolinguist Deborah Cameron argue that linguistics has gone too far in the quest for disinterested objectivity, and as a result has neglected the irreducible role of normativity in language, in the academic study of language, and in everyday discussions about language in all walks of life.¹⁷⁴

For Honey, this has resulted in an unwillingness to talk about the relative merits of different languages, or more importantly for his purposes, of different dialects of the same language. Honey's book is an apologetic for Standard English (SE), and the notion of standardised language generally, as something that needs to be taught in the schools even if this is at the expense of people's pride or fluency in their regional dialect.

His arguments in favour of *actively enforcing* SE, in brief, are:

1. People naturally associate well-spokenness and literacy with education, higher social status and power. In this sense people who speak in regional dialects will be discriminated against, as assumptions will be made about their intelligence. By the same token, enforcing of Standard English is necessary to combat discrimination *against* it from within communities of nonstandard English speakers.
2. Fluency in SE, being the language of government, law, scientific research and the great works of literature, is a *prerequisite* for involvement in these spheres. For schools not to give everyone the opportunity to speak SE is to emasculate them socially, politically and artistically.

¹⁷³ John Honey, *Language is Power* (hereafter LP), London: Faber & Faber, 1997

¹⁷⁴ Deborah Cameron, *Verbal Hygiene* (hereafter VH), London: Routledge, 1995. NB.: 'Disinterested' here means impartial, though as both Pinker and Cameron point out, this definition is in the process of being superseded by *uninterested*, a fact Pinker laments (despite his insistence that such gripes in the face of inevitable language change are futile and illfounded). Admittedly, my phrase 'disinterested objectivity' is clumsily tautologous.

3. The maintenance of SE (best done, for Honey, in accordance with the judgements of a cross-section of educated speakers) is invaluable for *communication*, wherever English is spoken. Non-standard forms, with their less-clearly defined grammar, higher incidence of slang and esoteric phrases, are limited by geography, but SE (in both British and American versions) is spoken the world over. Without its active promotion, English risks dissolving into a vast range of mutually unintelligible dialects, whereas *with* global promotion and support, a consensually formulated (and regularly updated) SE could truly be a world language.

Honey argues that belief in the dogma of linguistic equality has resulted in an erosion of English teaching in the UK, with teachers less willing to correct non-standard phrases and spellings. This is combined with changing attitudes to how grammar should be taught, or whether it should be taught at all, and the net result is (supposedly) appallingly high levels of illiteracy — especially in deprived areas — and the resultant perpetuation of cycles of poverty, rising crime figures and the other familiar riffs of the ‘hell in a handbasket’ deterioration school of social commentary. There are two aspects of Honey’s stance I would like to focus on: his critique of supporters of non-standard English on the basis of their role in perpetuating social decline, and his tendency to take as inevitable the prevailing attitudes mentioned in point 1 above. The latter I will examine in the discussion of verbal hygiene below. The former question is particularly relevant to Deleuze-Guattari’s advocacy of ‘becoming-minor’ in language, ‘making language stutter’, and ‘becoming a foreigner in your own tongue’.

7.3 What is Wrong with Communication?

The most cursory glance at Deleuze-Guattari’s ‘Postulates of Linguistics’ indicates that their stance will be fundamentally opposed to Honey’s assumptions regarding the superiority of Major or Standardised language, which they clearly associate with social control through the transmission of order-words. I have dealt above with their equation of grammar with

the imposition of the 'semiotic coordinates' by which we are expected to navigate our courses through life, a strict schooling in the language of the State being intertwined with the normalising of behaviour through social obligation. However, are they perhaps a little quick off the mark in their condescension towards official grammar and standardised language? This is one aspect of a greater worry Deleuze-Guattari often engender, that their valorisation of change and creation over stability is at best naïve, and at worst, dangerously destructive. Supposing English teaching (for example) were to be carried out on the basis of a rejection of the strictures of grammar, the fostering of password-creation over order word reinforcement, and encouragement of free innovation for its own sake? If we take at face value their claims that language is not primarily about conveying information, then perhaps a situation where conveying information becomes virtually impossible is the situation we should strive for? How else are we to take Deleuze's call for the creation of 'vacuoles of noncommunication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control' (N 174)?

In short, a Honeyesque critique of Deleuze-Guattari's stance on language would place them as two well-educated intellectuals devaluing everyone else's right to join the club of standard language users (an argument he uses against critics of SE, Raymond Williams and Roy Harris¹⁷⁵) by arguing that standardised, State-sanctioned language is the vehicle of oppression (rather than, as Honey argues with some force, of liberation). While of course Deleuze-Guattari were not setting out to contribute directly to debates about education policy, there is nonetheless a worry here that their views — if they are supposed to be taken to have any practical applications whatsoever, which I assume they are — smack of

¹⁷⁵ LP 114-116, e.g. 'So we have Roy Harris ridiculing those who, when nowadays urging the case for "standard English" (a term he puts in quotation marks) use the argument that "is the [kind of] English to learn for better job opportunities and improved social status" [...] It is easy for someone who has himself moved upwards socially from lesser beginnings to a university professorship [...] to belittle the ambitions of others who would like to do the same' (115).

armchair anarchism.¹⁷⁵ What use is minor literature if you have never learned to read?

The rather distasteful conclusion from this could be that Deleuze-Guattari's position is something like 'Of course people have to be taught to read and write in accordance with the major language. If they cannot give and receive order-words, they can't free up the passwords within; if they can't talk like a native in the first place, they cannot learn to talk like a "foreigner in their own tongue". We only said 'vacuoles' of noncommunication — we didn't mean whole housing estates!' In other words, to the extent that Deleuze-Guattari are critical of the Strata they are also complicit, and their criticisms only carry weight insofar as they assume the continued existence of the Strata regardless. Rather than the anarchic revolutionaries that are perhaps suggested by the radical educational policy I fancifully extrapolated from them above, they are actually interested in 'becoming-minor' in language as a literary or artistic exercise, an exercise that is only interesting against the backdrop of the continued dominance of the Major language of representation.

This reading of Deleuze-Guattari suggests that affirming passwords over order-words amounts to little more than a lifestyle choice, open only to those privileged enough to be able to discern the difference, with absolutely nothing to say about the problems caused by high levels of illiteracy the world over. For example, Goodchild's *Deleuze and Guattari* appears to present their politics in this fashion, where the point is to explore your own private becomings and leave politics in the capable hands of the social democrats.¹⁷⁶ I hope now to show that their account

¹⁷⁵ There is a parallel here with feminist criticisms of their notion of 'becoming-woman', whereby the assumed starting-point is always that of White Man Face, and the first stage is always becoming-woman. How does this apply, how can this be even vaguely relevant, to people who have never been in the subject-position of White Man Face?

¹⁷⁶ Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire*, London: Sage, 1996. I allude also to a response by Goodchild at the *Thinking Alien*

runs much deeper than this in its dissection of the social functioning of language, and rather than proposing an aesthetic judgement of password over order-word, they do in actual fact have a substantial contribution to make to issues of language teaching that surpasses the Honey stance.

In 'Postulates of Linguistics' they argue that major and minor are not opposing categories of language, but *the same language* from two different points of view: that of the institutional grammarian (in the prescriptive sense), extracting pseudo-universals from the flows of language on the one hand, and on the other, an experimental approach focusing on the *continuous variation* of language, its dependence in any given instance on the specifics of the social context in which it arises. As far as the teaching of language goes, this could take the form of a shift of emphasis (one that has already taken place) from a focus on supposedly immutable rules, to a sensitivity to the importance of paralinguistic aspects — intonation, the interplay of formal and informal registers, body language, and perhaps most importantly, the indexes of relative power in social interaction. The last thing such an approach would be is blind to the kind of prejudices Honey talks about against non-standard forms. Rather than seeing standard uses as something of value for their own sake, language teaching on a pragmatic basis would equip the student with an understanding of the *embeddedness* of speech and writing in a variety of different situations, and that discourses about language are (like discourses about anything else) only comprehensible in relation to the power relationships of which they are an expression.

conference at Leeds University (1997) where he said that there was no particular correlation to be found between Deleuze's metaphysics and his politics. Compare Deleuze's remark that *all* philosophy is political, made so by the many things that are shameful about being human, from Nazism to "jolly people" gossiping' (N 172), and that 'There's no democratic state that's not compromised to its very core by its part in generating human misery' (N 173).

In any case, communication has never been as simple as the model of 'telementation', or the transfer of thoughts from one head to another, suggested. As I have tried to show in this thesis, language is not a fixed code, and its flexibility also entails what could be seen as its greatest weakness — indeterminacy. Exact transfer of ideas from mind to mind is a hopeless idealisation, that makes inexplicable the enduring appeal of 'non-standard' literature from *Tristram Shandy* to Dr Seuss, and reduces language to a transparent medium of communication.¹⁷⁸ As Deborah Cameron puts it,

Non-standard and unconventional uses of language can only be seen as a threat to communication if communication itself is conceived in a way that negates our whole experience of it (VH 25).

In the following discussion of 'verbal hygiene', I will explore the possibilities of a fundamentally political, pragmatic understanding of how language works, in order to show that these ideas are a much more appealing basis for investigating and teaching languages than Honey's commitment to standardisation as means, and maximised communication as goal.

7.4 Metalinguistic Practices

[H]umans do not just use language, they comment on the language they use (VH 1).

In her book *Verbal Hygiene*, Deborah Cameron, like Honey, argues against the supposed objectivity of linguistics — though she is keen not to dismiss its insights and innovations. The problem with it is its failure to take adequate account of *metalinguistic practices*, both institutional, subcultural and individual. These practices or movements in the

¹⁷⁸ Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, Ware, Herts.: Wordsworth Classics, 1996. Dr Seuss, *Hooray for Diffendoofer Day!*, New York: Random House, 1998 (for example).

modification of speech and writing, she argues, are as old as language itself, predating modern linguistics by millennia. Her point, as we will see, is very close to that of Deleuze-Guattarian *pragmatics* — namely that there is no zone of language use that is free of investments in social and political concerns; language is never simply about information or communication, but always arises in particular social contexts, in particular relationships of power: the abstract entity ‘Language’ does not exist beyond its concrete instantiations in particular social contexts.

It is important for linguists to acknowledge that there is more to people’s beliefs than the ignorance and prejudice that meet the eye; for in order to displace the most powerful ideology there is, namely common sense, it is necessary to grasp its hidden principles and to understand the reasons for its enduring popular appeal (VH xiii).¹⁷⁹

In explaining her choice of the term ‘verbal hygiene’ to designate the practices she is investigating, Cameron contrasts it with the traditional distinction in linguistics between the descriptive and the prescriptive, arguing that the discipline has tended to distance itself from any investment in the latter area. As Steven Pinker was cited as arguing above, prescribing ‘correct’ language use is an activity for people who do not know any better — people who have not recognised that everyone (barring such exceptions as the mentally subnormal) automatically and necessarily has the means to express themselves fully, as language necessarily arrives as a totality, differences between idiolects notwithstanding. Linguistics is concerned with examining this natural phenomenon, in charting its changes and differences through history, across continents and through the economic strata of society. Notions of ‘correctness’ are alien to linguistics, since while it recognises that certain

¹⁷⁹ Deleuze-Guattari reject the notion of ideology; indeed they deny that there is any such thing. Accounts based on ideology relegate oppressive power structures to the realm of ideas, as though it were simply a matter of consciousness-raising, rather than one of deeper social change. Cameron is drawing on Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power*, Harlow: Longman, 1989.

uses may be privileged by certain groups over others, these are simply data to be recorded and interpreted in the manner befitting a true science.¹⁸⁰

Cameron argues that while the study of language in accordance with scientific practice is clearly possible and productive, such an approach cannot escape the fact that language operates on the basis of norms. Language is not a phenomenon like gravity or the speed of light; it is neither an artefact of culture, nor a living thing in its own right — ‘any more than swimming, or birdsong, is a living thing’¹⁸¹ (cf. Pinker’s suggestion that ‘language is like the song of the humpback whale’ (LI 370)). The rules linguistics ‘discovers’ no doubt capture actual regularities in speakers’ behaviour, but to say therefore that such rules exist ‘in the speaker’ or indeed ‘in the language’ conceals the social apparatus giving force to such rules and maintaining such regularities, a process in which linguistics is itself thoroughly implicated.

Cameron refuses to allow by unchallenged, any appeals to how (a) language or grammar simply ‘is’. Such appeals, while more innocuous and perhaps unavoidable in the natural sciences, are in linguistics mystifications, in that they take for granted the authority of some set of facts of past or present usage, to arbitrate in disagreements over new formulations. The point is not so much that you cannot derive an ‘ought’

¹⁸⁰ As mentioned at the end of Section 4.4, Deleuze-Guattari write: ‘Linguistics can claim all it wants to be science, nothing but pure science — it wouldn’t be the first time that the order of pure science was used to secure the requirements of another order’ (TP 101).

¹⁸¹ Here Cameron is quoting James Milroy, whose characterisation of language (as ‘a vehicle for communication *between* living things, namely human beings’, the idealisation of which as homogenous (the type of characterisation Chomsky dubs E-language) wrongly shifts the emphasis away from the activities of individual speakers) she agrees with, but whose dismissal of prescriptivism as unnatural, she rejects (VH 5, 9). While we disagree that language is primarily a ‘vehicle for communication’, we agree that ‘the processes affecting it are social processes’ (VH 5).

from an 'is', but (firstly) that the facts (or 'ises') brought to bear in such disputes will always be overdetermined by some already operational set of 'oughts' left outside the realm of argument, and (secondly) that when it comes to language use, there are no mere 'ises', just the 'oughts' that successfully took root and became entrenched.¹⁸²

For example, in English the masculine third person pronoun has found itself on the receiving end of verbal hygienists, on the fairly obvious basis that it excludes half of humanity. Traditionalists argued that 'he' actually meant 'he or she' all along, or at least that it does now, and that in any case it is vastly preferable to such ugly constructions as 'he or she', or worse still, the shudder-inducing 'they'-singular. People of this view to this day can be heard grudgingly correct themselves ('...sorry, *he or she*...') making it clear what a terrible imposition this concession is. Nevertheless, when I hear 'he' when what is clearly meant is 'he or she', it jars. Expressing the same sentiment slightly differently (and using the technique of 'experiencer deletion' as listed among Bolinger's list of techniques of 'non-neutrality in grammar'¹⁸³), *it is no longer acceptable to say 'he' when you mean 'he or she'*. Needless to say, if I had been brought up to believe that 'he' could be said to apply to both sexes, rather than its use being due to the subordination of women, it is likely I would strenuously argue that it is both acceptable and correct, and that anyone who says otherwise is either a fool or a dangerous extremist. In partial

¹⁸² It could be argued that there are biological constraints — lung capacity, the nature of the mouth and ear, and so on — that result in languages tending to function in some ways rather than others. Following the doubts raised about nativism earlier in the chapter, I wish also to suggest that the argument that language *has* to be thus and so, because of the facts of biology, is guilty of a reductionist fallacy that serves to give the status quo objective justification, just as those who argue on the basis of 'facts' of grammar. The fact that things are how they are is no reason to believe they always have been or that they can never change.

¹⁸³ AL 260-1. Other examples are *It is obvious that...* (obvious to whom?); *It is a known fact that...* (known to whom?), or *John seems to be lying* rather than *It seems to me that John is lying*.

concession to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, if the way we were taught language doesn't actually affect how we think about things in general, it certainly affects how we respond to challenges to our verbal hygiene!

This distinction (fool or extremist) Cameron brings out as evidence of the contradictory stance taken by opponents of language change. In such an example as the above, they are inclined to say on the one hand that these changes are offences against the way language actually is, and on the other that it doesn't matter anyway — why do these campaigners think that such superficial changes are anything to do with any real plight women and racial minorities might actually be in? This translates into two equally contradictory responses to changes that have become established (e.g. *Black* (or, if appropriate, *African-American*) replacing *Negro*, *disabled* or *dysabled* replacing *handicapped*, as well as the more obviously pejorative forms *nigger* and *cripple*). Either such changes are simply seen to be due to geological shifts in language caused by impersonal social currents rather than the result of individuals campaigning, or they are cosmetic shifts of little consequence that will probably change again tomorrow as fashion dictates. Both responses depoliticise language, and negate the efforts of the campaigners involved.

Cameron argues that linguistics cannot keep its hands clean in issues of verbal hygiene, because the distinction between what it does and what popular (and unpopular) verbal hygienists do is very difficult to maintain:

both prescriptivism *and* anti-prescriptivism invoke certain norms and circulate particular notions about how language ought to work [...] 'description' and 'prescription' turn out to be aspects of a single (and normative) activity: a struggle to control language by defining its nature' (VH 8).

Linguistics may purport to merely observe, but the often-unquestioned authority of science and the underdetermination of theories by empirical

data mean that its objectivity should not be taken for granted.¹⁸⁴ Instead, a linguistics that takes the normativity of language as fundamental will be better placed to understand its own political roles.

Verbal hygiene practices¹⁸⁵ in all their diversity point to two key notions. The first is that people constantly talk about talk, and modify the way they and each other speak and write. In other words, rather than being something we just do, the way we do it is as important (if not more so) than whatever it is we are speaking or writing about — and we are constantly making (more or less conscious) decisions about this just as we are about every other activity. In contrast to this, the disinterested stance of the linguist seems ludicrously alien: surely language-use of all things has to be investigated with rigorous attention, if not necessarily to the inner world of the individual, then at least to the actual situation she is acting in (and her effect on it). In Deleuze-Guattari's terms, utterances can only be understood in relation to particular collective assemblages — this last phrase marking a distinction both with the *speech* of the individual and the *language* of the society, and instead focusing on the particular milieu on which the utterance occurs.¹⁸⁶ Indeed, collective assemblages, the boundaries of which are far from self-evident in *A Thousand Plateaus*,

¹⁸⁴ Steven Pinker gives an example of the elusiveness of the descriptive/prescriptive boundary in the popular imagination, when he writes: 'A linguist's question to an informant about some form in his or her speech (say, whether the person uses *sneaked* or *snuck*) is often lobbed back with the ingenious counterquestion "Gee, I better not take a chance; which one is correct?"' (LI 371)

¹⁸⁵ examples of which Cameron gives as 'campaigning for the use of plain language on official forms; belonging to a spelling reform society, a dialect preservation society or an artificial language society; taking courses in 'communication arts' or 'group discussion', going for elocution lessons, sending for correspondence courses on 'good English' or reading self-improvement literature on how to be a better conversationalist; editing prose to conform to a house style; producing guidelines on non-sexist language, or opposing such guidelines' (VH 9).

¹⁸⁶ In this regard, the importance of standard usages (as discussed in reference to Honey above), whether they are deemed positive or negative, will depend on the particular assemblage concerned.

can be carved out on the basis of the verbal hygiene practices (along with other order-words) in circulation at a given moment. You comprise a collective assemblage with the rest of your Plain English pressure group, or with your fellow speakers of rural Doric, Jamaican patois or poststructuralist philosophy jargon.

What becomes of the individual in the collective assemblage? Cameron's arguments against those approaches which negate the roles of *individuals* in language change could conceivably be turned against the notion of the collective assemblage — is this not simply the return of the notion that impersonal geological shifts in society facilitate change rather than, perhaps, actively campaigning individuals (be they feminists, the Académie Française, or whoever)? This point raises the issue of the nature of the individual and the acts that can be attributed to it. Arguing with Deleuze-Guattari, all utterances are collective, and (as Cameron would presumably concede) it is the *collective* nature of such verbal hygiene movements that result in change, rather than their happening to consist in groups of particularly influential individuals. The individual is constructed from the collective assemblages, rather than the other way round, particularly with relation to politics and the politicisation of language. We will shortly examine Cameron's account of the construction of the individual.

The second point — why verbal hygiene practices are as relevant as any other socio-political campaigns or movements — is that they are never simply about language. As I have just suggested they can be defining characteristics of particular groups (most obviously in the case of those formed with explicitly linguistic aims) and in such cases, what might lie behind the ostensive activities is investment in a group of like minds, united in their alienation from prevailing attitudes. But more significantly, as Cameron points out, verbal hygiene debates are generally the symbolic expression of “deeper” social conflicts’ — or rather the two levels are in ‘complex interaction’ to the extent that neither can be

understood without reference to the other (VH 12). In Deleuze-Guattarian terms, the two are in reciprocal presupposition — the collective assemblage defined by its utterances (where what is said is not separable from the way it is said: *medium = message*¹⁸⁷) and the machinic assemblage defined by bodies, their actions and passions. On both sides, it is a matter of the enforcement or rejection of traditional norms and the creation and maintenance of new norms, behaviours and social obligations linked through the switching point of the order-word.

7.5 Subjectification

Cameron proposes three zones — *authority*, *identity* and *agency* — in which this interaction is played out. Each of these draw their significance from the uses of language, and show why disputes over the uses of language go ‘all the way down’ as regards the structuring of the social. Crucially, she argues that

Linguistic conventions are quite possibly the last repository of unquestioned authority for educated people in secular society. Tell such people that they must dress in a certain way to be admitted to a public building and some at least will demand to know why; they may even reject the purported explanation as absurd and campaign for a change in the rules. Tell them, on the other hand, that the comma goes outside the quotation marks rather than inside (or for that matter vice versa as is conventional in North America) and they will meekly obey, though the rule is patently as arbitrary as any dress code (VH 12).

The point is that while the rule itself may be arbitrary, its social function is not. As Honey argued, failing to comply with standard usages marks you out as legitimately discriminatable-against, where almost nothing else would — as Cameron puts it, ‘linguistic bigotry is among the last publicly expressible prejudices left to members of the western intelligentsia. Intellectuals who would find it unthinkable to sneer at a beggar or

¹⁸⁷ ‘The Medium is the Message’: Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, London: Sphere, 1967

someone in a wheelchair will sneer without compunction at linguistic “solecisms” (VH 12). For Cameron, this is prejudice (though she freely admits experiencing the ‘jarring’ effect of bad ^{spelling and} grammar herself¹⁸⁸); for Honey it is natural and legitimate, since he is already convinced of the superiority and importance of standard forms. Both agree that ‘correctness’ is neither arbitrary or trivial, and that to perpetuate or challenge the authority of grammar is to take a stand on far more than just language (and hence, will often be an utterly futile and counterproductive gesture). For Cameron, this is an indication that verbal hygienists of every stripe disingenuously or deliberately confuse the issues by failing to see the underlying social processes that are at stake.

The inexorability of grammar runs as deep as all other social behaviours — we are as likely or unlikely to *want* to speak or spell incorrectly as we are to want to draw attention to ourselves, act aggressively or obscenely, or otherwise contravene our internalised codes of acceptable behaviour. Take the following excerpt from a conversation about correct and nonsensical sentence constructions cited by Bolinger, between a mother and her seven-year-old daughter:

M: What’s the difference how you say things as long as people understand you?

D: It’s a difference because people would stare at you (titter) [...] I don’t want somebody coming around and saying — correcting me.¹⁸⁹

For Cameron, a major failing of sociolinguistics has been its taking for granted of ‘people’s demonstrable sensitivity to linguistic norms, their fine-tuned awareness of prestige and stigma’, without paying any attention to the actual mechanics of how this sensitivity and awareness comes about

¹⁸⁸ ‘I can choose to suppress the irritation I feel when I see, for example, a sign that reads “Potatoe’s”; I cannot choose not to feel it’ (VH 14).

¹⁸⁹ Bolinger, citing Lila R. Gleitman, Henry Gleitman and Elizabeth F. Shipley, “The Emergence of Child as Grammarian”, *Cognition: International Journal of Cognitive Psychology*, 1: 137-64, 1973 (AL 275).

(VH 14-15). Her suggestion is to examine the *construction* of identity (or in terms of the present investigation, *subjectification*), turning on its head the sociolinguistic assumption that linguistic behaviour can be explained in reference to a pre-existing identity, and looking instead at how social positions and relationships are constructed through linguistic and other behaviours. Drawing on Judith Butler's performative account of identity-construction, Cameron asks 'If identity pre-exists language, if it is given, fixed and taken for granted, then why do language-users have to mark it so assiduously and repetitively?' (VH 17). This continual, performative marking of identity is necessary because 'identity does not exist outside of the acts that constitute it', each of which are in interaction with the 'highly rigid regulatory frame'¹⁹⁰ of social norms.

This frame defines what acts are required to produce an intelligible, acceptable or normal identity; its definitions cannot simply be ignored, but they can be negotiated, resisted and in some circumstances deliberately modified [...] Debates on verbal hygiene are of particular interest: conflict renders visible the processes of norm-making and norm-breaking, bringing into the open the arguments that surround rules. Verbal hygiene practices that are not the subject of debate are also illuminating: examined closely, they show how norms become naturalized and how unquestioned ('conventional') ways of behaving are implicitly understood by social actors. Overall, then, the investigation of normative practices, whether contested or taken for granted, has the potential to cast light on the relations between language, society and identity (VH 17).

The third zone of agency brings together problems of authority and identity, in the question of agency — that of the extent to which we speak language, or, to paraphrase Heidegger, it speaks us. For linguistics, as we have seen, language is a natural phenomenon or a living organism with its own pattern of evolution and change; for verbal hygienists, it might either be something whose decline needs to be prevented, or whose outmoded forms need to be brought in line with changing attitudes. It is under the banner of agency that Cameron presents her middle path

¹⁹⁰ Cameron (citing Butler, *Gender Trouble*), VH 16-17.

between the notions either that language use (as natural process) cannot be made artificially to square with so-called passing whims of the age (such as political correctness) — and that attempts to make it do so are misguided prescriptivism, or that if changes are seen to take root they are merely the gradual evolution of language due to the effects of social change. In either case agency is denied and the ‘naturalness’ of language is strategically appealed to — in the first case, because the fact that changes can be argued for successfully and can take root as a result is denied, and in the second, because linguistic changes are seen as mere epiphenomena of social change.

A high level of conformity need not mean everyone assents to the relevant norms; it could mean rather that they live within social relations that make deviance and resistance particularly difficult (VH 238n4).

Because science itself has authority in modern society, while at the same time the discourse of value remains a highly salient one for everyday talk about language, the absolute distinction between observing norms and enforcing them cannot be maintained in practice (VH 8).

Cameron cites right wing commentator John Marenbon, who argued that the linguists who argue for description over prescription have missed the point:¹⁹¹

‘grammar prescribes by describing’. The point of doing a ‘descriptive’ grammatical analysis is precisely to establish what the norms of grammar are, so they can be prescribed with confidence to users of the language (VH 10).

But though Cameron agrees with this point, she disagrees with his assumption that we are therefore obliged to follow one set of prescriptions over another. By accepting that normativity is inescapable in language use, you open the very question of which normative strategies to follow at

¹⁹¹ John Marenbon, *English Our English: The New Orthodoxy Examined*, London: Centre for Policy Studies, 1987

any given point — a question that bears directly on the social and political investments of each.

I would argue that there is not the radical distinction Cameron proposes between the normative practices of verbal hygiene and normativity in other social arenas, in that the latter are often so ingrained as to be largely invisible much of the time. Examples of this could be the behaviours which mark someone as weird or insane-looking. Making this comparison brings up the corresponding argument one might make, to the effect that people who break social norms, whether by running around naked or by machine-gunning their workmates probably *are* insane, just as the illiterate or inveterately ungrammatical *are* deficient. Just because these norms are in one sense socially constructed, they are nonetheless real forces on people's behaviour, and there are real consequences for failing to conform to them.

The analogy can be taken further. Should there be any proponents of 'grammatical atheism', or the idea that grammar, or the regime of signification/subjectification in its entirety, is a set of shackles to be thrown off, or radically refigured, they would bear comparison with the radical antipsychiatry of someone like Thomas Szasz.¹⁹² While the present approach is happy to suggest that psychiatry and linguistics alike have had roles to play in ordering and controlling society in a rather less disinterested way than that in which they like to be presented, it is another thing altogether to suggest that either psychiatry (with its not infrequent successes in preventing people commit suicide or helping them get through difficult and dangerous periods of their lives) or the various sciences and proto-sciences of language should be declared our enemies. The point is not to criticise the very idea of norms, or to suggest that we could do without them, but rather to explore the possibilities of

¹⁹² Thomas S. Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness: Foundations of a Theory of Personal Conduct*, London: Paladin, 1972, and *Ideology and Insanity: Essays on the Psychiatric Dehumanization of Man*, London: Marion Boyers Ltd, 1983.

modifying or replacing those norms. Having realised that they are there and that they are to some extent open to debate, it will not do to appeal to them as natural principles, as a covert way of maintaining their power. Above, we saw how John Honey appealed to people's ill-dispositions towards non-standard forms of English, such as Black English, as justification for the active promotion of SE in schools. 'There is,' retorts Cameron, 'a lot of colour prejudice in Britain, but that fact is never invoked to suggest that black children [...] should be taught the proper use of skin lightening cosmetics' (VH 98).

7.6 Conclusion

To sum up the findings of this chapter: in contrast to the stance of nativist linguistics, grammar is unlikely to be an innate faculty, one essentially devoted to the production and reception of sentences. What we have argued for instead, is the faculty of order-words, which is not a biological property of human neuroanatomy, but rather, is a contingent social property of human societies (at least, all those that have been encountered so far). In other words, the behaviours we understand as language use, at least on present data, are everywhere accompanied by custom, regulation and control — *social obligation* — though this may take radically different forms at different times and places. The implication for linguistics is that language can only be separated off from a pragmatic examination of its particular context, at the risk of detaching it from life — in spite of Chomsky's claim that it is the cataloguers of linguistic variation who are the 'butterfly collectors' as opposed to those true scientists of language in the schools of generative grammar (LR 57). Our discussion of verbal hygiene emphasised that linguistic and metalinguistic practices are intertwined with social, political and economic struggles, and that there are no *mere* matters of language: that is, for all the time spent dealing about the 'merely linguistic', one is prevented or distracted from talking about the 'bigger picture'. Discussions of verbal hygiene, alongside debates about social practices, are vivid examples of the distribution of the visible and the articulable being contested and reasserted.

8. Conclusion

The central claim of this thesis has been that in investigating the role of language in life, language is best considered in terms of the order-word. This concept concentrates our attention on the moment of utterance or emission, its circumstances and particular variables, and its effects, the transformations in which it results — or rather, of which it simultaneously consists. On a sub-personal or preindividual level, order-words were shown to populate the constantly changing field of unmediated context-fixation or orientation between larval selves and environment. Rather than there being an integrated subject that arrives from on high, there is instead the precarious 'metastability' of this field of 'contractions-contemplations', this Grand Central Station of comings and goings between body and world. In this respect at least, there is no difference of essence between a single person and a collective; both have shifting boundaries which are at each moment traversed by different kinds of flows. The order-word/password lies between this field of larval selves and preindividual singularities, and the persons and blocky things of the strata.

It is not the grammar of rule-books that is important, so much as the grammar of stratification, i.e. the constraints on bodies and on thought that are in effect in a particular assemblage. It could well be protested that this all-encompassing approach is completely unworkable, and, as Chomsky argued, we should instead begin with idealisations (for example, a homogenous speech community). But idealisations, whether considered as hypotheses to be tested or generalisations to start an investigation going, are *simplifications* from this world, classes of things with their differentiating characteristics stripped away. Instead the present method abstracts from the strata, from the seen and said, to the level where the disparate communicates, where semiotic and energetic components circulate on the same Plane — precisely because of their differences.

This is not a reduction; it deals with the complexity of how things are rather than with a notion of how they should be. For as we have stressed, the Plane of Consistency or Abstract Machine is not an object, origin, or goal; it is not a common property of things but that which things with no property in common have in common. This allows us to see words as things, lines or arrows on a multidimensional map, and to *speak* things (or gestures, or roads, trees, stars...). It is all real, but the interactions and outcomes are no longer determined in advance. Instead of simplified idealisations, then, our apparatus (machinic and collective assemblage, abstract machine, strata, order-word) are, like the terms of Hjelmslev's net, ready to interact with concrete situations.

It is no doubt the case that the pragmatics we have proposed can sometimes look like dualism. Each of its pairs of terms (actual/virtual, stratified/destratified, order-word/password, extension/intensity and so on) at times appears to conform to a respective evaluation of 'bad/good'. But what makes this instead a 'monistic pluralism' is that in each case, the relations between the paired terms is rooted at different levels in our singular, open-ended construal of the Real. A good example is the pair content and expression, which as we saw, stand in a noncorresponding but mutually presupposing relationship with one another (as, say, non-discursive and discursive multiplicities respectively), where the boundaries are extremely porous and only the abstract forms (matters and functions respectively) are truly distinct. Hence the same bodies are worked upon on either level, and it is the cumulative effect of the whole apparatus in action that must always be our starting point. Just as Hjelmslev proposed a process of division, so we propose the initial pragmatic delimiting of an assemblage, which is then subdivided (or *analysed*) into the various levels of content and expression.

The order-word holds two places in this apparatus; firstly as an entity belonging to the plane of expression. The command is a product of the collective assemblage of enunciation; emerging from the anonymous

murmur to ring out between ordered, disciplined bodies. It both depends for its effect on a machinic assemblage, and also serves to reinforce that assemblage. Secondly, and more profoundly, the order-word/password appears at the very point of division into content and expression, *double articulation*: indeed, it moves or pulls in both directions (as its twin name suggests). Rather than simply emerging on the level of expression (as, say, a particular utterance, memo or graffito¹⁹³), and as such both arising out of and inserted into the flows of bodies of the machinic assemblage, the order-word/password is a decisive moment in the very relation between the visible and the articulable — as *articulation*, it is a moment of determination, defining one or many utterers, one or many recipients, and their relations to machines, animals, money and so on: in short, it *stratifies*, it *creates truth or knowledge*, it enforces or reinforces a particular regime of power.

However, this articulation is *doubled* by the simultaneous pull by the password-side in the other direction. Whereas the order or command need not be linguistic but is undoubtedly a matter of expression, the password throws even content and expression into disarray, making it impossible to determine what can and cannot happen. The password unleashes difference in itself, which as the continuous immanence of production, will have none of the ordered, static homogeneity of the Ordered world. For the password all matters and functions circulate and interact on the Plane of Consistency: the password breaks open both words and things, by being both word and thing, function and matter, itself, in the demonstration that nothing was ever really separated from anything else in the first place.

This bears directly on our everyday understanding of and dealings with language, because every imaginable human utterance (a category the

¹⁹³ e.g. 'A/DEEN SOCCER THUGS KILL ALL VISITING FANS', seen in Aberdeen in the early 1980s and immortalised in Duncan McLean's short story of the same name. Duncan McLean, *Bucket of Tongues*, London: Minerva, 1994

limits of which could undoubtedly be argued about indefinitely) takes a stand, at least one, on the question of the human. The vast majority of utterances, no doubt, unquestionably affirm the human world (by which here I mean the strata, though the two terms are far from interchangeable) by asserting the relevance of some particular aspect of it — dinner, sex, television, and so on — and this is so even when they are scabrously critical or loudly indifferent. Utterances in the category of ‘opinion’ are characterised by a position on a scale from ‘listen to me, I’m right!’ (a wholehearted affirmation of the game of opinions as narcissistic medium of self-assertion) to all those positions where one is reluctant or unwilling to give an opinion and hence join in the game — hence placing the self in relation to the game. However, there are uses of language — conversation, writing — where there is something more than ‘mere talk’ at stake, though this phrase is misleading. The sense of ‘mere talk’ here is that of the redundancy of the order-word, where what is being said precisely does not matter (where ‘to matter’ is a punning abbreviation of ‘to engage with matter’), as the words involved are merely the cover over the reinforcing of the machineries of stratification — hence it is not that there is any *disconnection* from the molar real in this chatter, since the underlying message in all mere talk, however ‘trivial’, is *THIS IS REALITY*. This is the ultimate order-word, the underlying message of (the stratic side of) every utterance. Similarly, it is certainly not that these other uses of language are more ‘meaningful’, since they may very well be utter nonsense from the angle of the strata. Indeed, this may be precisely because they dissimulate or underdetermine the *REALITY* from which they emerge/into which they are inserted.

In other words, the password (be it script that turns into pictures, a humorous utterance, a sentence that turns into music, an experiment in cut-up or electronic sampling) brings different realms into contact; it makes new directions possible (if only for a moment), it throws new light. It is not ‘mere talk’, not because it lacks redundancy but because that same redundancy is put to use. Where the order-word exists to

overdetermine the relations of control within the strata, the password is the failure, the impossibility of completely harnessing the surplus value to that end, with the result that incidents of unprecedented invention break out. The attempt to maintain things as they are results in changing them more radically than could have been anticipated. The emergence of ever more robust tiers of order and control is inevitably coupled with the emergence of more possible fracture-points, more distortion in the channel, more elements in play and more unanticipatable catastrophe.

All this exists at once. No one has a monopoly on distinguishing the order-words from the passwords. At any given moment, one's responses to either order or chaos need be worship or revulsion or anything in between; neither abstract extreme can exist without the other. As humans we are already entirely dependent on the strata for the bulk of our day-to-day needs; we are the stratified. Yet at the same time it is possible to 'push the envelope' of what can be seen, felt and said,

For the question was not how to elude the order-word but how to elude the death-sentence it envelops, how to develop its power of escape [...] There are pass-words beneath order-words. Words that pass, words that are components of passage, whereas order-words mark stoppages or organized, stratified compositions. A single thing or word undoubtedly has this twofold nature: it is necessary to extract one from the other — to transform the compositions of order into components of passage (TP 110).

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